



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE held on Wednesday, 31 January 2018 at Lecture Theatre - Fire Headquarters, Cheshire at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Councillors M Biggin, E Johnson, D Marren, R Polhill, S Wright and L Thomson

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Recording of Meeting

Members were reminded that the meeting would be audio-recorded.

B Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor D Beckett.

C Declarations of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

D Minutes of the Governance and Constitution Committee

RESOLVED: That

[1] the minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Constitution Committee held on Wednesday 8th November 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

2 STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE - ACTION PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE 2017-18

The Director of Governance and Commissioning introduced the report which provided an update on the small number of actions identified in the Statement of Assurance Action Plan 2017-18.

He drew Members' attention to Appendix 1 which contained a progress update on three areas highlighted for improvement:

- Policy management – building on the work undertaken in 2017 and completing a comprehensive review of all corporate key policies
- Relaunch of the Partnership Toolkit, policy and governance model
- Focus on initiatives highlighted in the Environmental Strategy 2014-20 supporting the achievement of 40% carbon emissions reduction target by 2020

He informed Members about the impact of the Blue Light Collaboration Programme on policy management. As a result of the creation of the new joint service teams,

ownership of policies and the review/approval process were being revisited. This would ensure that policies were kept up-to-date and published in a timely fashion. He also mentioned that, where possible, the processes and policies of the two organisations would be aligned.

The Director of Governance and Commissioning informed Members that work on the Partnership Toolkit was ongoing following an internal audit in 2017. He also advised Members that updates had not been reported to Members for some time concerning progress against the Environmental Strategy 2014-20. This was due to the loss of a key member of staff and uncertainty surrounding the role due to the Blue Light Collaboration Programme. However, the post was now filled and a carbon management report would be taken to Members in the near future.

Members also discussed potential options for improving the energy efficiency of the Service's fire stations which were due to be refurbished in the near future. Pitched roofs, insulation and cladding, solar panels and ground source heat pumps were all mentioned by Members for officers to consider incorporating into the station refurbishment plans.

Members requested that a session be included at the next Members' Planning Day concerning the Service's Environmental Strategy, with particular focus on how the Service measures carbon dioxide emission reduction and proposals for increasing the energy efficiency of the Service's fire stations.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Statement of Assurance – Action Plan Progress Update 2017-18 be noted.

3 REVISED MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

The Director of Governance and Commissioning presented the report which contained an updated draft of the Members' Code of Conduct (the Code) for consideration and an updated version of the Declaration of Interest Form (the Form) for review.

He referred Members to Appendix 1 to the report which contained an updated draft of the Code. He highlighted the inclusion of wording concerned with information and confidentiality and a revised section dealing with declarations of interests and participation in meetings.

A Member asked if further clarity could be provided surrounding disclosures associated with family members and close associates i.e. captured on the Form but stated at a meeting. It was agreed by the Committee that a note could be included.

A Member highlighted that paragraph (b) under section '2.2 Information and Confidentiality' contained information which was already included in paragraph (a) under '5. Openness' within '2. General Obligations'. It was agreed that paragraph (b) would be removed.

A Member queried whether all Fire Authority Members should be required to sign to accept the Code. Members discussed this and it was agreed that a section should be included in the Form for Members to sign declaring that they had received and agreed to abide by the Code. Members also requested that the updated Code and Form be taken to the next Members' Planning Day and changes be highlighted to all Members.

Members also discussed the information about the Law in Appendix 4 to the Code and it was agreed that it should be removed as it could cause confusion.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the revised Code of Conduct be approved and referred to the Fire Authority for adoption subject to:**
- **The inclusion of a note to make it clear that declarations about the interest of a family member or close associate need only be made at a meeting, not on the Declaration of Interest Form;**
 - **The removal of paragraph (b) under section '2.2 Information and Confidentiality';**
 - **The removal of Appendix 4; and**
- [2] the revised Declaration of Interest Form be approved, subject to the inclusion of a section for Members to sign declaring that they had received the Code and agreed to abide by it.**