



WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2024-2027

Purpose

Effective leadership and clearly defined roles and responsibilities are crucial for organisations to work well. Members who are appropriately skilled and developed are better equipped to carry out their role, which in turn leads to role satisfaction and improved organisational performance.

We recognise that all members will receive development and training support in their “home” authorities and this plan aims to supplement these with service and sector specific training and development opportunities.

The aim of this strategy is to ensure that all Members of West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority (WMFRA) are provided with appropriate support and development opportunities to enable them to carry out their roles effectively.

Responsibilities

The Chair and Opposition Group Leaders have responsibility for supporting their respective members to assess their training and development needs, and regularly oversee that members undertake necessary development and are able to perform their roles on the Authority adequately.

All members are required by the Constitution to ensure they have appropriate skills and understanding to undertake their role by actively engaging in training and development to respond to the growing complexities and demands on fire and rescue services, to enable them to carry out their role to their full potential and to assist the Service in making West Midlands safer, as set out in the Member Development Plan.

The Clerk, supported by other officers, is responsible for developing and ensuring the delivery of an effective programme of training and development opportunities for all members, and supporting the Chair and Opposition Group leaders to undertake their roles in supporting member’s personal development.

Member Induction

Each year, following the Authority AGM held in June, the Authority will hold an induction session open to all members. It will be compulsory for all new members or those returning after a period away from the Authority. All other members are encouraged to attend this session for their own development.

The Member induction will be delivered by the Head of Paid Service (CEO/CFO), Section 151 Officer (Treasurer), Monitoring Officer and Clerk, and will cover the following topics:

- Service structure, strategy, vision and purpose
- Key service developments
- Financial environment
- Interests and Gifts and Hospitality
- Code of Conduct
- Governance processes and Constitution

This will also serve as an opportunity for members to ask questions about any aspect of their role and the function of the authority and fire service. Following the annual induction session, all members will be provided with

Mandatory Training

The following training sessions will be mandatory for relevant members, but also open to all members if they wish to attend.

Members	Training Type	Frequency
All Authority (inc. Co-opted members)	Standards and Code of Conduct	Annual
	Effective Scrutiny and Oversight	
	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	
All Authority Chairs and Vice Chairs	Effective Chairing	Annual
New Members	Member Induction	Annual – with bespoke provision for those joining mid-year
Appointments, Standards and Appeals Committee	Interviewing and recruitment	Per recruitment process
	Pensions Law	Annual
Audit and Risk Committee members	Fraud	Annual
	Treasury Management	Annual

Station Visits

To aid member's development and as a core part of their role as local representatives, all elected Authority Members are expected to visit fire stations within their local area at least twice per year.

Every effort should be made to visit every station in their area over a reasonable timescale – members should not only visit stations closest to their own wards. It is recognised that some members cover a much wider number of stations than others, and it is expected that visits will be shared between all representatives for each local authority area.

Members may arrange these directly with their local station via their Ops Commander, or with the Democratic Services team.

A station visit will typically include an opportunity to meet with the on-duty crew, tour the station facilities, and discuss relevant local issues. Most visits will take at least two hours. Members can be accompanied by a senior officer or arrange their visit for an existing senior officer engagement session if they wish.

Members are encouraged to invite other councillors from their local authority to join them on station visits.

It is asked that members do not make unannounced visits to stations, and instead make arrangements with the Democratic Services team or their local Ops Commander.

When visiting stations members should be mindful of the [Member Code of Conduct](#) and [Protocol for Member and Employee Relations](#).

Annual Skills Audit

At the beginning of each year, Members will be asked to complete a skills audit (see [Appendix 1](#)), where they provide details of existing skills and experience, and identify additional training needs against a range of key skills.

This will form the basis of each member's one-to-one meeting with their Group Leader as part of their Personal Development.

Personal Development

Stage 1

In July of each year, members will be expected to attend a one-to-one meeting with their Group Leader to discuss their personal development objectives and identify any development requirements for the forthcoming municipal year.

As part of the Personal Development process, members will also be asked to look at their own individual learning styles to ensure that training and development activities can be delivered in a way that complements their identified learning style.

Personal Development meetings will be confidential. The Clerk will receive feedback on the training and development needs identified to enable a suitable programme of additional training and events to be developed that will meet members' needs beyond those compulsory sessions.

Stage 2

In January/February of each year, Members will be asked to look back on their performance and development over the year (i.e. since their Stage 1 PDR meeting and reviewing their Skills Audit) and review the progress they have made. This will be a paper exercise/self-assessment only; but members should discuss their progress with their Group Leader (which can be by way of a further one to one meeting if the member prefers). Group Leaders will need to alert the Clerk to any additional training and development needs that have been identified.

Additional Resources

Members are encouraged to make use of the wide range of resources available to support members online.

LGA E-learning

The LGA offers a range of online modules on [their e-learning platform](#), accessible to all councillors through free registration. These include:

- Audit Committees
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Facilitation and conflict resolution
- Influencing skills
- Local government finance
- Scrutiny for councillors
- Stress management and personal resilience

LGA Workbooks

The LGA also provide [downloadable workbooks](#) which members can complete when convenient. Many are linked to the e-learning modules. These include:

- Charing skills
- Effective opposition in local government
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Scrutiny of Finance
- Influencing Skills
- Local government finance

Centre for Governance and Scrutiny

The CfGS produce an authoritative publication on [effective audit and scrutiny of risk](#), as well as other research and resources.

Appendix 1 – West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority Member Skills Grid

Member Name:

Authority Skills

Please include details of training or qualifications undertaken or relevant experience against each of the relevant areas. This can be from your time on the Fire Authority, from your Local Authority, or from other roles. Also provide details of any perceived training and development needs in those areas.

Area	Existing Training/Experience	Relevant Dates	Training and Development Needs
Fire Service Legislation, Structure and Strategy			
Scrutiny and Oversight			
Finance, Audit, Fraud etc. (including Firefighter and Local Government Pensions)			
Chairing Meetings			

Risk			
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion			
Code of Conduct, Standards and Ethics			
Communications, Press engagement etc.			
Appointments and interviewing			

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Other Training and Skills

Please list any other relevant skills assessments, qualifications or training undertaken in the table below.

Qualification/Training/Experience	Relevant Dates
<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 48px; opacity: 0.3; transform: rotate(-30deg);">DRAFT</p>	