

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority  
14 December 2022

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**REPORT LEAD:** ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER

**SUBJECT:** NEW MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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Background Papers: FRA Executive report from 26 May entitled Independent Review of Governance See [HERE](#)  
FRA report from 7 June on the Member Development Programme See [HERE](#)  
FRA Executive report from 22 June on Final Resourcing Options for Monitoring Officer role See [HERE](#)  
FRA report from 20 July entitled Independent Review of Governance see [HERE](#)  
FRA report from 8 September 2022 entitled Monitoring Officer Report See [HERE](#)  
FRA report from 31 October entitled FRA's Action Plan Following LGA Governance Review  
FRA Executive Report from 15 November 2022 entitled Revised Governance Action Plan and Timetable  
See [HERE](#)

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**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to present members of the Fire & Rescue Authority (FRA) with a new Member Development Programme that reflects the LGA's independent review of governance and subsequent discussions. The programme is a result of Member discussion and agreement at the FRA Executive committee meeting on 15 November 2022.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Members acknowledge the content of this paper and:

- Members consider, comment on and agree the new Member Development Programme.

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 The Local Government Association's independent review of governance has been an inclusive and engaging process. The Authority now has a clear route map to move forward.
- 1.2 In particular, the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) will work with senior officers to develop the Member Development Programme.

## 2. Background

2.1 The LGA's Joint Member and Officer Workshop held on 6 October 2022 was a culmination of a programme of development and support activities as follows:

- A desktop document review of Bedfordshire FRA Governance Documents conducted by Shahin Ismail, Monitoring Officer at Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Separate diagnostic sessions for Members and Officers:
- Member Discovery Session on 8 September 2022; and
- Officer Discovery Session on 14 September 2022.

2.2 Key themes from the Discovery Sessions according to the LGA are:

- clarifying of the governance roles and responsibilities including the Remit of the executive; role of portfolio/challenge groups; role of non-executive members; and build in the Monitoring Officer function;
- clarifying the Scrutiny process including who does it, how, when, and how can it be improved whilst retaining the good relationships that exists;
- developing Member and Officer engagement include more opportunities for informal dialogue and learning;
- making the FRA more visible and accountable to the public;
- empowering managers to take decisions;
- reducing bureaucracy;

- working together better as a professional partnership which needs to be more systematic;
- considering the opportunities and risks of extending the tenure of the Chair;
- reviewing the Member’s Handbook including Standing Orders and Code of Conduct;
- increasing middle managers knowledge of the democratic process; and
- reviewing Member’s training and development including a programme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

### 3. Governance Review Action Plan

#### 3.1 Objectives:

- Future proof governance arrangements;
- Reform our governance arrangements to support a long-term professional partnership between officers and FRA Members;
- Make the FRA more accountable to the public; and
- Raise the visibility of the FRA and inform the public about what it does and why.

Action	By When	By Whom
<p>Design a new Member Development Programme and consider the content, costs and benefits. Formal member training packages will include sessions on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FRA governance literacy;</li> <li>• Community Risk Management;</li> <li>• Corporate Risk Management;</li> <li>• Equality, Diversity and Inclusion;</li> <li>• Ethics and ethical governance;</li> <li>• Data literacy; and</li> <li>• Visits to or observation of other FRAs.</li> </ul>	<p>FRA meeting on 14 December 2022</p>	<p>HSSA</p>

<p>Agree how the FRA will give oversight to proposals either via a Task and Finish Group of nominated Members, or by the Executive Committee.</p>	<p>FRA meeting on 14 December 2022</p>	<p>HSSA</p>
<p>Review governance elements outside the Member’s Handbook to include considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption of the LGA equality and diversity charter. See <a href="#">HERE</a>;</li> <li>• Adoption of the Fire Standard Code of Ethics. See <a href="#">HERE</a>;</li> <li>• Public and media participation;</li> <li>• Local pay review; and</li> <li>• Livestream and recording FR meetings.</li> </ul>	<p>FRA Executive Committee meeting on 10 January 2023</p>	<p>CFO</p>
<p>Review constitutional aspects of the Member’s Handbook to include options for strengthening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FRA terms of reference;</li> <li>• The function and role of scrutiny;</li> <li>• The opportunities and risks of extending the tenure of the Chair;</li> <li>• Call-in procedures and the function and role of task and finish group(s);</li> <li>• The role of the Monitoring Officer;</li> <li>• The process of Member appointments;</li> <li>• Review the terms of reference of the Audit and Standards Committee;</li> <li>• The terms of reference of the Executive Committee;</li> </ul>	<p>FRA meeting on 2 February 2023</p>	<p>MO and BSM</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Member Code of Conduct including adopting the appropriate parts of the LGA's Model Councillor Code of Conduct. See <a href="#">HERE</a>;</li> <li>• Scheme of Delegation to Officers; and</li> <li>• Financial regulations and financial instructions.</li> </ul>		
Test FRA elements of website and report back results	FRA Executive meeting on 14 March 2023	HSSA
Develop and present a People Impact Assessment (formerly known as an Equality Impact assessment) on proposals	FRA Executive meeting on 14 March 2023	HSSA
Report back the results of the reviews of constitutional aspects of the Members' Handbook.	FRA meeting on 30 March meeting 2023	HSSA
Finalise new FRA elements of the Website and modern.gov pages to improve user experience	FRA meeting on 30 March 2023	HSSA
Inform key stakeholders of governance changes	TBC subject to outcomes from review	CFO
Final approval of all new Governance arrangements	TBC subject to outcomes from review	CFO

#### 4 Member Development Programme

4.1 Agreed items have had item 6) added on ethics and ethical governance due to the requirements of the FRs Fire Standard on Ethics. All items are planned following the FRA AGM in June 2023. The full list is now:

- 1) FRA governance literacy;
- 2) Community Risk Management;
- 3) Corporate Risk Management;

- 4) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion;
- 5) Ethics and ethical governance;
- 6) Data literacy; and
- 7) Visits to or observation of other FRAs.

4.2 To ensure the best value for money, a project brief, detailed specification, quotes and timetable is being sought from:

- In-house providers, in particular 2), 4), 5) and 7)
- The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny for items 1), 4) and 5)
- RSM auditors for all 6 items
- Two other suppliers who we have observed and are known to us for items 1) to 6)

4.3 Indicative costs vary between £600 to £1,200 per day. Half day sessions based in Dunstable Community Fire Station are being planned, preferably linked to designated Member Development Days in 2023. Discussions on visits to or observations of other FRAs are taking place with East Sussex FRA, Durham and Darlington FRA, and Cambridgeshire FRA who are similar FRAs to Bedfordshire. All three of these FRA currently have or are planning to have online meetings.

## 5 Next Steps

5.1 The Authority will move forward in line with our action plan above and report back to FRA and FRA executive meetings.

5.2 The Authority will consider the content, costs and benefits of LGA's Development Phase delivered by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. We will seek quotes from other suppliers to gain assurance we are receiving value for money.

## 6 Recommendations

6.1 That Members approve the new Member Development Programme.

**GAVIN CHAMBERS**  
**ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER**