



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE  
FIRE AND RESCUE  
AUTHORITY**

Item 21/14

MEETING	Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority
DATE OF MEETING	11 February 2021
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Local Government Association action plan and Member Development Programme
STATUS OF REPORT	For open publication
PURPOSE OF REPORT	To consider and note
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>In June 2019, the Authority commissioned the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a peer review of the Authority's governance arrangements. Their final report provided positive assurance on the Authority's governance arrangements and suggested six improvement areas for further consideration.</p> <p>The LGA report was formally presented to the Authority at its meeting on 30 September 2019, where an action plan was approved.</p> <p>The progress of this action plan was reviewed by Members at their Authority meetings in September and December 2019, with the majority of the actions delivered in February 2020.</p> <p>The concluding action which was in relation to Member development has now been complete, following a Members skills audit in January 2020.</p> <p>The proposed Member Development Programme for 2021-22 is attached as Appendix C to this report for Member approval.</p> <p>Upon approval, it is proposed that the LGA action plan is signed off as complete.</p>
RISK ASSESSMENT	Failure to have a structured process of Member development may weaken the overall governance arrangements agreed by the Authority.

COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	None for the purpose of this report
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS	None for the purpose of this report
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider and approve the proposed Member Development Programme for 2021-2022, as set out in Appendix C.</li> <li>2. Approve the closure of the LGA Peer Review Action Plan as set out in Appendix A</li> </ol>
BACKGROUND PAPERS	<p>Dorset &amp; Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority Report of the Local Government Association Peer Review on Governance  <a href="https://www.dwfire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Report-of-the-Local-Government-Association-Peer-Review-July-19.pdf">https://www.dwfire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Report-of-the-Local-Government-Association-Peer-Review-July-19.pdf</a></p> <p>Local Government Association Peer Review of the Authority's governance arrangements – Report to the Authority in September 2019  <a href="https://www.dwfire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/19-37-LGA-Peer-Review-Report.pdf">https://www.dwfire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/19-37-LGA-Peer-Review-Report.pdf</a></p> <p>Local Government Association Peer Review Progress Update – Report to the Authority in December 2019  <a href="https://www.dwfire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/19-52-Local-Government-Association-Peer-Review-Progress-Update.pdf">https://www.dwfire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/19-52-Local-Government-Association-Peer-Review-Progress-Update.pdf</a></p> <p>Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (CIPFA/SOLACE, 2016)</p> <p>Dorset &amp; Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority Member Development  <a href="https://www.dwfire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Member-development.pdf">https://www.dwfire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Member-development.pdf</a></p>
APPENDICES	<p>Appendix A – Local Government Association action plan</p> <p>Appendix B – DWFRM Member Development December 2018-December 2020</p>

	<b>Appendix C – Proposed 2021-2022 Member Development Programme</b>
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## **1. Background**

- 1.1 At its meeting on the 6 June 2019, the Authority agreed to commission the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake an independent bespoke governance peer review covering the following key areas:
- Review the effectiveness and efficiency of the current governance arrangements and structures associated with the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority
  - Review the current assurance framework and supporting procedure that underpins the annual Statement of Assurance required under the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, 2018
  - Review the quality of Member and Officer relations and clarity of respective roles
  - Review the scope of opportunity of Member development arrangements
  - Make recommendations for strengthening the current governance arrangements.
- 1.2 The LGA peer review took place over two days on 24 and 25 June 2019, with the final report published in July 2019.
- 1.3 The LGA report, which provided the Authority with positive assurance of their governance arrangement, was formally presented to Members at the Authority meeting in September 2019. As part of this meeting Members approved several improvement actions, which are detailed within Appendix A, the Local Government Association action plan.

## **2. Local Government Association action plan progress**

- 2.1 Members have received reports on the positive progress of the actions during their Authority meetings in September and December 2019, with a number of recommendations being complete within the February 2020 meeting.
- 2.2 An overview of delivery against each of the agreed actions is provided within Appendix A. Which highlights the concluding actions:
- Complete a Members' skills audit to understand Member development requirement for 2020 onwards
  - Offer Member development sessions after full Authority meetings, rather than the Finance & Audit Committee meetings
  - Review the use of technology for Member Development. For example, recording sessions so that Members can access the training they are unable to attend.
- 2.3 To conclude the delivery of this action plan Members are asked to consider and approve the Member Development Programme, which has been designed following the completion of a Members skills audit.

### **3. Member development**

- 3.1 The Authority's Member development arrangements, which support Members in shaping and governing the functions of the fire and rescue service, were last reviewed in December 2018 and are included within the Members Handbook.
- 3.2 In setting the Member development arrangements, Members agreed that development opportunities needed to be both an individual and collective experience and that these should be provided in a variety of forms.
- 3.3 The full programme of Member development, which has taken place between December 2018 and December 2020, included opportunities through Member Seminars, information sessions, eLearning, development meetings and external opportunities. Full details are provided within Appendix B to this paper.
- 3.4 As part of the LGA action plan a Members' skills audit was carried out in January 2020, which took the form of an electronic survey. This audit has been used to support the development of the proposed future Member Development Programme.
- 3.5 Although the coronavirus pandemic has delayed the progression of the new programme, the move to virtual meetings has opened the opportunity for remote information sessions. Provided through Microsoft Teams, these will enable the recording of the live events, with the opportunity for Members who are unable to attend to receive the information at a convenient time.

### **4. Summary and next steps**

- 4.1 The LGA action plan, derived following the LGA peer review of the Authority, has been brought to Members for confirmation of completion and approval of its closure.
- 4.2 Furthermore, the proposed Member Development Programme for 2021-2022, captured within Appendix C to this paper and aligned to the recent Members skills audit, is due to commence from June 2021, following Member approval.
- 4.3 Upon approval, the Service's Democratic Services team will begin preparations, which will include programming sessions for Member attendance and ensuring access levels to eLearning facilities.

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