



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE  
FIRE AND RESCUE  
AUTHORITY**

Item 08

MEETING	Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority
DATE OF MEETING	9 March 2017
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Member development
STATUS OF REPORT	For open publication
PURPOSE OF REPORT	For consideration and approval
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>This report outlines a voluntary process for supporting Members in their role. It affords a personalised opportunity to increase understanding of a complex Service and to discuss areas of personal development that may wish to be pursued. The process outlined within this paper will both support individual Members and allow the Authority to demonstrate effective governance arrangements and alignment to the Adrian Thomas review. This may be the subject of interest by future government inspections.</p>
RISK ASSESSMENT	<p>Failure to have a structured process of Member development may weaken the overall governance arrangements agreed by the Authority or the external perception of them.</p>
COMMUNITY IMPACT	None for the purpose of this report
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS	None with this report
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>It is recommended that Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. consider and approve the Member development process</li> </ul>
APPENDICES	A: Principles of Good Governance from the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government

BACKGROUND PAPERS	Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (CIPFA/SOLACE, 2016)
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## 1 Background

- 1.1 It is well understood that Members of the Authority are elected by their residents and nominated by their respective Councils to serve on the Fire and Rescue Authority. This paper is therefore not challenging the accountability of these long-standing democratic arrangements but rather to offer voluntary opportunities to further help Members in their fundamental role in shaping and delivering fire and rescue services across the area covered by the Authority.
- 1.2 The proposal outlined in this paper avoids contradiction or duplication of effort with constituent Authorities. It will be complementary to roles in respective local Authorities. Member development needs to be both an individual and collective experience. Where appropriate, development will be individually targeted to Members who have so requested, but where it is beneficial to do so, these needs may influence the content of wider seminars or training events.

## 2 Current Member development arrangements

- 2.1 There are a number of existing arrangements that are in place or are in the process of strengthening. These include:
  - 2.1.1 **Induction.** All new Members to the Fire and Rescue Authority will be offered core induction development specific to their role. Thereafter induction is tailored according to the committees and groups on which they serve. This discussion may include the following:
    - Duties under the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004
    - Composition, powers and duties of committees
    - Standing Orders, procurement rules, financial regulations, delegations
    - Member/Officer protocol
    - Code of conduct
    - Other issuers raised by the Member
  - 2.1.2 Notwithstanding the above, new Members, and from time to time existing Members, are encouraged to attend and observe the other committees and working groups that ordinarily they are not members of.
    - **Specific training or awareness.** It is an on-going necessity for Chairs of committees to consider the development needs of new and existing Members. Where appropriate, they consider holding specific training events for committees for which they are responsible to steer. Members therefore receive training specific to their role sometimes through the events put on by the Service or their constituent Authorities; sometimes through external meetings or seminar/conference attendance. In some cases this is a requirement of the Authority (e.g. Appeals) and in other cases, is a demonstration of good governance. For example, all members of the

Finance, Governance and Audit Committee receive training at each of their meetings.

- The Head of Democratic Services is currently working with constituent Authorities and individual Members of the Authority to capture and centrally record this training both by the Service and constituent Authorities (where known).

2.1.3 **Workplace contact.** Members have been aligned to workplaces and invited to visit staff to understand key aspects of service delivery or support. These visits also allow introductions and relationships to be established with officers responsible for specific workplaces.

2.1.4 **Seminars and workshops.** In certain circumstances, it may be necessary or prudent to include items of specific interest within the annual seminar schedule. Sometimes these may be in response to changing pressures or expectations. These may include:

- National policy changes specific to public services
- Local issues associated to key partners
- Legislative change specifically aimed at the Fire and Rescue Service
- Awareness raising of key consultation issues
- Emerging issues identified within the strategic assessment

2.1.5 Where appropriate, relevant partners will also be invited and encouraged to attend development seminars to both learn from and contribute to the discussions.

### 3 Proposed personal Member development meetings

3.1 In order to further support Members, it is proposed that every two years a development meeting is offered on a voluntary and individual basis for all Members. This meeting would afford an opportunity to meet in confidence with their Group Leader and a representative of Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) to raise any issues of concern; areas where further clarity might be discussed; or areas of personal development. It would be an informal conversation and not a test.

3.2 Without wishing to be overly prescriptive, the conversation at the meeting might be framed by questions aligned to the Good Governance Standard for Public Services which the Authority has agreed to follow. This standard is the basis for the Authority's annual Statement of Assurance which accompanies the Statement of Accounts and is also a requirement under the National Framework. Appendix A is attached purely for information and guidance of what is expected under the principles of good governance.

3.3 Typical questions to help guide the informal conversation might include:

*Are there specific areas where you would like to provide more information; or have better support; or an improved approach towards:*

- *what the Service is trying to achieve or the values that it has adopted*
- *the workings of the Authority or role and responsibilities of Members and Senior Officers*
- *the code of conduct and the Officer/Member protocol*
- *the sufficiency of information provided to enable Members to make informed decisions and manage risk*
- *the effectiveness of communications with Members and with the public*
- *support in partnership working*
- *the value of seminars and learning events provided and suggestions for future seminars*
- *any other particular areas of frustration or improvement to support your role*
- *any personal development ambitions*

3.4 In order to capture the key points and actions, it is suggested that a brief note will be agreed with each Member and kept confidential. This note will be used to reflect development needs and ensure progress has been made for addressing these needs.

3.5 Following completion of all conversations, the Strategic Leadership Team will develop a consolidated action plan that seeks to address common themes. This action plan and seminar schedule will be formally discussed at the Finance, Governance and Audit Committee with a recommendation to the subsequent Authority. In this way a more efficient process of Authority wide learning may take place.

## **4 Summary & key points**

4.1 Although there is much in place, it is felt by the Governance Working Group, that it would be beneficial to provide a more personalised opportunity for individual Members to raise any specific areas of clarity; additional support; or thoughts about strengthening the workings of the Authority. The proposal is not aligned to any form of appraisal or performance process. Instead this proposal is a voluntary option for a secure personalised development offer to Members who wish to take up this opportunity. It will also help to both strengthen the governance of the Authority and be seen to be proactive in this important agenda.

4.2 Appendix A is attached purely for information and guidance of what is expected under the principles of good governance.

## Appendix A

### **Principles of Good Governance from the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (CIPFA/SOLACE, 2016)**

1. **Good governance means focusing on the organisation's purpose and on outcomes for citizens and service users**
  - Being clear about the organisation's purpose and its intended outcomes for citizens and service users
  - Making sure that users receive a high quality service
  - Making sure that taxpayers receive value for money
  
2. **Good governance means performing effectively in clearly defined functions and roles**
  - Being clear about the functions of the governing body
  - Being clear about the responsibilities of non-executives and the executive, and making sure that those responsibilities are carried out
  - Being clear about relationships between governors and the public
  
3. **Good governance means promoting values for the whole organisation and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour**
  - Putting organisational values into practice
  - Individual governors behaving in ways that uphold and exemplify effective governance
  
4. **Good governance means taking informed, transparent decisions and managing risk**
  - Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken
  - Having and using good quality information, advice and support
  - Making sure that an effective risk management system is in operation
  
5. **Good governance means developing the capacity and capability of the governing body to be effective**
  - Making sure that appointed and elected governors have the skills, knowledge and experience they need to perform well
  - Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group

- Striking a balance, in the membership of the governing body, between continuity and renewal

6. **Good governance means engaging stakeholders and making accountability real**

- Understanding formal and informal accountability relationships
- Taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public
- Taking an active and planned approach to responsibility to staff
- Engaging effectively with institutional stakeholders