

To: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

From: Monitoring Officer – Ms Shahin Ismail

Presenting officer(s): Monitoring Officer – Ms Shahin Ismail
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Proposed changes to Fire Authority Constitutional documents

1. Purpose

1.1 The national landscape for the governance of fire and rescue services is changing and developing and in this national context, it is important to keep the Fire Authority's own governance documents updated.

1.2 The Fire Authority's constitutional documents comprise of the following key documents;

- 1.2.1 Terms of Reference of Committees
- 1.2.2 Statement of Delegated Responsibilities
- 1.2.3 Standing Orders as to Meetings
- 1.2.4 Members Code of Conduct
- 1.2.5 Members' Allowances Scheme
- 1.2.6 Member/Officer Protocol
- 1.2.7 Code of Corporate Governance

1.3 The first three documents were reviewed with changes approved at the Fire Authority meeting in November 2021 (Minute 15 of the meeting refers), the Members Code of Conduct was reviewed and changed in February 2022 (Minute 27 of the meeting refers) and the Members' Allowances Scheme has been subject to an Independent Remuneration Panel. This report covers the final two documents, namely the Member/Officer Protocol and the Code of Corporate Governance.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Fire Authority is asked to consider and approve the wording changes to both documents as indicated at Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

2.2 It is further recommended that the Authority approve an annual review cycle for all its constitutional documents, specifically that they are reviewed and any changes brought to the June meeting for approval as necessary.

3. Risk Assessment

- 3.1 Political - the proposed changes to the documents bring them up to date and complete a review process in the interests of transparency and clarity.

4. Background

- 4.1 Since 2016, the Home Office has put into place a programme of reform within the fire and rescue sector. The aim of the reforms has been to support continuous improvement and to foster greater collaboration and coherence with policing services.
- 4.2 Previous changes to our constitutional documents reflect some of the reforms for example, greater operational independence given to the Chief Fire Officer and enhanced clarity and transparency in respect of the roles and responsibilities of the Authority, its Committees and its Officers.

5. Proposed Changes

- 5.1 Member/Officer Protocol – at Appendix 1 to this report is the current Member/Officer Protocol. The review of this document did not identify any significant changes were required however 14 changes to the language and wording, highlighted in red, have been made to ensure the document is up to date and reflects current terminology and structure. Two links to other reference documents (Paragraphs 3.1.6 and 3.2.11) have also been added to improve accessibility.
- 5.2 Code of Corporate Governance – at Appendix 2 to this report is the current Code of Corporate Governance. The review of this document did not identify any significant changes however seven changes to wording have been made to provide context and strengthen statements. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy reference has also been updated as required by the recent RSM internal audit report (Minute 60 of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20 April 2023 refers).

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The changes highlighted at Paragraph 5 above and within the attached appendices are recommended to ensure the Fire Authority's governance framework reflects the nationally driven modernisation agenda whilst remaining current and transparent through a robust review cycle.

Source Documents:

Fire Authority Member/Officer Protocol, Code of Corporate Governance and various Minutes of Fire Authority Meetings

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