

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 27 November 2017, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Councillors

M Parkinson (Chairman)
I Brown
D Coleman
F De Molfetta (for M Khan)
J Eaton
F Jackson (Vice-Chair)
T Martin
D O'Toole
J Shedwick
M Tomlinson (for N Hennessy)

Officers

J Johnston, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)
D Russel, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)
B Norman, Head of Service Development (LFRS)
J Hargreaves, Head of Fleet & Engineering Services (LFRS)
D Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer (LFRS)

9/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Khan and County Councillor N Hennessy.

10/17 DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None received.

11/17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 17 July 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

12/17 EMERGENCY COVER REVIEW 2017 - CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Members received a presentation from Area Manager Ben Norman on the Emergency Cover Review Process 2017 which had been summarised in the report as now presented.

At the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) meeting on 17 July 2017 Members endorsed the publication of the Emergency Cover Review (ECR) proposals for a 12-week consultation period on the basis of: i) A no change ECR for 2017-20 with regards to LFRS's 58 Fire Appliances and the associated crewing arrangements; ii) The principle that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service extend its collaborative response arrangements; and iii) Pre-alerting as a policy position, including the commissioning of further work to identify the potential benefits of a Dynamic Cover Tool.

Government recommended that the scope of the consultation should be proportionate to the nature and extent of any changes proposed, whilst the public would be naturally most interested in those aspects that impinged directly on the service provided to them and any perceived impact upon their safety. Consideration was given to the Authority's Public Consultation Strategy to ensure that the consultation exercise for this Emergency Cover Review was duly conducted in accordance with the agreed approach.

Due to the nature of the proposals outlined the approach of undertaking in-depth public consultation such as county-wide forums had not been adopted. Nor was there a detailed staff consultation in the form of working groups / presentations. This was because whilst there were recommendations to support changes to mobilising and working practices, this ECR in the main supported a no change proposal in terms of our fire appliances, special appliances and associated crewing arrangements.

The Consultation Process

Emergency Cover Review 2017 – Timetable	
Draft ECR proposals approved and proposed consultation process endorsed.	CFA Planning Committee 17th July 2017
Consultation with the community, staff and other interested parties.	19th July 2017 – 10th October 2017
Consultation report and final recommendations to Planning Committee.	CFA Planning Committee 27th November 2017
ECR Proposals presented for final approval.	Full CFA meeting 18th December 2017
Feedback on final outcomes	January 2018

Consultation commenced on 19th July 2017 and ran for a twelve week period.

Opinion on the proposals within the ECR was sought from a wide range of stakeholders digitally, with proposals cascaded through our website, social media and via email and letters.

The following were consulted:

THE FOLLOWING GROUPS WERE INFORMED AND INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CONSULTATION	
All LFRS Staff	Office of the PCC
All County Councillors	National Fire Chiefs Council
All Unitary/District Councillors	Lancashire Resilience Forum
CEO's of all District & Unitary Authorities	MP's and North West MEP's
CEO of Lancashire County Council	Parish Councils
Combined Fire Authority Members	Representative Bodies
Chief Fire Officers (NW Region)	North West Fire Control
Lancashire Constabulary	NW Ambulance Service
Other Miscellaneous	

During the consultation period on behalf of the CFA, the views of stakeholders were sought with the opportunity provided to consider the ECR proposals and to express an opinion on the changes. The majority of communication was done via email with a hyperlink provided to facilitate ease of access to the document and to reduce publication and postal costs. Links to the document were placed on the Service's external website and further communication was undertaken via letter with consultation going out to appropriate parties when no email address was available. Hard copies of the document were available upon request however, no requests were received.

Consultation with LFRS Staff

All LFRS staff were invited to comment on the ECR through internal communication channels. Consultation with staff was undertaken via a link to the ECR document which was available on the intranet and via the weekly emailed Routine Bulletin with guidance provided to state the consultation period and the process to use for the submission of feedback, views or observations. Staff representative bodies were advised of the consultation exercise via email and were provided with a link to the document and the process to use for the submission of feedback, views or observations.

Public Consultation

Public consultation was undertaken via the website and through our social media platforms Facebook and Twitter. Due to the nature of the proposals this was deemed to be appropriate in relation to the scale and complexity of the topic. Nevertheless the Service remains cognisant that the public are a valued stakeholder and any future proposals that are considered to require in-depth consultation would be actively communicated via the most appropriate channels, so that views and opinions could be obtained and considered.

Formal Responses

A total of 12 responses were received from the following:

- 3 from Fire & Rescue Services;
- 9 from elected representatives and/or other organisations.

One response was received on the closing date of the official consultation period. This was considered to warrant an extension so that further clarity surrounding the proposals could be provided and an extension of one week was afforded.

Summary of Responses

Members considered the report and responses. Given the scale and scope of the consultation Members were disappointed to receive a limited number of responses.

It was noted that the majority of responses only required a customary acknowledgement as they contained standard comments without question. Many respondents welcomed the proposals with full support provided alongside gratitude of the work undertaken by the Service and its staff. Responses from neighbouring Fire and Rescue Service's included support in the sharing of information to adopt the pre-alerting policy, agreement in the sensibility of the proposals and interest in the outcomes of the work undertaken to identify the potential benefits of a Dynamic Cover Tool. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that if approved, the pre-alerting policy would be used in areas where it was appropriate.

Many responses from local and parish councils highlighted their full commitment to support community safety and welcomed such proposals to improve the responsiveness and effectiveness of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, particularly when considering the challenging financial conditions experienced across the public sector.

Agreement was given that the adoption of a pre-alerting policy within LFRS would assist in making effective use of limited resources, whilst having a positive impact on response times to emergency incidents.

The exploration of further collaboration opportunities with other emergency services was deemed to be a sensible development with potential benefits to both emergency service organisations and the general public.

RESOLVED: -

1. To endorse the consultation process surrounding the ECR proposals as adequate in scale and scope; and
2. Refer items to the full Combined Fire Authority meeting scheduled for 18 December 2017 for final approval.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the results of an evaluation of a new Fire Appliance which incorporated a Water Tower function. It was noted that the vehicle had been supported (between LFRS and Rosenbauer) throughout its design and operation.

The vehicle, known as the AT-Stinger had been on trial for 33 weeks and had operated as one of Blackburn Fire Station's appliances. The appliance acted as a standard frontline fire appliance but had the additional capability of providing a water tower function. Other features included a piercing branch and a far larger pumping capability. The increased capacity and remote operation had provided significant advancements in operational capability and improved firefighter safety. The trial had been well received by operational staff who had both utilised the appliance and contributed to its evaluation and development. Currently the aerial capability was delivered by 4 Aerial Ladder Appliances (ALPs) alternatively crewed according to demand. The AT-Stinger appliance would complement this capability whilst having the added advantage of being permanently crewed.

Given the lease on the existing water tower ran out this year it was proposed to purchase within the current financial year from capital. The cost of purchasing the existing leased vehicle was £0.4m which could be met from either an additional in-year revenue contribution to the capital programme or from capital reserves. Individual appliance costs were noted as: ALP £0.6m, WT £0.5m, Standard Fire Appliance £0.2m. The net additional capital expenditure (subject to the preferred option) was approximately £0.8m. This could be borne through existing capital budgets alongside appropriate adjustments to the Fleet Assessment Management Plan.

Two options were discussed with regard to the number of appliances and their disposition: -

1. Purchase 2 AT-Stinger appliances and replace the standard existing fire appliances at Blackburn and Skelmersdale (as part of the fleet asset management plan). This option provided an enhanced aerial capability of 2 Water Towers and 4 ALPs;
2. Purchase 3 AT-Stinger appliances and replace the standard existing fire appliances at Blackburn, Skelmersdale and Nelson (as part of the fleet asset management plan and acknowledging the ability to extend the life of the 2004 ALP. This option provided an enhanced aerial capability of 3 Water Towers and 4 ALPs.

It was proposed and unanimously

RESOLVED: - That option 1 to: Purchase 2 AT-Stinger appliances and replace the standard existing Fire Appliances at Blackburn and Skelmersdale (as part of the fleet asset management plan) providing an enhanced aerial capability of 2 Water Towers and 4 ALPs be approved; including that the option to purchase a further AT-Stinger Appliance be reviewed after 12 months.

14/17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday 19 March 2018, at 1000 hours in the main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Further meeting dates were noted for 16 July 2018 and agreed for 26 November 2018.

M NOLAN
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood