

WMFRA Member Role Description

1. **Role Purpose**

1.1. **All members including co-opted members**

Fire Authority members must work collectively through the Authority and its Committees and Panels to provide effective governance and oversight in line with their statutory duties (specifically the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004) and the National Framework. This includes;

- A. Setting a strategic plan for what the Fire Service priorities and outcomes what it should achieve.
- B. Setting a budget to fund delivery of that strategic plan including a medium-term financial strategy, efficiency plan and reserves strategy
- C. Securing assurance that the strategy is being delivered, the service manages its budget effectively and achieves value for money
- D. Approving the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and securing assurance that the service is effectively assessing all foreseeable fire and rescue risks that could affect the communities of the West Midlands through the CRMP.
- E. Securing assurance that the service is effectively delivering on its requirement to prevent, protect and respond to fires and other emergencies.
- F. Securing assurance that the service is effectively collaborating with other emergency services and partners and delivering an interoperable service.
- G. Securing assurance that the service is effectively contributing to national resilience and has effective business continuity processes in place
- H. Securing assurance that the service has an effective workforce strategy, training and staff support and provision, and delivers in line with nationally agreed professional standards.
- I. Actively support and seek assurance that the service engages fully and transparently with inspection processes as required.
- J. Hold the Chief Fire Officer to account for the exercise of their functions in line with the agreed scheme of delegation.

1.2. **Section 41 members**

Members appointed as 'lead' members for their constituent council, under Section 41 of the Local Government Act 1985, will be required to answer questions put to them at meetings of their constituent council relating to the discharge of functions of the Fire and Rescue Authority.

1.3. **Committee/Panel Chairs/Vice-Chairs**

The Authority has determined to deliver some aspects of its work through committees and panels. The role of the Chair (and in their absence the Vice-Chair) is to chair and coordinate the business of their respective committee/panel, support their members to ensure appropriate skills and understanding, and providing updates to Fire Authority on its work. Chairs should promote a political open discussion, managing meetings to cover all business and encouraging a candid approach from all participants and ensure the committee maintains focus on matters of greatest priority.

1.4. Audit and Risk Committee Members

Audit and Risk Committee members, including the Chair and Independent Members, are to provide oversight of a range of core governance and accountability arrangements, including corporate risk management. They must also be responsive to the recommendations of assurance providers including Internal and External Auditors and help to ensure robust control arrangements are maintained.

1.5. Scrutiny Committee Members

Scrutiny committee members are expected to provide oversight and scrutiny across a wide range of areas including human resources policy, performance, complaint handling, collaboration and much more. Members will also choose and undertake specific scrutiny reviews of areas of interest or concern. Members will act as a critical friend to officers and the wider authority over decision making and performance, supporting a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

1.6. Appointments, Standards and Appeals Members

Appointments, Standards and Appeals committee has a wide remit to undertake the interviews for appointment of principal officers and statutory officers as required, to consider the outcomes of commissioned standards reviews and to hear stage 2 appeals under the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDPR) for the Firefighter Pension Schemes. The committee also has responsibility for reviewing and embedding the Authority's Member Development Strategy, and to hear appeals in relation to discipline of some senior managers.

1.7. Joint Consultative Panel Members

Members of the Joint Consultative Panel form an important part of the service's Employee Relations Framework. They will work alongside officers and representative bodies to make recommendations to the Authority or Chief Fire Officer on applications of terms and conditions or other employment or HR

related matters. Where necessary, the JCP has responsibility to refer to National Joint Council for consideration as necessary.

1.8. **Party Group Leads**

The lead member for each political party group represented on the authority is responsible for providing political leadership for their group and acting as that party's lead spokesperson.

1.9. **Authority Chair/Vice-Chair**

The Authority Chair (and in their absence the Vice-Chair) is responsible for providing the political and strategic leadership to the Fire Authority and its members. They are expected to foster a collegiate approach and ensure all authority business is conducted effectively and transparently. They will act as lead spokesperson for the Authority and ensure an ongoing engagement with all seven constituent local authorities throughout the year

2. **Key Tasks and Functions**

2.1. **All Members**

- A. Make collective decisions in line with the authority Constitution for the benefit of the whole community of the West Midlands with full consideration of relevant information, guidance and external factors.
- B. Maintain a good understanding of the Authority Constitution, Community Risk Management Plan and Authority Strategy, key fire and rescue service issues, policies and developments.
- C. Undertake effective and considered challenge and scrutiny of service strategy, budgets, policy, performance and officer decision making and behaviours.
- D. Attend and effectively participate in all meetings of the Authority and Committees or Outside Bodies to which they have been appointed, in line with the Standing Orders of the Authority as set out in the Constitution.
- E. Actively represent their local authority on the Authority and its committees
- F. Represent the Fire Authority and Service publicly at events.
- G. Proactively engage with the Authority Member Development Strategy and participate actively in all training and development activities.
- H. At all times adhere to the Authority's Code of Conduct, and challenge behaviour and from colleagues and officers that do not meet the standards set out in the Code.

2.2. **Co-opted members**

- A. Provide independent and expert challenge to the Authority in its decision making.
- B. Maintain a good understanding of the Authority Constitution, Community Risk Management Plan and Authority Strategy, key fire and rescue service issues, policies and developments.
- C. Undertake effective and considered challenge and scrutiny of service strategy, budgets, policy, performance and officer decision making and behaviours.
- D. Attend and effectively participate in all meetings of the Authority and Committees or Outside Bodies to which they have been appointed, in line with the Standing Orders of the Authority as set out in the Constitution.
- E. At all times adhere to the Authority's Code of Conduct, and challenge behaviour and from colleagues and officers that do not meet the standards set out in the Code.

2.3. **Section 41 members**

- A. Answer questions on the role, functions and performance of the Fire Authority within the respective home authority
- B. Provide regular, proactive updates on the work of the authority to the respective home authority's meetings.

2.4. **Committee/Panel Chairs/Vice-Chairs**

- A. Effectively chair meetings of the relevant committee in line with the Authority Standing Orders.
- B. Lead the committee/panel in ensuring it delivers against its terms of reference.
- C. Attend regular pre-meetings with relevant officers to support effective delivery of committee business.
- D. Provide written update reports to each full fire authority meeting on the work of their committee/panel.

2.5. **Party Group Leads**

- A. Support all party group members to engage with the Member Development Strategy through regular experience assessments and one-to-one meetings.
- B. Act as champion of the Nolan Principles and the Authority Code of Conduct within the party group

2.6. **Chair/Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority**

- A. Effectively chair meetings of the Authority and Members Engagement Forum in line with the Authority Standing Orders

- B. Act as champion of the Nolan Principles and the Authority Code of Conduct for the whole Fire Authority.
- C. Represent the Fire Authority at key public events, in the press and to WMFS staff.
- D. Provide regular public and staff communications on the work of the Authority.
- E. Meet regularly with the Chief Fire Officer and other Statutory Officers and ensure effective ongoing working relationships between the “Golden Triangle”.

3. **Experience and Skills**

3.1. **All Members**

- A. Ability to question, challenge and scrutinise effectively and constructively
- B. Effective spoken and written communication skills
- C. Ability to analyse and digest complex information
- D. Excellent understanding of ethical conduct and the Nolan Principles.
- E. Respectful and courteous approach

3.2. **Section 41 members**

- A. Excellent presentation and verbal communication skills
- B. Strong understanding of the specific fire services risks and proposals in relation to their local area.

3.3. **All Committee/Panel Chairs/Vice-Chairs**

- A. Effective and confident chairing of meetings
- B. Effective forward planning

3.4. **Audit and Risk Committee Chair/Vice-Chair**

- A. Strong understanding of audit principles
- B. Strong understanding of governance across the organisation
- C. Strong understanding of the Authority’s Risk Management Arrangements
- D. Apolitical, inquisitive and independent approach

3.5. **Scrutiny Committee Chair/Vice-Chair**

- A. Strong understanding of scrutiny principles including effective questioning methods
- B. Strong understanding of the services policies and performance metrics
- C. Apolitical, inquisitive and independent approach.

3.6. **ASA Committee Chair/Vice-Chair**

- A. Strong understanding of relevant recruitment and human resources policies to consider appeals and recruitment of senior leaders.
- B. Strong understanding of relevant pension legislation
- C. Strong understanding of the Authority's Code of Conduct, Standards processes and the Nolan Principles generally.

3.7. JCP Chair/Vice-Chair

- A. Strong understanding of the service's Employee Relations Framework
- B. Strong understanding of relevant terms and conditions and HR policies, including specifically the grievance and disciplinary processes.
- C. Collegiate and apolitical approach to working with officers and representative bodies
- D. Ability to resolve and mediate difficult conversations

3.8. Party Group Leads

- A. Ability to manage and support their group members, including undertaking regular appraisal processes.

3.9. Chair/Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority

- A. Effective and confident chairing of meetings
- B. Strategic and political leadership
- C. Strong written and spoken communication skills, including press and external communications.
- D. Broad knowledge of authority governance model, constitutional rules and relevant background legislation

4. Working arrangements and time commitments

Meeting/Role/Function	Occurrences per annum	Typical length (hours)	Online or in person?
Fire Authority Meetings	5	2-3	In Person
Member Engagement Forum	8-10	2	Mixed
Audit and Risk Committee	5	2	In Person
Scrutiny Committee	5	2	In Person
Appointments, Standards and Appeals Committee	1 minimum but ad hoc as required	2-3	In Person
Joint Consultative Panel	4	1.5	Online
Fire Station Visits	2 minimum	2	In Person
Member Training	5-7 depending on role	2-3	Mixed
Please note:			

- Formal Authority business is typically arranged on Mondays between the hours of 9.30 and 17.00 at Fire Service Headquarters in central Birmingham.
- Members will also be invited to optional events such as formal ceremonies, awards evenings, service celebrations and station open days which will occur on weekends and evenings
- Members may be required to attend further extraordinary meetings or briefings at short notice.

5. **Further Reading/Background Documents**

- [Fire Service National Framework](#)
- [LGA Fire Authority Members Guide](#)
- WMFRA Member Code of Conduct
- WMFRA Constitution

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