



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Item 23/27

MEETING	Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority
DATE OF MEETING	14 June 2023
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Proposed changes to the Members Handbook and Seminar Programme 2023/24
STATUS OF REPORT	For open publication
PURPOSE OF REPORT	To note and approve
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>Some aspects of the Members Handbook have been reviewed to ensure good governance is maintained and where necessary enhanced.</p> <p>The proposed amendments relate to a general update to Officer roles, meeting dates and Members' details. They include amendments to the schedule of Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee meetings, as well as learning and suggested improvements drawn from disciplinary processes that have occurred during 2022/23 that have required Member involvement.</p> <p>The report also sets out a proposal for the 2023/24 Members seminar programme.</p>
RISK ASSESSMENT	The proposed amendments will help to ensure the Authority is maintaining good governance, efficient decision-making arrangements, and effective Member development opportunities.
COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	None for the purposes of this report
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS	None for the purposes of this report

RECOMMENDATIONS	Members are asked to approve the proposed: i. Amendments as set out in the report ii. Seminar programme for 2023/24
BACKGROUND PAPERS	None
APPENDIX	A. Terms of Reference Appointments and Disputes Committee and Terms of Reference Appeals Committee
REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT	Name: Jonathan Mair, Clerk & Monitoring Officer Email: Jonathan.mair@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Tel no: 01305 224181

1. Introduction

- 1.1 To ensure the Authority maintains good governance, some aspects of the Members Handbook have been reviewed. As well as a number of general updates, there are proposed changes to the schedule of meetings for the Local Performance and Scrutiny Committees, as well as suggested changes to incorporate the learning from disciplinary and grievance matters involving Members.
- 1.2 This report also provides Members with the proposed seminar programme for 2023-24.

2. Appointments and Disputes Committee

- 2.1 As Clerk & Monitoring Officer I am proposing that the membership to the Appointments and Disputes Committee is reduced from five Members to four and with the quorum of three. It is proposed that this remains on political proportionality and where appropriate and possible is also gender balanced.

Membership: Number of Members: any four members appointed on a politically proportionate basis and where appropriate and possible is gender balanced. The Appointments and Disputes Committee has no standing membership. Instead, members will be appointed from amongst the whole membership of the Authority as the need to meet arises. Quorum: 3

3. Appeals Committee

- 3.1 It is proposed that the following changes are made to the terms of reference for the Appeals Committee, section 2.4 page 42 to ensure the scope of the committee's responsibilities are clear. The proposed rewording of the paragraph is below:

*Where the policies of the Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) provide for any member of staff conditioned to the Grey Book or the Green book, to appeal to elected members **against dismissal or termination**, the role of the Appeals Committee is to hear and determine the appeal whether **the dismissal or termination** is for a disciplinary matter, ill health, redundancy, or some other substantial reason.*

- 3.2 It is proposed that the following paragraph replaces the previous within the terms of reference for the Appeals Committee. This relates to the Gold Book with reference to an appeal against a discipline or grievance decision.

*Where the policies of the Authority provide for any member of staff conditioned to the Gold Book to appeal to elected members against a **disciplinary or grievance** decision (including a decision of the Appointments and Disputes Committee) then any such appeal shall be to the Appeals Committee.*

- 3.3 It is also proposed that the membership to the Appeals Committee is reduced from five Members to four and with a quorum of three. It is proposed that this remains on political proportionality and where appropriate and possible is also gender balanced.

Membership: Number of Members: any four members appointed on a politically proportionate basis and where appropriate and possible is gender balanced. The Appeals Committee has no standing membership. Instead, members will be appointed from amongst the whole membership of the Authority as the need to meet arises.
Quorum: 3

4. Scheme of delegation

- 4.1 It is proposed that the word 'controversial' is removed from paragraph 4.6 in section 3.5, page 131.

4.6 Delegated decisions must not involve the adoption of a new policy or major extension of an existing policy and shall exclude any instance where the magnitude or controversial nature of a proposal is such that responsibility for the decision should be taken by the full Authority. Key decisions must be referred to Members for a collective decision.

5. Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee

- 5.1 It is proposed that the May cycle of the Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee (LPS) meetings are removed from the meeting schedule. There is the potential each year for at least one or more constituent authority election to be taking place. This inevitably has an impact on the attendance at the associated LPS meeting, and the ability for it to operate within quorum. To ensure efficiency and good governance, it is recommended that the performance reports for this quarter are available to Members, but the meeting does not take place in May. The terms of reference would be amended to reflect that meetings will run in August/September, November and February/March each year.

6. Member seminar programme

- 6.1 To help ensure that Members are aware of national and local issues, a number of seminars take place throughout the year. These generally precede the Authority meetings. Members were invited to attend the following seminars in 2022/23:

- 20 January 2022 Finance Seminar
- 26 May White Paper on fire reform
- 27 July Training provision
- 29 September Local Resilience Forums and Business Continuity
- 14 December Finance Seminar
- 20 January 2023 Finance Seminar

6.2 It is proposed that the programme for 2023/24 is as set out below:

- 14 June 2023 Independent review - verbal update
- 28 September National Modernisation – an update
- 12 December Finance Seminar
- 17 January 2024 Finance Seminar/draft Community Safety Plan
- 8 February Environmental responsibilities

7. Summary

7.1 Subject to approval these amendments will be updated on the electronic handbook available on the Service's website. The Chair and Chief Fire Officer will ensure all new Authority Members are aware of the revised handbook through the programmed induction process.