

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Member Training & Development Working Group

Notes of virtual meeting held via 'Teams', on Thursday, 20 April 2023.

Present:	
Councillors	
S Morris (Chair)	
D Smith (Vice-Chair)	
N Hennessy	
A Kay	
Z Khan	
J Rigby	

Officers
B Warren, Director of People and Development (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)

Apologies For Absence

There were none.

Notes Of Previous Meeting

The notes of the previous meeting held on 03 November 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

It was noted, as a question from the previous minutes, that King Charles would stay President of the Prince's Trust and the name of the Trust would remain the same.

Councillor Smith advised that, on Page 31, the word 'addition' should be replaced by the word 'edition'.

Review Of Member Training And Development Strategy

The Authority has had a Member Training and Development Strategy in place since 2006 which had been reviewed regularly.

Members reviewed and approved the strategy as presented.

County Councillor Hennessy commented that the Member Training and Development Strategy was detailed and supported Members. The Chair stated that it was fantastic how Members were given the opportunity to have a meeting with the Chief Fire Officer who welcomed them to the Authority. Station visits were also very interesting and revealed the important work of the Fire Safety Team in terms of community work and guidance provided

to support local businesses against a variety of inspection criteria. The strategy in its entirety supported the purpose of the Fire service which was to make Lancashire safer.

Regarding community events, Members were impressed by the Service's ability to turn a negative into a positive such as demonstrations of crushed cars from road traffic accidents.

In her remit as Member Champion for Health and Wellbeing, County Councillor Kay informed Members that a wellbeing event would take place at Wyre Estuary with the TRiM (Trauma Risk Management) group and the wellbeing dogs.

County Councillor Hennessy queried whether the Climate Change element of the Health and Wellbeing Member Champion role should be split into a separate responsibility as it was a substantial subject. The Director of People and Development explained that the Authority was already well positioned due to the excellent work of County Councillor Kay who was very involved with all areas of the Champion role. In addition, the Fire Service was committed to taking action on Climate Change which was monitored by the HMICFRS (His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services), and the Local Government Association (LGA).

Members agreed, in relation to climate change, that there should be a focus on training Members to effectively use the Mod.Gov app with a view of moving away from printing papers copies of committee documents.

The Director of People and Development reiterated the importance of Members adhering to the Member Code of Conduct, to be aware of how their behaviour was perceived and how they expressed themselves. This area of perception had been highlighted in the HMICFRS report on culture and values in fire services. Lancashire Fire and Rescue had a rating of 'Outstanding' in culture and values and wished to maintain its standards. County Councillor Hennessy requested that further training on Member conduct be available for Members at the next Strategy meeting.

In relation to Equality and Diversity, County Councillor Hennessy advised that, in previous years, the LGA held an equality and diversity session in Lancashire and asked if it could be held in Lancashire again. The Director of People and Development advised that he was the North West Lead for People and was the Chair of the North West HR Directors Group where he could raise this. He could also raise it with the Chief Fire Officer.

Resolved:- That Members reviewed and approved the Member Training and Development Strategy.

Member Training & Development - Update Report

The Director of People and Development presented the report which detailed the various means available for elected Members for the Combined Fire Authority to access training and development opportunities.

Personal Development Plans

Personal Development Plans were being held face to face, although they could be held over the telephone and electronically to support Members with busy diaries.

Two new Councillors had joined the CFA since the November 2022 meeting, of which both had received an initial Personal Development Plan and discussion. Of the 25 elected Members of the Authority, 100% had met with a Democratic Services Officer to draw up or review their Personal Development Plan.

e-Learning

Members were encouraged through the Member Information Bulletin and emails, to view North West Employers Organisation and the Local Government Association websites to access training opportunities.

Members' Handbook

The handbook for the municipal year 2022/23 had been issued to all Members. The handbook for the municipal year 2023/24 would be updated following the elections with any subsequent changes to the Authority's Membership.

Member Information Bulletin

Further to Member discussion at previous meetings, the Member Information Bulletin had been reformatted to web-based and was accessed via an electronic link with tabs for information. Although the bulletin was continuously in development, the first digital bulletin had been emailed to Members on 01 April 2023.

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.

The Chair highlighted it was excellent that 100% of Councillors, (including 2 new Councillors) had received an initial or review of their Personal Development Plan.

Members thanked Democratic Services and Officers for their hard work as it was appreciated. The Chair added that the Member handbook and bulletin kept Members well informed and thanked Democratic Services for keeping Members updated.

The Director of People and Development thanked Members for helping to share safety messages online as well as in their own areas.

Resolved:- That Members noted and endorsed the content of the report.

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.

Attended Local Fire Stations

Members were encouraged to make contact with area personnel to visit their local fire station to discuss key issues. Members had undertaken station visits since the last meeting which had included three Members meeting with the Prevention and Protection teams to find out about the work carried out around local issues.

Involvement at Area Level

Members were routinely invited to attend local events including Open Days, Opening Ceremonies, and 'Safe Drive Stay Alive' events. Through the Member Information Bulletin, Members had been invited to and had attended Prince's Trust Presentation events in their local communities.

LGA Annual Fire Conference 2023

Three Members had attended the LGA Annual Fire Conference which had been held in Nottingham. Conference activity included nine plenaries consisting of presentations and two workshops consisting of presentations.

LGA Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials

New Councillors had been invited to attend the LGA Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials Programme. Other sessions Councillors had been invited to attend included Data and Managing Council Performance and Finance without Numbers – an introduction to Local Government Finance.

Events and Visits

- **Annual LFRS Open Day**

Due to the potential strike action at the beginning of the year, plans for the return of the Open Day / Mayoral day were postponed until 2024.

- **Drone and Dog Demonstrations at Service Training Centre**

Members had attended a drone and dog demonstration at Service Training Centre following the Strategy meeting in November 2022.

- **BA School and Fleet Garages Tour**

Members took place in a tour of the new BA School and Fleet Garages took place at Training Centre in December 2022.

Member Information Bulletin

Following a proposal at the last meeting, an evaluation of Member use / engagement with the new format Member Information Bulletin had been brought to the meeting for analysis.

IT and Mileage Claim Sessions

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

Members agreed that the new format of the Member Information Bulletin worked as it was interesting and informative. In addition, Members felt that it was easy to navigate through.

It was agreed that the new layout for Member Training and Development Activity would continue as Members found it easy to monitor their training and progress.

It was agreed that Democratic Services would explore sourcing and providing informative videos in relation to the Service which would improve their operational knowledge.

In relation to a question from County Councillor Morris regarding whether firefighters wore body cameras, the Director of People and Development advised that firefighters did not wear body cameras, however, some appliances did have CCTV. He also informed that there could be problems with body cameras in incidents involving fire due to the heat and also issues with funding.

Members were advised that, regarding attendance at passing out parades, the Chair of the Authority had confirmed that the Chair, Vice-Chair and Leader of the opposition would be invited to attend future passing out parades. This was due to the capacity in Washington Hall and giving priority to recruits' families to attend. County Councillor Hennessy queried whether other Members could meet separately with the recruits, and it was agreed this would be explored by Democratic Services.

In terms of the Leadership Essentials Fire and Rescue training session, it was noted that new Members would be invited to attend the course as a priority which would then be extended to other Members (a maximum of 3).

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

Future Meeting Dates

The next meeting of the Working Group will be held on 02 November 2023 and 25 April 2024.

LFRS HQ
Fulwood

B Warren
Director of People and Development