

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

### Member Training & Development Working Group

Notes of hybrid meeting held on Thursday, 23 October 2025.

<b>Present:</b>	
<b>Councillors</b>	
A Ali OBE	
G Baker	
G Mirfin (Chair)	
M Ritson	
D Smith (Vice-Chair)	

<b>Officers</b>
E Sandiford, Director of People and Development (LFRS) D Howell, Deputy Monitoring Officer & Legal Services and Standards Manager (LFRS) S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)

#### Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from County Councillors Nigel Alderson and Aidy Riggott.  
Councillor Graham Baker was present as a substitute.

#### Notes of Previous Meeting

The notes of the previous meeting held on 24 April 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

#### Review of Member Training and Development Strategy

Liz, Sandiford, Director of People and Development (DoPD), introduced Members to Dominic Howell, Deputy Monitoring Officer (DMO) and Legal Services and Standards Manager.

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

Members reviewed and approved the strategy as presented.

CC G Mirfin commented that in the current political year, the Combined Fire Authority had experienced the largest replacement of Members in its history, and he recognised that it was an onerous task for Officers. He suggested an induction day event for Members and stated that the first CFA meeting, followed by the Strategy Meeting had been invaluable and proposed a similar event at Service Headquarters.

CC A Ali concurred that the first CFA meeting had been beneficial for new Members. He suggested setting time aside after CFA meetings for key training which would be a great help to those Members with busy diaries. Group Leaders could also be consulted to help with attendance from Members of their party. The DoPD explained that Member attendance at training and planned visits could be challenging and so, organising training following a committee meeting was an effective idea. CC A Ali advised that pre-group discussions could be held in relation to agendas, enabling quicker meetings, leaving more time for training.

CC A Ali suggested that some training sessions could be recorded to enable Members who were unable to attend to view at their convenience. He also proposed introducing desirable and essential training with timescales, and bite sized briefings. CC Mirfin agreed that it would be a useful way of building a library of resources. Members were informed that they could be given access to eLMS (e-Learning Management System), which was an online facility used to complete learning modules. The DoPD explained that there could be challenges with recording training sessions due to the impact on Resources in Corporate Communications.

With regards to Whistleblowing, CC G Mirfin stated that the number of cases in Lancashire County Council (LCC) had increased exponentially and there was a great need for Members to know how to respond. Councillor D Smith added that Social Media could exacerbate tensions with fake news and personal attacks. The DMO proposed a process whereby the Chair and Vice-Chair would filter Whistleblowing cases to pick up valid concerns. CC G Mirfin agreed to the approach with further discussion to take place outside of the meeting.

CC Ali raised concerns regarding Member posts on Social Media targeting other Members which could bring Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) into disrepute and could have serious repercussions and result in sanctions for Members. Members agreed to Standards training, provided by the Deputy Monitoring Officer following a CFA meeting which would incorporate the Nolan Principles, Social Media use, and Whistleblowing.

The DoPD explained that the Service were considering adding Governance to the remit of Audit Committee and CC G Mirin stated that Members would be supportive of this.

CC M Ritson raised concerns in relation to clashes with meetings and events between Lancashire County Council and LFRS. It was noted that Democratic Services now had access to view the internal calendar at LCC which would assist to avoid future clashes and plan training events following meetings.

CC G Mirfin advised that facilities at Lancashire County Hall could be utilised to hold future training sessions which would attract more Members.

Councillor D Smith stated that training should be Fire Authority specific, as a lot of generic training had been completed at Members' home authorities. Members were advised that a list of training had been received by home authorities to avoid duplication and topics of interest for training would be sought through Personal Development Plans. The DoPD emphasised that some training such as Cyber Security may need to be completed because of the risk identified to the Service, however, she would check with the Digital Data and Transformation (DDAT) Team.

In relation to training events, Councillor Baker advised that he preferred training face to face with paper copies of information to take away as a refresher.

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

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

The Director of People and Development (DoPD), 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.

### **Personal Development Plans (PDPs)**

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

Fifteen new Councillors and five returning Councillors had recently joined the CFA since the April 2025 meeting. Of the 25 elected Members of the Authority, \*56% had met with a Democratic Services Officer to draw up or review their Personal Development Plan. (\*this number had changed since the creation of the report from 44%)

### **Training Opportunities and e-Learning**

Members were encouraged through the Member Information Bulletin and emails, to view the North West Employers Organisation and the Local Government websites to access training opportunities. Democratic Services also emailed Members with details and invitations to training courses.

### **Members' Guide and Handbook**

The Members' Guide for the municipal year 2025/26 had been issued to Members via email and the Members Information Bulletin, and the Members' Handbook was being created.

### **Member Information Bulletin**

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 and was emailed on a monthly basis.

In addition to providing meeting dates, Member Training and Development opportunities, news and events, presentations and demonstrations, 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 these campaigns in subsequent issues.

### **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.

Additionally, training such as the code of conduct and culture was provided after Committee meetings which helped Members with their roles.

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

CC G Mirfin encouraged Members to use the LGA to its maximum potential as it was an extremely useful resource. It was noted that Members were contacted with relevant training opportunities offered by the LGA and feedback had been positive.

CC G Mirfin requested that Group Leaders be contacted by Democratic Services to ascertain their availability for the LGA Annual Fire Conference in March 2026.

CC G Mirfin highlighted the importance of the Member Information Bulletin.

Councillor D Smith asked that Democratic Services aimed to complete 100% of PDPs by the next meeting.

Thanks were given to the Service by Members for the recent incident involving an overturned car near Clitheroe.

CC A Ali left the meeting at 11:03am.

**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, Charity Car Washes, 'Safe Drive Stay Alive' events, and 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, Spokesperson for the Opposition, and Vice-Spokesperson for the Opposition had been invited to attend the Wholetime Recruits Passing Out Parade on 02 May 2025 but were unable to attend due to election commitments.

Members had attended King's Trust Presentations at ACROSS Accrington, and Blackpool. A 'meet and greet' had taken place with a Councillor at Blackpool Fire Station, and an Alive to Drive road safety event had taken place on Blackpool Prom and was attended by Councillors. In addition, a 'Bubbles in the Park' event to promote community spirit event took place on Burnley's Thompson Park in August which featured Service attendance with some Members attending.

## **LGA Annual Fire Conference 2025**

Four Members had attended the LGA Annual Fire Conference in March 2025 which had been held in Gateshead. Conference activity included plenaries consisting of presentations, and workshops consisting of various topics.

### **Events and Visits**

- **LGA Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials**

Work was being carried out to secure bespoke virtual training from the LGA for all Members as the usual 2-day courses were restricted to 3 Councillors per authority. Members were emailed with the presentation from the previous year's LGA Leadership Essentials Course.

- **LGA Finance without Numbers – An Introduction to Local Government Finance Virtual Training**

Members had been invited, and several attended, the LGA Finance without numbers training in September and October.

- **LGA Virtual Masterclass – Leading Good Governance and Assurance as a Senior Councillor**

The Chair, Vice-Chair, and Party Leaders had been invited to attend the Virtual Masterclass – Leading Good Governance and Assurance as a Senior Councillor in December 2025.

- **North West Fire Control Visit**

Positive feedback had been received from previous visits to North West Fire Control and a Member visit had been arranged for 22 October 2025.

- **Equipment and Vehicle Demonstration at the Leadership & Development Centre**

Members attended a demonstration of several types of vehicles and equipment following the CFA Meeting on Monday September 2025. Members had commented that the demonstration was enjoyable and had improved their understanding of the Service's capabilities and how they support communities.

- **Carol Service**

The annual Carol Service would return to Blackburn Cathedral on 10 December 2025. The Chair, Vice-Chair, Spokespeople for the Opposition Parties, and the Clerk had been invited to attend the service.

- **Celebration of Our People Awards Event**

The Chair, Vice-Chair, and Spokespeople for the Opposition Parties had been invited to attend the 'Celebration of Our People' Awards Ceremony which provided an opportunity to reward colleagues for their outstanding service.

### **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 due to the low number of

views.

## **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. A paper-based mileage claim system had been established and implemented during the year.

## **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.

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).

## **Member Training Survey Results**

The results of the Member Training Survey were presented to Members following the Member Training Survey in August that related to proposed bite-sized Teams briefings and Local Government Association (LGA) Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials proposed tailored training.

## **Updates from the Last Meeting**

Members were presented with the educational packages and campaigns which were delivered regarding the risks of electric bikes and scooters.

In relation to King's Trust programmes being delivered in West Lancashire, it was found that there were different delivery partners that provided King's Trust programmes and previously, Skelmersdale College had run a programme. However, funding was not provided to run a programme in that area.

## **Suggested Training**

The below training was suggested and agreed:

- LGA Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials (2 half day virtual sessions).
- eLMS (e-Learning Management System) – (Members be given access to the system to complete recommended learning modules).
- EDI Training – EDI Training to be provided to Members following the Performance Committee.
- Whistleblowing Information – Members to receive Information/training on Whistleblowing following the next CFA meeting.

The DoPD explained that EDI & Culture training would be available on the eLMS system.

CC M Ritson encouraged Members to visit their local Fire Station as he had recently visited Bacup and felt that it helped to build relationships with local firefighters and Station Managers.

Councillor G Baker stated that there were a lot of new Members on the CFA and acknowledged that it could take time to gain confidence. To help new Members, he suggested that training be put in place as soon as possible.

Councillor D Smith requested and the DoPD agreed to explore options to introduce Kings Trust Programmes to West Lancashire. He expressed concern that there was no representation in that area but acknowledged that it was externally funded and employees were seconded from other agencies. He encouraged Members to attend presentations. Members were advised that an email with the next round of presentations had been sent to Members.

Councillor D Smith explained that he read the articles in the Member Information Bulletin, and it was a useful resource. He stated that some articles could be read without opening the item, which could be the reason for the low number of views.

The DoPD confirmed that adding Members to the eLMS platform would be explored.

Members agreed to the suggested training in the report.

Thanks were given to Officers for attending and for their work.

**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 23 April 2026**. A further meeting was agreed for **Thursday 22 October 2026**.

LFRS HQ  
Fulwood

Liz Sandiford  
Director of People and Development