

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

4th FEBRUARY 2013

1. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

Joint report of the Chief Fire Officer and Clerk and Monitoring Officer.

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the role and responsibility of Elected Members with regard to member development be set out within the Authority's Constitution.
- 1.2 THAT regular updates on Elected Member development are reported to the quarterly performance management meetings.
- 1.3 THAT following the receipt of reports from the quarterly performance management meetings, the Scrutiny Committee makes recommendations to the Executive Committee on identified opportunities for Member development activities.
- 1.4 THAT Policy Planning Forums continue to be used as an opportunity to provide briefings, updates and master classes.
- 1.5 THAT the existing Member induction process be reviewed and updated and that additional emphasis be given to the importance of station visits and personal development reviews.
- 1.6 THAT the existing Strategy for Supporting and Developing Members document be revised and updated to reflect the recommendations set out above.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is submitted for the Executive Committee to consider and approve recommendations to further establish, continue and improve the training and development process for Elected Members. This will encourage:

- a member-driven approach to development;
- relevant and timely learning activities and experiences which lead to a sharing of knowledge; and
- an improved take-up of learning opportunities.

The essence of the report, and its recommendations, was presented to Members at the Policy Planning Forum on 10 December 2012.

3. **BACKGROUND**

The Member Development Working Group (MDWG) ceased in June 2012 following the decision of the Fire Authority Annual Meeting that all matters relating to member development would be dealt with through the Executive Committee. The former MDWG, chaired by a lead Member, was responsible for raising issues around improving Member buy-in and achieving a member-driven approach to development.

3.2 **The Authority's Commitment to Elected Member Development**

3.2.1 The strategy document for supporting and developing Members states that all Members are effectively developed and supported to enable them to carry out their role on West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority to their full potential. This supports the delivery of good governance and assists the service in making West Midlands safer.

3.2.2 This intent also contributes to the Service's ongoing commitment to the Investors in People which in turn supports our Core Values.

3.2.3 Furthermore, with the growing complexities and demands on Fire and Rescue Services, coupled with the challenge of budget cuts, there is a pressing need for specific Fire Service related training and knowledge in addition to host Authority development.

3.2.4 In the drive to deliver improved services and achieve efficiencies, it is essential for managers to become more engaged with Members. Such closer engagement should assist Members in applying appropriate challenge and scrutiny in all service areas.

3.2.5 Members have been provided with a variety of development opportunities which has ranged from supporting new Members during induction, through to training resulting from Member requests. For instance, the defibrillator training received by some Members last year was at the request of Members following a development day held at the Academy. All learning activities are captured on the annual training schedule which is circulated to Members and available on CMIS. Other learning events have included:

- Visits to Safeside, Fire Control, Transport Engineering Workshops. These are particularly important for newer Members and are also offered to existing Members.
- Development days at the Academy have provided an opportunity to engage with staff/instructors and be briefed on technical developments; training standards, leadership development, etc.
- Awareness briefings on matters of strategic importance, for instance, health and safety (delivered by a Health and Safety lawyer); understanding risk awareness and updates in respect of Investors in People.
- Station visits and command performance briefings are also an opportunity to engage with officers and learn about local key initiatives and issues.

3.2.6 These activities, in conjunction with personal development reviews (PDRs) and feedback from Members who have attended development activities, should allow for individual learning outcomes to be further supported.

3.2.7 The delivery of an effective Member development programme, which is part of mainstream organisational development activities, will inevitably support the Fire Authority's:

- continued commitment to the Investors in People standard;
- ability to address the findings from the Operational Assessment for 2012 Peer Challenge;
- principles of the Member Development Charter; and

- alignment to the organisation's commitment to becoming a genuine Learning Organisation.

4. The following proposals are set out for Executive Committee to consider and approve.

- **Constitution** – Work is currently taking place regarding the development of a West Midlands Fire Authority Constitution to replace and enhance the current terms of reference and delegations agreed annually by the Fire Authority. It is proposed that the role and responsibility of Elected Members with regard to member development is set out within the revised constitution.
- **Quarterly Performance Management Meetings** – An existing programme of performance management meetings is established within the service. This meeting involves managers from across the organisation presenting reports on progress against the strategic objectives set out within 'The Plan'. Issues from these meetings are subsequently reported to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration. It is therefore proposed that regular updates on Elected Member development are reported to these meetings.
- **Scrutiny Committee** – Following the receipt of reports from the Quarterly Performance Management Meetings it is proposed that the Scrutiny Committee makes recommendations to the Executive Committee on identified opportunities for development activities.
- **Policy Planning Forums** – It is proposed that these continue to be used as an opportunity to provide briefings; updates; master classes.
- **Induction Process** – The existing process is to be reviewed and updated. Additional emphasis will be given to the importance of station visits and personal development reviews.

- **Strategy Document for Supporting and Developing Members** – It is proposed that the existing document is revised and updated reflecting the recommendations set out above.

5. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The essence of the report is to continue and improve the current provision of member development and ultimately improve engagement with our communities and the workforce. Therefore, in preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is required and has been carried out. The initial Equality Impact Assessment did not raise issues which required a full Equality Impact Assessment to be completed.

6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The course of action recommended in this report does not raise issues which should be drawn to the attention of the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The costs of any Elected Member Development activities are met from existing budgets.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

A Strategy for Supporting and Developing Members.
Peer Challenge Assessment.

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