

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Member Training & Development Working Group

Notes of hybrid meeting held on Thursday, 23 April 2026.

Present:	
Councillors	
N Alderson	
A Ali OBE	
I Duxbury	
G Mirfin (Chair)	
A Riggott	
D Smith (Vice-Chair)	
Officers	
E Sandiford, Director of People and Development (LFRS) D Howell, Deputy Monitoring Officer (LFRS) S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)	
Apologies for Absence	
Apologies were received from Councillor M Ritson with Councillor I Duxbury attending as substitute.	
Notes of Previous Meeting	
The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 October 2025 were confirmed as a correct record. Councillor D Smith remarked that following a request at the previous meeting for more training for newer members, he was pleased to see that a number of training sessions had been planned and delivered. The chair commended officers on the training sessions provided and asked that where possible training be planned around member commitments at their home authorities.	
Member Training Needs Analysis 2025-26	
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 last Training Needs Analysis taken in April 2025 and the Personal	

Development Sessions that had been held with Members throughout 2025/26.

Following consideration, Members agreed that their training needs were being met and agreed the training needs for 2026/27 as follows:

1. To continue to promote Fire Safety, Water Safety, Road Safety and the work of the Member Champions;
2. To continue to attend service area inductions and meetings at stations and information sessions on key issues to support decision-making;
3. To maintain good attendance at all Strategy Group meetings, encouraging all Members to attend;
4. To continue with the informal buddy system;
5. To support the use of electronic systems where needed, preferred and available.
6. To attend a King's Trust presentation or Cadet Passing Out Parade;
7. To continue to promote and attend all available training;
8. To offer new members relevant Local Government Association (LGA) training;
9. To support Member knowledge around the Service, terminology, and operational staff roles.
10. To attend and participate bespoke training based on the LGA Leadership Essentials: Fire and Rescue course.
11. To attend and participate in Service-related Bite Sized Briefings;
12. The relevant Members to attend and participate in Chairs and Vice-Chairs Training provided by the LGA.

The Director of People and Development (DoPD) advised members that further opportunities for training and development may be identified relating to governance and learning from other services which could be incorporated into the plan. She also emphasised the importance of members attending the Strategy Group meetings.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer (DMO) advised members that the LGA training for Chairs and Vice-Chairs took place yesterday, with 5 members in attendance. The bespoke governance training based on the LGA Leadership Essentials: Fire and Rescue course was scheduled for next week.

The chair emphasised the importance of governance and the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) focus on governance for the next round of inspections. He advised members that the authorities constitution was being reviewed to ensure it was fit for purpose. The DMO added that once the constitution had been agreed further training would be conducted to support members in applying the constitution. The DoPD added that it was important that members understood the distinction between the role of both members and officers and members had the required knowledge to be able to undertake scrutiny. The possibility of introducing a scrutiny committee was discussed but members felt that this was not required at present given the local government review could impact on the authority's model and structure. The DMO confirmed that as part of the constitution review the remit of the Audit Committee was being widened, it would also include governance. Members requested that the new terms of reference be shared with group leaders.

Resolved: That the Committee agreed the training development needs for 2026 - 2027.

Member Training & Development - Update Report

The DoPD 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

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.

Fifteen new Councillors and five returning Councillors had joined the CFA since the April 2025 meeting. 92% of the 25 elected Members of the Authority had met with a Democratic Services Officer to draw up or review their Personal Development Plan.

North West Employers Organisation (NWEO)

Members were encouraged to view North West Employers Organisation (NWEO) website which offered support to authorities in the region and for Members to access training opportunities. The core of NWEO work was to support councillors with their development, including professional networking, events, and advice to benefit their communities and the region as a whole.

Local Government Association (LGA)

The LGA offered a variety of development programmes and virtual masterclasses including Leadership Essentials for Fire and Rescue, Governance, Finance without numbers, Diversity and Inclusion workshops and Oversight of Performance workshops. LGA events were held both 'in person' and virtually. The LGA supported Fire and Rescue Authority Members to develop leadership skills and had resources available to support elected Members, including guides for Induction for Fire and Rescue Authority Members and Oversight of Performance and Governance of Fire and Rescue Authorities. The Member Information Bulletin also provided Members with Information and links to the LGA website. A maximum of 3 places could be allocated to Members of the Authority for each 'in person' programme.

Bespoke training had been arranged for Members based on the LGA Leadership Essentials for Fire and Rescue training. Bespoke Chair and Vice-Chairs training had been delivered as part of the Service's membership with the LGA.

Members' Guide and Handbook

The updated versions of the Members' Guide and Members' Handbook for the municipal year 2025/26 had now been issued to Members via the Member Information Bulletin.

Member Information Bulletin

An updated digital version of the Member Information Bulletin was sent to Members on 01 April 2026. This had been created using Microsoft Sway and would replace the previous digital bulletin. It contained the same information and was accessed via a link on an email.

Co-ordination of Training

Democratic Services arranged visits to outside bodies, including North West Fire Control, and also 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 helps Members with their roles.

To reassure Members, Democratic Services made regular contact with home authorities to co-ordinate Member training and development opportunities and avoid duplication which included the sharing of Members personal development plans and records as appropriate.

County Councillor N Alderson felt that he may benefit from additional training as he felt that all training helped. County Councillor I Duxbury and Councillor D Smith felt that they had received a good level of training including the new bite-sized briefings. County Councillor A Riggott commented that it seemed to be the same people who attended training, he suggested that group leaders encourage their members to attend.

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 invited to attend local events such as Open Days, Charity Car Washes, and 'Safe Drive and Stay Alive' events. Members were encouraged to contact area personnel to arrange to visit their local fire station to discuss local key issues.

Blackpool Councillors were invited and attended a viewing of the Blackpool Fire Station Refurbishment and a Commendation event.

'Meet and greet' sessions took place with a Councillor at Chorley Fire Station, Nelson Fire Station, and at service headquarters to discuss BESS (Battery Energy Storage Systems).

Through the Member Information Bulletin, Members had been invited to and had attended King's Trust Presentation and events in their local communities. Members attended King's Trust Presentations for Blackpool and Blackburn.

County Councillor U Arif, Vice Chair of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA), made a special guest appearance on Pendle Community Radio. Joining host Faz Patel, he shared insights into the important work of the CFA and its ongoing collaboration with the fire service. He also attended Diwali Celebrations on 22 October 2025 at the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir. The event highlighted the importance of unity, peace, and learning more about the cultural significance of Diwali – the Festival of Lights.

Events and Visits

- **LGA Annual Fire Conference 10 – 11 March 2026**

Five Members had attended the LGA Annual Fire Conference in March 2026 which had been held in Manchester. Conference activity consisted of presentations and workshops comprised of various topics.

- **LGA Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials**

Bespoke training had been secured to provide to all Members. As members of a fire and rescue authority, councillors carry a range of important and statutory governance responsibilities, including setting strategic direction, overseeing performance, approving budgets, and holding senior officers to account. It had therefore been recognised that there was an urgent priority to provide structured training and development.

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

Four Members attended the Virtual Masterclass - Leading Good Governance and Assurance as a Senior Councillor for senior elected members as it provided a grounding in the contribution that good governance and assurance made to the delivery of members' priorities, and the key roles of councillors in keeping the Fire Service safe, legal and decent.

- **LGA Handling Online Abuse**

In February, four Members attended handling online abuse and intimidation training that provide attendees with an awareness of the steps that could be taken to manage trolls and cyber-bullies, including a gentle introduction to the legal framework around social media posts. There was also guidance on how to be safe online generally, as well as tips on how to create a positive online presence.

- **LGA Personal Safety**

In February three Members attended the Personal Safety online training which was specially devised for councillors who were keen to improve their awareness of personal safety. Built around the role of the elected member, the session was full of practical advice and guidance. Included within the webinar was advice on surgeries, canvassing, home visits and managing unexpected doorstep visitors.

- **North West Fire Control Visit**

On 22 October, three Members attended a visit to North West Fire Control.

- **Bite-Sized Briefing Sessions**

A number of bite-sized briefing sessions had been held and were planned to take place. The short virtual sessions were designed to provide Members with information on different topics and areas of work within Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service. Recordings of the sessions were sent to all Members to ensure that those who were unable to attend, didn't miss out on the information.

- **Whistleblowing Training**

Following the February CFA meeting, the Deputy Monitoring Officer, Dominic Howell provided Members with a presentation on Whistleblowing and how to deal with Whistleblowing Complaints.

- **Carol Service**

The annual Carol Service took place on Wednesday 10 December 2025. The Chair, Vice-Chair, Spokespeople for the Opposition Parties, and Clerk were invited to attend the service.

- **Celebration of Our People Awards Event**

The 'Celebration of Our People' Awards Ceremony provided an opportunity to reward our colleagues for their outstanding service. The ceremony celebrated staff receiving long service and good conduct awards, high achievement, colleague recognition and

commendations for challenging operational incidents. The Chair, Vice-Chair, and Spokespeople for the Opposition Parties were invited to attend the service which took place in November 2025.

Members Meeting on Government's Fair Funding Review

The Chair, Vice-Chair, Spokesperson for Labour, and the Spokesperson for Progressive Lancashire along with the Chief Fire Officer and Director of Corporate Services travelled to London to lobby the Fire Minister, Samantha Dixon and Lancashire MPs in relation to the fair funding review and funding for fire authorities and the impact on public services. The Chair acknowledged the cross-party working relationships and expressed his ambition to maintain cross-party working.

Member Information Bulletin

The Member Information Bulletin contains a lot of important and useful information and invitations to events; however, engagement seems to be quite low.

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

Councillor D Smith commented that although engagement appeared low, he was able to view the content without clicking into it which may affect viewing figures.

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 was also established and implemented last year which Members had been using.

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, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Nextdoor, and LinkedIn, as well as a Podcast (Out of the Ashes).

Member Drop-In Sessions

Democratic Services introduced a series of drop-in sessions, both in person and electronically. These sessions were an opportunity for members to ask any questions or get any support they may need, such as submitting mileage expenses, accessing payslips or electronic meeting agendas, or identifying any training needs.

Suggested Training

- **LGA Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials**

A bespoke governance training session had been arranged for Members on 28 April 2026 at the Leadership and Development Centre.

- **Chair and Vice-Chair's Training**

A bespoke training session for the Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Authority had been held with the LGA on 22 April 2026 at Service Headquarters.

County Councillor N Alderson expressed his thanks to firefighters who attended a recent

incident in Hambleton.

County Councillor I Duxbury requested that he be informed of any events in his local area.

County Councillor A Ali encouraged members to visit their local stations.

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 **22 October 2026**. A further meeting was agreed for Thursday **22 April 2027**.

LFRS HQ
Fulwood

Liz Sandiford
Director of People and Development