

# ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>30 JULY 2020</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>MEMBER DEVELOPMENT 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT AND ACTION PLAN</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>KATIE MILLS, HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR PAULINE HELLIAR-SYMONS</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>NOTE</b>

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To receive an Annual Report on Member Development activities 2019/20 and Action Plan for 2020-2023.
- 1.2 Following approval of the Member Development Strategy in October 2019, the Member Development Working Group has met to develop an Action Plan to support its delivery.
- 1.3 The 2020-23 Member Development Action Plan sets out courses and activities aimed at all Fire Authority Members to successfully achieve the three-year Member Development Strategy.
- 1.4 This report is seeking the Committee to note 2019/20 Member Development activities and the three year Member Development Action Plan.

## **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **NOTE** the Member Development Annual Report; and
- 2.2 **NOTE** the 2020/23 Member Development Action Plan (Appendix A).

## **3. REPORT**

- 3.1 In 2019/20, the Fire Authority has seen its largest number of new Member appointments in recent times (eight in June 2019 and one in January 2020). The Member induction process was reviewed and refined in 2019/20 with the introduction of a three hour individual session with the Chief Fire Officer, Head

of Finance and Procurement and Head of Corporate Services, as opposed to a single group session, for each Member. Each new Member attended their Induction for a brief on the Strategic direction set by the Fire Authority, information on the financial pressures and issues facing the Fire and Rescue Service and details about governance arrangements and Democratic Support. The feedback received from each Member was positive as they felt they received a good general introduction to the Fire and Rescue Service.

- 3.2 Each new Member was also assigned an officer Buddy, a member of the Senior Leadership Team that would be their first port of call for questions about the Service outside of Committee meetings and the Fire Authority.
- 3.3 At the beginning of the Municipal Year, 1:1 meetings were held between Group Leaders and members of their Groups to capture their vast range of skills and to identify whether the development opportunities offered as part of the Action Plan covered specific needs. In addition, Members were required to complete a skills questionnaire which formed the basis of their 1:1 meeting.
- 3.4 Fourteen Members attended 1:1s with their Group Leaders between September and October 2019. An analysis was undertaken on the skills questionnaires received and used to inform the development of a Member Development programme of activities.
- 3.5 For example, at the beginning of the year, one Member expressed their wish to learn more about the budget and financial implications of the Service. This individual attended additional briefings with the Head of Finance and Procurement to further develop their understanding of the financial pressures the Service faces. All Members have been given the opportunity to understand in greater detail the budget pressures via the Members' Workshop and budget briefings.
- 3.6 Member Development courses and activities have become embedded as business as usual. Table 1 outlines the courses offered and the number of Members that were in attendance.
- 3.7 Members are asked to note that although there is low attendance on some of the courses and activities in Table 1, this is due to some Members attending those courses in 2018/19.
- 3.8 Understanding the Financing of the Fire Authority course was replaced this year by regular budget briefings held with Members in the lead up to the February 2020, Fire Authority meeting instead.
- 3.9 Only one person completed Protecting Information and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion e-learning courses. Democratic Support will look at ways to improve this uptake in these areas during the next Municipal Year.
- 3.10 Although Table 1 focuses on the courses offered during the year, it would be remiss not to mention the successful 'Getting to Know RBFRS' event, which was held on 11 October 2019. The majority of Fire Authority Members, West

Berkshire Chairman, Wokingham and Bracknell Mayors and other distinguished guests attended the event to promote and raise awareness of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service. The event received positive feedback from all those who attended and, in particular, Members commented on the new learning from the event.

- 3.11 The Local Governance Association (LGA) – Leadership Essentials was the only courses that were provided externally and held at Warwick Conferences, Coventry. The courses were fully subsidised which included accommodation, meals, course materials and tuition. The course is aimed at Fire Authority Members with varied experience and looks specifically at strategic issues facing the fire sector, building safety, the fire inspections regime and the emerging issues of culture, inclusion and diversity in the fire sector.
- 3.12 Members completed a Member Development Survey on the courses offered throughout 2019/20. The survey was completed by 16 of the 20 Fire Authority members. The survey highlighted that the Member Strategy Workshop was the most attended course. All members who completed the survey stated that the frequency of courses offered was ‘about right’.

**Table 1**

<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Facilitators</b>	<b>Attendance 2018/19</b>	<b>Attendance 2019/20</b>
1:1 with Group Leaders	Group Leaders Cllrs Dudley, Gittings and Shepherd- DuBey	14	14
Thames Valley Fire Control Visit	TVFCS	7	5
Understanding the financing of the Fire Authority	RBFRS	6	Cancelled
Healthy Organisation and Wellbeing	RBFRS	Cancelled	5
Modern.gov App	RBFRS	3	2
NEW Safety at Home and Understanding Safe and Well Visits	RBFRS	Not available	6
Understanding the Fire Authority Core Skills (maximum 2 Members per session)	RBFRS	2	3
New Member Induction	RBFRS	4	9
Strategy Workshop October	RBFRS	14	12
Colour Profiles	e-Learning	Not circulated	3
Protecting Information	e-Learning	0	1
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	e-Learning	Not available	1
Local Government Association - Leadership Essentials (September 2019 and February 2020)		N/A	2
Combined Fire Authorities Conference		1	Not available

- 3.13 On 24 October 2019, the Fire Authority approved 2020/23 Member Development Strategy which is aligned to the [Corporate Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan 2019/23](#) (min reference 25).
- 3.14 The Action Plan outlines courses and activities all Fire Authority Members will be invited to attend over the next three years to support the delivery of the Strategy.
- 3.15 Courses and activities such as Understanding the Financing of the Fire Authority, Control Room visits and Healthy Organisation and Wellbeing have been taken from the 2017-2019 Action Plan and transferred into the 2020-2023 Action Plan in order to ensure new Members will be offered the same level of training and development as current Members.
- 3.16 Towards the end of 2019, a new course was introduced, Safety at Home. This course provided smoke alarm safety advice, looked at ways of protecting your home and loved ones from kitchen related fires and advice on electric cooking appliances; which cause most accidental dwelling fires and provides an insight in the work of our Prevention Teams. Six Fire Authority Members have attended this course to date and will continue to be offered to all Members during the Action Plan period.
- 3.17 During the year RBFRRS internal auditors, RSM gave their audit opinion of substantial assurance on risk and governance to Audit and Governance Committee on 27 January 2020. They noted Member Development Action Plan were consistent with 1:1 meetings held with Members and the work that had been undertaken in relation to Member Development.
- 3.18 Some courses in 2020/21 may be offered as remote meetings subject to the government social distance measures of the day. **Appendix B** shows the dates of the planned programme of courses throughout the year. All Members will be invited to attend each course and particular attention will be made to newly appointed Members and those Members that have not attended Member Development sessions to date.
- 3.19 Courses attended in the 2020/21 Municipal Year and beyond will require Members to complete a feedback form at the end of each session to further capture comments to improve the course content.

#### **4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

- 4.1 All Strategic Commitments are supported by the Member Development Programme.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 A number of training and development activities were provided internally by RBFRRS officers.

- 5.2 LGA courses attended were fully subsidised at no extra cost to the Fire Authority. Joint training opportunities would continue to be sought with Unitary Authorities to minimise costs. On the event of the requirement to fund a new external course in 2020/21 funding can be obtained via the central training fund should a business need arise.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 None specified.

**7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training will form part of the Member Development Programme.

**8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 None specified.

**9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

- 9.1 As outlined in the Member Development Strategy, we will continue to identify opportunities to work with partners to deliver the Member Development programme where possible.

**10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 Statutory officers and the Senior Leadership Team have been consulted in the development report.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 Fire Authority minutes 24 October 2019 (not attached).  
11.2 Member Development Strategy 2020-23

**12. APPENDICES**

- 12.1 **Appendix A** - Member Development Action Plan  
12.2 **Appendix B** – Programme of Member Development Courses in 2020/21

**13. CONTACT DETAILS**

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