



AS A RESULT OF CONCERNS ABOUT THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH MEETING IN PERSON CAUSED BY THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC THIS MEETING TOOK PLACE VIA SKYPE.

THE LAW AT THE TIME OF THE MEETING DID NOT RECOGNISE REMOTE MEETINGS (LIKE SKYPE) AS FULFILLING THE REQUIREMENT FOR PUBLIC ACCESS. THEREFORE, THE MEETING WAS INFORMAL WITH NO DECISIONS BEING MADE. ANY DECISIONS THAT NEED TO BE MADE IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA WILL BE DEALT WITH AT THE NEXT FORMAL MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE.

NOTES OF THE INFORMAL MEETING OF THE GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE held on Wednesday, 14 July 2021 via Skype at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Councillors Rob Polhill (Chair), Rachel Bailey, David Brown, Martyn Delaney, Brian Gallagher and Nick Mannion and independent (non-elected) member Derek Barnett

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Recording of Meeting

Members were reminded that the meeting would be audio recorded.

B Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mike Biggin.

C Membership of Committee

Members noted the membership of the Governance and Constitution Committee for 2021-22, as agreed by the Fire Authority on 23rd June 2021.

Councillors: Rob Polhill – Chair
Nick Mannion – Deputy Chair
Rachel Bailey
Mike Biggin
David Brown
Martyn Delaney
Brian Gallagher

Substitutes: Michael Beanland
James Nicholas
Peter Wheeler

Independent (non-elected) member: Derek Barnett

D Declarations of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of Members' interest.

E Minutes of the Governance and Constitution Committee

Members did not raise any issues about the minutes.

2 DISPENSATIONS

The Director of Governance and Commissioning reminded Members that as the meeting was informal, the decision to extend the benefit of the existing dispensations to the new Members of the Fire Authority could not be made. Members agreed to defer the item to their next formal meeting.

Members were happy to move onto the next item.

3 WHISTLEBLOWING ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

The Director of Governance and Commissioning introduced the report which provided information about whistleblowing for 2020-21. He informed Members that the Authority had not been contacted by Safecall during 2020-21.

Members were happy to move onto the next item.

4 COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

The Director of Governance and Commissioning introduced the report which provided information regarding compliments and complaints received about the Service during the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

He provided an overview of the figures for the past five reporting periods which were presented within a table in the report. Compared to the previous year, the Service had seen a large increase in the number of compliments received. The number of formal complaints had decreased.

Members largely noted that the increase in compliments was caused by the Service's response to Covid-19 Pandemic.

A Member commented that a Cheshire East Borough Council report into flooding commended the Service for its response to the flooding in the borough. The Member also raised concerns that the report noted that a number of on-call appliances had not mobilised to local incidents. The Director of Governance and Commissioning advised that the Deputy Chief Fire Officer would discuss operational attendance with Members at a Member Planning Day.

Members were happy to move onto the next item.

5 SUMMARY OF MEMBER ATTENDANCE 2020-21

The Director of Governance and Commissioning introduced the report which provided information about Member attendance for the last municipal year. Appendix 1 to the report summarised Member attendance at meetings of the Fire Authority and its three main committees: Estates and Property, Governance and Constitution and Performance and Overview. Appendix 2 to the report contained details of the planning days and additional meetings attended as well as conferences and events attended.

The Director highlighted that meetings and events had been heavily impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic so most of the reported figures were of virtual attendance. Despite the lack of physical meetings and events, Members continued to demonstrate a clear commitment.

Members were happy to move onto the next item.

6 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Director of Governance and Commissioning advised Members that a minor amendment was required to the Financial Regulations to acknowledge the important role that the Service Management Team is expected to play in assisting Members with the management of reserves. This amendment would be put to the Fire Authority.

Members were happy to conclude the informal meeting.