

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 28th JUNE 2023
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE
AUTHOR: ANDREW LEADBETTER

SUBJECT: APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES ETC.,
OUTSIDE BODIES AND MEMBER ROLES
2023-24

Purpose of Report

1. This report enables Members to consider/determine the following issues:
 - Responsibilities of the Fire Authority and its committees, boards etc.;
 - Political proportions on the Fire Authority;
 - Political proportionality rules (where they apply and where they don't and their affect upon the allocation of seats on committees etc.);
 - Appointment of Members to seats on committees etc;
 - Involvement of independent (non-elected) member;
 - Appointments to outside bodies;
 - Appointments to Member Champion roles; and
 - Continuation of Member/officer buddy arrangements.

Recommended:

Members are asked to:

- [1] Confirm the responsibilities of the Fire Authority set out in Appendix 1A;**
- [2] Agree the responsibilities of Committees, Boards and Groups set out in Appendix 1B;**
- [3] Note the political proportions on the Fire Authority set out in paragraph 4 of the report;**
- [4] Agree the approach to the allocation of seats explained in paragraphs 5 to 8 of the report and Appendix 2A;**
- [5] Agree the appointments required as set out in Appendix 2B;**
- [6] Agree the involvement of the independent (non-elected) member (to act in an advisory capacity) as set out in paragraph 10 of the report**

and reflected in Appendix 2B;

- [7] Agree the appointments to outside bodies set out in Appendix 3;
- [8] Agree the appointments to Member Champions roles set out in Appendix 4; and
- [9] Agree the continuation of the Member/officer buddy arrangements.
- [10] Determine whether a Members' allowance should be introduced for the respective roles of Chair of the Audit Committee and Chair of the Local Pension Board – Firefighters Pension Scheme and if so the amount of the allowance payable (authorising officers to make the necessary changes to the Members' Allowances Scheme).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY

- 2. The responsibilities of the Fire Authority are set out in Appendix 1A.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEES, BOARDS ETC.

- 3. Appendix 1B contains details of the responsibilities of the respective committees etc.

Note: Responsibilities for relevant plans, strategies and policies are included.

POLITICAL PROPORTIONS ON THE FIRE AUTHORITY

- 4. Political proportions are important as they determine the allocation of seats on some committees. At the time of writing it is anticipated that there will be three Political Groups.

Political Group	Seats	Percentage
Labour	12	52.17
Conservative	8	34.78
Independent	2	8.70
Total	22*	95.65

* A Liberal Democrat is also appointed to the Fire Authority, but is not a member of a Political Group.

POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY RULES (WHERE THEY APPLY AND WHERE THEY DON'T AND THEIR EFFECT UPON THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES ETC.)

- 5. The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 and Local Government and Housing Act 1989 make provision for the handling of political group representation on the Fire Authority's committees. For the sake of simplicity the term 'political proportionality rules' has been used.

6. The political proportionality rules are not straight-forward. They involve the application of certain principles ‘...as far as reasonably practicable...’ in allocating seats to political groups. These principles are set out below:
 - a) that not all the seats on the body are allocated to the same political group;
 - b) that the majority of the seats on the body is allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority’s membership;
 - c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, that the number of seats on the ordinary committees of a relevant authority which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary committees of that authority as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority; and
 - d) subject to paragraphs (a) to (c) above, that the number of the seats on the body which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the number of all the seats on that body as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority.
7. Not all of the Authority’s bodies are caught by the political proportionality rules. For example, the Member Training and Development Group is not.
8. Some other bodies exist where there is no requirement for appointments to be made by the Fire Authority, e.g. Audit Committee (which is formed from members of Governance and Constitution Committee).

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO AVAILABLE SEATS ON COMMITTEES ETC.

9. Members are asked to note the information above and that contained in Appendix 2A when considering the allocation of seats and appointments required in Appendix 2B.

INVOLVEMENT OF INDEPENDENT (NON-ELECTED) MEMBER

10. Last year the Authority continued to operate with one independent (non-elected) member. He attended Governance and Constitution Committee, Performance and Overview Committee and Estates and Property Committee. He was also involved in the Member Training and Development Group. He is happy to continue.

OUTSIDE BODIES

11. Members are asked to make appointments to the outside bodies covered in Appendix 3. Members will see that the roles of the bodies and delegated powers (if any) are set out in the Appendix.

MEMBER CHAMPIONS

12. Members are asked to appoint the Member Champions covered in Appendix 4.

MEMBER/OFFICER BUDDY ARRANGEMENTS

13. The Authority operates a Member/officer buddy arrangement. This is intended to provide Members with officer support to help develop their knowledge of the organisation and the fire and rescue sector generally.
14. Members are asked to agree the continuation of the buddy arrangements. The alignment of Members with officers will be confirmed shortly after the meeting to take account of Member appointments e.g. Chairs and Member Champion roles.

Financial Implications

15. The cost of operating the democratic process is obviously contained within the Authority's budget.
16. Recommendation [10] is concerned with the recognition of two roles: the Chair of the Audit Committee and the Chair of the Pension Board – Firefighters Pension Scheme. Both roles involve a requirement for training and at least four meetings should take place each Municipal Year.
17. The Audit Committee was only created in the last Municipal Year. Any allowance paid to the Chair would be an increase to the Members' Allowances Scheme.
18. Currently, the Chair of the Pension Board – Firefighters Pension Scheme receives an allowance, by virtue of the role being linked to the Member Champion role.
19. It has been suggested that these roles may be commensurate with those of the Chairs of the Estates and Property Committee and the Governance and Constitution Committee.
20. A Member Champion receives an allowance of £577.94. The Chairs of the Estates and Property Committee and the Governance and Constitution Committee each receive £1,733.85. If the Chair of the Audit Committee and the Chair of the Pension Board – Firefighters Pension Scheme both received the same level of allowance there would be an increase to the Members' Allowances Scheme of around £2,900.

Legal Implications

21. The Fire Authority has delegated certain functions to various decision making bodies and has in place arrangements to facilitate good

communications between Members and officers. The appointments made as a result of this report help to ensure that decisions made will be set within an appropriate legal framework.

Equality and Diversity Implications

22. There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

23. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE