

SECTION 5 – MEMBERS’ ROLES

GENERAL ROLE

5.1 Collectively, elected Members shape the future of the Fire Authority and determine its priorities. Whilst it is acknowledged that Members have a duty to represent their constituents and are members of their constituent authorities their overriding duty as Fire Authority Members is to act in the interests of the Authority as a whole.

Members will:

5.2 Be advocates for the Fire Authority in the respective communities they serve and act as a channel of communication to the community on Fire Authority strategies, objectives, policies, services and procedures.

5.3 Represent the views of their respective communities, wherever possible, in the Fire Authority’s decision-making processes by liaising with other Members, Officers and partner organisations to ensure that the needs of the local communities are identified, understood and supported.

5.4 Engage fully in Fire Authority business and meetings including meetings of any committee, board, task group or external organisation that they may be appointed to serve on from time to time. This includes a requirement to fully engage in any preparatory or follow up work or tasks such as undertaking training and site visits or participating in any study, research, review or scrutiny exercises. It also includes the management of the unitary performance budget.

5.5 Proactively and continually identify, seek out and participate in opportunities for personal development.

5.6 Make effective use of modern electronic communication including email, the internet and intranet, to aid efficient communication with officers, other Members and the community.

5.7 Provide support and encouragement to new Members.

SPECIFIC ROLES

Chair of the Fire Authority and Deputy Chair in the Chair's Absence

- 5.8 Acting as the Civic Head of the Authority, performing an 'ambassadorial' role on behalf of the Authority;
- 5.9 Acting as political Leader of the Authority;
- 5.10 Leading the development and maintenance of the Authority's vision, objectives and values;
- 5.11 Participating in the North West Fire Forum;
- 5.12 Participating in regional and national political networks;
- 5.13 Enhancing links between the Authority and other public bodies and forging formal partnership working arrangements;
- 5.14 Encouraging links with the business community;
- 5.15 Chairing Authority meetings;
- 5.16 Co-ordinating the appraisal of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive;
- 5.17 Ensuring a good political/professional interface particularly between the Chair, the Deputy Chair and the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive; and
- 5.18 Ensuring good governance in relation to the Authority's activities and abiding by legal and procedural requirements.

Chairs of other Members' Decision-Making Bodies

- 5.19 To help co-ordinate the work of the decision-making body.
- 5.20 To be a focal point of knowledge, leadership and advice to Members of the decision-making body.
- 5.21 To provide competent and effective management of meetings to facilitate inclusivity, participation and clear decision-making.
- 5.22 To ensure that Members are able to take part in decision-making and that this is carried out with the benefit of adequate advice from officers.
- 5.23 To liaise with other Chairs of Members' decision-making bodies where necessary.
- 5.24 To report to other Members and/or Members' decision-making bodies.

Lead Members (each constituent Authority)

Roles and responsibilities

5.25 The role of Lead Member is:

- i] To represent the views of the Fire Authority at their constituent Authorities, taking the lead and co-ordinating activities in their constituent area in relation to Fire Authority business, where necessary.
- ii] To sit on the Business Continuity Committee
- iii] To fulfil the role of Business Continuity Member (Business Continuity Lead)

5.26 It is likely that the Chair and Deputy Chair will fulfill the role of Lead Member for their constituent Authorities. Should the Chair and/or Deputy Chair indicate a wish to act as Lead Member, they should automatically take this role without the need for appointment by Members of the Constituent Authority which appointed them to the Authority.

5.27 It should be noted that those Groups spokespersons that are not represented through the appointment of the Chair and Deputy Chair sit on the Business Continuity Committee and also act as Business Continuity Members (Business Continuity Leads) with the Chair and Deputy Chair.

Appointment

5.28 The appointment of a Lead Member is the responsibility of the members of the constituent Authority required to appoint a Lead member. If those Members are unable to decide or there is an equality of votes for candidates, the decision will then fall to be made by the Fire Authority. The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority assume the role of Lead Member for their constituent authorities.

Member Champions

5.29 The Structure allocates a number of Member champion roles. These roles make the best use of a Member's experience and interest, whether gained in their constituent authority, working life or through a personal hobby.

5.30 It is expected that prior to the Authority meeting in June, Members will put themselves forward for these roles within their political groups, which will be subject to voting in the usual manner if they are not agreed.

- 5.31 There is no constitutional requirement for Member Champions to be drawn from the largest group on the Authority, or to be drawn from any particular committee.
- 5.32 The role of Member Champions is to speak up, during Member meetings, on key issues relating to the position. In the consideration of reports and during debate, the Chair may look to the relevant Member Champion to speak or give an opinion to inform the wider Authority on matters relating to that Member Champion's area of expertise.
- 5.33 The Member Champion will also be expected to serve as a key contact for Officers, when dealing with a relevant matter. This is particularly relevant for the purposes of consultation responses to government and policy development. Member Champions may be asked to attend key meetings and conferences arranged by external bodies. It is the responsibility of Member Champions to feedback any key messages from such events, to the wider Membership of the Authority, at meetings.
- 5.34 In some cases, Member Champions will be expected to Chair or sit on key Officer meetings. As with external meetings, it will be the role of Member Champions to ensure key messages are relayed back to the wider Authority and to provide a Member opinion on relevant matters of policy.

Independent Members

- 5.35 The independent members are not members of the Fire Authority. They are unelected and have an advisory role. They are appointed following advertisement and interview. They serve a four year term of office and can be appointed for a maximum of two terms.
- 5.36 Currently there is one independent member. He sits on the following decision making bodies: Governance and Constitution Committee; Performance and Overview Committee; Estates and Property Committee and Member Training and Development Group.

Independent Audit Committee Member

- 5.37 The Independent Audit Committee member is a co-opted member of the Audit Committee and not a member of the Fire Authority. They are appointed following advertisement and interview and will hold a term of office. There is currently one Independent Audit Committee Member.

Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire

- 5.38 Cheshire Fire Authority (CFA) and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire (Cheshire PCC) are working more closely.

5.39 CFA grants the following rights to the Cheshire PCC:

- (a) to be provided with papers for CFA meetings (including those to be considered in private session unless a conflict of interest exists); and
- (b) to be briefed appropriately before CFA meetings: and
- (c) to attend CFA meetings (and remain during items considered in private session); and
- (d) to speak at CFA meetings.

5.40 The CFA expects the Cheshire PCC to:

- (a) Exercise these rights reasonably; and
- (b) Declare any conflict of interest at the appropriate time and withdraw as necessary.