



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Item 26/45

MEETING	Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority
DATE OF MEETING	29 September 2026
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Proposed changes to the Members' Handbook and Seminar Programme 2026/27
STATUS OF REPORT	For open publication
PURPOSE OF REPORT	To note and approve
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	To ensure good governance is maintained and where necessary enhanced, the Members' Handbook has been reviewed. There are a number of changes necessary that are routine in nature such as changes to Officer roles, meeting dates, Members' details and to various figures contained within the Handbook, for example Members' Allowances. This paper includes proposals to make the following substantive update to the Members' Handbook: • Add a section pertaining to Member pensions as they relate to Service on the Fire Authority. Additionally, a review of the training and development available to Members has been undertaken, and a programme of Member seminars has been formulated on the basis of this review.
RISK ASSESSMENT	The proposed amendments to the Handbook will help to ensure the Authority is maintaining good governance and efficient decision-making arrangements. The proposed schedule of Members' seminars will ensure the continued delivery of effective Member development opportunities.
COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	None for the purposes of this report

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	None for the purposes of this report
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS	None for the purposes of this report
RECOMMENDATIONS	Members are asked to: 1. Review and approve the proposed change to the Members' Handbook. 2. Review and approve the proposed schedule of Members' seminars.
BACKGROUND Papers	None
APPENDICES	None
REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT	Name: Vikki Shearing, Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority Email: Vikki.shearing@dwfire.org.uk Tel No: 01722 691000

1. Introduction

- 1.1 To ensure the Authority maintains good governance arrangements, some sections of the Members' Handbook have been reviewed. The principal update to the Handbook on this occasion involves the inclusion of a section relating the Local Government Pension Scheme as it relates to Fire Authority Members.
- 1.2 The Members' Handbook is regularly checked for accuracy, and routine corrections and updates are made throughout each municipal year as a result. Substantive updates, as set out in this report, are approved by the Fire Authority yearly.
- 1.3 Additionally, this report provides Members with the proposed seminar programme for 2026-27, which has been developed following a review of the training and development available to Fire Authority Members.

2. Changes to the Members' Handbook

Local Government Pension Scheme - Elected Member Pensions

- 2.1 A section 2.11 has been added to the Members' Handbook to provide details and information regarding Members' right to enrol in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) as a Fire Authority Member from 11 May 2026.
- 2.2 Members are not automatically enrolled into the LGPS in relation to their service on the Fire Authority and must opt in by contacting the Service's pensions team. A Member's Fire Authority pension is distinct from any LGPS pension held in relation to service on one of the constituent councils.
- 2.3 Pensionable pay for elected Fire Authority Members consists of:
 - Basic allowance
 - Special responsibility allowance (SRA)
 - Other relevant allowances
 - Salary (where applicable)
 - But will exclude travel and subsistence allowances

3. Member Seminar Programme

- 3.1 To help ensure that Members are sufficiently informed and engaged regarding the current work of and context surrounding the Service, a number of Member seminars have typically taken place throughout each municipal year.
- 3.2 These seminars generally take place following meetings of the Fire and Rescue Authority. This has made efficient use of both Members' and Officers' time, whilst affording sufficient opportunities each year to deliver a comprehensive and relevant programme of information and development to Fire Authority Members.

- 3.3 A review of the training and development provided or available to Members by the Authority's constituent councils, the Local Government Association (LGA), and the Service has identified no substantial gaps in the training available to Members in terms of the routine work of a local authority member.
- 3.4 The areas of engagement and training in which Fire Authority Members may, based upon the review of the current provision, benefit from a greater degree of knowledge are:
- the practical operation of the Service, internally and with partners
 - the contemporary and emerging issues faced by the sector
 - fire service finance.
- 3.5 The existing Members' seminar format will be used for the purposes of delivering the training and information that Members require. These Seminars are usually held at the closure of Fire and Rescue Authority meetings, or on-line. Member seminars make efficient use of time and resources, and do not duplicate training and information provided to Members via the constituent authorities or the LGA.
- 3.6 It is proposed that the Members' seminar programme for 2026/27 be agreed as set out below:

29 September 2026	FRA Member Governance
8 December 2026	Protection – increased expectations
25 January 2027	Finance (online)
11 February 2027	FRS National and emerging issues
15 June 2027	FRS collaboration and partnerships

- 3.7 To develop Members awareness of the Service, workplace visits can be arranged in advance through Democratic Services to take place following Local Performance and Scrutiny meetings as required.

4. Summary

- 4.1 Subject to approval by Members, the substantive amendment set out in this report will be made to the electronic version of the Members' Handbook, which is available on the Service's website.
- 4.2 Subject to approval by Members, the proposed schedule of Members' seminars set out in this report will be delivered throughout the 2026-27 municipal year.