

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

### Member Training & Development Working Group

Notes of hybrid meeting held on Thursday, 7 November 2024.

<b>Present:</b>	
<b>Councillors</b>	
D Smith (Chair)	
S Morris (Vice-Chair)	
Z Khan MBE	
D O'Toole	
M Salter	

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

#### Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from County Councillor Margaret Pattison.

#### Notes of Previous Meeting

The notes of the previous meeting held on 02 November 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

#### Review of Member Training and Development Strategy

The Chair gave thanks to Bob Warren for his time as Lead Officer on the Working Group and welcomed Liz Sandford, Director of People and Development as the new Lead Officer. Members requested that their thanks for his Service on the Working Group and wishes for a happy retirement were sent on to Bob Warren.

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

County Councillor Salter proposed that 2 minor amendments be made to the Role of Members of the Combined Fire Authority attached in the agenda pack at Annex 1 due to the current financial climate and uncertainties around Local Government funding. The amendments were:

- To change the wording on Page 2 of the document from 'Deliver Affordable and Sustainable Services', to 'Deliver Realistic Future Planning'.
- To remove the bullet point 'Planning for future grant reductions'.

County Councillor Salter proposed that the following amendment be made to the Community

Safety Champion – Role Description attached in the agenda pack at Annex 2:

- To change the wording of the bullet point 'Engage with other Fire Authority Members to promote awareness of older people issues and to seek their views', to 'Engage with other Fire Authority Members to promote awareness of issues effecting older people and seek their views'.

All Members agreed to the amendments to the Role of Members of the Combined Fire Authority and the Community Safety Champion – Role Description which would be sent before the full CFA for approval.

The Chair commented that the Member Training and Development Strategy worked very well and the opportunities for training were excellent. In addition, it was important that Members were informed and trained so they could undertake an effective Scrutiny function. County Councillor O'Toole felt that the Service 'led the field' in terms of Member development.

The Chair emphasised the importance of attending the Strategy Group meetings and asked Members to encourage attendance.

**Resolved:** - That Members reviewed and approved the strategy as presented with the proposed amendments.

### **Member Training & Development - Update Report**

The Chair presented the report which detailed the various means available for Elected Members for the Combined Fire Authority to access training and development opportunities.

It was noted by Members that Member training activities had been impacted by staffing changes and the adjustment of the political balance. As circumstances were stabilising, activities were resuming.

### **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.

Three new Councillors and one returning Councillor had joined the CFA since the November 2023 meeting, of which none had received an initial Personal Development Plan and induction discussion. Of the 25 elected Members of the Authority, 84% 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 the North West Employers Organisation and the Local Government Association websites to access training opportunities.

### **Members' Handbook**

The handbook for the municipal year 2023/24 had been issued to all Members. The

handbook for the municipal year 2024/25 was being prepared and would be updated once the issues with the political balance of the committees had been resolved.

### **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 2022.

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.

The Bulletin set out key dates for the diary and encouraged Members to attend special community events, presentations and demonstrations, fire station open days, and the King's Trust presentations. 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 arranged visits to outside bodies and organised demonstrations of Service equipment and facilities which helped Members to broaden their organisational knowledge and understanding of the work of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.

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

County Councillor O'Toole expressed the importance of the Member Handbook and how it was a very valuable resource which contained useful information.

The Chair and County Councillor Salter highlighted that the Member Information Bulletin was a useful resource which contained regular updates, invitations to events, and kept Members well informed.

County Councillor Morris was pleased with the co-ordination of training activities which included demonstrations of new equipment and the arrangements for visits to facilities of outside bodies.

Councillor Khan stated that he was happy with the access to training and development opportunities and activities.

**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 activities undertaken by Members to support the achievement of Service objectives or positive outcomes for communities.

### **Involvement at Area Level**

Members were routinely 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 King's Trust Presentation events in their local communities. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Leader of the Opposition had been invited to attend the Wholetime Recruits Passing Out Parade on 14 December 2023 but were unable to attend due to prior commitments, therefore a Member had attended on their behalf and provided positive feedback on the experience.

The Chair, Vice-Chair and Leader of the Opposition had also attended a Wholetime Recruits Passing Out Ceremony in April 2024.

### **LGA Annual Fire Conference 2024**

Four Members had attended the LGA Annual Fire Conference in March 2024 which had been held in Bristol. Conference activity included eight plenaries consisting of presentations, a fringe session, and five workshops consisting of various topics.

### **Events and Visits**

- **LGA Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials**

Six Members (3 new Members) had been scheduled to attend the LGA Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials Programme which was being held in October 2024 and February 2025 (with a maximum of 3 Members per authority on each programme).

Other sessions Councillors had been invited to attend included LGA Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials: Audit Committee with one Member due to attend in January 2025.

- **North West Fire Control Visit**

Positive feedback had been received from previous visits to North West Fire Control and two visits were currently being arranged for January 2025.

- **Hagglund Demonstration at the Learning and Development Centre (Previously Service Training Centre)**

Members had attended a demonstration of the Hagglund vehicle at the Service Training Centre following the CFA Meeting on Monday 18 December 2023. Members had commented that the vehicle was impressive and would be very useful for flooding and wildfire related incidents.

- **Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Visit**

Members of the Capital Projects Working Group had visited Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service on Monday 09 September 2024 which included a tour of the facilities that Members found impressive.

- **Tour of the Service Training Centre**

Members of the Capital Projects Working Group were given a tour of the existing facilities at Service Training Centre, Euxton in November 2023.

- **Carol Service**

The annual Carol Service would return to Blackburn Cathedral on 11 December 2024. The Chair, Vice-Chair, Spokesperson for the Opposition, and the Clerk had been invited to attend the service.

- **Burnley College Road Safety Week Event**

Members had been invited by Area Manager, Matt Hamer, to attend a Road Safety event which would be held at Burnley College on Thursday 21 November.

### **Member Information Bulletin**

Members views were requested to comment on what they felt worked well with the Member Information Bulletin and how engagement could be improved.

### **IT and Mileage Claim Sessions**

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

### **Social Media**

The Service used a number of social media platforms which Members were encouraged to join to share protection and prevention information and promote the work of the Service. County Councillor Matthew Salter had shared an email recommending that Members considered following Lancashire Fire and Rescue Social Media Accounts.

The Service had social media accounts on Facebook, X/Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Nextdoor, and LinkedIn, as well as a Podcast (Out of the Ashes).

### **Suggested Training**

- STRIVE Values and Core Code of Ethics
- Training for those Members involved in the recruitment of the CFO.
- Training for those Members involved in Appeals.

Members discussed the system for the claiming of expenses and mileage and raised issues including the complexity of the system and the taxability of journeys to Washington Hall, Euxton.

Members asked for an update on the introduction of a new system for claiming expenses as mentioned at previous Committee meetings, and suggested that a new system, similar to the

one used at Lancashire County Council could be implemented which was very simple to use. The Director of People and Development, and the Democratic Services Officer advised that they would liaise with the Director of Corporate Services regarding exploring an alternative option for members to provide mileage claims and a response would be provided outside of the meeting.

During this section of the meeting, Councillor Khan's audio failed and a phone call was made to him to allow him to share his views. He advised that he did not claim expenses from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council as he found the system, which was similar to that of the Service, complex and difficult to use.

The Chair commented that the Service's social media posts were very good and he had shared a post for the recruitment of On-call Firefighters on his home authority website.

The Chair encouraged all members to attend a King's Trust presentation as they were inspiring and uplifting events where young people shared their experiences and talked about how they had turned their lives around.

In relation to a question from the Chair in relation to the suggested training for Members of the Appeals Committee, the Democratic Services Officer explained that Members would receive the training ahead of, and separate to, any planned meeting of the Appeals Committee as they were extremely rare.

Members agreed to the suggested training in the report.

Members suggested and agreed that the format of the Member Training and Development Activity, as attached at Appendix 2, be amended so that all activities listed which included all Members, be listed separately to the individual activities so that the number of pages used would be considerably less.

The Chair advised that, overall, he was happy with the information provided, and the training and delivery which attributed to being the best Fire Service in the country. County Councillor O'Toole concurred that the training Members received was excellent and LFRS was the leading Fire Service in the country.

In terms of the meeting being held virtually, the Chair confirmed that he was pleased with the meetings being held via MS Teams which worked for the length of the meeting and the number of Members in attendance.

**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 Thursday **24 April 2025**. A further meeting was agreed for Thursday **23 October 2025**.

Liz Sandiford  
Director of People and Development

LFRS HQ, Fulwood