



**Cheshire**  
Fire Authority



# Member Training and Development Group Review 2023-24

Version 1.0 – March 2023

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Authority remains committed to ensuring that all Members have access to and undertake adequate training and development opportunities to better enable them to fulfil their roles as Fire Authority Members. This report provides a review of the Member Training and Development activities undertaken during 2023-2024 and the work carried out by the Member Training and Development Group.

## **2. MEMBERSHIP AND ROLE OF THE MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

- 2.1 The Fire Authority's Member Training and Development Group is a cross-party group composed of five Fire Authority Members and an independent (non-elected) member.

### **Membership for 2023-24**

Councillor Laura Smith (Chair)

Councillor Kath Buckley

Councillor Peter Coan

Councillor Rob Moreton

Councillor Karen Mundry

Derek Barnett (independent (non-elected) member)

### **2.2 Terms of Reference**

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

To advise on the development, monitoring and evaluation of a Member Training and Development Programme to ensure that Members' training needs are being met.

### **3. MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP WORK PROGRAMME 2023-24**

- 3.1 The Member Training and Development Group (the Group) usually meets on a quarterly basis to carry out its roles and functions in respect of the development, monitoring and evaluation of Member development activities for Fire Authority Members. Meetings have taken place on 4<sup>th</sup> July, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- 3.2 The Group plays a key role in assisting officers with Member development activities. Key areas of work carried out during 2023-24 include:
- Development, implementation and quarterly monitoring of the Member Development Strategy 2022-24 (the Strategy).
  - Development, implementation and quarterly monitoring of the Member Development Programme for 2023-24 (the Programme).
  - Review/refresh of the Personal Development Review process for 2023-24
  - Review of the outcomes from Personal Development Reviews conducted in 2023-24.
  - Evaluation of the Induction Programme for 2023-24.
  - Review of the training and development of Member Champions.

### **4. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2022-24**

- 4.1 The Member Development Strategy 2022-24 was initially approved by the Fire Authority in December 2021. The Strategy sets out the Authority's strategic direction in respect of Member Development for the two-year period.
- 4.2 The implementation plan for the Strategy was monitored at each meeting of the Group and a copy of the annual progress plan is attached as Annex 1 to the report. An outline of the objectives and progress to date is detailed below:

#### **Objective 1 – Identify and prioritise Members' Training and Development Needs**

Members' training and development needs were identified through personal development review meetings. The majority of personal development review meetings took place between July and October 2023. A summary report with the outcomes from the meetings was taken to the Member Training and Development Group in December 2023.

Personal development plans were created from these review meetings and most individual training needs identified have been met through one-to-one sessions with the relevant departments or officers. Training identified that was felt to be beneficial to all Members has been incorporated into the Programme for 2024-25.

General training and development needs identified from the 2023-24 personal development plans included:

- A Day in the Life of a Firefighter
- Tour of the Training Centre, Sadler Road
- Tour of Safety Central
- Visit to North West Fire Control
- Visits to local fire stations
- Social Media

**Objective 2 – Review and refresh the Members Personal Development Review process to ensure that it remains effective for both experienced Members and new Members**

Officers continued using the template which simplified and updated the personal development plans to ensure all elements were still relevant. Members rated their knowledge of different areas from 1-4 (1 = below the level required to 4 = outstanding) to ascertain areas where development was required. These results were also compared within the previous year. All Members saw some increase in their knowledge of the Authority and Service.

**Objective 3 – Provision of an annual Member Development Programme that is in line with priorities identified and within available resources**

The Programme was approved by the Authority in June 2023. It covered general training and development sessions for all Members, as well as induction sessions specifically tailored for new Members. A copy of the Programme is attached as Annex 2 to this report. Several virtual webinar style training sessions took place throughout the Programme which were well received by Members.

In person Members’ Planning Days took place throughout 2023-24 which provided an opportunity for Members to further their knowledge and understanding the Service. The Planning Days aimed to provide Members with key information to enable them to make informed decisions about the Authority/Service’s future. They also provided an opportunity for updates to be given on local and national issues within the sector.

All Members and the independent (non-elected) member, were encouraged to attend the Planning Days and to provide feedback on the sessions to ensure that they remain informative and relevant. An overview of attendance follows:

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Number of attendees</b>	<b>Completed evaluation forms</b>
7 <sup>th</sup> July 2023	16	10
11 <sup>th</sup> August 2023	16	12

8 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	19	9
10 <sup>th</sup> November 2023	18	15
12 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	15	7
22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2024	12	11

A 'Mop Up' Planning Day session was held for the Members who were not able to attend the Member Planning Day meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2024. This was included in the Programme to ensure that all Members were informed of the proposals for the Community Risk Management Plan 2024-28 and had the opportunity for scrutiny.

Overall, feedback continues to be very positive from the Planning Days with the majority of Members stating that they found the sessions to be 'Completely' applicable to support their role on the Fire Authority.

Feedback highlights from the Planning Days included:

**7<sup>th</sup> July 2023:**

"Excellent Planning Day – well organised – relevant and informative"

"Learning about the Service and the important work they're done. Being part of the future of the Service. Being able to make suggestions."

**11<sup>th</sup> August 2023:**

"The way, possibly complex, informative and data was explained in an accessible manner."

"I am very pleased (as a newbie) to be welcomed and look forward to enabling all CFRS colleagues to meet your challenging targets."

**8<sup>th</sup> September 2023:**

"Full understanding of changes made and reassurance re. safeguarding"

"Excellent presentations open honest and nothing hidden"

**10<sup>th</sup> November 2023:**

"Excellent videos and update on staff survey feedback very reassuring bearing in mind nationally the image is not good."

“Being well briefed is important for us passing on the information to other town councillors as well as to residents.”

### **12<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

“I find these sessions the most rewarding and informative of all our meetings. Keep them going.”

“Well organised – officer input very good – plain English (some acronyms need explaining for new Members)”

### **22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024:**

“These Planning Days, I find, are the best way to inform Members.”

### **Objective 4 – Delivery of a comprehensive and effective induction process for new Members**

Six new Members joined the Fire Authority in 2023-24. The new Members were sent a welcome pack from Democratic Services and attended a one-to-one meeting with the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive. Any further information was supplemented through the officer/Member buddy system.

### **Objective 5 – Member Champions – Review current roles and maximise opportunities for Member Champions to access support networks and development opportunities in line with their specific remit**

Each Member Champion has a Lead Officer appointed to assist them in their role. At the beginning of each year a meeting is arranged for the Member Champion to meet with the Lead Officer to discuss the work for the year ahead.

Throughout the year the Lead Officers also assist with ensuring that Member Champions have been invited to attend Local Government Association networking groups, training and conferences where relevant.

The Member Champion arrangements were reviewed by the Governance and Constitution Committee. The outcomes of the review saw the introduction of a role profile for each Member Champion role and a mechanism for reporting activities was implemented at the Member Planning Day on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024.

These arrangements have been in place for 12 months and the Governance and Constitution Committee are due to review their effectiveness. The Member Training and Development Group provided feedback to the Governance and Constitution Committee for the Member Champion arrangements as part of their review.

### **Objective 6 - Continuous Development**

The Member Training and Development Group has reviewed monitoring reports on the progress of implementing the Member Development Strategy 2022-24 at its meetings throughout 2023-24.

The Member Development Strategy 2022-24 was taken to the Member Training and Development Group for review in October 2021 prior to submission to the Authority for approval. The Member Development Strategy 2024-26 was reviewed by the Group in November 2022 and has been approved by the Fire Authority, ready for its implementation in June 2024.

The Member Development Satisfaction Survey 2023-24 was sent to all Members for feedback on the training and development opportunities throughout the year. Some of the questions informed the stakeholder consultation for the Governance department review.



ANNEX 1

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Key Actions</u>	<u>Responsible Officers</u>	<u>Target Date</u>
<p>1. Identify and prioritise Members Training and Development Needs</p>	<p>1.1 Complete Annual Personal Development Reviews and Development Plans for all Members</p>	<p>People and Organisational Development/ Democratic Services</p>	<p>Oct 23</p>
	<p>1.2 Complete an initial Personal Development Review and check personal development plans for newly elected Members as part of the induction programme</p>	<p>People and Organisational Development/ Democratic Services</p>	<p>Jul –Sep 23</p>
	<p>1.3 Carry out Training Needs Analysis based on outcomes of PDRs and Members PDPs and develop a programme for delivery of needs based on priorities.</p>	<p>People and Organisational Development/ Democratic Services</p>	<p>Oct 23</p>
<p>2. Review and refresh the Members Personal Development Review process to ensure that it remains effective for both experienced Members and new Members</p>	<p>2.1 Carry out a review of the current PDR process to ensure that it remains effective for experienced and new Members.</p>	<p>People and Organisational Development/ Democratic Services</p>	<p>Dec 23</p>
<p>3. Provision of an Annual Member Development Programme that is in line with priorities identified and within available resources.</p>	<p>3.1 Develop Annual Member Development Programme which complements the training needs identified</p>	<p>Governance and Corporate Planning Manager/ Member Training and Development Group (MTDG)</p>	<p>Jun 23</p>
	<p>3.2 Review the annual programme to ensure that it aligns with any future changes introduced as part of the national Fire Reform Programme</p>	<p>Governance and Corporate Planning Manager MTDG</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>3.3 Produce a quarterly monitoring report on the delivery of the programme for submission to the Member Training and Development Group</p>	<p>Governance and Corporate Planning Manager</p>	<p>Jul 23 Oct 23 Dec 23 Mar 24</p>

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Key Actions</u>	<u>Responsible Officers</u>	<u>Target Date</u>
4. Delivery of a comprehensive and effective Induction process for new Members	4.1 Provision of Induction Programme for New Members	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager	Jun - Jul 23
	4.2 Provision of Information Pack for New Members (on appointment to Fire Authority)	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager	Jun 23
	4.3 Annually review the Member/Officer Buddy System to ensure it remains effective	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager MTDG	Oct 23
5. Member Champions	5.1 Review current roles and maximise opportunities for Member Champions to access support networks and development opportunities in line with their specific remit	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager MDTG Governance and Constitution Committee	Mar 24
6. Continuous Development	6.1 Produce quarterly monitoring reports in respect of the Strategy's implementation plan for MTDG	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager	Jul 23 Oct 23 Dec 23 Mar 24
	6.2 Present an annual report on Member Development activities to the Fire Authority	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager MTDG	Apr 24
	6.3 Carry out an annual review of Member Development Strategy	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager MTDG	Dec 23
	6.4 Carry out a Member satisfaction survey to provide more in-depth feedback on the service provided to Fire Authority Members and inform future development	Democratic Services/ Communications MTDG	Apr 24



**ANNEX 2**

**MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

**2023/2024**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>EVENT</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>2023</b>				
5 July	Induction Session	Initial welcome and induction session hosted by the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive:  Welcome and overview of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service  Core functions of the Fire Authority and overview of the Constitution	To provide an overview of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and introduce new Members to the Service Leadership Team.  To provide an overview of the Fire Authority and the roles/responsibilities of new Members.	For new Members  4 Members attended
6 July	Webinar, Teams Session	External Audit Training	Grant Thornton representatives will provide training on external audit functions within Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service	All Members event  8 Members attended  Mandatory attendance for Audit Committee members (1 attended)

7 July	Planning Day	<p>Medium Term Financial Plan Update</p> <p>Development of Community Risk Management Plan 2024-28</p> <p>PESTELO</p> <p>Community Risk Model Presentation</p>	To engage with Members on the development of the future direction of the Service	<p>All Members event</p> <p>16 Members attended</p>
21 July	Webinar, Teams Session (mandatory)	Internal Audit Training	Merseyside Internal Audit Agency (MIAA) representatives will provide training on the internal audit processes within Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.	<p>All Members event</p> <p>8 Members attended</p> <p>Mandatory attendance for Audit Committee members (1 attended)</p>
31 <sup>st</sup> July	Webinar, Teams Session	Fire Cover Review Re-Cap	<p>To allow those who were not in attendance at the Planning Day on 7<sup>th</sup> July to engage with the proposals of the CRMP.</p> <p>1:1 session were arranged for those who could not make the session</p>	<p>Members who did not attend the previous Planning Day</p> <p>3 Members attended</p>

11 <sup>th</sup> August	Planning Day	Medium Term Financial Plan Update  Community Risk Management Plan Update	To engage with Members on the development of the future direction of the Service	All Members event  16 Members attended
22 <sup>nd</sup> August	Planning Day Re-Cap	Community Risk Management Plan Re-cap	To allow Members who missed the previous Planning Day an opportunity to engage with the CRMP	Members who did not attend the previous Planning Day  7 Members attended
8 September	Planning Day	Medium Term Financial Plan Update  Community Risk Management Plan Update	To engage with Members on the development of the future direction of the Service	All Members event  19 Members attended
15 September	Webinar, Teams Session	Risk Management	To provide an overview of the Service's risk arrangements and introduction to the risk team.	All Members event  10 Members attended  Mandatory attendance for Audit Committee members (1 attended)
21 September	Webinar, Teams Session	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	To provide an overview on equality, diversity and inclusion in the Service.	All Members event  4 Members attended

29 September	Visit Training Centre, Sadler Road	Day in the Life of a Firefighter		All Member event
<b>POSTPONED</b>				
27 October	Visit	Safety Central	To visit the purpose-built facility dedicated to public safety – to learn how to stay safe by experiencing a range of hazards in realistic learning zones that simulate the environments in which injury and harm are most likely to occur.	All Members event
<b>POSTPONED</b>				
10 <sup>th</sup> November	Planning Day	Medium Term Financial Plan Update  Community Risk Management Plan Update	To provide an update on the Community Risk Management Plan and 2024/25 Budget	All Members event  18 Members attended
8 <sup>th</sup> December	Visit	North West Fire Control	To observe the call arrangements for the Service provided by North West Fire Control	All Members event  7 Member attended

2024				
12 <sup>th</sup> January	Planning Day	Medium Term Financial Plan Update and Treasury Management  Scrutiny of Business Cases/Budget Bids  Community Risk Management Plan Consultation	Presentation on the Medium Term Financial Plan including business cases and budget bids for growth and efficiency items. Draft Capital programme and reserve position and Community Risk Management Plan Consultation.	All Members event  15 Members attended
January	Visit	Tour of local fire station	To meet the watch based to your local fire station and understand how the station operates.	All Members event (optional and arranged upon request)  No uptake from Members
26 <sup>th</sup> January	Webinar, Teams Session	Fire risks associated with lithium batteries	To understand the increasing risks of fire associated with products containing lithium batteries.	All Members event  10 Members attended
22 <sup>nd</sup> March	Planning Day		To engage with Members on the development of the future direction of the Service	All Members event

**Other training and development sessions for 2023/24:**

**Tour of local fire station** – a tour of your local fire station can be arranged upon request. If you are interested in visiting any of Cheshire’s fire station, please contact Democratic Services. A list of fire station open day dates will be circulated to all Members.

**IT Training** – Various Microsoft courses are running throughout the year. The dates for these meetings are available upon request.

**Budget Bid Approvals** – visits and Teams sessions will be available throughout the year for Members to have sight on the outcomes of the Budget Bids which have been approved. Examples include Rapid Response Rescue Units and Wildfire capabilities.

**HR** – A webinar on the human resources policies and Steps Framework will be arranged.

<p><b><u>Training/Development from Personal Development Reviews:</u></b></p> <p><b>To be included in the MD programme for 2023/24:</b></p> <p><b>Communications – Social Media training and handling the press</b></p> <p>Officers are aiming to provide guidance by Autumn 2023.</p> <p><b><u>Training/Development associated with Member Champion Roles</u></b></p> <p>During the review of Member Champion arrangements, the Fire Authority agreed for a role profile to be developed between the Champion and Lead Officer. All Champions will meet with their lead officer to establish the training and development requirements for their roles and opportunities will be arranged accordingly.</p> <p>Note: Democratic Services will liaise directly with individual Members regarding individual PDR training requests.</p>	<p><b><u>Training/Development associated with Committees</u></b></p> <p>Dates to be arranged as part of the Committee timetable if required:-</p> <p><b>Governance and Constitution Committee:</b> Briefings when required</p> <p><b>Audit Committee:</b></p> <p>Mandatory attendance at Teams webinar sessions on Internal Audit, External Audit and Risk Management.</p> <p><b>Performance and Overview Committee:</b> Briefings when required</p> <p><b>Brigade Manager Pay and Performance Committee and Staffing Committee:</b> Briefings when required</p> <p><b>Estates and Property Committee:</b> Briefings when required</p> <p><b>Joint Consultative Committee:</b> Briefings when required</p>
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