

Report of the Head of Legal

6. Member Development Programme 2014/15

Purpose of report

1. To propose themes for inclusion in the Member Development Programme 2014/15.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that the Member Development Programme 2014/15 incorporates:

- ***Authority Budgets and Finances;***
- ***National Structures;***
- ***Building and Infrastructure;***
- ***Fleet and Equipment; and***
- ***Business Fire Safety.***

Introduction and Background

2. At its meeting on 13 February 2012 the Authority agreed the Member Development Strategy for 2013 to 2016 which has the following aims:
 - i) to maintain effective leadership of the Authority through on-going and continuous Member development;
 - ii) to provide Members with the support, knowledge, skills and information necessary to enable them to effectively carry out their role; and
 - iii) to ensure Members are made aware and kept up to date with developments impacting on the organisation through seminars, workshops and bulletins.
3. The Development Strategy comprises a specific programme each year that is co-ordinated by Committee & Members' Services, in conjunction with the Member Development Working Group, Group Leaders and Chief Officers.
4. The Member Development Working Group was established to involve Members in ensuring that their Development Programme remains meaningful and appropriate. The Group plays a key role in steering the Development Programme on an annual basis as part of the wider strategy for 2013-16 and puts forward proposals for consideration by the Audit & Standards Committee.

Member Development 2013/14

5. The Authority has seen a total change of 16 Members throughout 2013/14, with 13 of the new Members attending an Induction Session which provided Members with information on:
 - the legislative framework;
 - Service structure;
 - 'Our Strategy';
 - the Service area;
 - personnel and stations;
 - scope of Service activity; and
 - an overview of the Authority's finances.
6. In addition all new Members received an Induction Pack, which included essential information such as the Code of Conduct and the role and responsibilities of Authority Members. Authority Members have received training on the Code of Conduct at their constituent authorities.
7. As set out in the Member Development Strategy 2013-2016 the annual programme includes core information for all Members, with a key theme being identified for each year. The themes are linked with 'Our Strategy' (attached at Appendix 2) and for 2013/14 incorporated 'People' and 'Services', which comprised:
 - Role of the FRA Member (incorporating responsibilities around business continuity, risk management, health and safety, governance).
 - Ethical Framework (including Equality and Diversity).
 - Duty Systems (information disseminated via the Members' Bulletin).
 - Community Fire Safety (information disseminated via the Members' Bulletin).
8. In addition to the core information above, specific sessions were held regarding Authority Budgets and Community Risk Management Planning. A specific session was also held regarding the role of the Audit and Standards Committee.

Annual Members' Survey

9. As part of the process in planning the Development Programme for 2014/15, all Members were sent the annual survey in order to gain feedback on the information provided to Members during 2013/14. Only 7 out of 25 Members responded to the survey. As the response rate was very low, the results could not be used to draw any firm inference on the views of Members in general. However, the 7 Members who responded thought that the sessions and information provided in 2013/14 helped them to challenge operational and financial performance, hold officers to account and to understand more about the CRMP, Strategic Risk, Internal Control and Assurance.

Year 2 – 2014/15: Proposed themes for Member Development

Services: 'We will deliver targeted and quality services with the resources available to us'.

10. Further awareness on the work carried out regarding the way we deliver Business Fire Safety could be undertaken as part of a future Authority meeting. This would complement the information previously provided to Members.
11. The theme would help Members achieve the following responsibilities associated with their role to:
 - Ensure that the Authority delivers targeted and quality risk managed services to ensure the safety of our communities across the two counties.
 - Develop and maintain knowledge of the Authority's services, activities and other matters, which affect and impact on the local communities.

Building & Infrastructure: 'We will provide appropriate premises in the right locations that enable our staff to carry out their roles effectively'.

12. This theme would link in with current capital works that the Authority has recently invested in and would provide all Members with the opportunity to visit the new stations at Bromsgrove, Malvern and Worcester and to have regular updates regarding progress at Hereford and Evesham. The theme would provide Members with the opportunity to see the outcomes of their previous decisions and to meet frontline staff. Members would also be updated on modern methods of working at the new stations, helping consolidate information delivered at meetings, seminars and in bulletins. In addition, Members would have the opportunity to be familiarised with areas in the two counties with which they may not be as aware of on a day to day basis.
13. The theme would help Members achieve the following responsibilities associated with their role to:
 - Represent all communities in both Herefordshire and Worcestershire to the Authority and represent the Authority to all communities.
 - Develop and maintain respectful and effective relationships with employees and other Authority Members.
 - Positively promote the reputation of the Authority.
 - Ensure that the Authority delivers targeted and quality risk managed services to ensure the safety of our communities across the two counties.
 - Ensure that the Authority carries out its responsibilities as an employer effectively and maintains the highest health and safety standards for all staff.

Fleet & Equipment: 'We will provide and maintain the right fleet, tools and equipment to ensure our staff can do their jobs effectively'.

14. This theme would link in with visits to new stations and the annual major operational exercise planned for the Autumn, providing staff with an opportunity to demonstrate equipment to Members. As outlined in paragraph 10, this would consolidate information previously provided to Members and provide an opportunity to meet frontline staff.
15. The theme would help Members achieve the following responsibilities associated with their role to:
 - Develop and maintain respectful and effective relationships with employees and other Authority Members.
 - Positively promote the reputation of the Authority.
 - Ensure that the Authority delivers targeted and quality risk managed services to ensure the safety of our communities across the two counties.
 - Ensure that the Authority carries out its responsibilities as an employer effectively and maintains the highest health and safety standards for all staff.
16. In addition, Members will be offered specific sessions and information that will complement their role. Awareness raising with regards to the national structures and their impact on the Authority will build on the information provided as part of the Members' Induction. The role of bodies such as the Chief Fire Officers' Association and the Local Government Association Fire Commission and their impact on the Fire Authority will be provided.
17. The theme would help Members to develop and maintain a sound working knowledge of the Authority's duties, policies and practices by providing the wider context within which decisions of the Authority are made.
18. Members will also receive workshops on Authority finances to provide information on the Government settlement and the development of the Medium Term Financial Plan. These sessions would help Members achieve the following responsibilities associated with their role to:
 - Ensure that the Authority delivers value for money and maintains effective risk management and internal control arrangements, ensuring public funds are safeguarded and used efficiently.
 - Contribute actively to the formation and scrutiny of the Authority's strategic policies, priorities, plans, targets, budget, performance and service delivery, providing constructive challenge on behalf of the communities.

19. In addition any new Members that have not received training on the Code of Conduct at their home councils will be offered a session with the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

Conclusion

20. The Authority's Member Development Programme aims to provide Members with the support, knowledge, skills and information necessary to enable them to effectively carry out their roles. The Programme also aims to ensure Members are made aware and kept up to date with developments impacting on the organisation.
21. This report provides Members with proposed themes for inclusion in the Member Development Programme 2014/15 which forms part of the Member Development Strategy for 2013-2016.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	None. Sessions are delivered in-house
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	Proposals for Member Development accord with Our Strategy.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	None
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Members will be surveyed to ascertain their views regarding the Members' Development Programme
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	The Members' Development Programme has incorporated information on the Ethical Framework and Equality and Diversity.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Member Development Strategy

Appendix 2 – Our Strategy

Background papers

Member Development Working Group Terms of Reference

Fire Authority Meeting 13 February 2012

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