

Review of Ethical Framework Documents and Procedures

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact John Redmond, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260203 or Sharon Lloyd, Corporate Support Manager, on 01743 260210.

1 Purpose of Report

This report asks the Committee to review and amend, where necessary, the following ethical framework procedures and documents and make recommendations, where appropriate, to the Fire Authority:

- Members' Code of Conduct;
- Code of Conduct complaints procedure;
- Complaints form;
- Disclosable pecuniary interest form; and
- Dispensations Procedure.

2 Recommendations

Members are asked to review, where necessary, the ethical framework procedures and documents listed in section 1 and make recommendations for amendments, where appropriate, to the Fire Authority.

3 Background

It is considered good practice to review annually the various documents listed above and these actions are included in the Committee's Work Plan for October.

Officers have carried out their own review and recommend the changes set out on the following page. Links to these documents have been provided, rather than appending them to this report, in order to save on paper and postage.

4 Generic Changes

Throughout the documents and procedures references are made to the Standards Committee and the Corporate Services Manager. It is proposed that these are amended to Standards and Human Resources Committee and Corporate Support Manager respectively to reflect the current position.

5 Members' Code of Conduct

The Fire Authority's Code of Conduct complies with the provisions of section 28 of the Localism Act 2011, namely it enshrines the following principles:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

The Code of Conduct can be accessed via the following link:

<http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/section-12-v1.0-august-2013.pdf>

No changes are proposed, other than those set out at section 4 above. If agreed by the Committee these changes will be taken to the Fire Authority for final approval, as the Committee does not have power to amend the Code.

6 Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure and Form

The Code of Conduct complaints procedure can be accessed via the following link:

<http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/managing-service/fire-and-rescue-authority/complaint-about-member/guidance-complaints-about-members>

The following changes are proposed:

- The address of the Monitoring Officer needs to be changed from PO Box 215, Telford, TF3 4LF to Telford & Wrekin Council, Darby House, Lawn Central, Telford TF3 4JA
- After the heading 'Investigation finding of breach', any references to the Committee should be followed by 'Hearings Panel', as it is the Panel, made up of three members of the Committee, which now deals with hearings, not the full Committee.

The complaints form can be accessed via the following link:

<http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/managing-service/fire-and-rescue-authority/complaint-about-member>

No changes are proposed.

7 Disclosable Pecuniary Interest Form

The disclosable pecuniary interest form can be accessed via the following link:

<http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/section-12-v1.0-august-2013.pdf>

It is proposed that the following text (set out in the Guidance note) is deleted.

‘A guide to Members’ personal interests can be accessed on the Communities and Local Government website via the following link:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/personalinterestsguide>

This guide is included on the Fire Authority’s website, so there is no need to access it via another website.

8 Dispensations Procedure

Specific reference to dispensation rules and procedure are contained both in the Code of Conduct and the Dispensations Procedure. The latter can be found at the following link:

<http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/section-4-v1.2-april-2014.pdf>

No changes are proposed.

9 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

10 Legal Comment

The statutory requirements for the Code of Conduct and ethical framework for Members is set out at part 1, chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011. The Fire Authority’s Code of Conduct does comply with this requirement.

11 Initial Impact Assessment

This report contains merely statements of fact. An Initial Impact Assessment is not, therefore, required.

12 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

13 Background Papers

The Localism Act 2011

