

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

MEMBER TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Notes of meeting held in the Virtual Meeting via 'Teams', on Thursday, 3 November 2022.

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| <u>PRESENT:</u> | |
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| <u>Councillors</u> | |
| S Morris (Chair) | |
| D Smith (Vice-Chair) | |
| N Hennessy | |
| Z Khan | |
| J Rigby | |

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| <u>Officers</u> |
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| E Sandiford, Head of Human Resources (LFRS) D Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS) |

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from County Councillor Andrea Kay.

NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The notes of the previous meeting held on 28 April 2022 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

MEMBER TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT - UPDATE REPORT

The Head of Human Resources, Liz Sandiford, presented the report which detailed the various means available for elected Members of the Combined Fire Authority to access training and development opportunities. She explained that she was covering elements of the role of the Director of People and Development with this being her first Member Training and Development Working Group.

Personal Development Plans

With the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, in the previous year, Personal Development Plans (PDPs) had returned to being held face to face although some were held over the telephone and electronically to support Members with busy diaries.

Three new Councillors had joined the CFA since the April 2022 meeting, of which all had received an initial PDP and induction discussion. Of the 25 elected Members of the Authority, 92% had drawn up or reviewed their Personal Development Plan. The remaining 2 Members were in the process of reviewing their annual PDP and Action Plan.

e-Learning

Members were encouraged through the Member Information Bulletin, to view North West Employers Organisation and the Local Government Association websites to access training opportunities. Training opportunities for these organisations were also emailed to Members directly by Democratic Services.

Members' Handbook

The handbook for the municipal year 2022/23 had now been issued to all Members.

Member Information Bulletin

Further to Member discussion at previous meetings, the Member Information Bulletin had now been reformatted to web-based and was accessed via an electronic link with tabs for information. Although development was ongoing, the link to the first digital Bulletin had been emailed to Members on 01 April 2022. The Bulletin would now be issued more frequently, on a monthly basis.

In addition to providing meeting dates, Member Training and Development opportunities, news and events, it was intended that the Bulletin would also provide upcoming safety campaign information for Members to forward as appropriate to their constituents and key partners using their social media channels together with reporting to Members on the success of these campaigns in subsequent issues. Members were also actively encouraged to provide information to officers for inclusion in the Bulletin and provide feedback on any improvements they would like to see.

Co-ordination of Training

Democratic Services continued to contact home authorities where relevant to co-ordinate member training and development opportunities and avoid duplication.

Councillor Smith commented that he liked the digital format of the Member Information Bulletin and Councillor Rigby added that it was easy to navigate. All Members agreed that they were happy with the format of the Member Information Bulletin. In addition, the Chair stated that digital communication was more beneficial in terms of climate change.

The Chair gave thanks to the staff in the Service for helping to develop Members and improve new Members' understanding of the Authority. He explained that being a Member of the Combined Fire Authority was a prestigious position with Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service being the best Fire Authority in the country.

RESOLVED:- That Members note and endorse the content of the report.

MEMBER TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS 2021/22

The Member Training and Development Working Group was responsible for analysing and agreeing the training needs of Members that linked to the objectives, priorities and vision of

the Authority.

Members were updated on the action that had been taken in response to training needs identified from the Training Needs Analysis undertaken in 2021 and the Personal Development sessions that had been held with Members throughout 2021/22.

Following consideration, Members agreed that their training needs were being met and agreed the training needs for 2022/23 as follows:

- To continue to promote Fire Safety / Safe and Well Service and the work of the Member Champions;
- To continue to attend service area inductions / meetings at stations and information sessions on key issues to support decision making;
- To maintain good attendance at all Strategy Group meetings, encouraging all Members to attend;
- To continue with the informal buddy system;
- To support the use of electronic systems where needed, preferred / available.
- To attend a Prince's Trust presentation or Cadet's Passing Out Parade;
- To continue to promote all available training;
- To offer LGA Fire Leadership Essentials training to all Members focusing initially on any new Members.
- To support Member knowledge around the Service, terminology and operational / staff roles.

Councillor Jean Rigby thanked Democratic Services for their work as Member Training and Development had evolved and improved over the years. It was concurred by Councillor Smith that Member Training and Development had improved with members being informed of training opportunities and individuals making the decision about the extent of their involvement

County Councillor Nikki Hennessy encouraged all Members to attend the LGA Fire & Rescue Leadership Essentials Programme as it was useful as a refresher and to keep up to date with current practices. She stated that it was an enjoyable programme which enhanced Members' experience and knowledge. It was noted that the LGA Fire & Rescue Leadership Essentials Programme was a proposed training need for 2022/23, however, it was focused towards new members due to the limited number of places. Members were informed that the training need would be reworded so not to exclude other Members.

The Chair explained that Members were a means for the Fire Service to pass on information to their local community. With regard to drones and other Service technology, he advised that the more experiences Members witnessed, the more information they could give to people in communities.

In response to a question from the Chair as to whether King Charles III would remain as the Head of the Prince's Trust, the Head of Human Resources advised that she would find out and provide a response outside the meeting.

Following the removal of the Covid-19 restrictions, County Councillor Nikki Hennessy welcomed member invitations to attend cadet passing out parades.

In response to a query raised by the Chair regarding whether there was a designated role for Equality, Diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the Service, the Head of Human resources advised that EDI was placed within Human Resources and the Prevention Team. The Service were able to target vulnerable people within their Prevention work and there were four Employee Voice Groups dedicated to EDI within the Service (LGBTQ+, Women and Families, Race and Religion, and Neurodiversity). The Chief Fire Officer was the Chair of the EDI Steering Group, and a number of senior officers took the lead and Chaired each of the employee voice groups. Councillor Zamir Khan was the Member Champion for EDI.

The Chair asked if there were certain ethnicities or faiths that were difficult to recruit to the Service. The Head of Human Resources explained that there was a local and national drive to improve inclusivity and diversity in the workforce. Diversity was improving in the workforce through recruitment and targeted engagement of certain groups in communities. She highlighted that Members were valuable in engaging with hard to reach groups in their local communities and promoting LFRS as an employer of voice.

RESOLVED: - That the Committee agreed the training development needs for 2022/23.

MONITORING, REVIEW & EVALUATION OF ACTIVITIES

The report provided an update on Member Training and Development activities since the previous meeting. The report showed opportunities and outcomes of activity taken by Members to support the achievement of Service objectives or positive outcomes for communities. Some activities such as visits to local stations, involvement at local open days and other leadership events were now open to Members following the ending of Covid-19 restrictions.

Involvement at Area Level

Local events had resumed which Members had been invited to attend. Local fire stations had opened up to visits and Members had attended open days in their local areas. Members could contact area personnel to arrange to visit their local fire station to discuss local key issues. Through the Member Information Bulletin, Members had been invited to and had attended Prince's Trust presentations in the community. The Chairman attended a Wholetime Recruits Passing Out Ceremony in August 2022.

IT and Mileage Claim Sessions

Democratic Services Officers provided ongoing support on a 1-2-1 basis assisting Members to access the internet, submit mileage claims, and access the Mod.Gov app to view private papers.

Chairing Skills Essentials

Chairs and Vice Chairs had been invited to attend the LGA Chairing Skills Essentials virtual webinar. The webinar provided insights and tips from two experienced LGA member peers on the key skills needed to chair meetings effectively whether in a formal council setting or as a representative of the local community.

Members' feedback of the training was that it was good to hear how other Councillors chair their meetings and it would have been helpful to anyone new to Committee Meetings. They felt that it was very basic for experienced Chairs.

Social Media Training

Members had been invited to join an online media training session with a colleague from the Corporate Communications Team. The training included topics such as: Why we use social media as a Service; Diverse types of social media content; How to make your posts accessible for those with disabilities; and Examples of best practice.

Positive feedback was received from Members with comments that the training was very helpful and the section on how to make posts more accessible to people with disabilities was particularly interesting.

LGA Leadership Essentials Training

Initially new councillors had been invited to attend the LGA Fire & Rescue Leadership Essentials Programme with the invitation then being extended to all members. Members had also been invited to attend the Climate Emergency Leadership Essentials Programme, and Finance without Numbers – an introduction to Local Government Finance webinar.

Feedback provided for the Finance without Numbers – an introduction to Local Government Finance webinar was that it was good refresher training on the management of funds.

Annual LFRS Open Day

Members noted that the annual Service-Wide Open Day at the Service Training Centre (STC) had not taken place since the Covid-19 restrictions had been introduced. Discussions were proposed regarding the possibility of open days returning to STC.

Drone Demonstration at Service Training Centre

Members noted that a demonstration had been arranged to take place within the Strategy Meeting on Monday 7th November to show the Service's drone and canine capabilities.

In relation to the planned drone demonstration, members commended the capability of drones in particular when dealing with wildfires as they helped to save lives and supported the prevention of harm to firefighters.

A discussion took place with Members regarding the format of Member Training and Activity undertaken during the period, considered as appendix 2, and whether it could be revised to show all training offered to Members and details of which Members had subsequently attended the training and presented to show training activity by individual Members. It was agreed that Democratic Services would explore revising the format of the data presented.

With regard to the social media training, the Chair stated that the pandemic had driven the use of internet technology and Councillors had become adept at meeting through Teams

and webinars. All Members agreed that Lancashire Fire & Rescue social media was excellent with positive posts and information.

The Chair inquired about the possibility of Members experiencing the hot room which would help their understanding of the work of firefighters which would be beneficial in their role. The Head of Human Resources explained that there were health and safety concerns around physical experience of the hot room and BA equipment could not be provided to individuals without them undergoing medical screening.

It was agreed by the Head of Human Resources, in response to a request from Members to have a tour of the Fleet Garages / Breathing Apparatus School at the Service Training Centre, which would be arranged when feasible for the Authority.

Members were informed, in response to a question raised by Councillor Rigby, that discussions were proposed regarding the possibility of open days returning to the Service Training Centre which may incorporate the Mayoral Day.

RESOLVED:- That the Group noted and endorsed the content of the report as presented.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

The next meeting of the Working Group would be held on Thursday 20 April 2023. A further meeting date was agreed for Thursday 02 November 2023.

B WARREN
Director of People and Development

LFRS HQ
Fulwood