

**Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on
17 September 2020 via Webex**

Present

Sally Ellis
Julia Hughes
Gill Murgatroyd
Gareth Pritchard
Cllr Owen Thomas, Flintshire County Council

Gareth Owens, Deputy Clerk
Alwen Davies, Member Liaison Officer

Apologies

No apologies.

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR

1.1 A P Young's term of office with the Standards Committee had ended and therefore the Committee was asked to nominate a new Chair and Deputy Chair.

1.2 Sally Ellis nominated Julia Hughes for the role of Chair and this was seconded by all those present and there were no other nominations.

1.3 Julia Hughes then took the Chair and asked for nominations for the role of Deputy Chair. Mrs Hughes nominated Sally Ellis and this was seconded by all those present and there were no other nominations.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

2.1 None.

3 NOTICE OF URGENT MATTERS

3.1 None.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2020 were approved as a correct record.

5 MATTERS ARISING

5.1 It was agreed that a letter of appreciation should be sent to Antony P Young to thank him for his eight years of service to the Committee.

6 TRAINING SESSION

6.1 As agreed at the last meeting, the Deputy Clerk delivered a training session to members on the following topics:

- Dispensations
- The Committee's responsibility on the Service stage 3 complaints
- Increased understanding of the six protocols that the Committee has reviewed over the past year.

6.2 It was agreed that the training notes to be circulated to Members.

6.3 **RESOLVED to note the information.**

7 ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

7.1 No meetings of the Authority had been held since February 2020 due to Covid, therefore it was agreed to defer the matter of attendance at meetings until the next meeting.

8 REGISTRATION OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY BY MEMBERS OF THE AUTHORITY

8.1 Members were asked to review the value above which gifts and hospitality must be registered by councillors.

8.2 At its meeting in February 2020, the Committee asked the value above which gifts and hospitality must be registered in other Welsh authorities. It was noted that the bulk of authorities (12) who responded set the level above which gifts must be registered at £25.

8.3 **RESOLVED to recommend to the Fire and Rescue Authority that it retains the value above which gifts and/or hospitality must be registered at £25. It was also agreed to request the Authority to include an obligation within the members' code of conduct as follows:**

"You must, within 28 days of receiving any gift, hospitality, material benefit or advantage from a single source where the total value of that plus any other gifts, hospitality, material benefit or advantage from that same source within the last 12 months exceeds £100, provide written notification to the clerk of the existence and source of the same."

9 REPORT IN TO THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO THE MANCHESTER BOMBING

9.1 Following a request from members at the last Committee meeting, the report gave members more information about the Kerslake report and whether there were any ethical lessons to be learned from the bombing that took place in Manchester in May 2017.

9.2 It was noted that the report reviewed the operational response to the bombing with a view to establishing whether the emergency services were prepared for and how they handled a terrorist attack of this type. The focus of the report was therefore on the strategic and operational arrangements that were in place and how they could be improved. It did not touch on ethical behaviour by elected councillors.

9.3 It was further noted that due to all decisions being taken at an operational level there were no governance or ethical issues arising from multi-agency relationships at an Authority level.

9.4 **RESOLVED to note the report.**

10 STANDARDS COMMITTEE'S FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

10.1 The report was presented to review the Committee's forward work programme.

10.2 At its meeting in February the Committee asked to review its own work programme against the work undertaken by the Committees in the other fire authorities. A revised work programme was presented to members for approval.

10.3 In order for independent members to be able to meaningfully observe Authority meetings, they requested a structured feedback form which the Deputy Clerk will circulate in 2021.

10.4 Due to Covid, the Authority had not met since February 2020 and as meetings would be held virtually for the foreseeable future, it was agreed that any observations would be undertaken in 2021 once FRA members were au fait with the Zoom system. It was suggested that when observations were undertaken that independent members observe in pairs in order to be able to compare notes.

10.5 **RESOLVED to agree the forward work programme subject to adding the following items to the February/March 2021 agenda:**

- FRA members' attendance at meetings
- Joint Standards Committee.