

## **SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**

### **MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2020 AT SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS**

#### **83. PRESENT:**

Mr G Hughes (Chair)	Independent Lay Member
Mr R Alexander	Independent Lay Member
Mr S Barnes	Independent Lay Member
Mr D Fussell	Independent Lay Member
Dr M Kerbey	Independent Lay Member
Councillor J Williams	South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority

#### **APOLOGIES:**

Councillor A Roberts	South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority
DCO S Chapman	Monitoring Officer

#### **ABSENT:**

Councillor J Harries	South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority
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**OFFICERS PRESENT:** - Ms S Watkins – Deputy Monitoring Officer

Following a request by the Chair, each Member provided a formal introduction.

With reference to Members Handbooks, Officers agreed to ensure that all Members had received a copy.

#### **84. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

#### **85. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 4 February 2019, were received and accepted as a true record of proceedings.

## **85.1 MATTERS ARISING**

85.1.1 Officers confirmed that a letter of thanks had been sent to Councillor Val Smith acknowledging her dedication and support to the Standards Committee.

85.1.2 With reference to Item 76 within the minutes, 'Social Media Guidance for Councillors', Officers agreed to ensure that all Members of the Fire & Rescue Authority were in receipt of a copy.

85.1.3 With reference to Item 79, 'Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Report & Accounts 2017/2018', Officers agreed to confirm that the following clause was written into the document:-

*'Individuals had 20 working days to raise an appeal to the Ombudsman's Office'*

85.1.4 With reference to Item 81.2 within the minutes 'Network of Standard Committee Members' Officers advised Members that following discussions with other Monitoring Officers it appeared there was no appetite at this stage to progress this issue.

Following lengthy discussion, Members wished to record their disappointment and register their concerns in not progressing with networking as they considered it an opportunity lost to share good practice. Officers agreed to feedback Members concerns to the Service's Monitoring Officer.

## **86. OBSERVATIONS BY INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Following a request by the Deputy Monitoring Officer for Members to consider Independent Member observance of Fire & Rescue Authority meetings, Mr Alexander informed the group that he had attended the Fire & Rescue Authority meeting which was held on

16 December, 2019, as an observer. He was pleased to report that generally Members had shown good conduct to business and respect towards each other. However, he noted that several Members had left the meeting earlier than expected.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

86.1 Members agreed to note the verbal feedback of the Independent Member.

86.2 Following a question and answer session, Mr Alexander agreed to forward his observations to Members and Officers following agreement from the Vale of Glamorgan, as their observations template had been used.

### **87. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS (WALES) BILL**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised Members of the content of provisions of the Bill relating to Standards Committees.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

87.1 Members agreed to note the report and to await further information on any amendments to the Bill that may be enacted.

87.2 With reference to producing an Annual Report as set out in legislation, Officers agreed to confirm if this applied to Fire & Rescue Authority Standard Committee meetings.

### **88. PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES – ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS FOR 2018/19**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented a report to Members which included extracts from the Annual Report, and Accounts for the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales for the year ending 31 March, 2019, in respect of Members' Code of Conduct matters.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

Members agreed to note the content of the report.

## **89. PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES – CODE OF CONDUCT CASEBOOK**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented Members with a report on the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Code of Conduct Casebook, issues 19 to 22.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

Members agreed to note the content of the Ombudsman Code of Conduct Casebook, issues 19 to 22, published by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

## **90. MEMBER TRAINING**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented a report in order for Members to discuss the benefits of the collaborative Member training session held jointly with Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Authority's Standards Committee.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

90.1 Following lengthy debate on the benefits of the collaborative training session, Members unanimously agreed that they received good learning points from case studies, as well as participating in interactive mock trials and role play scenarios. They also confirmed it was valuable and useful to share experiences with other individuals at the training session.

90.2 With reference to identifying future training opportunities, Members confirmed they wished to receive training on the following key areas:-

- Social Media
- Equality & Diversity

90.3 Following discussion, Members highlighted the benefits of attending external training courses. Officers agreed to consider this option, and to provide further information in due course.

- 90.4 Officers noted that Members wished to receive periodic refresh training sessions.
- 90.5 With reference to networking, Officers noted that Members wished to extend an invitation to Mid & West Wales and North Wales Standard Committee Members to participate in future training sessions.
- 90.6 Following lengthy group discussion on whether the Monitoring Officer of a Fire & Rescue Authority would inform the Monitoring Officer of a County Council of any complaint made against a current Member, Officers agreed to provide clarification on this issue.
- 90.7 With reference to the Monitoring Officer possibly closing off and resolving any complaints quickly, Officers noted that Members wished to be informed of what the complaint is, and how it had been resolved, in order to identify any trends, and ensure that the complaint had been investigated properly.
- 90.8 Following a question and answer session, Officers agreed to inform Members of the date of the next Standards Conference