



WMFRA
West Midlands Fire and
Rescue Authority

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND
RESCUE AUTHORITY**

24 NOVEMBER 2025

REVIEW OF THE MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
For DECISION

Principal Officer of the Chief Fire Officer
Report of the Interim Clerk
Author: Democratic Services Officer

1. **PURPOSE**

- 1.1. To provide members with the opportunity to provide input into the draft Member Development Strategy that has been developed by Sarah Sprung, the Independent Peer from the Local Government Association on the Corporate Governance Improvement Board.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. That the authority **approve** the draft Member Development Strategy, found in **Appendix A** of this report including its appendices.
- 2.2. That the authority **approve** the implementation of a Member Development Steering Group and its Terms of Reference, found in Appendix
- 2.3. That the authority **approve** the draft Member Induction Programme, found in **Appendix B** of this report.

3. **OBJECTIVES & EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

- 3.1. The revised Member Development Strategy seeks to provide current and new members joining the Authority with the necessary skills and experience they need to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

3.2. The work conducted by Sarah Sprung from the Local Government Association and Independent Peer on the Corporate Governance Improvement Board has aligned the strategy with best practice across the country. It also addresses the recommendations highlighted within the Authorities Improvement Plan agreed at Fire Authority in June 2025.

4. **BACKGROUND**

4.1. The Member Development Strategy was last revised and approved by the Authority in December 2024. Following a review conducted by Ed Hammond, from CFGS, his report highlighted some issues around the skills and understanding of authority members. These findings were then incorporated in the Improvement Plan, overseen by the Corporate Governance Improvement Board, and agreed by the Authority in June 2025 and are as follows:

3. Enhance member and officer capability and development	
Action	Accountable Officer and Member
a) Strengthen the Member Development Strategy and Programme, to include some elements of compulsory training, to ensure all members are supported in acquiring key governance skills, and have capacity to effectively challenge officer decision making and recommendations (Statutory Recommendation 1 from EA)	Interim Clerk/Fire Authority Chair Key Contact: Governance Support Officer
b) Improve member understanding of corporate risk and the service’s Community Risk Management Plan as part of training and induction	Interim Clerk/Fire Authority Chair Key Contact: CRMP Manager
c) Introduce a programme of joint member/senior and statutory officer development	Chief Fire Officer/Fire Authority Chair Key Contact: SLT Support Manager

- 4.2. A full review of the Member Development Strategy was agreed, following an initial review of the existing strategy by the Corporate Governance Improvement Board in June 2025. Sarah Sprung kindly volunteered to oversee this review with the assistance of the Interim Clerk. A full re-write was taken to the Corporate Governance Improvement Board on 26 September where further feedback was provided. Revisions were made subsequent to the meeting following collaborative work with the Chair of the Authority and Cllr Chris Read, LGA National/Regional Peer for Labour. The Final revision was taken to the Board on 31 October 2025.
- 4.3. A further review by the Appointment, Standards and Appeals Committee (ASAC) took place on Monday 3 November. **Appendix A** reflects all amendments and feedback requested by both the Board and ASAC.
- 4.4. The revised draft includes proposals for necessary support mechanisms, to include a Member Development Steering Group and peer networking/training opportunities. A terms of reference for the steering group has been developed and can be found at **Appendix 2** within the strategy. The proposal also includes draft role-specific pathways found at **Appendix 3**, and a template experience audit which would replace the current, more limited skills grid and can be found at **Appendix 1** of the strategy.
- 4.5. **Appendix B** of the report includes a draft Member Induction Pack that looks to set out an annual programme of compulsory and voluntary training opportunities for all members and for specific committee members, as well as additional resources members can access and utilise in their own time.
- 4.6. Should the authority approve the draft strategy the following timeline would be aspired to:
- Establish the Member Development Steering Group (from November 2025)
 - Launch the Experience Audit and development conversations (Winter 2025/26)

- Publish the first Annual Member Development Report (June 2026)

5. **STRATEGY ALIGNMENT**

- 5.1. The revised strategy looks to enhance its members in order for them to carry out the critical role they play in shaping the strategic direction, governance, and accountability of the Fire and Rescue Service.

6. **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

- 6.1. No Equality impact assessment is required. When offering out relevant training, any special adjustments required to aid members will be incorporated on a case by case basis.
- 6.2. There will be a higher demand on both members and officers time to incorporate the training programme.

7. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. There are no direct legal implications arising from the content of this report.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. There will be a financial cost associated with the delivery of external training. It is expected that these will be met from within the existing Democratic Services Budget.

9. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. The majority of the training sessions will be held remotely to reduce the carbon impact from members travelling to Headquarters from across the West Midlands.

10. **CONSULTATION**

- 10.1. The Corporate Governance Improvement Board, which includes the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority, Leader of the Main Opposition and the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, have been

consulted on a regular basis. The Appointment, Standards and Appeals Committee has provided feedback prior to its submission.

11. **BACKGROUND PAPERS & APPENDICES**

- Appendix A – Draft Revised Member Development Strategy
- Appendix B – Draft Member Induction Pack
- [Fire Authority, Member Development Report, 09 December 2024 / Appendix A](#)
- [Fire Authority, Corporate Governance Improvement Plan and Centre for Governance Review, 16 June 2025 / Appendix A / Appendix B](#)
- [Appointment, Standards and Appeals Committee - 3 November 2025](#)

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