



**GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN – MEMBER ROLE DESCRIPTION,
CORE TASKS AND FRA PAPER FORMAT**
For DECISION

Principal Officer: Chief Fire Officer
Report of the Interim Clerk to the Authority
Author: Interim Clerk to the Authority

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To gain final member approval for three updated documents progressed as part of the WMFRA’s Governance Improvement Plan which was approved on 16 June 2025.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That members approve the updated Member Role Description outlined in **Appendix A**, for adoption into the WMFRA Constitution as part of the wider review of that document due in February 2026, and for sharing with constituent Authorities.
- 2.2. That members approve the updated Core Tasks of the Authority as outlined in **Appendix B**, for adoption into the WMFRA Constitution as part of the wider review of that document due in February 2026.
- 2.3. That members approve the updated Authority paper template outlined in **Appendix C**, for adoption for all future FRA and Committee meetings not already published.

3. OBJECTIVES & EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 3.1. The WMFRA Governance Improvement Plan included a number of actions relation to strengthening governance, authority purpose

and member roles. This paper resolves a number of these, identified below;

1. Strengthen Committee Governance	
Action	Accountable Officer and Member
d) Simplify reports and communications to sharpen decision-making, including clear guidance for officers/authors.	Interim Clerk/Fire Authority Chair Key contact: Interim Clerk
2. Clarify purpose and strategic oversight of the Authority	
a) Define a set of core strategic tasks for the Authority and committees, guided by the Fire and Rescue National Framework and Authority Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). Once agreed, embed understanding of these roles with members and officers through workshops and development process.	Chief Fire Officer/Fire Authority Chair Key contact: Fire Authority Chair
3. Enhance member and officer capability and development	
f) Introduce a more detailed member role description, to include skills and expertise requirements and expectations. Ensure this is shared with all appointing Authorities and prospective members.	Interim Clerk/Fire Authority Chair Key Contact: Interim Clerk

4. **BACKGROUND – MEMBER ROLE DESCRIPTION**

- 4.1. WMFRA’s current member role description has been identified as lacking sufficient detail and is not closely linked to the constitution and requirements of documents such as the National Framework. Member roles are also separately described within the Constitution within Article 2 – Members of the Authority.
- 4.2. Officers engaged with members at a Member Engagement Forum on 8 September on this topic and have used the feedback to shape the draft role description included in **Appendix A**. Particular areas highlighted include further detail on the overall time commitments, required training commitments and clearer definition of specific roles, such as Committee Chair or Section 41 member. CGIB has also provided input and further refined roles and strengthened language throughout.
- 4.3. The single member role description now also includes members and co-opted members, S41 members, committee chairs, the Authority chair and party group leadership in one document so expectations are set for all members, and all members can understand other roles.
- 4.4. Efforts have been made to link the role to the draft member development strategy created with support from the LGA, as well as to key internal documents such as the Constitution and agreed Code of Conduct (which is based largely on the LGA Model Code).
- 4.5. Subject to approval this new role description will be used to inform Member Development, will be shared with constituent Authorities and be integrated with the revised Constitution for adoption in February 2026.

5. **BACKGROUND – CORE TASKS OF THE AUTHORITY**

- 5.1. West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority is required to undertake specific roles as set out in legislation and within the Fire and Rescue National Framework. Under section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (“the 2004 Act”), the Secretary of State must prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework. Every fire and

rescue authority must have regard to the Framework in carrying out their functions and must publish an annual statement of assurance of compliance with the Framework. The latest National Framework was published in 2018.

- 5.2. Set out within the National Framework is a requirement to put in place a Community Risk Management Plan, which sets out the full range of foreseeable risks that might impact the local communities of the West Midlands, and how the service will address and mitigate them. The current WMFRA CRMP was agreed in February 2024 and runs until 2027.
- 5.3. The current strategic role of the Authority is outlined in the Constitution, and especially “Article 6 – The Authority”. Article 6 specifically outlines the matters reserved the authority and covers some of the relevant matters from the National Framework and CRMP but not in a comprehensive or structured manner. It is predominantly focused on describing in detail the limits of decision making by the Authority and does not include full details of the Authority’s roles in terms of scrutiny and assurance.
- 5.4. The revised core strategic tasks, outlined in **Appendix B** are designed to be more comprehensive and more explicitly linked to the Authority’s role as set out within the National Framework. It also includes which of those core roles have been delegated to Committees.
- 5.5. The draft strategic task list is deliberately linked to the drafted update to the Member Role Description, which also includes key tasks for members and individual office holders. These two documents will inform the member induction and training process.

6. **BACKGROUND – AUTHORITY PAPER TEMPLATE**

- 6.1. The current Authority paper format was updated in June 2025, to provide a more comprehensive approach to the information provided to members in meetings and provide more guidance to authors. The same format is used for all Authority and Committee meetings. In particular, effort has been made to align Authority and Senior Leadership Team paper formats such that decisions made

at SLT which require Authority approval or input can be escalated in much the same format to ensure continuity of decision making.

6.2. Following recommendations from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny Review and member and CGIB feedback, some additional changes are proposed (**Appendix C**) to further strengthen the report writing and approval process, and ensure members are provided with appropriate information to guide decision making and scrutiny. The changes made include;

- 6.2.1. Ensuring all papers provide more than one option for consideration when making recommendations.
- 6.2.2. Including CRMP alignment as well as Strategy alignment
- 6.2.3. Including Corporate Risk Implications within the Impact Assessments
- 6.2.4. Redrafting the Financial Implications guidance to report authors to improve quality of information provided
- 6.2.5. Adding sign off boxes for all Statutory Officers

7. **STRATEGY ALIGNMENT**

7.1. Effective governance is critical to the delivery of all elements of the Authority's Strategy. Clearer Authority and elected membership roles are designed to support members to better understand their role in determining, overseeing and scrutinising the delivery of the strategy, and the changes to paper format are designed to ensure the information provided to members is most helpful.

8. **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

8.1. No equality impact assessment has been undertaken as all three papers do not relate to a change in policy or approach, but instead a clearer restating of existing responsibilities or roles. The changes to the paper format do not represent a significant change likely to impact on any protected groups.

9. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1. The roles and responsibilities of elected members, and the functions of the Fire and Rescue Authority, are set out in various

pieces of legislation to include the Local Government Act 1972 and the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, as well as statutory guidance such as the National Fire and Rescue Service Framework. These have been considered in the creation of all three documents for approval.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1. There are no financial implications from this paper as none of these proposals will incur any additional cost.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1. There are no environmental implications of this update report.

12. CONSULTATION

12.1. Consultation has been undertaken with Fire Authority members on all three areas through Member Engagement Forums between September and October 2025. The CGIB has also considered and provided comment on all three drafts both through its formal meetings and offline which have been incorporated into the drafts.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS & APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Proposed Member Role Description
- Appendix B – Proposed Core Tasks for WMFRA
- Appendix C – Proposed updates to WMFRA Paper Format
- [WMFRA Constitution – June 2025](#)
- [Fire and Rescue Service National Framework](#)

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