

Public Document Pack

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 8 February 2021 - Virtual Meeting accessible via MS Teams and YouTube (as a live webcast) commencing at 10.00 am.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES REGARDING THE AGENDA PAPERS OR REQUIRE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT DIANE BROOKS ON TELEPHONE NUMBER PRESTON (01772 866720) AND SHE WILL BE PLEASED TO ASSIST.

IF ANY MEMBER OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC WISH TO RAISE A QUESTION FOR THE CHAIRMAN PLEASE DO SO NO LATER THAN 3 WORKING DAYS IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING BY EMAIL TO: DIANE BROOKS@LANCSFIRERESCUE.ORG.UK.

AGENDA

PART 1 (open to press and public)

Chairman's Announcement – Open and Transparent Virtual Committee Meeting
In response to the Covid-19 Pandemic the Government has made regulations that enable virtual meetings.

This meeting will be accessible for Committee Members via Microsoft Teams and for members of the press and public via a live webcast on YouTube.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
2. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Members are asked to consider any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests they may have to disclose to the meeting in relation to matters under consideration on the agenda.
3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (PAGES 1 - 10)
4. STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT OF RISK AND INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (PAGES 11 - 14)
5. BLUE LIGHT COLLABORATION (PAGES 15 - 18)
6. HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS) UPDATE (PAGES 19 - 32)
7. URGENT BUSINESS

An item of business may only be considered under this heading where, by reason of special circumstances to be recorded in the Minutes, the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency. Wherever possible, the Clerk should be given advance warning of any

Member's intention to raise a matter under this heading.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee has been agreed for 10:00 hours on 12 July 2021 - venue to be agreed.

Further meetings are: scheduled for 15 November 2021
 proposed for 7 February 2022

9. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee is asked to consider whether, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, they consider that the public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there would be a likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the appropriate paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, indicated under the heading to the item.

PART 2

10. URGENT BUSINESS (PART 2)

An item of business may only be considered under this heading where, by reason of special circumstances to be recorded in the Minutes, the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency. Wherever possible, the Clerk should be given advance warning of any Member's intention to raise a matter under this heading.

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 16 November 2020, at 10.00 am - Virtual Meeting accessible via MS Teams and YouTube (as a live webcast).

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Councillors

N Hennessy (Chairman)
S Blackburn (Vice-Chair)
I Brown
J Eaton
Jane Hugo
M Khan CBE
T Martin
D O'Toole
M Pattison
J Shedwick

Officers

J Johnston, Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)
B Norman, Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)
J Charters, Acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)
D Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer (LFRS)
Richard Edney, Senior Communications Officer (LFRS)

35/19 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman, County Councillor Hennessy, thanked County Councillor Parkinson for his dedication and diligence as the former Chairman of this Committee.

County Councillor Hennessy then welcomed Authority Members and members of the press and public to the virtual committee meeting of the Planning Committee. She 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.

36/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

37/19 DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None received.

38/19 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

In relation to page 4, regarding the establishment of a wildfire burn team, County Councillor Eaton wanted to express his thanks to the staff team where their successful interventions at several incidents resulted in prevention of further fire spread and no reported injuries.

In relation to page 5, regarding the tools to improve the appraisal conversation, County Councillor Hennessy queried whether the 360° appraisal tool had been launched. In response, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that this had been launched, starting with the senior management and this would be extended throughout the Service over the forthcoming months.

In relation to page 7, regarding collaboration with other public services, County Councillor Hennessy requested an update on site sharing opportunities. In response the Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that most of the former, non-covid work had slowed (as detailed later on the agenda) and consideration was currently being given as to whether fire stations could be used in support of the vaccination programme.

In relation to page 9, and County Councillor Shedwick's request at the previous meeting for detail regarding ongoing vacancies across all on-call stations, he confirmed that the information was received immediately and at July there were 43 vacancies across the fleet of 32 on-call pumps. He requested that if there were any significant changes in future that he be advised as a matter of course.

In relation to page 13, County Councillor Hennessy requested a further update on how the Service was preparing for any potential second wave of the pandemic in the winter months, particularly the level of physical and mental wellbeing support provided to staff. In response the Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that from a business continuity planning point of view staff absence had been predicted including how best to mitigate this; work continued with representative bodies and health and safety consultation meetings to keep staff absence as low as possible. For example, normal absence rate was around 40 staff at any given time which increased in the winter months due to seasonal flu however, at the moment due to self-isolation this had slightly increased to around 60 staff. He assured Members that the measures that had been put in place ensured pump availability and response to incidents was high. In addition, he confirmed that training for staff on operational fire stations continued where it was safety critical and other training had been reviewed and amended where possible including delivering digital training sessions to new fire safety enforcement staff and the digital delivery of fire safety training in schools. With respect to wellbeing, the Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the

core support from Occupational Health and Human Resources continued and there were regular staff dial-ins for staff to discuss concerns or key topics with managers. Feedback on this had been strong in relation to wellbeing provision and there was currently a survey open at the moment which should provide further reassurance once it had concluded.

RESOLVED: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 13 July 2020 be confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

39/19 SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGY & PLANNING DIRECTORATE LEVEL CHANGES

The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report. At the previous meeting Members discussed a high level of detail with regards to the Fire Safety Bill (due Royal Assent in January 2021) and Building Safety Bill (due Royal Assent in 2021/22) and endorsed the proposed internal restructuring necessary to underpin the transformation plan to ensure that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) was well positioned to deliver Fire Protection duties in accordance with the new legislation and associated best practice (resolution 31/19 refers).

This included the introduction of a strategic lead at Head of Department level for Prevention and Protection. It was noted that following an internal and external recruitment and selection process, Group Manager Mark Hutton was successfully appointed to the Area Manager level post and he would commence in role from 1 December 2020. This change enabled the Head of Prevention and Protection sufficient capacity to lead the Prevention and Protection functions in a manner commensurate with the expectations of the Building a Safer Future Report, which would place LFRS in a strong position to deliver the National Fire Chief Council Competency Framework and successfully implement requirements under the new Fire Safety Bill and Building Safety Bill. The Protection Reform related changes provided an opportunity to review the areas of responsibility and associated resources within the Director of Service Delivery and Director of Strategy and Planning portfolios.

It was proposed that the new Area Manager Prevention and Protection would operate within the Director of Service Delivery portfolio which would result in all aspects of Prevention and Protection policy and delivery sitting within the same functional area. This was a change from the current position whereby Protection and Prevention policy was shaped within the Strategy and Planning team and subsequent prevention delivery operated from Service Delivery.

To further strengthen capacity within the Prevention and Protection area it was proposed that LFRS established a new dedicated Group Manager for Protection (with a temporary Protection transformation team) and a repurposing of the Group Manager (GM) (Central Area) to become the GM Prevention, to continue to lead Fire Investigation, Road Safety, Prevention policy plus all Youth Engagement activities.

It was further proposed that the Area Manager, Head of Training and Operational Review be re-aligned to the Director of Strategy and Planning portfolio in order to bring closer alignment between the key areas of training specification, operational

learning and competence, to the operational policy elements delivered by the Response and Emergency Planning team.

The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that, subject to Committee approval, it was proposed to move to the new structure with effect from 1 January 2021 which would align with the arrival of the new Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Steve Healey who would have responsibility for this work as Director of Service Delivery. Members considered the diagrams on page 17 and 18 which set out the proposed structure changes and a number of councillors commented that it would have been helpful to have a key to the acronyms used.

In response to a number of queries raised regarding the business risk implications outlined, the Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised:

- Although there had been a number of changes and innovations to try and recruit colleagues into working in the fire safety environment over a number of years, and there had been significant progress, this had been challenging given it took between 18 months and 2 years for an experienced fire officer to become a competent inspector. This work was now being extended to deal with the wider risk in Lancashire, as detailed in the report at the last meeting and given that work would then be intensified through the new responsibilities under the joint regulation alongside local authority building regulations and the health and safety regulations therefore, the task had become more difficult and the levels of competence and experience had increased hence the challenge was greater.
- There was an increasing demand across the sector for competent fire sector workers (experienced inspectors and support staff) however, most staff (approximately 90% of 44 staff) were in post although the majority were still in development (ie: those who had newly entered or were newly appointed leaders). There were small numbers of transfers across local fire and rescue services with only one in the last 12 months that had left to work in the commercial sector.
- The Service had undertaken a lot of work and created a 3-year plan to respond to the risks posed to the Service from Dame Hackitt's Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety and the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Report. Work included the anticipation of impacts from the new 2 pieces of legislation and the determination of required structural changes to provide more scrutiny and focus for this work. For example, consideration had been given to the competency framework and workforce development which included work required by staff on wholetime stations to check business premises; increasing the numbers of degree qualified engineers and inspecting officers. Staff had also been signed up to formal qualifications at levels 3, 4 and 5 as appropriate. In its entirety over the time required to fully implement the new framework, and if all the aspects were delivered, all the risks identified would have been addressed to as low a risk as possible.

The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer agreed that an update on staff competence would be reported at the July meeting next year and it was noted that should the risk remain it would feature on the corporate risk register.

In response to a question from County Councillor Shedwick, the Chief Fire Officer advised that Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services

(HMICFRS) would be looking to see the Service was adjusting the way it staffed, considered and delivered against the changing landscape. It was expected that when HMICFRS undertook the inspection the following year they would be able to see the preparatory work done to ensure that by the time the significant legislative changes were enacted that the Service had already adjusted itself to be able to deliver against it.

RESOLVED: - that the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the internal restructuring plan.

40/19 HMICFRS UPDATE

The Acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented the report. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) was due to be conducted in April/May 2020. This was suspended due to the recall of staff within HMICFRS returning to their own Fire and Rescue Services to plan and manage the implications of the Covid-19 outbreak.

During this period the Service's Liaison Officer, Charlene Johnston had maintained contact with Service Liaison Lead (SLL), Jo Hayden by having two weekly conversations to update on how the Service was managing the pandemic in Lancashire and to inform her understanding on how the Service operated. Jo Hayden returned to HMICFRS on 29 June this year, however there would be a period of time during which the HMICFRS would continue work to re-populate their inspection teams and a full inspection was not expected to take place until far into 2021.

Covid-19 Thematic Inspection

HMICFRS were legislated to report on Fire and Rescue Services annually and announced, as expected, that they would be conducting a Covid-19 Thematic Inspection of all Fire and Rescue Services. This would be an ungraded sub-diagnostic under the forthcoming but delayed round 2 inspection programme.

The inspection of LFRS took place over two weeks commencing 28 September and involved a data return and self-assessment survey followed by digital interviews with key staff members. The HMICFRS Service Liaison Lead met, via Microsoft Teams, with the Group Manager Prevention and Protection, Group Manager Response and Emergency Planning, Director of People and Development, Director of Corporate Services, Group Manager Training and Operational Review, and Head of Safety, Health and Environment as well as the Chief Fire Officer and Combined Fire Authority Chairman.

The inspection was light touch and looked at how Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service delivered its functions safely and how it worked for the greater good of the community alongside partners.

It was noted that the inspection of other Fire and Rescue Services would conclude in December, at which point the Service would receive a letter from HMICFRS detailing results with a full thematic report covering all Services expected in January 2021.

As yet there were no indications as to when the round two inspections would commence which would depend on the Covid-19 situation nationally.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Hennessy, the Acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the data return was similar to those submitted on a biannual basis (in spring and autumn) which focussed on the Service's ability to deliver some of its duties (to understand the impact of the pandemic). Throughout the pandemic the Service had dynamically assessed the consequences of both Government and NHS Public Health guidance to ensure a balance between delivering an effective Service (using different technologies and methods where appropriate) and the protection of staff wellbeing. He confirmed that broadly the data set spanned those topics. Since then the autumn data had been submitted which assessed staffing, types of facilities and services offered and looked to assess the impact of covid over the last 12 months when compared with data submitted the previous year.

In addition, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the data return provided was factual in terms of what the Service had undertaken (including the delivery of thousands of PPE items to care homes and 3,500 vulnerable visits to people in the community who were shielding on behalf of the NHS). He confirmed that the informal feedback received had been positive however, all the data returns were yet to be compared.

The Chief Fire Officer also advised that the difficulty at this time was that HMICFRS would not yet have formed a view on what levels of service were being delivered by any particular Fire and Rescue Service which included: staff wellbeing, links into the Local Resilience Forum to deliver additional activities and whether there were any barriers. He confirmed that the narrative feedback at the end of the inspection and the subsequent report, as expected at the end of the year, would show broadly how the Service had looked after its staff (by keeping staff well engaged and well informed) and how the Service had provided significant additional response to the Lancashire Resilience Forum (which included having over 40 officers detached into the forum to deliver its core structures) well beyond traditional fire and rescue service activity.

RESOLVED: - that the Planning Committee noted the report.

41/19 BLUE LIGHT COLLABORATION

The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report. The quarterly Blue Light Collaboration (BLC) meetings had largely been placed on hold due to the ongoing support provided by the blue light agencies to Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF) in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the increased internal pressures felt by the three blue light organisations in adapting and responding to the ever-changing and demanding operational landscape. It was noted that there were some exceptions in relation to the progression of some long-term pieces of work (including meeting infrequently in relation to fire investigation and the International Standards Organisation for accreditation alongside the National Fire Chiefs Council and National Police Chiefs Council).

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) and partners had entered into an amended working relationship where areas which were not previously highlighted through the BLC had continued to gather pace, evolve and be delivered to support the multi-agency response to Covid-19.

Many areas of delivery that had been supported (or would be supported if requested) were closely linked with the tripartite agreement (NFCC, Employers and FBU) which was constantly evolving.

To date, LFRS had been involved in the preparations for, or delivery of, the following:

- Face fitting for masks to be used by frontline NHS and clinical care staff working with Covid-19 patients;
- Mass casualty transportation (movement of bodies in support of Coroner functions);
- Vulnerable person contacts and visits (delivery of essential items);
- Delivery of PPE and other medical supplies to NHS and care facilities;
- Lead agency for collating all PPE requirements through the Joint Intelligence and Planning Group.

In terms of support to the LRF, the Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer chaired the Response and Containment Group and there were a number of officers embedded within the various LRF sub-groups, delivering leadership and co-ordination to these teams. At present there was an Emergency Planning Watch Manager and Station Manger supporting the county-wide response.

The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that there were discussions ongoing currently as to whether any second wave would require the Service to: i) support local authorities to distribute PPE as it had previously (with the Training Centre acting as a distribution centre); ii) retrain staff regarding transportation of the deceased; and, iii) support partners in the provision of the vaccination programme which was expected to start for the most vulnerable in the next few weeks and conclude by spring. In addition, early conversations were being held whether staff who were first aid trained could be upskilled to deliver vaccinations.

All activity was being collated within the collaboration log which would provide an overview of outcomes delivered and benefits realised, and would form a definitive evidence base for any future HMICFRS inspections. The evidence also informed some aspects of a collaboration review report being delivered by Shared Architect Services, through which it was expected that further beneficial collaboration opportunities could be identified and explored.

In conjunction with partners the joint collaboration officer post was being reviewed, with steps being made towards reinstating the post to support future collaboration work. The intention remained that BLC meetings would be restarted when capacity across the blue light partners permitted, however on a day-to-day basis, dialogue and consistent collaborative working remained ongoing across numerous areas of work.

County Councillor Pattison asked for clarification of the best contact where a vulnerable person had been identified as needing support. The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that every Local Authority across Lancashire had established community level hubs (which were stood up throughout the whole pandemic and remained currently in place) and these were intensifying their resources through the winter period. He confirmed that the hubs were the point of contact to support a vulnerable person. He advised that the Service would react as required to a request to support local authorities and the work they were doing via the community hubs. Currently there were no specific requests to deliver food or medicines or check on residents.

The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that if Members had any significant concerns regarding residents' fire safety in the home, the Service continued to provide advice over phone and during the last quarter had made interventions in the home on circa 2,000 occasions where the risk of harm to the individual from fire outweighed the risk to staff of transmission of covid while in the home. He confirmed that these interventions did include onward referrals to local authority hubs teams.

County Councillor Hennessy queried whether there had been an increase in Home Fire Safety Checks with people currently staying in the home. The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the first lockdown period showed a slight shift in call types with an increase in unwanted fire signals in business premises; the quieter roads showed a decrease in road traffic collisions and as more people worked from home there was a slight increase in domestic fires. Referral rates had slowed but those who were at the greatest risk were still being referred at similar rates. The Service continued to undertake door step delivery of equipment ie: replacement smoke alarms for self-installation or as required Prevention colleagues entered premises every day, wearing PPE and keeping socially distanced to place the interventions; thereby reducing the risks from fire and keeping the residents of Lancashire safer.

County Councillor Hennessy queried whether the Service had changed its delivery for those people who had been in hospital and their circumstances had changed. In response, the Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that these referrals had continued as there were significant risk factors; the Service still visited people who were referred and provided individual support as required.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Hennessy regarding how the Service was reaching local communities, the Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the winter period (darker nights, shorter days and colder weather) generally created a challenge for the Service and during this time the winter safety campaign would be intensified.

RESOLVED: - that the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the report.

42/19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on 8 February 2021 at 10:00 hours – venue to be confirmed.

Further meeting dates were agreed for 12 July 2021 and 15 November 2021.

M NOLAN
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood

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LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Meeting to be held on Monday 8 February 2021

STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT OF RISK AND INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Contact for further information:

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Ben Norman – Telephone 01772 866801

Executive Summary

This paper provides an update on the work to date on the formulation of the Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAoR) and planning for production and consultation on the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) commencing April 2022.

Recommendation

The Planning Committee is asked to note and approve the contents of the paper.

Information

In April 2022 the Service is required to deliver the next Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) as required within the “Fire and Rescue National Framework” published in May 2018. The guidance within this document requires that our IRMP must:

1. Reflect up to date risk analyses including an assessment of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the area of the authority;
2. Demonstrate how prevention, protection and response activities will best be used to prevent fires and other incidents and mitigate the impact of identified risks on its communities, through authorities working either individually or collectively, in a way that makes best use of available resources;
3. Outline required service delivery outcomes including the allocation of resources for the mitigation of risks;
4. Set out its management strategy and risk-based programme for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in accordance with the principles of better regulation set out in the Statutory Code of Compliance for Regulators, and the Enforcement Concordat;
5. Cover at least a three-year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as it is necessary to ensure that the authority is able to deliver the requirements set out in this Framework;
6. Reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies and partners; and
7. Be easily accessible and publicly available.

In order for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) to efficiently discharge the requirement, it is essential that suitable and sufficient resource and time is allocated to the planning and production of the IRMP and supporting documents such as the Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAoR), and associated strategic documents, policies, plans and governance statements.

Work has started on a new and revised SAoR format that will deliver prior to April 2021. This will underpin and guide the next iteration of the IRMP, based upon a robust data-led methodology which, when coupled with the new district intelligence profiles, provides LFRS with a refreshed evidence-led direction for future Prevention, Protection and Operational Response activities over the medium term.

Through our linkages into national workstreams running under the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), we remain closely aligned to emerging work pertaining to Risk Management Planning and intend to evolve the IRMP, so far as is reasonably practicable, aligned to this emerging sector-led guidance as new information becomes available.

A timeline for planned work can be seen below:

IRMP 2022 – 27 Milestone Chart	
Date	Activity
01/10/2020	SAoR and IRMP Planning and Shaping
01/11/2020	SAoR and IRMP Development Commences
18/01/2021	Working groups formed for SAoR and IRMP
01/02/2021	SAoR methodology complete
12/02/2021	Risk table completed
13/02/2021	IRMP production commences
28/02/2021	First draft SAoR completed
01/07/2021	Strategy Group – progress update with draft IRMP
12/07/2021	Planning Committee – Draft IRMP approval to consult
14/07/2021	Draft IRMP consultation to start (10 weeks)
21/09/2021	Draft IRMP consultation ends (10 weeks)
22/09/2021	Formulate consultation report and prepare amended draft
18/10/2021	Strategy Group – Present progress to date
15/11/2021	Planning Committee – Final Draft
21/02/2022	Full CFA – Final IRMP presented for approval
01/04/2022	IRMP published

The SAoR is currently taking shape in the basic statistical framework, before being progressed to internal stakeholder groups for consultation and professional judgement to be applied with any supporting rationale suitably documented.

Once the risk categories have been finalised through the stakeholder groups, work will commence in tandem to complete the final version of the SAoR and the inception of the IRMP document that will be presented in an update to Strategy Group in early July.

Thereafter, Planning Committee will be asked to approve the opening of consultation for a 10-week period from mid-July. We are presently in discussion with other Fire and Rescue Services who are planning / undertaking consultation work, to learn from their experiences and to best position the Service to deliver an effective consultation exercise over the 10-week period, despite the constraints arising from the potentially ongoing pandemic.

Business Risk

Potential failure to discharge a business-critical planning function.

Environmental Impact

Largely digital dissemination and consultation is likely hence considered low.

Equality & Diversity Implications

IRMP to be subject to Equality Impact Assessment as required upon completion.

HR Implications

N/A

Financial Implications

N/A

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact
Reason for inclusion in Part 2, if appropriate: N/A		

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LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Meeting to be held on Monday 8 February 2021

BLUE LIGHT COLLABORATION

Contact for further information:

Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) Ben Norman - Telephone 01772 866801

Executive Summary

This paper provides an update on the collaborative work being progressed by Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Recommendation

The Planning Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

Information

As reported at the last Planning Committee, the quarterly Blue Light Collaboration meetings have largely been placed on hold due to the ongoing support being provided by Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service and partners, to Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF) in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Whilst the tri-partite agreement (National Fire Chiefs Council, Employers and Fire Brigades Union) ceased mid-January, LFRS employees have continued the outstanding work in support of the wider Covid response.

As reported previously, this initially commenced with preparations for, or delivery of, the following:

- Face fitting for masks to be used by frontline NHS and clinical care staff working with C-19 patients;
- Mass casualty transportation (movement of bodies in support of Coroner functions);
- Vulnerable person contacts and visits (delivery of essential items);
- Delivery of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other medical supplies to NHS and care facilities;
- Lead agency for collating all PPE requirements through the Joint Intelligence and Planning Group.

The support provided by LFRS to the LRF strategy and multi-agency response has been reviewed on a regular basis and at this time there are no ongoing activities with regards to any of the tri-partite agreement related topics.

More recently however, we have become the first Fire and Rescue Service in the country to step up support to the national vaccination programme. Our staff have risen to the challenge admirably and by joining our 'volunteer list', made themselves available to provide logistical support to the delivery of vaccinations initially through 21 Primary Care Network establishments and subsequently through the Mass Vaccination sites at Blackburn, Blackpool and Lancaster.

To date, this commitment has seen 163 operational and support staff support the delivery of over 65,200 vaccinations whilst also delivering crucial home fire safety advice to some of Lancashire's most vulnerable individuals.

From mid-January our offer was increased further, and following provision of the appropriate training and guidance, we had the first firefighters in the country actively administering Covid-19 vaccines at Mass Vaccination Centres at Blackpool and Blackburn with over 400 delivered in the first week alone.

In terms of our continuing support to the LRF, we have an Emergency Planning Watch Manager and Station Manager embedded; their role is to lead the coordination of LFRS involvement across the various areas of work.

Within Service, we have established the provision of Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) into a number of fire stations, Service Headquarters and Service Training Centre, moving towards a planned Service wide roll out within the short term. This has proved invaluable in identifying asymptomatic members of staff, reducing risk of transmission within the workplace and supporting front line fire engine availability, whilst also providing much needed reassurance to members of staff and those they support within the home environment. To date, LFRS staff have taken up the offer of over 1889 LFT's across the Service (figures quoted as at 26/1/21).

All activity is collated within the collaboration log which will provide an overview of outcomes delivered and benefits realised, and will form a definitive evidence base for any future HMICFRS inspections.

The intention remains that the formal Blue Light Collaboration meetings will be restarted when capacity across the blue light partners permits, meantime cross-organisational dialogue and collaborative working remains ongoing across many areas of work.

Business Risk

Low – risk assessments are documented in relation to LRF support activities.

Environmental Impact

Low

Equality & Diversity Implications

Low

HR Implications

Low – staff undertaking modified duties in support of response to pandemic. Covered by existing terms and conditions of employment.

Financial Implications

Medium – Additional costs incurred by LFRS with regards to Covid response related activities are charged to the Covid grant allocation. This includes resources such as PPE and also increased staff costs including the emergency planning staff on secondment to the LRF.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact
Reason for inclusion in Part 2, if appropriate: N/A		

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LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Meeting to be held on Monday 8 February 2021

HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS) UPDATE (Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information:

Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) Ben Norman - Telephone 01772 866801

Executive Summary

This paper provides an overview of the recent Covid Thematic report outcomes and detail of imminent publications due from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), along with latest update on the second round of inspections commencing in 2021.

Recommendation

The Planning Committee is asked to note the report.

Information

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) completed the Thematic Inspection of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) in September 2020. On 22 January, our thematic report (attached as appendix 1) was released alongside a [covering national report](#) which summarised the findings across the sector. This was the first of three reports expected from HMICFRS in the first quarter of 2021.

LFRS Thematic Inspection

LFRS received a positive inspection from HMICFRS.

The inspection, which occurred during late September 2020, involved a data return and self-assessment survey followed by digital interviews with key staff members. The HMICFRS Service Liaison Lead (SLL) met, via Microsoft Teams, with the Chief Fire Officer and Chairman of the Combined Fire Authority, Director of People and Development, Director of Corporate Services, Group Manager (GM) Prevention and Protection, GM Response and Emergency Planning, GM Training and Operational Review, and Head of Safety, Health and Environment.

The inspection was a light touch and looked at how LFRS delivered its functions safely and how it worked for the greater good of the community alongside partners.

The report notes how prevention and protection work continued, albeit in a modified capacity and how LFRS worked with its partners in the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) providing structure, support and logistics.

LFRS successfully engaged with unions such as the Fire Brigade Union and Unison and was able to put in place effective plans in line with requests from partners in the LRF, many of which came under the tripartite agreement. These activities included antigen testing, face fitting, assisting vulnerable people and packing/repacking food. This differs from the HMICFRS National report which highlights areas of difficulty in reaching these agreements in some other Fire and Rescue Services.

The Service was also praised for wellbeing support to staff which was supported by all levels of management and our ability to communicate with staff at all levels using a variety of innovative methods.

LFRS was graded 'outstanding' in the round 1 inspections for culture and values. This further positive result arising from the Thematic Inspection will contribute to our grading under the round 2 inspection.

Further Reports Due

The second report to be produced will be the HMICFRS findings of the phase 1 Inquiry into Grenfell Tower. This is expected on 10 February 2021 and will focus on the recommendations made in the Inquiry and may provide opportunities for learning within LFRS.

The third will be the annual State of Fire and Rescue report; now due in March 2021 and expected to focus upon improvement since the round 1 inspection, as well as encompassing the recently published Thematic Inspection outcomes.

The Audit Assurance team will take into consideration the findings of the national report and establish a position from which we can assess the performance of LFRS ahead of the round two inspection.

Round 2 Inspection Planning

As per previous, there are three tranches with the first starting January 2021.

The second tranche (within which sits LFRS) runs from September 2021 until February 2022, and the third and final tranche will run from March 2022 to September 2022.

Based on latest information available, it is reasonable to expect that our report would be published in summer 2022 and tranche three reports in winter 2022, followed by the third State of Fire and Rescue Report in 2023.

Our document and self-assessment request will occur around May/June 2021. This is in addition to six-monthly data requests each May and October.

The Audit Assurance Team previously conducted a gap analysis of the Service using the lines of enquiry that the inspection team will use in the round 2 inspection. Given that improvements have been delivered collaboratively and innovations delivered in response to the changed operating environment, work has commenced to refresh our internal assessment to ensure we are best positioned to provide the most robust evidence base to the inspectors.

Financial Implications

N/A

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

N/A

Equality and Diversity Implications

N/A

Human Resource Implications

N/A

Business Risk Implications

Failure to prepare adequately presents a potential reputational risk.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact
None		
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate:		

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Justin Johnston
Chief Fire Officer
Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service

Councillor Francesco De Molfetta
Chair
Lancashire Fire and Rescue Authority

22 January 2021

Dear Mr Johnston and Cllr De Molfetta,

COVID-19 INSPECTION: LANCASHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

In August 2020, we were commissioned by the Home Secretary to inspect how fire and rescue services in England are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. This letter sets out our assessment of the effectiveness of your service's response to the pandemic.

2. The pandemic is a global event that has affected everyone and every organisation. Fire and rescue services have had to continue to provide a service to the public and, like every other public service, have had to do so within the restrictions imposed.

3. For this inspection, we were asked by the Home Secretary to consider what is working well and what is being learned; how the fire sector is responding to the COVID-19 crisis; how fire services are dealing with the problems they face; and what changes are likely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognise that the pandemic is not over and as such this inspection concerns the service's initial response.

4. I am grateful for the positive and constructive way your service engaged with our inspection. I am also very grateful to your service for the positive contribution you have made to your community during the pandemic. We inspected your service between 28 September and 8 October 2020. This letter summarises our findings.

5. In relation to your service, Lancashire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) declared a major incident on 12 March 2020.

6. In summary, the service adapted and responded to the pandemic effectively. It used on-call and wholtime firefighters to respond to emergencies, and it gave additional support to the community during the first phase of the pandemic. Prevention and protection staff made home fire

safety visits to the most vulnerable people and businesses. They used appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for these visits. This meant the people of Lancashire were well supported throughout the pandemic. The service was able to effectively deal with some significant incidents, such as wildfires and flooding, during this period.

7. Its financial position was largely unaffected, and it didn't have to use its reserves. It also communicated well with its staff, including through virtual meeting platforms and podcasts. The service has provided its staff with good wellbeing support throughout the pandemic.

8. We recognise that the arrangements for managing the pandemic may carry on for some time, and that the service is now planning for the future. In order to be as efficient and effective as possible, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service should focus on the following areas:

(a) It should determine how it will adopt, for the longer term, the new and innovative ways of working introduced during the pandemic, to secure lasting improvements.

(b) It should consider whether the shared plans it uses, such as plans owned by the LRF, are comprehensive enough to meet the specific needs of the service and its community. If not, the service should make sure the plans change to reflect these needs.

Preparing for the pandemic

9. In line with good governance, the service had business continuity plans in place. The service relied on the county LRF pandemic flu plan as it didn't have its own. These plans were activated. They were detailed enough to enable the service to make an effective initial response, but understandably didn't anticipate and mitigate all the risks presented by COVID-19.

10. The service now has guidance documents on what elements of the service should maintain response capability if loss of staff is greater than normal. These are the degradation arrangements. They include prevention, protection, response and support functions, social distancing, making premises 'COVID secure', remote working, mutual aid, and supply of PPE.

Fulfilling statutory functions

11. The main functions of a fire and rescue service are firefighting, promoting fire safety through prevention and protection (making sure building owners comply with fire safety legislation), rescuing people in road traffic collisions, and responding to emergencies.

12. The service has continued to provide its core statutory functions throughout the pandemic in line with advice from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). This means the service has continued to respond to calls from the public and attend emergencies. It has also continued to visit vulnerable people who are at the greatest risk of fire in the community. And it has continued to audit its highest risk premises.

Response

13. The service told us that between 1 April and 30 June 2020 it attended broadly the same number of incidents as it did during the same period in 2019.

14. The overall availability of fire engines was better during the pandemic than it was during the same period in 2019. Between 1 April and 30 June 2020, the service's average overall fire engine availability was 98 percent compared with 93 percent during the same period in 2019. We were told that this was as a result of lower sickness levels and an increased number of on-call firefighters being available to respond to emergencies because of being furloughed from their primary employment. The service didn't change its crewing models or shift patterns during this period.

15. The service told us that its average response time to fires remained broadly the same during the pandemic compared with the same period in 2019. This may not be reflected in [official data recently published by the Home Office](#), because services don't all collect and calculate their data the same way.

16. The service is one of four to have a control function provided by North West Fire Control. It had good arrangements in place to make sure that its control room had enough staff during the pandemic.

17. These included effective resilience arrangements, such as having supervisors work from home, changing the control room layout to maintain social distance, and having good fallback provision. There are control rooms at West Midlands Fire Service and London Fire Brigade as part of the tri-services agreement.

Prevention

18. The NFCC issued guidance explaining how services should maintain a risk-based approach to continuing prevention activity during the COVID-19 pandemic. The service adopted this guidance.

19. The service conducted fewer safe and well visits than it would normally undertake. The service reviewed which individuals and groups it considered to be at an increased risk from fire as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

20. The service decided to continue offering face-to-face safe and well visits on a risk-assessed basis and gave staff suitable PPE to do so. It also introduced the option of a home fire safety check by telephone instead of face-to-face home fire safety checks. The service carried out vulnerable persons checks on behalf of the district councils. As part of these checks, it was able to identify more high-risk people. It offered them welfare checks and advice by telephone. If necessary, staff made face-to-face visits to fit smoke alarms and offer other preventative measures. The service continued to offer interventions such as a Fire Setters programme, the Fire Cadets scheme, the Prince's Trust and Bright Sparx. It did this through virtual platforms.

Protection

21. The NFCC issued guidance on how to continue protection activity during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included maintaining a risk-based approach, completing desktop audits and issuing enforcement notices electronically. Activity included carrying out audits on those premises that are at the greatest risk from fire. The service adopted this guidance.
22. The service reviewed how it defines premises as high risk during the pandemic. As a result, it used information from sub-groups of the LRF to identify hotels that were being used to rehome homeless people and to accommodate key workers. It worked with the owners of these buildings to ensure fire safety.
23. The service conducted fewer fire safety audits than it would normally undertake. It decided to continue face-to-face fire safety audits and enforcement work on a risk-assessed basis and gave staff suitable PPE to do so. It introduced risk-based desktop appraisals as well as face-to-face audits to minimise face-to-face contact between members of staff and the public.
24. The service continued to issue alteration notices, enforcement notices and prohibition notices and continued responding to statutory building control consultations. It also introduced other measures to reduce social contact. These included making initial contact by telephone and email, and completing more desktop assessments. The service has adapted its IT system to support this new approach.
25. The service has continued to engage with those responsible for fire safety in high-risk premises with cladding similar to that at Grenfell Tower, in particular, premises where temporary evacuation procedures are in place.
26. A recovery centre was located in the service area. The service worked with the responsible person to put in place suitable and reasonable fire safety measures.

Staff health and safety and wellbeing

27. Staff wellbeing was a clear priority for the service during the pandemic. It identified wellbeing problems and responded to any concerns and further needs. Senior leaders actively promoted wellbeing services and encouraged staff to discuss any worries they had.
28. Most staff survey respondents told us that they could access services to support their mental wellbeing if needed. Support put in place for staff included occupational health, counselling, peer support and access to an employee assistance programme. The service also used existing internal communication platforms to offer support and information.
29. Staff most at risk from COVID-19 were identified effectively, including those from a black, Asian and minority ethnic background and those with underlying health problems. The service worked with staff to develop and implement processes to manage the risk. Managers identified staff who were most at risk and offered them personalised support. This support included letting

them work from home. The service also offered hotel accommodation to two firefighters, so they could protect vulnerable people who were living at their homes.

30. Wellbeing best practice was also shared with other services and partners within the LRF. The service is developing plans to support staff with the potential longer-term effects of COVID-19.

31. The service made sure that firefighters were competent to do their work during the pandemic. This included keeping up to date with most of the firefighter fitness requirements. It assessed the risks of new work to make sure its staff had the skills and equipment needed to work safely and effectively.

32. The service provided its workforce with appropriate PPE in a timely manner. It participated in the national fire sector scheme to procure PPE, which allowed it to achieve value for money.

Staff absence

33. Absences have remained stable compared with the same period in 2019. The number of days/shifts lost due to sickness absence between 1 April and 30 June 2020 decreased slightly by 2 percent compared with the same period in 2019.

34. The service updated the absence policy so that it could better manage staff wellbeing and health and safety, and make more effective decisions on how to allocate work. This included information about recording absences, self-isolation, testing, training for managers, and bereavement. Data was routinely collected on the numbers of staff either absent, self-isolating or working from home.

Staff engagement

35. Most staff survey respondents told us that the service provided regular and relevant communication to all staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included regular virtual team meetings, written updates, and one-to-one meetings for staff to discuss wellbeing and health and safety with managers.

36. The service and managers made use of virtual platforms to support staff. It had a dedicated site on its intranet, and social media apps, for communicating with on-call staff during COVID-19.

37. The service intends to maintain changes it has made to its ways of working in response to COVID-19, including the use of its IT platforms as part of its communication with staff. It is also likely to retain some remote and flexible working.

Working with others, and making changes locally

38. To protect communities, fire and rescue service staff were encouraged to carry out extra roles beyond their core duties. This was to support other local blue light services and other public service providers that were experiencing high levels of demand, and to offer other support to its communities. The service carried out the following new activities: assisting vulnerable people, fitting of face masks, delivering PPE, antigen testing, and packing/repacking food for vulnerable people.

39. A national 'tripartite agreement' was put in place to include the new activities that firefighters could carry out during the pandemic. The agreement was between the NFCC, National Employers and the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), and specifies what new roles firefighters could provide during the pandemic. Each service then consulted locally on the specific work it had been asked to support, to agree how to address any health and safety requirements, including risk assessments. If public sector partners requested further support outside the tripartite agreement, the specifics would need to be agreed nationally before the work could begin.

40. The service consulted locally to implement the tripartite agreement with the FBU and the Fire Officers' Association. Other unions were engaged, including UNISON, if their members were asked to do extra work, including under the tripartite agreement.

41. Most of the new work done by the service under the tripartite agreement was agreed in time for it to start promptly and in line with the request from the partner agency. There were extra requests for work by partner agencies that fell outside the tripartite agreement, including supporting local authorities with business continuity reviews; co-ordinating support to trial track and trace; supporting Public Health England with its study into antibody testing, which included the blood testing of 300 participants. The service also worked in collaboration with police in the early stages of the pandemic to introduce staff testing for COVID-19. This approach to staff testing was shared with the NFCC. This work was agreed and undertaken on time and in line with the request from the partner agency.

42. All new work, including that done under the tripartite agreement, was risk-assessed and complied with the health and safety requirements.

43. The service monitored all activities to support other organisations during this period. It will review them. The service has already identified some which it may continue. These include the sharing of vulnerable persons' data and joint prevention campaigns (such as staying safe during the winter and looking after your neighbours).

Local resilience forum

44. To keep the public safe, fire and rescue services work with other organisations to assess the risk of an emergency, and to maintain plans for responding to one. To do so, the service should be an integrated and active member of its LRF – in this case, Lancashire LRF.

45. The service was an active member of Lancashire LRF during the pandemic. The service told us that the LRF's arrangements enabled the service to be fully engaged in the multi-agency response. It gave administration and chairperson support to LRF sub-groups. It also co-ordinated and distributed PPE for all LRF partners. The service was able to allocate suitably qualified staff to participate in these groups without affecting its core duties.

Use of resources

46. The service's financial position hasn't yet been significantly affected by the pandemic.

47. The service has made robust and realistic calculations of the extra costs it has faced during the pandemic. At the time of our inspection its main extra costs were £24,000 spent on overtime for staff, £178,000 spent on IT, £578,000 spent on PPE, and £132,000 spent on cleaning and decontamination of buildings. It fully understands the effect this will have on its previously agreed budget and anticipated savings. Where possible, it has exploited opportunities to make savings during this period and used them to mitigate the financial risks it has identified.

48. The service received £1.4m of extra government funding to support its response. At the time of our inspection it had spent £900,000 of this money, and has retained the rest to meet future costs associated with the pandemic. It has shown how it used this income efficiently, and that it mitigated against the financial risks that arose during this period.

49. The service didn't use any of its reserves to meet the extra costs that arose during this period.

50. When used, overtime was managed appropriately. The service made sure that its staff who worked overtime had enough rest between shifts.

Ways of working

51. The service changed how it operates during the pandemic. For example, it conducted most of its meetings virtually, both with staff and its fire and rescue authority. It developed new virtual training packages. And it reused filters in PPE masks. It had the necessary IT to support remote working where appropriate. Where new IT was needed, it made sure that procurement processes achieved good value for money.

52. The service was able to quickly implement changes to how it operates. This allowed its staff to work flexibly and efficiently during the pandemic. The service plans to consider how to adapt its flexible working arrangements to make sure it has the right provisions in place to support a modern workforce.

53. The service has had positive feedback from staff on how they were engaged with during the pandemic. As a result, the service plans to adopt these changes in its usual procedures and consider how they can be developed further to help promote a sustainable change to its working culture.

54. The service made good use of the resources and guidance available from the NFCC to support its workforce planning, and help with its work under the tripartite agreement.

Staffing

55. The service had enough resources available to respond to the level of demand during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to reallocate resources where necessary to support the work of its partner organisations.

56. Arrangements put in place to monitor staff performance across the service were effective. This meant the service could be sure its staff were making the best contribution that they reasonably could during this period. Extra capacity was identified and reassigned to support other areas of the service and other organisations.

57. As well as performing their statutory functions, wholetime firefighters volunteered for extra activities, including those under the tripartite agreement.

58. The on-call workforce took on extra responsibilities. These included community prevention activities in their local area. The service also used the on-call workforce to give emergency response cover at wholetime fire stations.

59. The service started contracts earlier than planned for on-call staff who were successful in a recent recruitment process. It did this to give cover during the pandemic.

Governance of the service's response

60. Each fire and rescue service is overseen by a fire and rescue authority. There are several different governance arrangements in place across England, and the size of the authority varies between services. Each authority ultimately has the same function: to set the service's priorities and budget and make sure that the budget is spent wisely.

61. Members of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Authority were actively engaged in discussions with the chief fire officer and the service on the service's ability to discharge its statutory functions during the pandemic. The service regularly updated the fire and rescue authority about how it was responding to the pandemic and the extra activities of its staff. This included work carried out as part of the tripartite agreement.

62. During the pandemic, the fire and rescue authority maintained effective ways of working with the service. This made sure the service could fulfil its statutory duties as well as its extra work supporting the LRF and the tripartite arrangements. The authority continued to give the service proportionate oversight and scrutiny, including of its decision-making process. It did this by regularly communicating with the chief fire officer and receiving the service's written briefings.

Looking to the future

63. During the pandemic, services were able to adapt quickly to new ways of working. This meant they could respond to emergencies and take on a greater role in the community by supporting other blue light services and partner agencies. It is now essential that services use their experiences during COVID-19 as a platform for lasting reform and modernisation.

64. The service has improved its collaboration with other LRF partners. An example of the benefits includes the sharing of information between partner organisations about vulnerable people in the community. Better collaboration has also led to improved referrals being made to the service for safe and well visits. The service's improved communication and ways of working have had a positive effect on staff wellbeing. The service has transformed its use of technology to support remote working and to create virtual platforms. It plans to continue with these new ways of working to become more efficient and effective. The service has regularly reviewed how it has responded to the pandemic. It will use any lessons learned in future planning.

65. Good practice and what worked was shared with other services through the NFCC and other regional groups. This includes frequent testing of Lancashire FRS's own staff for COVID-19, and the reusing of filters in face masks.

Next steps

66. This letter will be published on our website. We propose to restart our second round of effectiveness and efficiency fire and rescue inspections in spring 2021, when we will follow up on our findings.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Parr', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Matt Parr CB

Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

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