

**AWDURDOD TÂN AC ACHUB CANOLBARTH A GORLLEWIN  
CYMRU**



**MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**COFNODION  
CYFARFOD Y PWYLLGOR SAFONAU**

Pencadlys Y Gwasanaeth Tân, Heol Llwyn Pisgwydd  
Caerfyrddin  
2 Hydref 2006

**MINUTES  
OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING**

held at Fire Service Headquarters, Lime Grove Avenue,  
Carmarthen  
2 October 2006

**PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE**

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN: G Morgan

IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN:

AELODAU/MEMBERS: M Howells, R Martin  
Cyng/Cllrs: G Seabourne, JJJ Davies

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES Cyng/Cllr: S Fox, P James

**1 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTERESTS**

None were declared

**2 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2006**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2006 were received and approved as a true record

**3 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2005/06**

The Clerk reported that as a matter of good corporate governance, an annual report had been produced covering the activities of the Standards Committee during the past year up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006. It was noted that whilst there was a statutory requirement for the Committee to meet at least once a year, the Committee had striven to meet at least twice a year, or more often if business dictated.

The annual report covered the major areas of work carried out during the year, particularly in relation to the review of the Model Code of Conduct, the review of other draft regulations relevant to the work of the committee, the monitoring of complaints and training.

**RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The Annual report be received and approved and presented to the Fire Authority at their next meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2006.*

**4 TO RECEIVE THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL REPORT 2005/06**

It was reported that the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005 had received Royal Assent in April 2005 and in October 2005, the National Assembly for Wales had passed the necessary Order to bring the Act into force from 1 April 2006.

Accordingly, this was the last time Mr Adam Peat, Ombudsman, would report on his four previously separate jurisdictions as the Commissioner for Local Administration in Wales; the Welsh Administration Ombudsman; the Health Service Commissioner for Wales and the Social Housing Ombudsman for Wales.

An extract from the Annual Report for 2005/06 relating to the work of the Commissioner for Local Administration in Wales was attached for the consideration of members, from which it was noted that no complaints of maladministration were made against the Authority nor any allegations of

misconduct made against Authority Members.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that***

***The report be received and noted***

### **5 TO RECEIVE THE ADJUDICATION PANEL FOR WALES ANNUAL REPORT 2005/06**

The Adjudication Panel for Wales Annual Report 2005/06 was received and noted for information

### **6 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON PROVIDING INDEMNITIES TO MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

The Clerk reported that the ability of Members and Officers to take decisions and deliver services on behalf of the Authority without the risk of personal liabilities where they had acted properly was fundamental to the effective operation of the authority. Following the publication of Assembly Regulations and specific guidance, a report had been produced which explained what indemnities could be given, what restrictions could apply, and made suggestions as to the form of indemnity which could be adopted by the Authority. The Clerk specifically drew Members attention to the form of Indemnity which was attached as an appendix to the report and which needed the specific approval of the Authority.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that***

***the contents of the report be approved and that the indemnity in the form contained in Appendix 1 be recommend for approval by the Authority.***

### **7 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE ALL WALES STANDARDS COMMITTEE CONFERENCE AT ABERAERON ON 22<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER 2006**

The Clerk reported that the Committee had been represented at the above Conference by Officers only as unfortunately Members had been unable to attend due to other commitments. Richard Martin had attended, however, as a representative of Ceredigion County Council. The theme of the Conference was "*Moving the Ethics Agenda Forward*" and the Clerk provided members with a summary of the Conference proceedings. Of particular interest to Members was a letter received from Stephen Phipps, Head of the Partnership and Ethics Team, Welsh Assembly Government who had been due to speak at the Conference, but who had cancelled at the last moment. Mr Phipps referred to the Code of Conduct and indicated that a detailed analysis of the responses had

yet to be undertaken which would cause further delay to the publication date. One consideration had been to delay implementation until the local elections in May 2008. Delegates expressed concerns about the potential further delay and were urged by Mr Peat to find a collective way in which to encourage the Welsh Assembly Government to progress matters.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*A letter be sent to Mr Phipps expressing concerns that the publication date for the Code of Conduct had been subject to further delays.*

### **8 TO REVIEW COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY THE AUTHORITY FOR THE PERIOD 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL TO 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER**

The Corporate Head of Policy and Member Support presented the report on complaints for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2006. It was noted that the number of complaints received for the period April-September 2006 amounted to sixteen which was the equivalent number received last year for the same period.

The number of upheld complaints had increased from one to six and were in respect of conduct, operational matters and three miscellaneous issues.

The standard of complaint acknowledgement and investigation performance remained generally good.

Only one satisfaction questionnaire had been returned but all complainants were informed however that the non-return of a questionnaire indicated that they would be deemed to be satisfied with the way in which the complaint was handled.

The number of compliments received has decreased compared with the corresponding period last year. It was noted that a feedback form was available on the Authority's website in which a comment or complaint could be made electronically.

Members requested the complaints be split across the six different command areas for the next report in order to identify potential trends within the complaint categories.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The Complaints report be received and noted*