



SECTION F5

**GUIDANCE FOR NEW COUNCILLORS AND FOR CONTINUING MEMBER
DEVELOPMENT**

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Responsible Officer	Section Issued	Section amended/ updated	Review Date
ACO	December 2014	December 2016 July 2019	

GUIDANCE FOR NEW COUNCILLORS AND FOR CONTINUING MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Members who are appointed to the Fire Authority from the constituent authorities of East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council may have some experience of being a local councillor, may be entirely new to local government, or may have previous experience of serving in a Fire Authority.
- 1.2 East Sussex Fire Authority's Elected Members seek to serve the communities they represent and the County and the City of Brighton & Hove as a whole, to the very best of their ability. To that end, the Fire Authority has made a commitment to ensuring its Members are supported in continuously developing the range of skills needed to be outstanding community leaders.

2. Member Development Charter

- 2.1 Whilst East Sussex Fire Authority successfully achieved Member Development Charter status, awarded by South East Employers, it has decided not to re-apply for charter status. However, the principles of the charter will be adhered to in line with good practice to ensure that the Authority is still meeting the objectives of the scheme and delivering a valuable scheme to Members.
- 2.2 The purpose of the Charter is to:
 - raise the profile of member development and training
 - encourage local authorities to provide development and training for their elected members
 - award authorities for best practice in member training and development initiatives

3. Induction

- 3.1 A comprehensive induction programme is given to all Members of East Sussex Fire Authority to give them a foundation and knowledge to enable them to contribute effectively to the work of the Fire Authority in a short space of time.

3.2 Members' initial induction will usually include information on:

The Authority's key plans and documents such as:

- The Fire Authority's duties
- Annual Plan
- Medium Term Financial Plan
- Integrated Risk Management Plan
- How the Fire & Rescue Service is structured and the range of services provided
- Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegations
- Timetable of programmed meetings

Familiarisation with the Fire & Rescue Service's facilities, including:

- FRS Headquarters, including meeting rooms and Members' Room
- FRS Training Centre at Maresfield
- ESFRS fire stations
- Sussex Control Centre

Resources available to Members such as:

- Guidance from ESFRS staff, e.g. Corporate Management Team, Monitoring Officer, Treasurer and Democratic Services
- Local Government Association (for Councillor development and guides) at:
<http://www.local.gov.uk/councillor-development;jsessionid=616D1921284B12C85FB05F517461DFB8>
- Chief Fire Officers' Association
- Fire Service College at Moreton-in-Marsh

General Housekeeping arrangements:

- Code of Conduct for Members
- Declarations of Interests
- Political Group forms and election of Group Leaders
- How to claim allowances and the supporting documentation required from Members such as motor vehicle insurance, MOTs and driving licences.



4. Member Learning & Development Strategy

4.1 A robust Member Learning & Development Strategy has been formulated to support Members in achieving the skills needed to meet the broad range of responsibilities that come with being a community leader.

4.2 The aims of the strategy are to:

- create a clear Member Development Framework, based upon individual needs and the needs of the Fire Authority as a whole
- ensure all Members have the skills and knowledge necessary to lead the delivery of high quality public services through the Community Leadership way of working
- ensure all Members are fully aware of their responsibilities, accountabilities, legal requirements and matters of probity
- support continuous learning and skill-building, through Personal Development Planning

4.3 From these key aims, an action plan has been developed to help drive the work being undertaken by the Fire Authority, by identifying key milestones and goals. The plan is fully supported by the Member Development Steering Group, which is a body that regularly meets to discuss member development issues and ensure the project remains focussed and on-track.

4.4 A mixture of online courses, in-house workshops, external courses and events all help to give a balanced approach and maintain flexibility.

5. Mentoring Scheme

5.1 The purpose of the ESFA mentoring scheme is to provide elected members with the personal support they require to enable them to fully contribute to the strategic leadership of the authority whilst also supporting their personal development.



- 5.2 Mentoring is an invaluable personal development opportunity for anyone who wants to draw on their knowledge and experiences to encourage, shape and challenge personal and professional self-awareness and learning in others.
- 5.3 An elected member mentor is able to give independent confidential help, support, guidance and advice to a mentee in an unbiased way, to enable them to learn and develop.
- 5.4 A successful mentor will draw upon and develop a range of skills including analysis, problem-solving, listening and questioning and is likely to gain invaluable perspectives from their own self-reflection and that of their mentee.
6. **Members' Seminars**
 - 6.1 A series of Members' Seminars are held during the year at intervals between Fire Authority meetings. These give the opportunity for Members to be briefed informally about current issues and to take part in interactive sessions in a more relaxed atmosphere.