

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AND ESSEX FIRE
AUTHORITY JOINT STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL,
CHELMSFORD, ON 24 JANUARY 2011**

Membership

**Appointed by Essex County
Council**

Independent Members:

- * Mr A French (Chairman)
- * Mr D Farrow (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mr C Jackman

Vacancy

Councillors:

- * R Bass (Chairman of the Council,
ex officio)
- * Mrs M Fisher
- * Mrs E Hart
- * M Mackrory
- * J Pike
- * C Pond
- * D Robinson
- K Twitchen
- Mrs M Webster

* Present

**Appointed by Essex Fire
Authority**

Independent Member:

- * Mr M Goodswen

Councillors:

- S McPherson (Thurrock Borough
Council)
- * R Pearson (Essex County Council)
- * Fay Evans (Southend Borough
Council)

The following officers were present in support throughout the meeting:

Vivien Door

Alex Hallam

Colin Ismay

Margaret Lee

Philip Thomson

Committee Officer

Deputy County Solicitor

Governance Manager

Executive Director for Finance

County Solicitor

1. Membership

The Chairman informed the Committee that Councillor Mrs Hart had become an Essex County Council Member of this Committee and welcomed her to the meeting.

2. Apologies

The Committee Officer reported apologies from County Councillor Twitchen.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. Matters Arising

Minute 62, Members Handbook

Councillor Bass, Chairman of the Council, and the Governance Manager had agreed that work needed to be done on providing greater clarity around the content of this handbook. When the Members Handbook had been updated it would be taken to Full Council for endorsement.

6. Update on Independent Member Recruitment

The Committee received an oral update on the Independent Member Recruitment by the Chairman. An applicant had been offered the post subject to references.

7. Progress on the Independent Remuneration Committee Recommendations

The Committee received an oral update on the progress and implications for the Committee on the Independent Remuneration Committee Recommendations from Colin Ismay, Governance Manager.

The approved Independent Remuneration Committee recommendations included three areas of activity for the Standards Committee:

- i) Approval of specific travel expenses for Members with a physical disability which restricted their ability to access some types of public Transport;
- ii) Review of the Annual Statements produced by Members of their achievements and activities, to identify best practice;
- iii) Where a Member is judged to be conspicuously failing to perform, that Member to be referred to the Standards Committee, which in appropriate cases could recommend that the Member should no longer claim an allowance.

The Governance Manager had separated these three issues, and had drafted proposals as to how each could be dealt with. These proposals were to be discussed with Councillor Chapman. When Councillor Chapman had given her support, the Governance Manager would share the proposals with the Chairman of this Committee and the Chairman of the Council.

8. Update on the Future of the Standards Committee Regime

The Committee received an update on the Future of the Standards Committee Regime, (SC/001/11), from Alex Hallam, Deputy County Solicitor.

Members noted that the Standards Committee may exist in its current format until the end of 2011. When further information was made available both Essex County Council and the Essex Fire Authority would need to make their own decisions regarding how they deal with Code of Conduct issues.

9. Date and Time of the Next Meeting

The Committee noted the date of the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 23 February 2011 at 10.00 am in Committee Room 2.

10. Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

That the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972: (Paragraph 3 – relating to the finance or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information)).

11. Ethical Governance Diagnostic Report
(Public and press excluded)

The Committee considered report (SC/002/11), by Margaret Lee, Executive Director for Finance, to which was attached the Internal Audit Corporate Governance Management Action Plan and the Delivering the Principles of Public Life report from the Audit Commission. In presenting the report, the Director for Finance highlighted the areas of key concern and expanded on the report.

Councillor Mackrory expressed disappointment that representations made to the Audit Commission about the need for the Opposition Parties to be sufficiently resourced to hold the Administration to account had not featured in the presentation.

Resolved:

That the Executive Director for Finance discuss with the Audit Commission the options for obtaining further details on which the presentation was based together with any further analysis for the Committee.

As there was no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 3.05 pm.

Chairman