



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE held on Wednesday, 5 July 2017 at Lecture Theatre - Fire Headquarters, Cheshire at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Councillors M Biggin, E Johnson, R Polhill, A Ruddy, L Thomson and S Wright and independent members A Ruddy and L Thomson

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Recording of Meeting

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

B Membership of Committee

The appointment of a Chair and membership of the Governance and Constitution Committee for 2017-18 was initially agreed by the Fire Authority at its annual meeting on 21st June 2017.

Following these appointments notification of revised appointments from Cheshire West and Chester was received. As a consequence of this and following consultation with the relevant group spokespersons, two changes took place to the membership of this Committee. Members were asked to note the revised membership, listed below:

Councillors:

S Wright – Chair
R Polhill – Deputy Chair
M Biggin
D Beckett
E Johnson
D Marren

Substitutes:

N Jones
D Mahon
J Mercer

Independent Members:

L Thomson
A Ruddy

C Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Beckett and D Marren.

D Declarations of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

E Minutes of the Governance and Constitution Committee

RESOLVED: That

[1] the minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Constitution Committee held on Monday 12th June 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

2 COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS - ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

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 2016 to 31st March 2017. He explained that this report was presented annually in this format.

The Director of Governance and Commissioning provided an overview of the Service's performance for responding to and resolving complaints. He referred Members to a table in the report which contained performance comparison figures from the past five reporting periods. He informed Members that the overall volume remained steady.

He also drew Members' attention to Appendix 1 of the report which provided brief details of the informal complaints received and whether they had been resolved within the timescale set out in the Service's procedure.

Members were referred to a number of key themes that had arisen during the reporting period. The Director of Governance and Commissioning highlighted the inclusion of incidents within Appendix 1 that were not direct complaints against the Service or had resulted from a misunderstanding. He informed Members that the incidents were captured within the database to ensure that a central record was maintained which ensured that the queries were investigated and resolved.

The Director of Governance and Commissioning drew Members' attention to complaints received concerning the use of images from incidents on the Service's social media sites. He informed Members that permission was sought by the Service for the use of images from incidents and that images would be removed if requested. A Member queried how the Service ensured that permission was obtained and whether the purpose of sharing images was explained to individuals. The Director of Governance and Commissioning committed to discussing the process with the Communications team, in case there were any lessons to learn which needed to be implemented.

He concluded by referring Members to Appendix 2 to the report which contained a brief outline of the formal complaint received by the Service during the reporting period. As some details of the formal complaint were confidential in nature, he informed Members that further information would be provided in Part 2 of the

meeting.

Due to their nature there was no discussion about the compliments needed.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the information regarding compliments and complaints made during the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017 be noted.

3 SUMMARY OF MEMBERS ATTENDANCE - MUNICIPAL YEAR 2016-17

The Director of Governance and Commissioning informed Members that the report contained information relating to Members' attendance for the last municipal year. He referred Members to a revised Appendix 1 to the report, was provided to Members at the meeting. It summarised Member attendance at meetings of the Fire Authority and three main committees: Performance and Overview Committee, Governance and Constitution Committee and Policy Committee for the municipal year 2016-17. It was noted that the revised Appendix showed the performance of the independent Members accurately, i.e. 6 out of 7 meetings and 4 out of 4 meetings.

Members were asked to consider whether they wished to further discuss the process adopted in respect of the monitoring of attendance. Members noted the report without debate.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the revised summary of Member attendance at meetings of the Authority and its three main committees for 2016-17 be noted.

4 WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURE - ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

The Director of Governance and Commissioning introduced the report which provided an update on the current position in relation to the Authority's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure. It was noted that the policy was updated in July 2016 when changes were made to reflect the recommendations made in the Government's Guidance for Employers and Code of Practice for Whistleblowing. Members were informed that the policy had been reviewed and only minor amendments were made, such as updated job titles and contact details for officers and the inclusion of the Chair of the Committee within the key contacts list, a copy of which was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Director of Governance and Commissioning informed Members that the Authority had been contacted by Safecall since the last report to the Committee in 2016. He informed Members that further information would be provided during Part 2 of the meeting.

The Chair of the committee wished to record that any Member could be approached by any member of staff.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the content of the report be noted.

5 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Order 2006, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the items of business listed below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12 A to the Act in the paragraphs indicated:

Item 6: Further details concerning matters arising from Item 2 and Item 4

Paragraph(s)

(2) Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual

(3) Information relating to the financial or the business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

6 FURTHER DETAILS CONCERNING MATTERS ARISING FROM ITEM 2 AND ITEM 4

The Director of Governance and Commissioning presented information relating to Item 2 and Item 4.

RESOLVED:

That the information be noted.