



# **Member Development Strategy 2012-2014**

**Draft: March 2012**

# **Cheshire Fire Authority Member Development Strategy 2012- 2014**

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## **1. Introduction**

The Member Development Strategy provides the framework for future Member support and development and forms the basis of an effective Member Induction Programme.

Following the Authority's accreditation to level 1 of the North West Charter for Elected Member Development the emphasis of the Strategy for 2012-14 will be on continuous development and improvement. The Strategy will also include objectives to assist the Authority in achieving Level 2 of the Charter.

The Strategy aims to make a contribution to achieving the Service's vision and the key aims and organisational objectives of the Integrated Risk Management Plan. Members are an integral part of the progress made towards achieving the Service's Vision and it is important to ensure that Members are equipped with the skills required to fulfil this role.

## **2. Aims of the Strategy**

The overall aim of the Strategy is to ensure that all Members have access and undertake adequate training and development opportunities to better enable them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities as Fire Authority Members and to engage and have an impact on their communities through this role.

Key aims include

- Provision of a clear framework for the development of Members based upon their individual needs and the needs of the Authority as a whole
- Ensuring Members have the skills and knowledge necessary to meet their needs to fulfil their roles and are fully aware of their responsibilities and accountabilities
- To support the continued development of Members
- To ensure a consistent approach to Member Development

The Strategy confirms the Authority's commitment to learning and development for Member and sets out some of the main activities that will be undertaken to support Member development.

Fire Authority Members also have a responsibility to commit to undertaking training and development activities identified which will enable them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities as Fire Authority Members.

### **3. Key Objectives**

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that all Members are trained and developed to fulfil their roles on the Fire Authority and ensure that the following objectives are met:

- **Identify and prioritise Members Training & Development Needs through Personal Development Reviews;**
- **Provision of an Annual Member Development Programme that is in line with priorities identified and within available resources;**
- **Delivery of a comprehensive and effective Induction process for new Members;**
- **Review of evaluation/feedback process to be able to clearly identify the Authority and Community outcomes;**
- **Establish Member mentor roles;**
- **Ensure that there is an emphasis on continuous development and improvement for Members and work towards attainment of North West Charter for Elected Members – Level 2.**

The following actions will be undertaken to assist in the implementation of the Strategy in line with the key objectives:

#### **3.1 Members Personal Development Plans**

All Fire Authority Members will complete an annual Personal Development Plan. This will be carried out within the Personal Development Review process through which training and development plans will be agreed with each Member.

Development needs identified will be prioritised and key themes identified will be fed into the annual Member Development Programme.

#### **3.2 Delivery of Member Development Programme**

Members nominated to the Cheshire Fire Authority will already undertake Member Development Programmes within their own Local Authority, but as a Member of the Cheshire Fire Authority, Members must undertake specific learning and development programmes in connection with their roles on the Fire Authority.

- **Member Training and Development Programme** - will be drawn up based on inputs from several sources. These will include formal learning needs analysis, Members' own personal development plans, suggestions from Officers/Members, Budget and IRMP proposals, new legislation, central Government and local initiatives, partnership working, and other

external influences. All training and development activities provided for Members will be consistent with, and support, the Fire Authority's Strategy and Service Policies.

- **Joint Training** - Cheshire Fire Authority will offer to collaborate with Constituent Authorities and other Fire Authorities in the delivery of joint Member training activities and to promote the sharing of best practice.
- **Monitoring** - Progress against the plan will be monitored by the Member Training and Development Group on a quarterly basis. The group will also review the Programme annually to ensure that it remains in line with the Authority's Strategy and Service Policies and the Governance Framework. Regular monitoring of the programme will assist to ensure that the changing needs of Fire Authority Members are reflected in the Programme. The Member Training and Development Group will also ensure that activities, when proposed, meet Members' needs and are scheduled and delivered appropriately and effectively.

### **3.3 Delivery of Induction Programme**

Cheshire Fire Authority is committed to ensuring that all new Members are supported when they join the Authority through an effective induction process. The induction process will include an induction programme for new Members which will be supported by the provision of a generic information pack. This process was implemented in 2011/12 and a review of the process will be undertaken once the 2011/12 programme has been delivered.

- **Members Induction Programme** – will consist of a programme of sessions to provide an overview of Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service and the Fire Authority. Core modules for new Members such as Health & Safety and Equality & Diversity will also be included to ensure that new Members are clear on their roles and responsibilities as Fire Authority Members in these key areas.
- **Members Information Pack** - will provide sufficient information for Members new to fire and rescue responsibilities to begin their role. It will include key contact details, information on the terms of reference and constitution for all the Authority's meetings, calendar of meetings, together with details of the various forms/declarations which Members are required to complete.
- **Members Handbook** - will provide more detailed information on the various departments/functions of the Authority together with other general information in respect of regional and national Fire & Rescue Service issues. This will be updated and provided for all Members on an annual basis following the Fire Authority's AGM.
- **Buddy System** – the Officer/Member Buddy system provides an alignment of elected Members to members of the Service Management team (SMT), to provide information and support on a range of Service,

Policy and Organisational issues. Officer buddies are available to Members for the purpose of developing their overall knowledge of fire and rescue. Where possible, buddies will provide answers to questions and queries themselves or after consulting colleagues.

- **Members' Intranet Pages** - a Members section on the Service's Intranet will be made available, where an electronic copy of the Members' Handbook will be kept, along with other relevant information.

### **3.4 Review and Evaluation of Programmes**

Member Development activities need to meet the requirements of both Members and the Authority. Constant evaluation and review of the programmes offered should ensure that these requirements are being met. The Authority needs to ensure that Value for Money is obtained and the benefits/impacts to Members, the Authority and the Community can be measured.

It is essential to know how effective and appropriate any training and development exercise has been and it is important that all courses are analysed in terms of relevance and effectiveness. Receiving feedback from those involved is a key factor in ensuring that value has been derived by the individual and promotes continuous improvement of the programme. The following processes are in place to ensure that the programmes offered are constantly reviewed and evaluated:

- Each Member will be requested to complete an evaluation form upon the training and development which has been undertaken. The evaluation forms will be collated and monitored by Democratic Services. Members attending external conferences/ seminars can provide feedback to Democratic Services (as appropriate)
- Newly Elected Members will be requested to provide feedback, towards the end of their first year, on the effectiveness of the Induction Programme.
- A synopsis of the evaluation received will be submitted to the Member Development and Training Group as a regular agenda item, so it is able to take account of Members' feedback.
- The Personal Development Plan review process will give Members the opportunity to reflect on how the training they have received has impacted upon them and their performance. Where relevant, comments can be fed back to the Member Development Group.
- A review of the current processes will be undertaken to improve the feedback provided to help shape future Member Development Programmes and to identify positive outcomes for Members, the Authority and the Community.

### **3.5 Member Mentoring Scheme**

The Member Training and Development Group will explore the possibility of developing a Member Mentoring Scheme. The following activities will be required to develop the scheme:

- Agree the Authority's approach to Member Mentoring;
- Develop a framework which will identify training and support available and provide guidance for both mentees and mentors on how the scheme will operate.

### **3.6 Continuous Development**

The Authority were awarded the North West Charter for Elected Members – Level 1 in 2011. This award recognised the Authority's commitment to Member Development and North West Employers had noted that this was an exemplary submission. They did also note, however, that maintaining such a high standard would be a key challenge for the Authority and stressed the importance of continuous improvement and development.

The Authority will be reassessed for Level 1 in 2014 so will need to ensure that the key principles are maintained. Work will also be carried out to assess the requirements to meet the criteria for Level 2 of the Charter with a view to achieving level 2 by 2014. The following activities have been identified to assist with this objective:

- The effectiveness of the Strategy and existing development activities will continually be monitored and reviewed;
- Carry out a self-assessment on the Authority's progress towards Level 2 of the Charter and develop and implement an action plan.

## **4 Role of Member Training and Development Group**

The Member Training and Development Group is responsible for advising the Fire Authority on the development, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy and also ensuring that the Member Development Programme is developed in line with the Strategy.

The cross-party group comprises of four Members and one Independent Member and reports directly to the Fire Authority on matters relating to Members Training and Development. The Group will present an annual report to the Authority in respect of Member Development activities.

## **5. Implementation and Review of the Strategy**

A report on all appropriate aspects of the Member Development Strategy and Programme will be presented to and considered by the Member Training and Development Group on an annual basis. The Group will consider the effectiveness of all aspects of the implementation of the Member Development Strategy, its requirements and the need for any modifications. Any revisions which are required will be made following this review and reported to the Fire Authority.

An Implementation Plan for the Strategy has been developed at Appendix 1. The implementation plan will be monitored by the Member Training and Development Group.

## **6. Outcomes**

Following the successful implementation of the Strategy, key outcomes that will be achieved are:

- Highly motivated, trained and developed Members;
- Members possessing the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to effectively fulfil their roles and responsibilities within the Fire Authority;
- Equality of opportunity in the delivery of training and development.

Outcomes will be measured through the evaluation and monitoring of both the Strategy and the Member Development programme as detailed in the Strategy. The review of the evaluation process should assist in improving the measurement of outcomes and the impact of the programme on Members, the Authority and the Community. Members Training records and Personal Development Plans will also assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the Member Development Strategy in meeting the key outcomes.

## Appendix 1

### Member Development – Implementation Plan

The implementation plan will be produced, managed and co-ordinated by the Democratic Services section and will be monitored quarterly by the Member Training and Development Group.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officers</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
1. Identify and prioritise Members Training and Development Needs	1.1 Complete Annual Personal Development Plans for all Members	Learning and Development Manager	Dec -12 Dec -13
	1.2 Carry out Training Needs Analysis based on outcomes of PDRs and Members PDPs and develop a programme for delivery of needs based on priorities.	Learning and Development Manager	Feb-12 Feb-13
2. Provision of an Annual Training Programme that is in line with priorities identified and within available resources.	2.1 Develop Annual Member Development Programme which complements the training needs identified	Democratic Services Manager/Member Training and Development Group (MTDG)	June-12 June-13
	2.2 Explore the provision of Joint Training with other Fire Authorities and constituent Authorities	Democratic Services Manager MDTG	On-going
	2.3 Produce a quarterly monitoring report on the delivery of the programme for submission to the Member Training and Development Group	Democratic Services Manager	2012 -14 Jun Sept Dec Mar

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officers</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
<b>3. Deliver of a comprehensive and effective Induction process for new Members</b>	<b>3.1 Provision of Induction Programme for New Members</b>	<b>Democratic Services Manager</b>	<b>June-12 June-13</b>
	<b>3.2 Provision of Information Pack for New Members (on appointment to Fire Authority)</b>	<b>Democratic Services Manager</b>	<b>June-12 June-13</b>
	<b>3.3 Annually update Members Handbook and distribute to all Members</b>	<b>Democratic Services Manager</b>	<b>July-12 July-13</b>
	<b>3.4 Annually review the Member/Officer Buddy System to ensure it remains effective</b>	<b>Democratic Services Manager</b>	<b>July-12 July-13</b>
	<b>3.5 Develop a Members Page on the CFRS Intranet</b>	<b>Democratic Services Manager/ Corporate Communications</b>	<b>??</b>
<b>4. Review of Evaluation and Feedback Process to be able to clearly identify the Authority and Community outcomes</b>	<b>4.1 Review of current evaluation process to be undertaken in 2012/13</b>	<b>Democratic Services Manager MDTG</b>	<b>Dec-12</b>
<b>5. Member Mentoring Scheme</b>	<b>5.1 Introduction of Member Mentoring Scheme - Development of Framework</b>	<b>Democratic Services Manager MDTG</b>	<b>Dec-12</b>

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Key Actions</u>	<u>Responsible Officers</u>	<u>Target Date</u>
<b>6. Continuous Development and work towards the attainment of NW Charter for Elected Members</b>	<b>6.1 Produce quarterly monitoring reports in respect of the Strategy's implementation plan for MTDG</b>	<b>Democratic Services Manager</b>	<b>2012 -14 Jun Sept Dec Mar</b>
	<b>6.2 Present an annual report on Member Development activities to the Fire Authority</b>	<b>Democratic Services Manager MTDG</b>	<b>Jun-12 Jun-13</b>
	<b>6.3 Carry out an annual review of MD Strategy</b>	<b>Democratic Services Manager MTDG</b>	<b>Jun-13</b>
	<b>6.4 Carry out a self-assessment on the Authority's progress towards level 2 of the Charter based on the criteria provided by NW Employers</b>	<b>Democratic Services Manager</b>	<b>Jun-12</b>
	<b>6.5 Implementation of action plan on the work required for achieving Level 2</b>	<b>Democratic Services Manager MTDG</b>	<b>Jun-13</b>