

## Appendix 1

### Members of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority (WMFRA).

WMFRA has 27 councillors which govern the Authority. The Authority's core business is about:

- assessing the risks posed to communities;
- being proactive in preventing fires and other risks, rather than simply reacting to fires;
- working with the most vulnerable in society and those less able to make themselves safe from or respond to a fire when it does occur;
- working closely with communities to decide on and implement the best approaches to community fire safety;
- delivering value for money; and
- high standards of conduct being promoted.

High standards of conduct ensure that there is greater public confidence in what the Authority does. The 10 general principles of conduct for members are:

- Selflessness;
- Honesty and integrity;
- Objectivity;
- Accountability;
- Openness;
- Personal judgment;
- Respect for others;
- Duty to uphold the law;
- Stewardship; and
- Leadership

In addition all councillors and co-opted members of the Authority are subject to the Members' Code of Conduct.

If you are unhappy with the conduct of a WMFRA member you may complain to the Authority's Standards Committee. In this leaflet "member" means any of the following people:

- An elected councillor
- An appointed member of the Authority's committee (including members of the Standards Committee) or
- A co-opted member of the Authority's committee.

The Standards Committee is a group of people appointed by the Authority to help maintain and promote high ethical standards. It is made up of elected councillors and independent people who are not councillors or employees of the Authority but who are appointed by the Authority.

### Complaints about Members

Members are required to comply with the standards set out in the Authority's Member Code of Conduct (which is part of the Authority's Constitution). The Standards Committee can only deal with complaints that a member has not complied with the Code of Conduct. The full Code of Conduct is available on the Authority's website at: <http://94.236.33.181/CMISWebPublic/Binary.ashx?Document=1918>

or you can obtain a paper copy by contacting the Authority (see the contact details at the end of this leaflet). The Code of Conduct includes requirements:

- To treat people with respect (including not bullying or intimidating people)
- To comply with the Equalities Acts
- Not to disclose confidential information
- Not to bring the Council into disrepute
- Not to abuse their position for their own (or someone else's) advantage or disadvantage
- To disclose certain personal and financial interests

Members must also act lawfully in their personal and public capacities.

The Standards Committee cannot look into complaints that are about:

- Political and policy decisions i.e. if you simply disagree with a decision that has been made
- People employed by the Authority
- Incidents that happened before a member was elected or chosen to serve
- The way the Authority conducts or records its meetings
- The way the Authority has or has not done something. In these cases, you could use the Authority's corporate complaints procedures. You can obtain information about this from the Authority's website at: [http://www.wmfs.net/Contact\\_Us/Compliment%2C+Comment+or+Complain/](http://www.wmfs.net/Contact_Us/Compliment%2C+Comment+or+Complain/); by telephoning the Authority on 0121 380 7404 or by email [contact@wmfs.net](mailto:contact@wmfs.net)

You may also complain about some of these matters to the Local Government Ombudsman if you think that the Authority has been guilty of neglect, inattention, delay, incompetence etc.

### How to complain and what happens to your complaint.

If you make a complaint about member misconduct to the Standards Committee it must be in writing. To ensure that your complaint is one that can be properly considered you should make your complaint on a form which is available from the Monitoring Officer. As well as the Complaint Form information sent to you will explain to you how to complete the Form. You will have to say who the complaint is about and why you think that they have not followed the Code of Conduct.

To ensure your complaint is one that can be properly considered you should make your complaint on a Form which is available from the Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer's details are at the end of this leaflet.

With the Complaint Form you will receive information and guidance for potential complainants. This information includes :-

- How you should set out your complaint. Your complaint should be clearly set out on the Complaint Form summarising what you are complaining about and including supporting documentation where necessary. You should say who you are complaining about and why you think that they have not followed the Code of Conduct.
- The referral criteria which the Assessment Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee will use to decide whether or not to refer your complaint for investigation or other action.
- What happens once you submit your complaint – the Assessment Sub-Committee will meet to consider your complaint and decide whether it should be referred for investigation or other action. This will happen within an average of 20 working days of the date we receive your complaint.
- The powers of the Assessment Sub-Committee which may decide to refer your complaint for other action instead of referring it for investigation. Other action is a deliberately broad term that may include options such as requiring the person you have complained about to apologise or undergo training or mediation.
- When we will notify you of the Assessment Sub-Committee's decision and your right to ask for a review of the Assessment Sub-Committee's decision.

#### **Contact Details**

Monitoring Officer for West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority  
Mrs N Sharma  
Sandwell MBC  
Legal Services Division  
Sandwell Council House  
Oldbury  
West Midlands  
B69 3DE

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