

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 13 July 2020, at 10.00 am - Virtual meeting accessible via MS Teams and YouTube (as a live webcast).

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Councillors

M Parkinson OBE (Chairman)
I Brown
F De Molfetta (for T Martin)
J Eaton
Jane Hugo
H Khan
M Khan OBE
D O'Toole
J Shedwick

Officers

J Johnston, Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)
B Norman, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)
J Charters, Area Manager, Head of Service Development (LFRS)
D Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer (LFRS)
N Bashall, Member Services Officer (LFRS)

25/19 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman, County Councillor Parkinson welcomed Authority Members and members of the press and public to the virtual committee meeting of the Planning Committee. He advised that in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic the Government had made regulations that enabled virtual meetings. This meeting was accessible for Committee Members via Microsoft Teams and for members of the press and public via a live webcast on YouTube.

The Committee Members individually confirmed their attendance at the start of the meeting.

26/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Tony Martin.

27/19 DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None received.

28/19 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 10 February 2020 be confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

29/19 ANNUAL SERVICE REPORT

Area Manager Charters presented the report.

The Annual Service Report (ASR) was a key part of the Service's corporate planning process which enabled the documentation of deliverables in the previous 12 month performance period as set out in the Annual Service Plan.

In addition to highlighting the key projects that had been delivered against the 2019/20 Annual Service Plan, it also presented the opportunity to reflect on some of the unplanned major achievements and challenges the Service had delivered over the last 12 months.

Members considered the detailed a range of projects, action plans and priority items for completion during the year as set out in the report:-

Preventing fires and other emergencies from happening and protecting people and property when they do

Deliver tailored prevention activity

- CookSafe and TeenSafe campaigns

The Keep It Clean, Keep It Clear cooking safety campaign ran from July to October 2019 and was centred on keeping ovens and hobs clean and clear to reduce the risk of fire. High risk areas were targeted as part of the campaign, as well as people living alone and people over the pensionable age. There had been a decreasing trend in cooking related accidental dwelling fires since the CookSafe campaign started in 2017.

The 2019/2020 academic year saw the first full year of key stage 3 TeenSafe delivery, which provided targeted sessions on themes such a Bonfire Night, water safety, grass fire safety and anti-social behaviour. In addition prevention sessions were provided for year 2 and early years' pupils, both at their settings and on stations. The Service also worked with voluntary youth groups such as guides and scouts, as well as further education and higher education establishments delivering student safety sessions.

- Become an Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) aware organisation

During 2019/20, ACE toolbox talks were undertaken at the Service's headquarters and training centre and at a number of fire stations across Lancashire. Delivery of the talks would continue in 2020/21 until ACE was embedded as a core organisational offering.

Harness technology to improve protection activity

Work continued to develop technology to support quicker report production and

wider digitisation of business safety and enforcement services, with more agile ways of working including mobile access to building files and plans. This was part of a wider project to ensure fire safety inspectors' resources were targeted at the most appropriate premises through an increasingly refined risk based inspection programme which considered building use, management history and other factors such as cladding.

Responding to fires and other emergencies quickly and competently

Evaluate tools to strengthen response

- Pre-alerting system

Following promising results at four fire stations, the trial had been extended to include the majority of fire engines in the north of the county to examine the impact of early mobilisation messages on performance levels on all shift systems including on-call.

- Dynamic cover tool

The Service continued to explore the feasibility of a shared product with regional partners to improve the effectiveness of geographical resource allocation across Lancashire.

Strengthen operational assurance

Following the successful launch of a debrief app the Service continued to develop a bespoke assurance monitoring system. The system would ensure the recording, analysis and tracking of any learning from incidents and exercises effectively and efficiently. Learning from other fire and rescue services and from station assurance visits would also be managed through the system.

Integrate a second water tower into the fleet

Following evaluation of our first Stinger appliance and confirmation that the appliance significantly enhanced firefighter safety, firefighting capability in the built environment and pumping capacity, a second Stinger had been integrated into the Service's fleet and was based at Skelmersdale Fire Station.

Replace incident command units

Work to finalise the specifications for the incident command unit as well as incident command software had progressed, and would provide the Service with a bespoke vehicle for use at multi-agency and major incidents. This would enhance command and control capability and provide a space for high level incident ground discussions and decisions to take place. New software would enable the safe and efficient sharing of information across the incident ground and with other agencies. A physical prototype of the new command support unit had been constructed and work was being carried out to ensure the unit and software could be seamlessly integrated. Once both the specifications and prototype had been finalised the procurement process could commence.

Optimise rota management

The Service operated a risk based approach to staffing fire appliances and other specialist vehicles and by necessity there were a range of duty systems in use, each with their own guidelines, management overheads and interdependencies. The Service had been working to ensure this project would reduce the amount of time staff spent in both operational and administrative roles in managing people disposition. The project had already delivered a contemporary approach to overtime management, utilising an app, and would go on to focus on smarter ways to manage other aspects of staffing.

Establish a wildfire burn team

The crew at Bacup Fire Station now made up a newly established specialist wildfire burn team capable of proactively burning areas of land to reduce the spread and duration of wildfires. The team had provided successful interventions at several wildfire incidents resulting in fires being contained and extinguished in a relatively short period of time; prevention of further fire spread; and no reported injuries. The team helped to maximise firefighter safety and minimise the risk to people, property and the environment, and positive feedback had been received from partner agencies.

Lead nationally on the use of drones

The Service remained at the forefront of emergency service drone technology and maintained a joint drone team with Lancashire Constabulary. Through its national lead status, the Service had assisted a large number of other emergency services in developing their own drone capability. As the only Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) qualified training organisation in the sector, training had also been delivered to other services and government agencies.

The Service keeps up with the rate of technological change in the drone industry through links with research organisations, manufacturers and academia; currently supporting a number of research projects including the development of the Lancashire Unmanned Aviation Vehicle Cluster in conjunction with the University of Central Lancashire.

Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer

Develop a strong organisational culture where our values are understood

- Improve how the appraisal conversation is undertaken

Further to extensive staff consultation, a revised approach to the appraisal conversation was created including new documentation. This was launched alongside a video to ensure colleagues were aware of the reasoning behind the change in arrangements. The new approach had been welcomed by members of staff and alternative recording arrangements were now being developed within existing HR systems. To ensure that meaningful conversations took place in relation to performance activity around having difficult conversations within the development programme for supervisory managers was also included. Line managers also attend coaching development sessions.

- Performance manage the completion of appraisals

Further to the implementation of the new appraisal approach, the completion rate in relation to appraisals last year was 98% for operational members of staff and 97% for support staff.

- Tools to improve the appraisal conversation

A 360 degree appraisal tool had been developed however the launch of a pilot was postponed due to the Covid-19. The Service is looking to implement this work in September 2020.

Encourage and listen to employee voice

Following months of staff consultation, a new internal intranet 'The Engine House' was launched and was now widely used. Incorporating social networking to connect staff across the Service, the site allowed them to raise and discuss new ideas, as well as share knowledge and ideas in an open forum. The Engine House was used as a central hub for all internal information.

Promote equality, diversity and inclusion within the Service

- Promote opportunities to diverse communities

The Service had selected suitable candidates for firefighter recruitment courses in September 2020 and January 2021 after a positive action campaign was held in February 2019. How social media could be used to engage diverse groups in the next recruitment drive was being explored.

A careers insight day provided operational and support staff the opportunity to learn about the variety of roles available in the Service provided by those with experience, including how these could be accessed and pathways to promotion.

- Consult communities to shape our activity

Throughout 2019/20 staff were consulted regarding options for new and improved uniform; proposed building work to create dormitory facilities for women at South Shore, Blackpool, Hyndburn and Preston fire stations; and locker rooms in the fleet garages at Service Training Centre. The network of contacts across minority groups in Lancashire were reviewed to ensure the Service was best placed to engage and specific work had been undertaken with the LGBT community, people with disabilities, women and families and ethnic minorities in terms of considering a career in the fire service.

Pride events

The Service had utilised its Pride liveried fire engine to highlight its inclusive employer status. Over the last year, the number of Pride events in Lancashire had increased and this opportunity had been used to promote key prevention and recruitment messages at Blackpool, Lancaster, Morecambe and Preston based events. Given the scale of the celebration and crowds, the Service also attended Manchester Pride to promote recruitment to the many thousands of attendees. In addition to these formal events the LGBT employee voice group had worked closely with other colleagues and supported a number of fundraising, health and wellbeing

and recruitment events using the striking appliance as a key backdrop, supporting engagement at the event and also across the Service's social media platforms.

Expand apprenticeship opportunities

The Service was successful in gaining employer provider status and was now delivering firefighter apprenticeships. This benefitted new starters who received a more individually focused training course and subsequent development programme to support them on station. The first cohort of apprentices had completed their initial recruits' course and they were progressing with their development at stations across the county.

Build a strong and resilient workforce

- Embed Trauma Risk Management (TRiM)

Health and wellbeing toolbox talks had been delivered to all members of staff in order to embed TRiM. The talks, which continued across the Service, also provide key information about PPE contamination, musculoskeletal issues, mental health and wellbeing and the link with physical fitness, all to help improve personal resilience.

- Blue Light Wellbeing Framework assessment

A gap analysis against the Blue Light Wellbeing Framework hosted on Oscar Kilo had been completed. Some of the key themes highlighted were flexible and family friendly working practices, rewards and recognition and future training on wellbeing topics ranging from difficulty sleeping, menopause and nutrition to personal resilience, alcohol and drugs and suicide prevention. The framework was a live document being used to develop continuous improvement.

Re-develop Preston Fire Station

The scope of this redevelopment and potential to site share with other public services had been evaluated and the costs would be considered pending a medium term financial settlement from the government.

Upgrade fire station accommodation

Progress had been made towards upgrading accommodation at South Shore, Hyndburn and Blackpool fire stations. At South Shore, planning permission had been obtained and tender documents approved. At Hyndburn the Service was working with the contractor towards starting the procurement process and planning permission had been received for proposals at Blackpool however procurement for this project would commence upon completion of South Shore and Hyndburn works.

Delivering value for money in how we use our resources

Invest in training and equipment

- Expand facilities at Service Training Centre

Building plans for the upgrade of facilities at the training centre had been developed and planning permission to expand had been requested. The contract had been awarded to the successful bidder and pre-construction work was progressing, although somewhat delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Firehouse refurbishment

The firehouse had been refurbished and now allowed for basement fire training in a realistic fire environment. This enhanced training facility enabled operational crews to develop further skills and knowledge in a practical setting.

- Review of duty rig uniform

Extensive staff consultation and trials had taken place to ensure that new duty rig uniform met the needs of the workforce. As a result, new trousers and boots had been chosen and would be rolled out across the Service in 2020/21.

- CCTV on operational fire appliances

Work had progressed to scope the fitting of CCTV on all operational fire appliances. Soft market testing had been completed and the tender process was being prepared. Once fitted, these CCTV systems aimed to improve driver training and reduce the amount of time taken to investigate incidents.

Collaboration with other public services

- Collaboration programme with Lancashire Constabulary

Work was ongoing to expand collaboration opportunities with Lancashire Constabulary, specifically looking at joint accreditation of staff to undertake fire scene investigations.

- Site sharing opportunities

A shared location had been established with the local neighbourhood policing team at Skelmersdale Fire Station; and site sharing opportunities continued to be explored with other partners.

Information management strategy

- Centralised document management system

This project had a number of inter-dependencies and has been incorporated into wider work to develop the information management strategy.

- Integrated Planning and Performance (IPP)

Given the resources required to maintain the current reporting system (Corvu), it was decided to refocus the direction of this work solely on replacing this vital tool rather than developing it. This activity underpinned much of the IPP work and allowed progress to be made towards multiple organisational objectives. An interim solution that delivered data directly from the existing system to planning documents was rolled out successfully in 2019.

Making Lancashire safer

In addition to the priorities set out in the Annual Service Plan, the Service provided a wide range of services throughout the year to help keep people safe, including:

- Working alongside Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service to provide realistic high-rise firefighting training based on learning from the Grenfell Tower fire;
- The implantation of rapid flood catchment area response plans, which enabled North West Fire Control to mobilise the nearest resources on receipt of flooding notifications;
- A combined event for members of staff was held for those who had achieved 20, 30 and 40 years' service and those who had been awarded employee Star Awards;
- Last winter's safety campaign focused on elderly, isolated and vulnerable members of our community who were encouraged to reach out for help and support over the winter months;
- The latter part of 2019/20 saw the outbreak of Covid-19 in the UK. The Service acted quickly to continue responding to emergencies, protect the most vulnerable members of our communities and ensure the health and safety of our people. Also resources were re-allocated to support the Lancashire Resilience Forum with a number of activities including helping vulnerable people in the community, distributing personal protective equipment (PPE) across the county, assisting in taking samples for Covid-19 antigen testing and face-fitting masks for NHS staff.

Significant Incidents

A number of significant incidents were also detailed in the report, namely:

- Wildfire in Bacup, April 2019;
- Commercial building fire in Lower Darwen, May 2019;
- Recycling centre fire in Preston, August 2019;
- Derelict building fire in Preston, October 2019;
- Commercial building fire in Condor Green, January 2020;
- Storm Ciara across Lancashire, February 2020;
- Derelict building fire in Lytham St Anne's, February 2020;
- House fire in Preston, February 2020; and
- Commercial building fire in Preston, February 2020.

County Councillor O'Toole felt the report was excellent and he was really pleased that the drones were being put to good use.

County Councillor O'Toole asked whether significant incidents that related to commercial building fires had increased during the pandemic and whether these were being investigated. In response, ACFO Norman advised that the Service had seen a slight change in the volume and type of call during the lockdown. There had been an increase in unwanted fire signals in premises that were empty more often and in relation to nuisance fires. He confirmed there had not been a significant spike in arson or suspected arson. The Incident Intelligent Officer Team investigated significant incidents extensively and the issue would be closely monitored.

County Councillor Eaton thanked officers for a very detailed report. As referenced on page 14 of the report, in relation to the 17,206 incidents attended and the average attendance time of 7 minutes and 28 seconds, County Councillor Eaton asked how these numbers compared to the previous year. In response, AM Charters advised that the total incidents attended this year had increased by 150 on the previous year which was mainly due to gaining entry to premises (incidents attended on behalf of Police and Ambulance colleagues to gain entry to premises so life-saving intervention could be delivered). He confirmed that the average attendance time had improved by 16 seconds on the previous year.

Also referenced on page 14, County Councillor Shedwick noted that 83 on-call firefighters had been recruited which was excellent. He asked for information regarding the number of vacancies currently held for on-call firefighters. AM Charters advised that the recruitment of on-call firefighters was an area of challenge for the Service which was resourced extensively. The numbers of on-call firefighters recruited remained broadly consistent with the previous year. Recruitment encouraged increased diversity across the workforce from all sectors of the community. The detail of ongoing vacancies across all on-call stations would be provided to County Councillor Shedwick after the meeting.

County Councillor Shedwick was pleased that on-call fire engines were available to respond to incidents 87% of the time. He asked for confirmation that this figure was in the upper quartile when compared with many other Fire and Rescue Services. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service continued to be one of the best performing Services in terms of on-call availability.

RESOLVED: - That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the Annual Service Report.

30/19 HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES UPDATE

Area Manager Charters presented the report.

The second inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) was due to be conducted in April/May 2020. This was suspended due to the Covid-19 outbreak and the recall of HMICFRS seconded staff to their own fire and rescue services in order to support the planning and management of response during the pandemic.

Throughout the pandemic period LFRS' Service Liaison Officer had maintained contact with the HMICFRS' Service Liaison Lead, Jo Hayden by means of two-weekly telephone conversations.

Whilst the Service Liaison Officer would return to the HMICFRS with effect from 29 June 2020, there would be an ensuing period of time where the HMICFRS would need to undertake work to recruit to vacant roles within the inspection teams, meaning that a full inspection was not expected until much later into 2021.

However, early indications suggested that a Covid-19 Thematic review was likely to occur and whilst confirmation was awaited, the Service was making preparations in readiness for:

1. The Data Return request (postponed from May) and likely to incorporate Covid-19 specific data sources. A subsequent Data Return in October this year bringing LFRS back into the planned HMICFRS data rhythm;
2. A Covid-19 Thematic inspection of all FRS between July and October 2020;
3. A Thematic report being published in January 2021 on the findings of the Covid-19 inspection;
4. A HMICFRS 'return to work strategy' that involved the use of Microsoft Teams to provide an engagement tool for use with fire and rescue services;
5. A return to business as usual by July 2021.

The Covid-19 inspection was thought likely to be a sub-diagnostic within the wider inspection framework and framed around the pillars of efficiency, effectiveness and people. It would be reasonable to expect that such an inspection would consider delivery of prevention, protection and response activities during the period, provisions made for employee welfare, and work conducted under the tri-partite agreement and in support of the Lancashire Resilience Forum partnership.

RESOLVED: - That the content of the report be noted.

31/19 IMPLEMENTING REGULATORY CHANGE AND TRANSFORMING PROTECTION SERVICES

The Chief Fire Officer introduced the report. He advised that the need for regulatory change had been discussed for a number of years now as it had been 3 years since the Grenfell tragedy. Some significant changes had been made towards the legislation and much more was expected. So far, the focus had been on high-rise buildings. However, there was a move now to buildings below what would traditionally be seen as high-rise and the regulations for that would have a knock on effect on the entire built environment. The scale therefore would probably be the most significant change seen by the sector since it carried out fire certifications 20 years ago. When the Regulatory Fire Safety Order 2005 was put in place it changed the role of the Fire Service to be more like the Health and Safety Executive ie: using fewer resources to provide some support to businesses, investigating fires in commercial premises and prosecuting as required. These responsibilities would remain but the changes to the role of the Service were more likely to include giving consent to changes to the use of buildings. A transformation was required by the sector in the way it was structured and responded to the changes that had been made to the built environment during the last 20 years ie: where there had been a number of changes to the way inspections by local building control had been undertaken and the role of approved inspectors.

Dame Judith Hackitt had described the current system as broken and in need of fundamental reform. This was the early stages of that transformation which came with a commitment to provide surge funding which was expected would be built into baseline funding as part of the comprehensive funding review; the detail of which had yet to be seen due to the pandemic.

This was the start of a journey of significant change in the sector, one which should put the Service in a much stronger position to assure the building stock in Lancashire was fit for purpose in terms of protecting the people who resided and operated in them.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the first part of the paper largely introduced the legislation and the drivers for change. Page 30 set out the Fire Safety Bill, which was a response to the Grenfell Tower Fire and which would amend the Fire Safety Order to clarify that the responsible person or duty-holder for multi-occupied residential buildings must manage and reduce the risk of fire for: the structure and external walls of the building, including cladding, balconies and windows; and the entrance doors to individual flats that opened into common parts.

The paper then detailed the scope of the amended legislation and referred on pages 32-33 to the Building Safety Bill which was due to come into force in a couple of years' time. If the Fire Safety Bill was the regulatory device used to correct deficient existing building stock, then the Building Safety Bill would be the regulatory device used to ensure future construction of higher risk residential buildings (HRRB) to avoid the pitfalls of the past.

The new legislation would require:

- LFRS to act as part of the new Building Regulator (formerly called Joint Competent Authority) with HSE (lead) and Local Authority Building control;
- LFRS to consult at all [gateway] stages whereas previously consultation was only undertaken at Building Regulation application stage;
- HRRB inspectors would, as a minimum need to be Fire Safety Inspectors with a L4 Diploma, current CPD log and registration to IFR (or similar);
- LFRS to maintain access to Fire Engineers.

The paper then discussed the competency framework which was agreed by the national Fire Chiefs Council on 5 February 2020. Members noted that LFRS were co-authors of the revised Framework, which would ensure suitably trained Fire Safety Inspector Officers with levels, 3, 4 and 5 diplomas operated within that bespoke area of work.

Pages 34-35 detailed how the Service was engaging with seconded, dedicated staff members into working part-time as part of their role for the various key governance areas and teams that were driving best practice.

The latter part of the report identified the transformation change required, including short-term and medium-term objectives. The proposal included changes to the structure; moving the prevention and protection department under the directorate of service delivery and training and organisational review moving to sit alongside emergency planning, policy and strategy. The paper also showed how the initial government surge funding of £300k would be utilised to add some strategic leadership and additional practitioners to focus initially on the transformational change and meet future needs.

County Councillor De Molfetta was pleased that the report stated on page 31 that Robert Jenrick MP had announced steps to introduce mandatory sprinkler systems and consistent wayfinding signage in all new high-rise blocks of flats over 11 meters tall which would come into effect for all buildings constructed after 26 November 2020.

County Councillor Shedwick observed from the Chief Fire Officer's introduction that as the role for the Service would be enhanced to include involvement in local authority licencing and planning applications for bigger buildings there were also

historic licensing conditions that may not have been complied with which maybe more problematic. He felt the identification of these could be a role for Members of the Fire Authority if they were aware of historic conditions that were not being complied with. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed he would welcome that information from Members. He advised that there was currently a Built Environment Assessment Team undertaking a one-off piece of work over the next few months to analyse: the building stock, its current condition and whether the changes to legislation might have any material effect. The Team were also looking at what remedies may need to be put in place to work with the building owners and how the Service could plan to respond to a building that potentially did not perform as expected in relation to the current building regulations.

RESOLVED: - That the Planning Committee noted the national drivers for change, the allocation of pump prime funding and endorsed the proposed internal restructuring necessary to underpin the transformation plan.

32/19 CONSULTATION STRATEGY

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented the report. The Authority had a consultation strategy which provided a framework through which it could seek public opinion on major change issues.

Each year the Planning Committee reviewed the strategy as now considered by Members to assure continued compliance with guidance or legislation and to incorporate learning from any public consultation exercises undertaken.

The review concluded that the strategy continued to be legally compliant and in line with good practice.

In response to a comment from County Councillor O'Toole, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer provided assurance that the style and reporting of consultations including the number of consultation events, number of respondents involved and the collation of comments made would remain a part of the work undertaken. This would be the case next year when there would be a consultation on the Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan. This had not been a feature of today's meeting as there had not been requirement for a consultation item during the last year.

County Councillor O'Toole expressed concern regarding the relevance of collecting personal data during a consultation (as categorised in section 9 on page 51 of the agenda pack). He felt this would be intrusive and unnecessary and that gathering such information caused division in society and locally.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the intention was to show that the Authority complied with the General Data Protection Regulations in its processing of personal data and was more an indication of the type of data that needed to be protected. The Chief Fire Officer added that this data was not generally collected apart from where it was required to collect some, such as during recruitment.

Councillor Jane Hugo commented that she disagreed with County Councillor O'Toole in that there were occasions where it was important to collect such data to ensure that the Fire Authority was not inadvertently excluding people. For example, reaching equal number of men and women and not excluding any groups.

RESOLVED: - That the Committee noted and endorsed the consultation strategy.

33/19 BUSINESS CONTINUITY TESTING

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) was required to test Business Continuity Plans (BCP) annually. The Service test was usually scheduled towards the end of the year once all plans had been updated and reviewed.

The 2019/20 test (Exercise Raven) had been planned in detail and was programmed to be held in March 2020. It involved a simulated pandemic influenza event combined with a fuel shortage. Planning and preparation for the impending arrival of Covid-19 within Service replaced delivery of the 'test' exercise with actual instigation of business continuity plans.

Meanwhile a significant flooding event also occurred on Sunday 9 February 2020 which triggered the LFRS BCP and led to non-essential headquarters-based staff being prevented from entering the building for the subsequent 2 days.

Members considered the scale of both events was significant enough to qualify as live tests of the business continuity plans.

The Chairman asked how the Service was preparing itself for any potential second wave of the pandemic in the winter months particularly the level of physical and mental wellbeing support provided to operational and non-operational staff.

In response, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that Chief Fire Officer was the national lead for fitness standards and that the Service had a comprehensive fitness and wellbeing programme with a commitment to Oscar Kilo (which was a wellbeing programme that the National Fire Chiefs Council had signed up to that shared learning and best practice across blue light emergency services). He advised that there had been an increase in the staff use of the support mechanisms which included the Service Employee Assistance Scheme and efforts had intensified to signpost staff for wider support as required.

In terms of a potential spike, the Service was linked into the Local Resilience Forum which prompted the consideration for the potential of a localised spike, pan-county or larger footprint. The current classification was Phase 2 where the emergency phase was ongoing but resources were being dedicated also to the recovery phase. Currently the Service was planning to be in the emergency phase for quite some time which might intensify during the winter months where some of the earlier intelligence was that the threat from Covid-19 might increase. The Service was also planning to resume prevention and protection services which had been adapted or ceased during the pandemic but was cognisant of the need for a quick and effective response as required.

The Chief Fire Officer added that the Service had recently surveyed staff to ensure all the learning was captured and that the Service took any advantages that had arisen during the pandemic ie: enabling more flexible working in general was something being considered now. The Service was aware of the potential mental health effects. One of the observations from discussions with staff was that operational personnel were used to going into an emergency phase which could last a few days at most (with Winter Hill the exception) however, this was the biggest

business continuity change event. Therefore, people were being encouraged to take leave, downtime and be aware of the potential for burn out particularly for some Officers.

RESOLVED: -

- (i) to accept the basement flooding event in February 2020 and subsequent debrief as the annual Business Continuity Plan test for the financial year 2019/20 and;
- (ii) to accept the arrangements implemented in response to the Covid-19 pandemic as the annual Business Continuity Plan test for the financial year 2020/21.

34/19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday, 16 November 2020 at 1000 hours venue to be confirmed.

M NOLAN
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood