

CHARTER REVIEW PROCESS APPLICATION FORM

About You and Your Organisation – to be completed by an Officer on behalf of the organisation. (Members **do not** need to complete individual copies)

Name of your Organisation

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority

Title

Mrs

First name

Janet

Surname

Henshaw

Designation

Director of Legal, Procurement And
Democratic Services

Department

Legal, Procurement And Democratic
Services

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	Charter awarded in year: 2006 Renewed in 2010

General checklist for organisations

Does your entry show:

- 1 The impact of member development on the work of the local authority and the community?
- 2 That the authority is committed to continuous improvement within member development?

Description of your organisation

Please give a brief description of your organisation; for example, number of members, political make-up of the authority, aims and objectives of the authority.

The Fire and Rescue Authority is made up of 18 Elected Members who represent the 5 Local Authorities of Merseyside, Liverpool, Sefton, Wirral, Knowsley and St.Helens. The political make-up of the Authority, at the time of writing this application is:

Labour - 13

Conservative -3

Liberal Democrats - 2

There are also three Independent Members which the Authority appointed to the Standards Committee. Though these are not Elected Members they are invited to all learning and development events and open committee meetings of the Authority.

The Mission of the Authority is: To Achieve;

Safer Stronger Communities - Safe Effective Firefighters

The Aims of the Authority are;

- **Excellent Operational Preparedness**

We will provide our firefighters with the training, information, procedures and equipment to ensure they can safely and effectively resolve all emergency incidents.

- **Excellent Operational Response**

To maintain an excellent emergency response to meet risk across Merseyside with safety and effectiveness at its core.

- **Excellent Prevention and Protection**

We will work with our partners and our community to protect the most vulnerable through targeted local risk reduction interventions and the robust application of our legal powers.

- **Excellent People**

We will develop and value all our employees, respecting diversity, promoting opportunity and equality for all.

The Authority's Core Values are to:

- **Make a positive difference to our community**

We will build upon our unique position of trust and respect within the community and the professionalism of our staff to tackle the real underlying factors which affect risk.

We will achieve this by seeking partnerships in areas where we believe we can contribute to making communities safer from fire and other emergencies.

- **Provide an excellent and affordable service**

We will manage our emergency response flexibly, with an emphasis on those most at risk.

We will do this by managing the number and type of appliances which are available to respond to emergencies at different locations throughout the day, night and at different times of the year to more accurately reflect the changing level and location of risk.

- **Everyone matters**

We aim to reduce risk in every home on Merseyside to a tolerable level, with no homes being assessed as high risk after we and our partners have offered support to the resident.

To achieve this we will be more sophisticated in the way we commit resources to reduce risk; we will continue to offer free Home Fire Safety Checks to residents in Merseyside as we have done for the past ten years, but our key focus will be to work with our partners to identify and provide assistance to those individuals within the community who are most at risk from fire and other emergencies.

- **Respect our environment**

We will fulfil our responsibilities for protecting the built and natural environment, with support and commitment at the highest level.

We will continue to identify and manage our activities, which have an impact on the environment, without compromising our operational response or our service delivery to the communities of Merseyside.

- **Our People are the best they can be**

We will ensure our workforce has the necessary knowledge, skills and values to make a difference. We will support them in their role and encourage them to contribute their ideas to continually improve the Service to deliver our mission.

We will ensure our staff receive the training and information they need, in order to deliver our services to a high standard and that they are protected in their work through a comprehensive and robust approach to health and safety.

1. Issues for the authority and community

- **What were the issues for the community and your authority that you wanted to tackle at the beginning? Please give evidence of these issues, as experienced by the community.**

“Almost half of all malicious fires within England and Wales are concentrated within the seven metropolitan areas”

(Safer Communities: Towards Effective Arson Control – Report Of The Arson Scoping Study)

“In 2006/07 the total estimated cost of arson in the UK was over £1.3 Billion . . . the cost to Fire Services alone was £378 Million”

(Safer Communities: Towards Effective Arson Control – Report Of The Arson Scoping Study)

“Youth Disorder is estimated to be responsible for 39% of vehicle arson and 36% of property arson”

(The Burning Issue: Research And Strategies For Reducing Arson – Report Of The ODPM)

Prior to 1999 all Fire and Rescue Authorities in the country focused almost entirely on responding to emergency incidents and the enforcement of Fire Safety Legislation. Around this time deliberate fire setting was becoming an increasing problem, especially on Merseyside, with the number of deliberate fires increasing year on year between 1997 and 2002. During this period Merseyside experienced a 37% increase in deliberate fires and a 56% increase in deliberate vehicle fires. By the end of 2002, there had been over 20,000 incidents of deliberate fires on Merseyside throughout that year, accounting for almost 50% of the operational workload for Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority. [\[1\]](#)

Research conducted, demonstrated a significant link between deliberate fire setting and deprivation. The Arson Scoping Study – Safer Communities Towards Effective Arson Control, found that the most socially deprived communities had a 31 times higher risk of experiencing a deliberate fire than those in the most affluent areas. [\[2\]](#)

With severe deprivation being evident in most Districts across the North West and with the Districts within Merseyside containing six of the top ten of the most deprived Wards within the Country, it was evident that deliberate fires

were a major deep rooted problem for the Fire and Rescue Service and the communities of Merseyside. [3]

In addition, the ODPM Report – The Burning Issue, highlighted a link between deliberate fire setting and youth disorder. Between 2001 and 2002, 213 individuals on Merseyside, were found guilty or cautioned under the Criminal Damage Act for deliberate fire setting and 52% of these individuals were under the age of 20. [4]

With this increase in deliberate fires came an increase in other forms of anti-social behavior, including attacks on firefighters. The perpetrators of these attacks were predominantly young males who would deliberately start a fire, await the arrival of the fire appliance, and then attack the fire crews with bricks or debris whilst they were trying to deal with the incident.

At the same time a further problem affecting Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority and the communities of Merseyside was the growing number of road traffic collisions attended by the Service. The largest at risk group in road traffic collisions was young males between the age of 15 and 25 driving whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol, whilst using a mobile phone, showing off to friends and not wearing a seat belt.

Deliberate anti-social behaviour fires, road traffic collisions and other associated anti-social behaviour related incidents, were consuming vast amounts of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority's resources and blighting the communities of Merseyside. They were causing deaths, serious injuries and resulting in personal and financial hardship. In addition, they were having a detrimental effect on the local economy and local tax payers were footing the bill for this drain on the resources of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority.

In addition to facing these operational issues, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority were experiencing continuous grant funding reductions and increasing requirements to make efficiency savings, whilst keeping local taxation low and trying to maintain an excellent service for the people of Merseyside.

To achieve this the Service recognised that it would have to tackle the issues of anti-social behaviour and reckless driving, in smarter more innovative ways. Since that point Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority has led the way in its approach to tackling the underlying issues which lead to these incidents occurring.

However, in order to do this, it was essential that Members had a thorough understanding of the issues and underlying causes facing the Service, both in

terms of the financial challenge and the increasing problem surrounding anti-social behaviour and deliberate fire setting, in order for them to make informed decisions regarding the best use of limited resources. Effective Member learning and development was critical to the success of this strategy.

Members identified that to respond effectively to the growing number of constituent's complaints and questions, regarding anti-social behaviour related fires in their wards, they would need to know more about how the Fire and Rescue Service could intervene to reduce these fires and the underlying causes of the anti social behaviour.

The Authority had already approved the introduction of some interventions in order to educate young people about the dangers of fire setting and making malicious false alarm calls. However despite these actions, the number of anti-social behaviour incidents was continuing to rise steadily.

Members wanted to learn more about what the Fire Service could do and how it could be involved in really tackling such incidents. They listened to the needs of the people, both within their own constituencies and across Merseyside as a whole and aimed to create a balanced prevention strategy in Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service over time, tailoring the work of the Service to address these anti-social behaviour related incidents, whilst maintaining the ground breaking Home Fire Safety Check initiative.

It was acknowledged that in order to have a meaningful impact, by reducing not only the number of incidents, but improving the overall quality of life for people in the communities most affected by this blight, then the Authority would have to focus on tackling the root causes of the anti social behaviour, which would mean communicating at a new level with younger members of the community.

Members acknowledged that in order to maximise any impact, the Service could not work in isolation. It became immediately apparent that the Service must work in partnership with other agencies in order to achieve this and Members knowledge regarding their individual Districts and contacts within other agencies, was key.

Members worked with Officers to develop partnerships, seeking opportunities for joint working and formulating initiatives which would reduce anti social behaviour by actually tackling the causes not just dealing with the symptoms. [\[5\]](#)

2. Member learning and development

- Describe the member learning and development that took place in relation to these community issues, eg workshops, mentoring, video, role play, project work.
- How was the learning and development designed to meet member learning and development needs?
- How did you ensure the quality of the learning intervention?
- Tell us about what people learnt with a clear “before and after” picture e.g Before learning I could not do “X” and I did not do “Y”. Then I had “Z” learning and development (based on my needs assessment). This then enabled me to take “X” actions, which have helped recycling in “Y” ways.

“Members were all aware of the problem of anti-social behaviour within our communities. However, the learning and development we were provided with, made us realize that the Fire Authority could actually do a lot to tackle these problems. Through using a bit of imagination and working jointly with partners, we have developed and implemented initiatives which are having a real impact across Merseyside”

(Councillor Jimmy Mahon – Vice Chair of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority and Chair of Member Development Group)

Members were keen to develop strong partnerships with other local authorities and organisations, with the aim of developing a joined-up approach to tackling anti-social behaviour incidents on Merseyside.

The Authority realised that one of the main strands to this partnership working was the active participation of Officers, at a Strategic Level on the “Safer Merseyside Partnership” and at District Level on each of the Crime And Disorder Reduction Panels (CDRP’s) and instructed Officers to get involved.

[6] This representation was further strengthened in 2003, with the implementation of The Police Reform Act 2002, which amended the Crime And Disorder Act 1998, to include Fire Authorities as a body which has a duty to formulate and implement strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder in its area.

These forums generated ideas for a number of Arson Reduction Initiatives, subsequently implemented by the Authority. Ideas would be generated, in consultation with Members. Research would be carried out around how these ideas could be put into practice and then fed back to Members through

reports and/or presentations at development events, providing them with information about what the proposed initiative hoped to achieve, and giving Members the opportunity to ask questions or make alternative suggestions. Following this process, reports would then be brought back for formal consideration by the Authority, to approve implementation.

This process worked well as it enabled initiatives to be developed jointly with partners, in consultation with the Authority, which were specific to the needs of a particular community. This approach recognised that although some issues were generic across Merseyside, some Districts and areas suffered from more specific problems, for which tailor made interventions could be developed through these forums.

The Officers who represented the Authority on these forums, provided Members with regular updates, enabling Members to keep in touch with any developments or indeed any issues arising, both within their own Districts as well as within other Districts across Merseyside.

This provided a valuable learning experience for Members and in addition, provided a great opportunity to share best practice. For example, if a particular initiative was implemented and proved very successful in one District; Members could look to see if the same initiative, or something similar, could also be adopted across the other Districts and would request Officers to look into the possibilities for wider implementation.

Members requested that Officers with specialist knowledge of each individual District, and who were directly involved in the development of initiatives, provided presentations to them. This ensured that the learning provided was of a high quality, containing the most current, relevant information. These Officers were also best placed to feed back and push for further action, following any comments or suggestions that Members may have for further implementation or developments. [\[7a\]](#) [\[7b\]](#) [\[7c\]](#) [\[7d\]](#)

The initiatives developed and implemented were beginning to have an effect; however it was felt that Partnership working to tackle anti-social behaviour could be taken to another level, which would in turn realise greater improvements.

Through the development of these successful partnerships through the Crime and Disorder Reduction Panel network and the involvement and influence of Members, the opportunity arose to extend partnership working arrangements.

Proposals were put forward for the establishment of an Arson Task Force. Members requested Officers to look into options for the creation of such a team and feed back their findings for Members consideration. The proposed solution, presented to Members at a development event, incorporated a seconded Police Officer and it was envisaged that the Task Force would develop strategies to support and compliment work already being conducted within the CDRP network. Members decided that by developing a Task Force, the Authority would establish a closer working relationship with the Police, which would lead to amongst other things: better recording, reporting and sharing of information regarding non-accidental fires, the ability to identify arson trends, ability to better identify and remove contributory factors to arson, and ability to develop proactive multi-agency strategies to reduce the number of incidents.

Members also considered, as part of the development of an Arson Task Force, the introduction of Arson Reduction Advocates, to operate within the task force, as the appointment of such individuals would improve service delivery at a local level and support the work undertaken at community police and fire stations, with these individuals becoming "champions" for arson reduction. It was proposed that these Arson Reduction Advocates would interact on a daily basis with a wide range of agencies, further extending Merseyside Fire & Rescue Services partnership network.

Following this learning and development, the Authority requested Officers to submit a bid on their behalf, to the Arson Control Forum, for funding of these projects, entitled "Coordinating the Response – Hardening the Approach", a bid which proved successful. [\[1\]](#) [\[8\]](#)

The work of the Arson Task Force and the Arson Reduction Advocates was extremely successful. However in 2006 an opportunity was identified to expand Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority's involvement in tackling threats affecting the communities of Merseyside, including anti-social behaviour and other forms of criminality and to expand upon the existing, hugely successful partnership with Merseyside Police.

Members considered proposals for the establishment of a Threat Response Group. [\[9\]](#) and requested that detailed reports and accompanying presentations be provided to Members for their consideration. This learning and development outlined the proposals for the incorporation of the existing Arson Task Force and Arson Reduction Advocates, into a wider Threat Response Group, which would include a cross-section of personnel from different backgrounds, bringing together an array of knowledge, experience and expertise. The proposals would see the joint MFRS and Merseyside Police

team tackle wider items in the agenda of anti-social behaviour, better equipping them to deal with threats affecting the community. Members considered proposals and benefits which could enable both Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority and Merseyside Police, to move away from being reactive, and begin to be far more proactive, by actively trying to prevent incidents of anti-social behaviour occurring within Merseyside. After consideration, Members took the ground breaking decision to approve the establishment of this unique team.

Members requested Officers to provide them with regular updates regarding the success of the team, to ensure that they remained updated with developments and any further arising issues which may need addressing. These updates took the form of PowerPoint presentations and demonstrations, delivered at Member Development Events and Strategy Days. [\[10a\]](#) [\[10b\]](#) [\[10c\]](#) [\[10d\]](#) [\[10e\]](#)

In addition to the development of teams and initiatives to detect anti-social behaviour, through identifying trends and hotspot areas, and putting in place targeted responses, it became apparent that in order to have a real, lasting impact on anti-social behaviour on Merseyside, the Authority would have to work on challenging the views and changing the behaviour of people. To achieve this, it would mean directly engaging with the very people who were creating the problem. This was a very innovative approach and Members requested that a great deal of research and detailed information to be provided to the Authority, to enable them to feel confident in making this step, given that it was not normal business and to satisfy any concerns that they may have because of this.

In 2002, in response to their wish to engage and educate children and young people, the Authority approved the establishment of the Youth Engagement Team, to support the Fire Authority's youth engagement initiatives.

In March 2002, following careful consideration, Members approved a unique partnership with the Prince's Trust. This partnership saw MFRS become a major "high performing" delivery partner of the "Prince's Trust Volunteer Personal Development Course". The aim of the course was to help people to succeed, who may not otherwise have the opportunity, including young people who were marginalised through lack of qualifications, unemployment, or a criminal conviction. Members realised that it would directly reach out to individuals who were, or could well become a problem for the Fire Authority, individuals who were perhaps driving irresponsibly, making malicious calls, attacking fire crews, deliberately setting fires, etc. and the partnership

provided an ideal opportunity to try to reach these groups and influence the future behaviour of these young people.

Initially, Members approved a 12 month pilot of the course, which operated out of Kirkdale Fire Station, throughout the Financial Year 2002/03. Members were invited to attend the final presentation evenings of these courses, which saw the young people who had completed the course, stand up and deliver a speech to the audience regarding their personal journey. This was a valuable learning experience for Members, as it enabled them to see firsthand, the positive effects that their decision and the course had had on the young people who completed them. [\[11a\]](#) [\[11c\]](#)

This has since been extended by the Authority [\[11b\]](#) and there have been numerous success stories to have come out of this initiative, which has seen a positive change in behaviour and values of many young people who have completed the course, their friends and their families, across the whole of Merseyside.

This partnership with the Prince's Trust has proved to be hugely successful; however this was just one means of trying to reach young people across Merseyside.

Members wished to investigate other ways in which they could engage with young people. They acknowledged that the sooner the Fire Service could reach young people, the more likelihood there would be of successfully influencing their behaviour. Therefore, Members instructed Officers to look into options for engaging with school aged children.

The Authority approved the appointment of a Community Youth Coordinator to enhance their Youth Engagement Strategy, the aim of which was to influence young people who may have been involved in deliberate fire setting, violence towards Firefighters and hoax calls. [\[12a\]](#) [\[12b\]](#)

Members wished to look at what support could be given to this role, to enable it to have a positive impact and suggested that it could be supported using existing resources, i.e. Firefighters.

Members instructed Officers to look into options for utilizing firefighters to support the work of the Community Youth Coordinator, and report back proposals for Members consideration, for a pilot to embed a Firefighter within 6 schools across Merseyside, highlighting the expected outcomes. [\[12a\]](#)

It was expected that such a pilot would have a number of positive effects on the behaviour of the young people at these schools. The pilot would help to "put a face" to the Firefighters, enabling the children to build up a rapport

with, and respect for, these Firefighters as individuals. As such, it was anticipated that this would reduce anti-social behaviour fires both within the school and within the local area, and reduce attacks on Firefighters.

It was also envisaged that the proposed pilot would have a number of further benefits, for example building up a network of contacts through the school with other agencies, raising awareness of, and reducing the number of firework misuse related incidents and also raising general fire safety awareness - even generating Home Fire Safety Checks through the children, for their relatives and friends.

Following consideration of all the information, the Authority approved the implementation of this pilot. Again, this proved hugely successful and was ultimately extended into more schools across Merseyside. [\[12c\]](#) [\[12d\]](#)

With the success of this Embedded Firefighter initiative (or School Fire Liaison Officers as they became) it became evident that this partnership between Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority and local Secondary Schools, could be further strengthened.

An idea was developed around producing an innovative, multi-media, educational resource, which would link into the English GCSE Curriculum, but at the same time, educate young people around the dangers of participating in fire related anti-social behaviour.

A resource was developed in partnership with the Ariel Trust and information around the concept was presented to Members for their consideration. Following this, Members requested that a demonstration of the resource be provided to them during a Learning Lunch, for their consideration. [\[13d\]](#)
[\[13c\]](#)

Members were so impressed with the resource that they subsequently approved a pilot of this resource at St John Bosco School in Croxeth.

The pilot was independently evaluated and the results/ outcomes presented back to Members. [\[13a\]](#) [\[13b\]](#) [\[13e\]](#) [\[13f\]](#) The resource proved so successful, both in terms of improving the young people's school grades and improving their attitudes and behaviour in relation to fire safety and anti-social behaviour, that Members later approved the extension of this educational resource to schools across Merseyside.

The Arson Task Force also incorporated a fire investigation dog, highly trained to detect the use of accelerants in deliberate fires. Members considered whether this fire investigation dog could also be used as a means of engaging young people. It was believed that the dog would be a great

means of interacting with young people, whilst also acting as a deterrent for participating in deliberate fire-setting, by demonstrating the dog's capabilities. Again, Members considered all the information, and approved the use of demonstrations by the fire investigation dog, within schools, as a further way of engaging with these young people. [\[14\]](#)

A further way, in which the Authority believed they could engage school aged children, was by providing them with an opportunity to have a "Firefighter experience". From this idea, came proposals for the introduction of a "Fire Cadet" scheme. It was hoped that this scheme would help to change the values and future behaviour of young people, through promoting self-discipline, social consciousness and good citizenship. It would break down barriers between the young people and the Firefighters, hopefully reducing the likelihood of them participating in any anti-social behaviour related activity and also provide the young people with an opportunity to obtain meaningful qualifications.

Following this development and careful consideration, the Authority approved the implementation of this scheme. [\[15a\]](#) [\[15b\]](#) [\[15c\]](#) [\[15d\]](#)

More recently, some Members and Officers, who have an interest in amateur boxing, came up with an idea for a further highly innovative initiative. They recognised the unique position that amateur boxing clubs hold, and the success they have in reaching marginalised and disaffected young people, within some of the most deprived areas.

Information was collated by Officers in collaboration with Members and presented for the Authority's consideration, highlighting the significant positive outcomes that the sport has achieved, around tackling social exclusion and developing neighborhoods through the positive and effective engagement of young people, many of whom were at risk of offending. This highlighted the potential for Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority to build on their successes around engaging with young people and develop partnerships with local amateur boxing clubs. This initiative would see boxing classes organised and run by firefighters, for children within deprived areas. The proposals were for 2 classes to be held, one for children aged 8 to 12 and one for children aged 12 to 16. These classes would be held on evenings when statistics showed anti-social behaviour was at its peak and they would provide the young people with an outlet for expressing themselves, within a controlled environment. It was believed that this initiative would have a positive impact on the behaviour of the young people who participated, with the Firefighter acting as positive role models, challenging unacceptable behaviour through discussion and positive support. In turn, it was anticipated

that the initiative would result in a reduction in anti-social behaviour, deliberate fires and deaths and injuries as a result of road traffic collisions.

Members recognised the unique potential of this initiative and approved its implementation. The initiative has since gone from strength to strength and has been implemented in further areas across Merseyside. [\[16a\]](#) [\[16b\]](#)

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority has also developed a strong successful partnership with the Fire Support Network Charity and the extent of their partnership working has also expanded into the remit of youth engagement, with the aim of reducing Anti Social Behaviour related incidents.

An idea was proposed around the introduction of a mobile sports cage, which could be moved and set up in areas suffering for high levels of ASB, to attract the participation of local youths in sports activities, thus deterring them from participating in ASB.

The Fire Support Network were successful in obtaining funding for such a mobile unit and Members approved for the "Cage Soccer" initiative to be piloted within the Knowsley District by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority, in conjunction with the Fire Support Network. The cage was utilised in areas that have historically suffered high levels of deliberate primary and secondary fires and were held during times of high levels of ASB activity.

Members requested that following the pilot, a full evaluation be conducted and the results reported back to them for their consideration. The evaluation of the pilot highlighted a few areas for improvement, including greater involvement of Firefighters. Following consideration of all the information and outcomes presented to them, Members approved the continuation and expansion of the initiative. They acknowledged the success and potential of the initiative, but also recognised the potential for further improvement in relations between Firefighters and the young people. As such, the Authority also requested that Firefighters be recruited and trained as coaches, to order to improve these relationships. [\[17a\]](#) [\[17b\]](#) [\[17c\]](#) [\[17d\]](#)

A further issue that was causing great concern for Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority, was the rise in road traffic collisions. Analysis showed that the most at risk group of being involved in RTC's was young males between the age of 15 and 25, who were driving irresponsibly, speeding, and showing off to friends. Many were driving whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol and were not wearing a seatbelt.

Members wished to identify a way of engaging with these young people to highlight the risks associated with driving in such a manner. Again, they

realised that the best way forward, would be to work in partnership with other agencies, also affected by the rise in such incidents. They instructed officers to carry out research and identify a suitable way forward, with the aim of challenging the behaviour of these young drivers, and report these findings back to Members.

The result of this research, was the proposal of a "Drive to Arrive" Initiative, developed in partnership with Liverpool Road Safety and Liverpool Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. The aim of this initiative was to reduce speeding and educate young motorists around the dangers of unsafe driving. The resource developed was a hard-hitting interactive programme, focusing on the consequences of unsafe driving.

As requested, Officers presented their proposals to Members and following consideration, the Authority approved a joint pilot of this initiative, with Merseyside Police. This initiative saw young drivers who had been stopped for speeding by the Police, offered the opportunity to attend a "Drive to Arrive" presentation, rather than receiving a fine and fixed penalty points. [\[18a\]](#) [\[18b\]](#) [\[18c\]](#)

There was a good take up of this opportunity and the pilot was independently evaluated by the University of Liverpool, which highlighted a positive change in the attitudes of the young motorists, following attendance. [\[18d\]](#)

Members realised early on that anti-social behaviour was a problem for the Service and acknowledged that without successful interventions, the problem was likely to get worse. Many of the initiatives that they approved for implementation were very innovative and outside the usual remit of a Fire & Rescue Service. As such, it was important that Members were provided with all the relevant information and options, through good quality and effective learning and development, to equip them with the necessary knowledge, and provide them with the confidence, to take these bold steps.

Many Members have expressed a wish, through their one-to-one development meetings, to learn more about youth engagement activities and the work of the Threat Response Group in reducing deliberate fires and anti-social behaviour. [\[44 –available for site visit\]](#) Officers have listened to the requests of Members and have built appropriate learning sessions into the Member Development Programme, [\[45\]](#) to ensure that all Members are kept updated regarding current initiatives and are also provided with the opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions for further opportunities or the expansion of existing schemes.

All learning and development sessions, be it through videos, reports, presentations or learning lunches, were well researched and provided by the individual who had carried out this research work and who therefore, were best placed to answer questions raised by Members.

All learning and development activities are also evaluated for effectiveness and quality, through the use of an evaluation questionnaire, which are provided to each Member at each session. The information collated in these questionnaires is recorded and any negative or positive comments are fed back to the reporting officer. This process also ensures that any requests for further information from Members is picked up on and provided to them, to ensure they are getting all that they require from the learning and development sessions. [\[41\]](#)

In addition to organized learning and development events, Members also regularly take it upon themselves to request further information, usually via email or through conversation with appropriate Officers. Such requests range from requests for specific learning events for all Members, for example a Learning Lunch regarding the work of the Fire Support Network, requests for specific information regarding initiatives being undertaken within their Ward or District, or more general information around the work and role of the Anti-Social Behaviour and Arson Reduction Advocates. [\[46a\]](#) [\[46b\]](#) [\[46c\]](#) [\[46d\]](#) [\[46e\]](#)

3. Overall Impact

- Describe the overall impact on the community, the Members and the Authority
- What changed in the community because of the Member learning and development?
- What did the Authority learn from the whole process?

“Being on this course has changed me. I like structure and routine and it has made me aware that to make my life better, I need a job. I need to keep pushing myself, I need a reason to get up everyday . . . ”

(Lisa participant on Toxteth Prince’s Trust Team 10)

“ Residents complemented all the volunteers for being hard working, polite and courteous and loved having them working on the gardens. Residents and LMH housing staff have noted that incidents of ASB have declined and there is now a greater sense of community spirit in the area”

(David Pye – Community Involvement Officer, LMH re: Beechwood Gardens Prince’s Trust Community Project)

“I think it is the disaffected, troubled kids on whom the project generally has the biggest impact: by helping them, counseling them, working with them and motivating them, it has helped to turn their lives around . . . and because these are the ones who are most likely to cause trouble, it helps to solve some of the ASB problems that the community faces”

(Teacher – Parklands School re: School Fire Liaison Officer Scheme)

The learning and development that Members received around the issues of anti-social behaviour and its impact on the communities of Merseyside, provided Members with the relevant facts and the confidence to implement a whole raft of innovative initiatives, which have not only reduced the number of anti-social behaviour related incidents across the County, but also influenced the views and behaviour of young people.

Research has demonstrated that anti-social behaviour impacts more on the most vulnerable within the community and by actively reducing such incidents, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority was able to help those who needed it most.

An evaluation was conducted of the work undertaken by the Arson Task Force, during the period October 2003 to March 2006. During this period, the amount of deliberate vehicle fires experienced across Merseyside had reduced by 35%, the number of ASB related fires reduced by 38% and the number of void property fires had reduced by 18%.

In economic terms, these reductions in the number of ASB related incidents, led to a 38% reduction in the cost of deliberate fires within Merseyside during this period, a reduction which equates to savings of approximately £50 million.

This demonstrates the significant impact that the introduction of these initiatives had on both the Authority, as less of its resources were being consumed with dealing with these incidents, and also the communities of Merseyside affected by these incidents, either personally, or financially.

In addition, the development of this team, brought wider benefits for the Authority, Members and the community, as it led to a number of strong partnerships being developed and acted as a spring board for the development and implementation of further initiatives with these partners, which would further impact upon the reduction of ASB across Merseyside. [\[19\]](#)

Following the success of the Arson Task Force and Arson Reduction Advocates, partnerships were extended and a joint Threat Response Group established with Merseyside Police.

The introduction of this team resulted in further positive effects for the community and the Authority.

Between 2006 and 2007, following the introduction of this unique, joint team, there was a further 29.50% reduction in deliberate vehicle fires, a 16.80% reduction in deliberate secondary fires and a 12.20% reduction in deliberate secondary fires.

Through work conducted with partners to secure void properties, which were a target for deliberate fire setting, a 31% reduction for deliberate fires in these properties, was observed on the previous year.

In addition to these reductions, a massive 50.5% reduction was experienced in relation to Violence At Work incidents, a hugely positive outcome for the Authority and their staff.

In addition to these significant reductions in ASB related incidents, the work undertaken by the team had far reaching effects on the communities of Merseyside.

Arson Reduction Advocates visited hotspot areas, offering a high visibility presence. In addition to engaging with young people and acting a deterrent for ASB, they also provided reassurance to the communities residing in these areas experiencing high levels of ASB, and offered assistance to those people who felt threatened.

They completed over 400 Hate Crime Fire Risk Assessments across Merseyside, providing practical support, reassurance and advice to people who had suffered from a deliberate attack involving the use of fire.

The advocates continued to expand their network of partners across Merseyside, in order to assist local communities. One example of this is the participation of the Liverpool based Advocates in the W.A.V.E.S scheme, which was a multi-agency scheme, piloted to provide assistance to witnesses and victims of crime and encourage them to report such incidents, including ASB fires and hate crime incidents.

The advocates gained the trust of local people and as a result, managed to gain intelligence, about young people engaging in ASB related activity. This led to the team assisting in obtaining 11 Anti-Social Behaviour Contracts for problem individuals across Merseyside and the issuing of 11 fixed penalties for students involved in ASB within student accommodation. [20a – EXEMPT] [20b – EXEMPT] [20c]

In addition to assisting partners to obtain Anti-Social Behaviour Contracts and fixed penalties, the advocates were also able to sign post these young people, who were creating a problem for the Service and the communities of Merseyside, onto its various innovative courses, in order to try to change their attitudes and thus reduce the risk of re-offending.

The Youth Engagement Team and the raft of initiatives implemented by the Authority have and continue to offer a unique range of positive and engaging activities that are attractive to young people and enable participants to experience risk taking activities in a controlled environment. Activities which enable young people to build up their confidence and self esteem, gain experience and qualifications and also have fun! They have also provided young people who are often poor school attendees, not realising their full potential, the opportunity to positively channel their energies by taking part in challenging and disciplined firefighting activities.

The success of the team has been recognised by the receipt of awards, never before received by a Fire & Rescue Authority. These awards include the Guardian Public Services Award for Service Delivery, Children and Young People and also the awarding of Beacon Authority Status for Early Intervention (Children at Risk). [21]

There is no doubt that Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority's involvement in delivering innovative courses, such as the Prince's Trust Volunteer Programme, have had far reaching positive effects for both the young people involved and the wider community.

The course has helped a range of young people from diverse backgrounds, to not only change their attitudes, but to gain self confidence, a sense of purpose and achievement and provide them with more community spirit. It has provided a large number of young people throughout Merseyside, with qualifications and experience,

which has enabled them to get into full time training or employment, greatly reducing the likelihood of them engaging in anti-social behaviour or other forms of criminality. [\[22\]](#) [\[23\]](#)

In addition to having a huge positive impact on the young people themselves, the course has also contributed towards improving the local community. Each course delivered by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service has resulted in a community project being completed.

For example, one of the teams based at Toxteth Community Fire Station completed their Community Project at Beechwood Gardens. Local residents had been complaining about the level of anti-social behaviour in the area and felt that their complaints were being ignored. The team decided to address these issues and set about transforming the communal gardens to the rear of the property, working in conjunction with Liverpool Mutual Homes. The arrival of the team brought a sense of positivity to the local residents, who felt that their concerns were being addressed. Many residents were encouraged by the young people, to get involved bringing the local community together and breaking down barriers. The local residents had nothing but praise for the young volunteers and both residents and LMH Housing staff noted a decline in anti-social behaviour incidents in the area following the community project and also a greater sense of pride and community spirit. [\[24\]](#)

A further team based out of Toxteth Fire Station, completed their Community Project at the Wah Sing Chinese Community Centre in Liverpool and working with Lovell Construction and LMH (Liverpool Mutual Homes), renovated the centre and fitted a new kitchen. For their completion of this project, the team was nominated for and where successful in winning the Regional Community Impact Award at the Prince's Trust and L'Oreal Paris Celebrate Success Awards in 2011. This award highlights and acknowledges the impact that Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority's Youth Engagement team and initiatives have on the local community and the lives of young people within Merseyside. [\[25\]](#)

A further initiative implemented by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority, which has had a huge impact on the communities of Merseyside, the Authority and young people themselves, is the embedded Firefighter, or School Fire Liaison Officer Scheme.

In 2010 an independent evaluation of the scheme was conducted by the University of Huddersfield. The evaluation focused on findings from Parklands High School, Speke, which was the first school within Merseyside to pilot the scheme back in 2005. [\[26a\]](#) [\[26b\]](#)

In 2005, the school was described as “challenging” in terms of anti-social behaviour. Problems around bullying, fighting and theft were identified by both students and staff, with staff also expressing issues around respect and boundaries between staff and students, such as disruptive, disrespectful behaviour.

The evaluation found that the presence of the School Fire Liaison Officers in the school has had a positive impact, both on the levels of anti-social behaviour and also on the attitudes, perceptions and consequent behaviour of the young people that it has targeted.

The School Fire Liaison Officers have provided a “face to the uniform”, which has contributed to a reduction in the number of hoax calls received, a reduction in attacks on fire crews and also a reduction in deliberate fire setting, therefore having a massive, positive impact on both the local community, Merseyside Fire & Rescue personnel and the Authority.

In addition to these benefits, the School Fire Liaison Officers have also assisted the schools greatly in improving their attainment, attendance and new intake figures, demonstrating the wide reaching impacts this initiative has had.

Also contributing to the success of the School Fire Liaison Officer scheme was the effectiveness of the Street Heat Educational Resource. The resource was piloted at St John Bosco School, Croxteth and evaluated by the Ariel Trust, who found that it had positive results, with potential to raise grade attainment for young people, whilst at the same time being effective in changing the attitudes of the young people around fire related anti-social behaviour and fire safety. [\[13b\]](#) [\[27a\]](#) [\[27b\]](#)

The results of the evaluation were presented to the Liverpool Association for Secondary Head Teachers and as a result, ten more schools are utilising this resource, which was also shortlisted for the Innovations Awards.

The Street Cage Soccer initiative, which has been run in partnership with the Fire Support Network has also been hugely successful in attracting and engaging young people across Merseyside.

The initiative was evaluated following its pilot [\[17a\]](#) and it was found that almost 6000 young people had attended the sessions over the 10 month period. Analysis using Police data showed that within a half mile radius of the cage sessions, whilst the sessions were taking place, incidents of anti-social behaviour fell by 32%. It also showed that within the same half mile radius, malicious false alarm calls to the Service, fell by over 50%, equating to an estimated saving to Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority of £40,335.

In addition to these benefits, the Street Cage Soccer sessions also had a positive impact on the lives of many young people. During the pilot, 7 young people who

were not in education, employment or training, volunteered at the sessions. They all passed FA Level One coaching certificate and 4 went on to be employed on a self-employed basis as coaches. All of these young people are now in full time employment with other employers.

The local community also benefited from this initiative, as the Chairman of one local community group quoted "...the cage has been a god send...we have certainly noticed a reduction in rowdy behaviour from young people."

Through the initiatives implemented by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority in relation to tackling the behaviour of young drivers, the Drive to Arrive resource developed by the Authority has been proven to be effective in positively influencing the attitudes of high risk groups.

These interactive presentations, developed to engage with the most at risk young people through trying to influence their attitudes on the five key issues underpinning the majority of road traffic accidents amongst this group, was independently evaluated by a team of academics from The University Of Liverpool. [\[18d\]](#)

The evaluation took the form of a large scale attitude survey amongst participants, with a questionnaire survey conducted with 331 participants taking the Drive To Arrive either voluntarily, or through referral.

The findings of this evaluation, showed that the Drive To Arrive intervention has been worthwhile, particularly in influencing the attitudes of those young drivers judged to be posing a higher risk of involvement in RTC's.

The higher risk category were found to undergo a positive attitude change as a result of the intervention, in terms of wearing seatbelts, exceeding the speed limit, recklessness, the risks they pose as passengers and pedestrians and also using mobile phones whilst driving. There was also found to be a downward trend amongst this group with regards to the view that recreational drugs can improve driving ability. Participants reported following the intervention that they felt less likely to gain respect from others for driving fast and less likely to gain enjoyment from taking risks whilst driving. These individuals also showed an increased agreement following the intervention, that reduction of RTC's in their local community was actually important to them.

The research also found that the Drive To Arrive intervention appears to bring the attitudes of the higher risk participants, into line with the "Normal" population. This research clearly demonstrates that this unique, innovative intervention, implemented by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority, is tackling the root causes of this type of behaviour amongst at risk young people, which will ultimately reduce

the risk of them becoming involved in RTC's, thus reducing the risk within the community and the cost to the Authority of responding to these incidents.

The raft of innovative interventions, developed and implemented by the Authority are having a huge positive impact on anti-social behaviour on Merseyside, both in terms of reducing incidents, but also in terms of actually influencing the attitudes of young people across the County. They also demonstrate the commitment of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority towards not only tackling and reducing anti-social behaviour across Merseyside, but also towards the development of young people's skills and confidence in preparation for adult and working life.

These initiatives have led to huge benefits for the Authority, in terms of making their staff safer from the risk of violence at work incidents [\[28\]](#) and reducing the amount of resources required to deal with these incidents.

They have had a huge impact on the local communities, as people and businesses now feel safer and less at risk, as a result of massive reductions in anti-social behaviour incidents across the whole of Merseyside. In addition, reductions in these incidents have meant that less of the local taxpayers money has been consumed in dealing with these unnecessary incidents, freeing up resources.

In addition to these benefits, the effects that these initiatives have had on the lives of local youths across Merseyside, should not be underestimated.

The decision made by Members to implement some of these highly innovative initiatives, was not an easy one to make, especially as a lot of these activities were considered by some to be outside the remit of a Fire & Rescue Service. However, Members realised that ultimately the Fire & Rescue Service are required to deal with the aftermath of such behaviour and through effective learning and development activities, Members realized that the Authority could actually do a lot to reduce the risk of this type of behaviour occurring on Merseyside and by doing so, would ultimately reduce the risks and costs associated with this behaviour for both the Authority and the local community. Through this process, the Authority have also learnt the power of the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service "brand" and the potential that it has to reach and engage with people that other agencies have struggled to engage with.

Through the learning and development provided to Members in relation to tackling anti-social behaviour and engaging young people, Members have developed the knowledge and confidence to go out within their own Districts and seek further opportunities for improvement. [\[29a\]](#) [\[29b\]](#)

Members regularly request the involvement of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service at Community Engagement events organised through their respective Councils or local

area forums, to highlight the extent to which the Authority work in partnership with other agencies and to demonstrate the commitment of the Authority to working with the community. [\[29c\]](#)

Authority Members appointed by Liverpool City Council have also been instrumental in obtaining funding through the Department of Children, Schools and Families, for a new initiative within Liverpool - Street Based Teams, to support delivery of the Youth Crime Action Plan. The opportunity for this initiative arose through Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority's successful partnership working with Liverpool City Council and involves Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority hosting a multi-agency team, including Fire Service Mentors and Youth Offending Service Prevention Officers, who assertively engage with young people and signpost them to support, advice, and diversionary activities available within the community.

The implementation of this initiative has enabled the Authority to reach some of the most excluded members of the community responsible for youth crime and anti-social behaviour and has helped to signpost these individuals to positive activities, providing ongoing support and providing them with the opportunity to make positive decisions regarding their life choices. Through this initiative, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority have had the opportunity to influence young people, deterring them from making hoax calls, committing arson related offences, or attacking firefighters, contributing to the continuing reduction in anti-social behaviour across Merseyside. [\[30\]](#)

Although the Authority has been instrumental in reducing incidents of anti-social behaviour across Merseyside over recent years, the recent civil disturbances experienced across the County, highlight that there is still more work to be done. [\[31a\]](#)

Nevertheless, Merseyside did not experience disruption and violence on the same scale as other major cities across the Country and this may well have been due to some extent, to the work undertaken by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority, in partnership with other agencies around engaging with young people.

In addition, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority conducted a Community Reassurance Campaign throughout the period of the civil disturbances, providing visits to homes and businesses, offering safety advice, removing combustible materials and providing a visible presence. [\[31b\]](#) This action provided reassurance to the community that Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority were doing all they could to minimize the impact of the civil disturbance on the people of Merseyside.

Members have recently instructed officers to make amendments to the current Service Instructions and produce a new Service Instruction regarding Community

Reassurance, in response to the lessons learnt from these recent disturbances.

[\[31c\]](#)

The Authority have learnt a great deal over recent years in terms what they are capable of achieving through successful youth engagement in relation to reducing anti-social behaviour related incidents. However, they are not complacent and are continuing to learn and develop, embracing opportunities to help make the communities of Merseyside safer.

4. Continuous Improvement

Give examples of how the authority is committed to continuous improvements with member development.

- In reviewing the evidence from your last assessment visit, what have been the most significant improvements?
- What are your aspirations/ hopes for the next three years?

“We have a robust financial plan to deliver the cuts we know about and despite the bleak predictions for the future, we are confident that we will be able to continue to deliver an outstanding Service, which will contribute to making Merseyside safer and stronger. We intend to deal positively with the challenges we are likely to face and still maintain the best Fire and Rescue Service in the Country”

(Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority’s Integrated Risk Management Plan 2012/15)

“Fantastic opportunity to observe a major incident, both on site and Gold and Silver Command and to see the new Incident Management Unit which was a good example of the Authority decision to purchase being correct”

(Councillor Lesley Rennie – Evaluation of attendance at live exercise: Exercise Phoenix)

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority has constantly strived to make improvements in terms of its service delivery, by relentlessly looking for innovative ways to help keep the people of Merseyside safer. In turn, this has led to continual improvements in the Authority’s Member development activities, to ensure that Members are equipped with the necessary information and confidence, to make the decisions to implement initiatives to achieve this.

Despite the huge scale of the financial challenge facing the Authority, [\[32a\]](#) [\[32b\]](#) [\[32c\]](#) Members remain determined to continue striving to improve the safety of the people of Merseyside, with effective and timely Member development activities remaining crucial to this progress.

In June 2010, the Authority approved a change to its Structure, which saw the introduction of a number of Scrutiny Panels. These Scrutiny Panels have provided Members with the opportunity to look into issues and performance in greater detail, thus developing Members understanding. [\[33a\]](#) [\[33b\]](#)

With the introduction of these Scrutiny Panels, there has also been an increase in the number of presentations provided at these meetings, in support of reports being considered, which has again provided Members with the opportunity to ask questions and develop their understanding. [\[34a\]](#)
[\[34b\]](#)

However, the Authority has recently identified that its current scrutiny processes could be improved further and made even more effective, and has set up a Scrutiny Review Group, consisting of Members and various Officers; to look into how these improvements can be achieved. By introducing Task and Finish Groups, which will be Member Sponsors working with Strategic Officers, to look into specific topics in more detail, and jointly reporting back findings to the Scrutiny Committee, the Authority will improve and make its Scrutiny processes more effective, which will also lead to an improvement in Members development and understanding. [\[35a\]](#) [\[35b\]](#)

Another significant improvement that has been achieved in relation to member development has been an increase in attendance at learning and development events.

In setting the dates of meetings for the current municipal year, officers consulted with Members to ensure that the arrangements for learning and development activities optimised Member attendance.

Members were asked to consider whether they would prefer development events to be held on separate days to Authority Committee Meetings, or whether they would prefer, in the main, that Committee Meetings and development events, be held on the same day.

The vast majority of Members confirmed their preference to hold development events and meetings together on the same day, to reduce the overall number of dates they needed to be available for.

Officers then looked to schedule bite sized development events, in between meetings of Committees, consisting of one set of Members and meetings of Scrutiny Panels, consisting of a different set of Members, to ensure that the maximum amount of Members were being captured. [\[36a\]](#) [\[36b\]](#)

The result of this rescheduling of meetings and events has greatly improved attendance at Member development events in recent months.

Members were also consulted regarding arrangements for their bi-annual Strategy Days. Previously, the Budget Strategy Day had been held at an external venue, with the location being rotated across the Districts of

Merseyside, over one full day. The other Strategy Day was held internally over one full day.

Officers noticed that attendance at these events was good in the morning, with most Members being in attendance, however by the end of the day, only a few Members remained.

Again, Officers consulted with Members over how they would like the events to be structured, to ensure that the majority of Members were able to remain in attendance for the duration of the events. Following this, it was agreed that both these events be held internally, to maximise attendance and also reduce costs to the Authority and that they would be held over two consecutive mornings. [\[37a\]](#) [\[37b\]](#)

Following the implementation of these changes, attendance at these events has also greatly improved, with the majority of Members attending and remaining in attendance for the full duration.

In addition to these changes regarding the structure of the Authority and development events, there have also been developments in the way information is provided to Members.

Previously, the vast majority of development events took the form of PowerPoint presentations and although this continues to be the main form of development events, there has also been a move in recent months, to providing Members with more demonstrations and the opportunity to attend and observe live exercises. [\[38a\]](#) [\[38b\]](#) [\[38c\]](#) [\[38d\]](#)

Members have provided particularly positive feedback regarding this type of development.

The Authority has in place, a Member Learning and Development Strategy. [\[39\]](#) However, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority is particularly fast moving and as such, Members learning and development continues to be constantly monitored and assessed to ensure that Members are provided with all the information that they need, in a timely manner, to enable them to make informed decisions. [\[41\]](#) This involves reviewing actions from meetings, where further information is requested by Members, ensuring that these requests are followed up and appropriate development arranged. [\[40\]](#)

In addition, the Authority continues to regularly review their Member Sponsor roles, to ensure that the roles continue to reflect the priorities of the Authority. For example, in July 2010, the Authority approved the inclusion of a Member Sponsor role for Youth Engagement. [\[42a\]](#) [\[42b\]](#) [\[42c\]](#)

The next 3 years will be a very uncertain time for Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority and indeed for Fire & Rescue Services as a whole. We are aware that the financial challenge nationally for Fire & Rescue Services will be back loaded, but are not yet aware of the extent of Government grant cuts for 2013/14 and 2014/15. Despite this uncertainty and in the face of the largest grant cuts ever experienced, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority will seek to minimise the impact of these cuts on the people of Merseyside and will continue to ensure the safety and effectiveness of firefighters, so that they can continue to help create safer, stronger communities.

Despite diminishing resources, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority will continue to focus on preventative work, however this will be focused where needed most, targeting the most at risk within the community. This will include continuing to target the most at risk group from being involved in RTC's through our recently launched Road Safety Strategy. [\[43a\]](#) [\[43b\]](#) [\[43c\]](#)

Anti-social behaviour remains a major concern for the communities of Merseyside and impacts on the resource availability for Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority. The Authority will continue, therefore, to work to address this type of behaviour in robust, innovative ways.

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority will continue to build upon their position of trust and respect within the community and the professionalism of their staff, to enable them to continue tackling the real, underlying factors which affect risk.

To achieve this, especially in the extremely difficult current financial situation, the Authority will continue to seek partnerships in areas where it believes it can contribute to making the communities of Merseyside safer, working smarter to reduce risk.

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority continues to evolve and develop, looking for ways in which to ensure the people across Merseyside are the safest they can be, despite the huge scale of the financial challenge facing the Authority at present and moving forward. In order to achieve this, it is more important than ever that Members learning and development continues and is the most effective that it can be, to ensure that Members are provided with the information and confidence to make the best decisions on behalf of the people of Merseyside.

