

# Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

## Member Training & Development Working Group

Notes of hybrid meeting held on Thursday, 2 November 2023.

<b>Present:</b>	
<b>Councillors</b>	
D Smith (Vice-Chair)	
N Hennessy	
Z Khan MBE	
J Rigby	
M Salter	

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

### Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from the Chair, County Councillor Stuart Morris.

### Notes of Previous Meeting

The notes of the previous meeting held on 20 April 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

### Member Training & Development - Update Report

The Vice-Chair presided over the meeting in place of the Chair.

The Chair gave thanks to County Councillor Kay for her time on the Working Group and welcomed County Councillor Salter. Members requested that their best wishes and hope for a speedy recovery were sent on to County Councillor Kay.

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

### Personal Development Plans

Predominantly, PDPs were held face to face, although they could be held over the telephone and electronically to support Members with busy diaries.

Three new Councillors had joined the CFA since the April 2023 meeting, of which two had

received an initial PDP and induction discussion. Of the 25 elected Members of the Authority, 96% had drawn up or reviewed their Personal Development Plan. The remaining 1 Member was 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 2023/24 had now been issued to all Members.

### **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 development was continuous, the link to the first digital Bulletin had been emailed to Members on 01 April 2022. The Bulletin was now being issued more frequently, on a monthly basis.

In addition to providing meeting dates, Member Training and Development opportunities, news and events, the Bulletin also provided 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 those campaigns in subsequent issues. Members were actively encouraged to provide information to officers for inclusion in the Bulletin and to 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.

Matthew Salter expressed that, as a new Member, he was very happy with the induction process, the material provided by Democratic Services and the support of the Democratic Services Officers. He found the induction meeting with the Chief Fire Officer beneficial, and the Member Handbook a useful resource. Furthermore, he believed that the Annual Service Report was impressive, interesting, and very accessible. Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) compared favourably with the induction processes at other Local Authorities.

County Councillor Hennessy highlighted the importance of the Local Government Authority (LGA) and of attending the Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials Programme. Members noted that County Councillor Morris was attending the course that day and County Councillor Salter was enrolled to attend in February 2024.

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

## **Member Training Needs Analysis 2022 - 23**

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 last year and the Personal Development Sessions that had been held with Members throughout 2022/23.

Following consideration, Members agreed that their training needs were being met and agreed the training needs for 2023/24 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;
- To continue to promote all available training;
- To offer new Members LGA Fire Leadership Essentials Training;
- To support Member knowledge around the Service, terminology, and operational / staff roles.

Members discussed firefighter pensions issues within the Authority and requested further information at a future Strategy Meeting and within a brief, written summary.

It was noted by Members that County Councillor Singleton had replaced County Councillor Kay as the Member Champion for Health and Wellbeing.

The Vice-Chair informed the group that the Darwen Fire Cadet Unit had given an interesting presentation which highlighted their work to Darwen Town Council. He advised that Blackburn and Darwen Council had awarded the Cadets with a funding grant and requested that Members of other authorities encouraged Cadet Units to apply for any community grant schemes they had in place.

**Resolved:** - That the Committee agreed the training development needs for 2023/24.

## **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.

## **Involvement at Area Level**

Members were invited to attend local events such as open days and Members were encouraged to 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 Chair, Vice-Chair and Leader of the Opposition had been invited to attend the Wholetime Recruits Passing Out Parade on 14<sup>th</sup> December but were unable to attend due to prior commitments, therefore a Member had agreed to attend on their behalf. A Member had also attended a Cadet's Passing Out Parade at Morecambe Fire Station.

### **LGA Culture in the Fire Service 2023**

Three Members attended the Culture in the Fire Service Conference held in London on 27 June 2023 which was chaired by Councillor Jane Hugo with the programme consisting of: i) Culture in the Fire Service: where we are now; ii) Voices from around the sector – experiences, reflections and way forward; iii) Leading cultural change; iv) Exploring Fire and Rescue Authority Members Role; and, v) Overview of Employment Law.

Feedback from the conference included that it was important and valuable as culture in the fire sector was a big issue across the country.

### **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. Six Members were scheduled to attend the course which was being held in November 2023 and February 2024 (with a maximum of 3 Members per authority on each programme).

Members had also been invited to attend the LGA Leadership Essentials: Audit Committee with one Member due to attend in February.

### **Cheshire Fire & Rescue Training Centre Visit**

Members of the Capital Projects Working Group were invited to visit Cheshire Fire & Rescue Training Centre on 6 October 2023 which included a tour of the facilities.

Positive feedback was received which included that the facilities were impressive, and the trip was informative and interesting.

### **North West Fire Control Visit**

Positive feedback was received from a previous visit to North West Fire Control and a visit had been arranged for 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023, however, the visit had been cancelled due to low interest and / or availability of Members.

### **Annual LFRS Open Day**

This event was postponed in 2023 and was next planned for 2024.

## **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.

At the last meeting, it was agreed that Members would be encouraged to move away from having printed paper copies of committee documents by providing any further necessary training. It was noted that although Members could effectively use the Mod.Gov app to view committee papers, Members preferred paper copies instead.

## **Social Media**

Through the Member Information Bulletin and by email, links and updates for the Service's podcast, (Out of the Ashes: Stories from Lancashire), were shared with Members and positive feedback had been received. In particular, the view of one Member who was impressed with the podcast and had stated that it was positive communication for the public, was shared by the group.

## **Training on Member Code of Conduct**

The Clerk provided training on the Member code of conduct at the last Strategy Group meeting and it was intended that guidance on this would be added to future editions of the Member Information Bulletin.

## **Informative Videos**

Democratic Services would look into finding whether videos could be used to improve Members' operational knowledge.

County Councillor Hennessy requested that the Chair, Vice-Chair and Leader of the Opposition monthly briefing sessions with the Chief Fire Officer be included in the Monitoring, Review and Evaluation of Activities Report.

The Vice-Chair asked that a message be included in the Member Information Bulletin to remind Members to advise Democratic Services of any training undertaken.

Members highlighted the importance of receiving and sharing social media posts and it was confirmed that they would continue to receive them.

Interest was expressed by County Councillor Salter in attending a visit to North West Fire Control (NWFC) as the previous planned visit had been cancelled. Members were advised that another trip would be planned in 2024 pending Member interest at the time. The Director of People and Development, stated he was HR Advisor to NWFC, and offered to explain in greater detail the role and activity of NWFC to County Councillor Salter alongside a visit if required and include any other Members of the Working Group if needed.

Members discussed the upcoming His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection and how the fundamental processes for reviewing,

evaluating and supporting Member training and development would provide the inspectorate with valuable insight if required. The HMI Inspection was due to take place in 2024 although the date was unknown. A discussion took place pertaining to equality & diversity, and culture and values within the Fire and Rescue sector, in which it was emphasised, that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service had been recognised as outstanding. The Members requested, and it was agreed, that information would be shared with the group outside of the meeting in relation to the Authority's objectives, work carried out, and work to be done in respect of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, and Culture and Values.

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

### **Future Meetings Dates**

The next meeting of the Working Group would be held on Thursday **25 April 2024**. A further meeting was agreed for Thursday 07 November 2024.

LFRS HQ  
Fulwood

B Warren  
Director of People and Development