MERSEYSIDE FIRE &

RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEMBERS' LEARNING AND

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
2010 - 2013

September 2010

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Providing learning and development that supports good governance and helps the Authority achieve its purpose of making Merseyside a safer, stronger community.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority is committed to Member development and understands the benefits it provides to individual Authority Members and to the decision making and leadership role of the Authority as a whole. A varied range of topics and events meet the objectives of the Member Development Strategy.

AIMS

1.   To provide learning and development which supports Elected and Independent Members in the delivery of their Fire and Rescue Service role which includes setting the Authority's Purpose and Aims, managing performance, and excellence in leadership.

2.   To provide a learning and development service, and activities, that embed excellence, reflect best practice and enable Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service to become a world leader in the delivery of fire and rescue services.

3.   Provide a development cycle that underpins this strategy and encompasses five broad areas of Member Development:

- Induction

- Core knowledge development

- Subject specific development

- Individual development activities

- Biannual Strategy Days.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

1. To undertake a thorough training needs analysis ("One to One") at an individual Member level at least once every two years, and at Authority level on a regular basis, ie, at least twice per annum. This will:

- Establish learning and development priorities for Members following the individual and group training needs evaluation process.

- Provide a programme of learning and development opportunities in line with the priorities identified and within available resources.

- Ensure all Members (with Officer support) to develop and achieve individual 'Personal Development Plans' providing leadership in the promotion of a lifelong

learning culture throughout the Authority.

- Ensure One to One meetings take place for all new Members within the first three months of their appointment to the Authority, and existing Members review their Personal Development Plan annually

- Ensure that Members are provided with a copy of their Personal Development Plan

- Ensure that Committee Services are informed of all Members personal development requirements, which will be built into the Development Programme.

2   To provide advice and information regarding learning opportunities through the Member Development Group, Committee Services, Executive Leadership Board, Members' Notice Board and in the future via the Corporate Intranet and Members' portal.

3.   To keep pace with, and promote innovations in learning and development, for example, new materials and new technologies such as on-line learning and development courses, through discussion with the Member Development Group (MDG) and information passed on verbally and via email to all Members.

4.   To monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Members' Learning and Development Strategy by providing regular updates to the Authority via the MDG. Members of the MDG will feedback to their Political Group Members at their Pre-Meetings, which take place prior to full Authority Meetings.

5.   To maintain a network of Member 'Sponsors' who will work with Officers to develop knowledge and understanding and share this with Member colleagues, through discussion in Political Group Pre-Meetings and during discussion of the relevant topics during Authority and/or Committee Meetings.

6.   To continue to embed excellence by retaining the North West Employers' Elected Member Development Charter and to aspire to achievement of Exemplar status within the Charter Scheme, This will be achieved by Members of the MDG engaging with Members of their Political Group's and encouraging all Members to support their learning and development and abide by the Strategy.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

This strategy document will ensure that the roles and responsibilities of Officers and Members involved in the learning and development process are defined and that the Fire & Rescue Authority maximises its return on the investment made in learning and development activity.

To ensure that Members have an opportunity to fully engage with and influence the learning and development process a Member Development Group (MDG) has been established. The Member Development Group consists of three Members, one from each political group. The Group meets regularly, facilitated by the Member Liaison & Support Manager and the Workplace Development Manager. Recommendations from the Group are considered by Authority Members through the Committee process.

Learning and development activities that Members are encouraged to participate in are as follows:

- Induction events

- Approved conferences

- Sponsored conferences (not on the approved conference list)

- Learning & Development events, eg, structured "Strategy Days", internal and external training sessions and workshops including operational training

- Individual learning and development

- Coaching and mentoring

- Sponsors

- Learning Lunches (bite size learning)

INDUCTION

All new Members will participate in an induction programme and will be mentored by other Members, with the Committee Services Team co-ordinating the process.

New Members will be provided with a handbook that provides essential information about Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service (for example, how to access sources of information such as the **www.merseyfire.gov.uk** web site), the organisational structure and contact details and roles of Principal Officers, Directors of functions and Community Fire Stations. In addition, Members will also be provided with a small quick reference handbook with contact details for fellow Members and Committee Services, dates of meetings and appointed Sponsors.

APPROVED CONFERENCES

Approved conferences can vary from year to year and are determined each year at the Annual Meeting. Member representation at these conferences will be agreed by the Director of Law ("the Director"), in consultation with the Executive Leadership Board.

Members will be required to share the knowledge acquired at these events, by providing feedback in the form of a briefing paper and/or a short presentation at Authority meetings. Committee Services and People & Organisational Development will support Members in the delivery of this feedback.

SPONSORED CONFERENCES

The Director, in consultation with the Executive Leadership Board, may also sponsor attendance at conferences and seminars other than those on the approved conference list. Sponsored Conferences will be those pertinent to a particular work stream or Members' responsibilities. The Member Liaison and Support Manager, once notified, will provide budget authorisation and the Principal Officers' Personal Assistants will administer attendance, including booking the conference and overnight accommodation if appropriate.

Again, Members will be requested to share the knowledge acquired by providing feedback in the form of a briefing paper and/or a short presentation at Authority meetings.

For more information regarding conferences and attendance, please see the "Procedures" Section of this document.

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

Learning and development needs will be identified at least twice a year through analysis and evaluation of:
- Integrated Risk Management/Service Plan

- Changes in government legislation

- Changes in corporate risk

- Changes in Service provision, ie, changes in working practice/equipment, or, benchmarking exercises.

Two Member 'Strategy Days' will be arranged each year to provide the knowledge and understanding identified and will take the form of presentations and workshops.

"Learning Lunches" are held prior to each Strategic Assets Committee and Community Protection Committee to provide concise updates on topics of interest. These activities facilitate Members development in accordance with the Fire and Rescue Authority Member Role Map (Appendix 2).

Members agree a schedule of Meetings and Development Dates at each Annual Meeting, this enables Members to programme their diaries to ensure their availability.

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Elected Members will be encouraged to undertake a process of self-reflection and have an initial one-to-one meeting with a People & Organisational Development Officer within three months of being appointed to the Authority, followed up with an annual review each year of their appointment thereafter. A Learning and Development Plan will be produced as a result of this meeting and the People & Organisational Development Department will liaise with the Committee Services Department to meet development needs.

If this requires provision by an external body, the Member Liaison & Support Manager will provide budget authorisation and the Principal Officers' Personal Assistants; will make bookings and accommodation arrangements for Elected Members to attend approved/sponsored conferences.

COACHING AND MENTORING

Committee Services can arrange for coaching and mentoring by Officers of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, Members, or 'Sponsors' to meet individual development needs. Mentoring is carried out through the Sponsor Roles, should a Member request it.

SPONSORS

Elected Members appointed as "Sponsors", will be encouraged to act as a Sponsor for a particular subject area which will involve research and building relationships with Officers of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services, to develop greater knowledge and understanding that will be shared with Authority Members. Should the Authority appoint a new Member as a Sponsor, they will be partnered with a more experienced Member in a Mentor capacity.

PROCEDURES

The following procedures should apply to all learning and development events/activities:

- All conferences and external learning and development events require approval. Consequently details will be presented to the Executive Leadership Board via Committee Services, for Board Members' approval and nomination of representative Members (where applicable). In the event that there is insufficient time scales for the Board Meeting to consider attendance prior to the event, Committee Services will forward the details to the Chair of the Authority for consideration and nomination of Members to attend.

- Attendance at any event should be determined according to the relevance of the event to the individual Member's role or to a personal development plan.

- In considering individual development opportunities the Member Development Group will consider how the Member's development needs links to the Fire Authority Elected Member's role map and the Member's Personal Development Plan.

- In the spirit of equal opportunities, all learning and development opportunities will be communicated to all Members (including Independent Members) via the notice board in the Elected Members' meeting room, e-mail, postal service, fax or telephone for those who do not have access to e-mail, and Committee Services electronic calendar of events.

- The proximity of the event cannot be used as a reason to by-pass this process. The Member Development Group and Executive Leadership Board via Committee Services, or, the Director in exercise of delegated powers, must approve all learning and development events. If there is insufficient time prior to the event for this process to take place, then permission must be sought from the Chair of the Authority for the Member in question to attend the learning and development event.

- A request for learning and development will not necessarily result in approval.

- The individual Member must ensure that there is sufficient time to process their request prior to attending the event. Failure to do so may result in a claim for expenses and/or allowances being rejected. This is particularly the case for learning and development events or conferences other than those on the approved duty conference list.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR
APPROVED CONFERENCES

Approved conferences can vary from year to year and are determined by the Annual Meeting of the Authority. The Director, in consultation with the Executive Leadership Board proposes the basis of Member representation.

The Director will prepare a report each year to be submitted to the Annual Meeting inviting the Authority to determine the basis of Member representation at approved professional conferences based on an assessment of the balance of the following criteria:

- Requirements for political balance, ie, that one political group does not have disproportionate access to learning and development events/activities.

- The occupational and technical competences required for attendance (Member Engagement)

- That learning and development needs of individual Elected Members have been identified through analysis/evaluation.

- Cost/benefit analysis.

Committee Services are responsible for:

- Inviting the appropriate Members to the event.

- Processing requests for learning and development.

- Confirming attendance following the event.

Individual Members are responsible for:

- Attending the event (or finding a suitable deputy if authorised to attend).

- Disseminating information obtained at the event.

People & Organisational Development Department is responsible for:

- Updating Personal Development records of Members following the event.

- Encouraging Members to disseminate information to fellow Members following the event.

The procedures outlined on pages 6 & 7apply in all cases.

<u>ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SPONSORED CONFERENCES</u>

The Officers of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) may also suggest that events, other than those on the approved conference list, should be attended which are pertinent to their department or a Member's responsibilities. ELT is responsible for submitting the event to Committee Services who will identify funding prior to submission to Executive Leadership Board for approval, and for administration of attendance. Booking the conference and overnight accommodation (if appropriate) is carried out by Principal Officers' Personal Assistants.

<u>Individual Members are responsible for:</u>

- Bringing potential opportunities to the notice of the Executive Leadership Team and securing their sponsorship.

- Submitting a learning and development request to Committee Services.

- Upon selection, attending the event (or finding a suitable deputy if they are unable to attend).

- Disseminating information obtained at the event.

<u>The Executive Leadership Team is responsible for:</u>

- Considering the relevance to the Members role and benefit to the Authority for Members to attend.

- Submitting the event to Committee Services for consideration by the Executive Leadership Board.

<u>Committee Services Department is responsible for:</u>

- Confirming attendance following the event, to People & Organisational Development.

- Monitoring the Executive Leadership Board agenda and noting the outcome of a request.

<u>People & Organisational Development Department is responsible for:</u>

- Updating individual Members personal development records following the event.

- Encouraging Members to disseminate information to peers following the event.

<u>Principal Officers' Personal Assistants are responsible for :-</u>

- Identifying funding via the Member Liaison and Support Manager.

- Booking conference, travel and accommodation if appropriate.

- Advising Committee Services of any rail travel requirements.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Personal development opportunities must link to Member competencies and be identified by individual Members and agreed with People & Organisational Development.

Individual Elected Members are responsible for:

- Discussing their learning and development needs with People & Organisational Development Department and securing approval and support.

- Submitting a learning and development request form to Committee Services.

- Attending the event after approval.

- Disseminating knowledge and understanding gained from the learning event/activity to Authority Members and/or Principal Officers.

The People and Organisational Development Department is responsible for:

- Facilitating the identification of learning and development needs through one-to-one meetings.

- Submitting requests to Committee Services for agreement of arrangements.

- Updating individual Member's personal development records following the event.

- Ensuring that the procedures outlined on pages 6 &7 apply and that training links to Member competencies.

Committee Services are responsible for:

- Recording attendance following the event and providing information to People and Organisational Development Department.

- Requesting Members to disseminate information to other Authority Members and Principal Officers following the event.

- Requesting Members to complete a form providing feedback regarding the event attended.

Principal Officers' Personal Assistants are responsible for:

- Identifying funding via the Member Liaison and Support Manager.

- Booking the event, travel and accommodation if appropriate.

- Advising Committee Services of the arrangements and requirements for rail travel.

The procedures outlined on pages 6 & 7apply in all cases.