

Public Document Pack

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 30 March 2022 in Washington Hall, Service Training Centre, Euxton commencing at 10.00 am.

If you have any queries regarding the agenda papers or require any further information, please initially contact Diane Brooks on telephone number Preston (01772) 866720 and she will be pleased to assist.

<u>AGENDA</u>	
<u>PART 1 (open to press and public)</u>	

Chairman's Announcement – Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

Any persons present at the meeting may photograph, film or record the proceedings, during the public part of the agenda. Any member of the press and public who objects to being photographed, filmed or recorded should let it be known to the Chairman who will then instruct that those persons are not photographed, filmed or recorded.

1.	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>
2.	<u>DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS</u> 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.	<u>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</u> (Pages 1 - 14)
4.	<u>FINANCIAL MONITORING</u> (Pages 15 - 24)
5.	<u>DIGITAL STRATEGY</u> (Pages 25 - 44)
6.	<u>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</u> The next scheduled meeting of the Committee has been agreed for 10:00 hours on <u>6 July 2022</u> in Washington Hall, Service Training Centre, Euxton. Further meetings are: scheduled for 28 September 2022 and 30 November 2022 proposed for 29 March 2023
7.	<u>URGENT BUSINESS</u> 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.	<p><u>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC</u></p> <p>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.</p>
<u>PART 2</u>	
9.	<u>PFI CONTRACT - OUTCOME OF RE-FINANCING OF THE SENIOR DEBT</u> (Pages 45 - 46)
10.	<u>HIGH VALUE PROCUREMENT PROJECTS</u> (Pages 47 - 56)
11.	<p><u>TRADE UNION RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENTS</u></p> <p>(Verbal report)</p>
12.	<u>PENSIONS UPDATE</u> (Pages 57 - 62)
13.	<u>INTERNAL DISPUTES RESOLUTION PROCEDURE - STAGE 2</u> (Pages 63 - 138)
14.	<p><u>URGENT BUSINESS (PART 2)</u></p> <p>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.</p>

Agenda Item 3

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 1 December 2021, at 10.00 am in the Washington Hall, Service Training Centre, Euxton.

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Councillors

T Williams (Chairman)
D O'Toole (Vice-Chair)
L Beavers
J Mein
G Mirfin
M Pattison
S Serridge
R Woollam

Officers

S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)
K Mattinson, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS)
B Warren, Director of People and Development (LFRS)
J Baines, Head of Finance (LFRS)
B Ford, Safety, Health and Environment Advisor (LFRS)
D Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer (LFRS)
L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)

In attendance

D Shaw, FBU

29-20/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from County Councillors Keith Iddon and Stuart Morris.

30-20/21 DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None received.

31-20/21 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 29 September 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

32-20/21 FINANCIAL MONITORING 2021/22

The Director of Corporate Services presented the report which set out the

current budget position in respect of the 2021/22 revenue and capital budgets and performance against savings targets.

The overall position at the end of September was an underspend of £0.2m, with a forecast outturn position of an underspend of £0.4m. Both were a combination of the level of staffing vacancies, the slow return to business-as-usual spending activities, less the funding gap identified at budget setting and the unbudgeted pay awards.

The year to date and forecast positions within individual departments were set out in the report with major variances relating to non-pay spends and variances on the pay budget being shown separately in the table below: -

Area	Overspend/ (Under spend)		Reason
	30 Sept 2021	Forecast	
	£'000		
Service Delivery	(51)	(104)	<p>The underspend for both the first six months, and the year-end forecast, largely related to the reduced activity levels in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoke detectors, in addition recent difficulties in the supply chain for smoke alarms were partially resolved, however a potential increase in costs had been identified which may impact final spend in year; • Travel budgets, were significantly underspent, it was expected that changing working practices for non-operational staff would mean reduced usage in the future
Covid-19	-	-	<p>We have received total funding of £1.6m since March 2020. In addition, as previously reported, we have transferred £0.2m of travel/mileage budgets into this reserve to reflect savings in respect of differing working practices during the pandemic, resulting in total funding of £1.8m.</p> <p>We have spent £1.7m to the end of September, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional staff costs £0.5m • Additional cleaning £0.1m • Consumable items £0.2m • Remote working and video conferencing equipment £0.2m • PPE £0.7m <p>With effect from 1 September, LFRS</p>

			reduced the level of support offered to the large vaccination centres, handing over control back to the NHS. The remaining had been partially utilised during October, with some staff overtime and the order for personal issue P3 masks costing £21k, leaving an estimated balance of £50k for use in November/December.
TOR	(44)	(209)	<p>The current and forecast underspend largely related to the position with apprentice levy income for wholetime recruits. At the time of setting the budget it was anticipated that the recruit numbers would fully utilise the balance in the levy account, therefore the income budget was set at £0.2m. During the year, levy drawdown forecasts had been updated as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following a nationwide review of the wholetime fire-fighter apprenticeship programme, which LFRS participated in, the government apprentice levy setting body agreed an uplift to the funding for each apprentice starting after January 2021 from £12k to £14k over the 24 month apprenticeship, resulting in additional income circa £46k in 2021/22; • levy account shortfalls would be met by 95% funding (known as co-investment) from the Government, which meant we will benefit from £163k additional levy income in the financial year. <p>TOR had been catching up on training during the year and spend on external training was currently in line with budget.</p>
Property	(203)	(148)	<p>Whilst non-essential maintenance was re-instated prior to the end of the last financial year, departmental capacity due to a vacant surveyor post, and the ongoing situation meant that there was an underspend to date. The post was filled from the start of November; therefore the outturn forecast assumed that there would be some catch up spend for the final few months, reducing the current level of underspend.</p>

Non DFM	273	582	<p>Both the year to date and outturn overspend position reflected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the £0.3m funding gap identified at the time of setting the budget in February • additional RCCO for the capital programme STC workshop and South Shore refurbishment previously approved, plus • the request for the approval of additional £0.1m RCCO in relation to the purchase of a second Haglund vehicle (see capital budget below).
Wholetime Pay (including associate trainer costs)	114	66	<p>As previously reported there had been significantly more early leavers than allowed for in the budget. At the end of September, we had 10 fewer wholetime members of staff than budgeted, resulting in an underspend of circa £200k against budgeted establishment levels. It was extremely hard to predict leavers for the remainder of the year, however assuming that early leavers slowed down in the second half of the year, we anticipated an underspend against establishment of approx. £0.5m. In addition, as previously reported, there was a shortfall in recruit numbers this year, with 35 recruits compared with a budgeted 48, which lead to a further underspend of £130k.</p> <p>Broadly speaking these were offset by:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the unbudgeted grey book pay award of 1.5%, at a cost of £0.4m, as previously reported. • increased overtime costs, associated with covering vacancies, and staff absences,. (As the May recruits were posted to station in September the reliance on overtime should reduce during the second half of the year.) <p>The net of all the above factors was the forecast overspend of £66k, however it should be noted that if we continued to experience higher than expected early leavers this overspend may reduce or, in all probability, become an underspend.</p>

On Call Pay	(42)	(49)	The position within On-call staffing was slightly underspent, with the unbudgeted pay award being more than offset by higher staff vacancies than budgeted.
Support staff (less agency staff)	(228)	(239)	The underspend related to vacant posts across various departments, circa 12% of the establishment in early October, far in excess of the 3.75% vacancy factor built into the budget. This was partly offset by spend on agency staff, which amounted to £41k in the period. Although recruitment activity had now recommenced the labour market had become more challenging and we were experiencing difficulties in filling posts. As such we anticipated the high level of vacancies remaining throughout the year. This would be partly offset by the eventual pay award for green book staff. This had not yet been agreed, but the pay offer has been increased to 1.75%, which had been reflected in the forecast outturn position which would be updated as we progressed through the year.
Apprentice Levy	(9)	(23)	The apprentice levy was payable at 0.5% of each months payroll costs, the budget for this was set at anticipated establishment levels, hence the underspend against this budget reflected the various pay budget underspends reported above.

It was noted that significant cost increases across various supply chains, and in particular in construction projects was being seen and this may affect the final outturn expenditure levels. This would continue to be monitored, and other trends, to ensure that they were reflected in future year's budgets, as well as being reported to Resources Committee.

Grant Funding

The Authority receives specific grants from the Government in respect of various new initiatives. These were included in the revenue budget position but were shown separately in the report. The forecast outturn assumed that all grant was spent in year, but any that was not would be carried forward as an earmarked reserve to use in the new year.

Capital Budget

The approved capital budget for 2021/22 stood at £4.4m.

It was noted that following discussions with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee the budget had been increased to allow for the purchase of a

second Haglund to enhance operational response to emergencies in remote/inaccessible locations. These machines were ex-military machines which used rubber tracks instead of wheels, had low ground pressure, despite their size, and could cross soft ground with relative ease. This capability enabled the Service to provide year-round emergency cover in response to natural disasters across the County, especially flooding, which was becoming more severe and intense. The original capital budget allowed for the purchase of one such machine, and a Climate Change Operational Response Plan was currently being drafted which would recommend the purchase of a second machine. Initially it had been planned to include this in next year's capital programme, but the supplier confirmed that buying both at the same time would generate a saving of £9k across both machines.

To date £2.7m of the programme had been committed, with an anticipated year end spend of £4.0m, as set out below: -

	Spend to 30 Sept 2021 £m	
Other vehicles	0.2	This budget allowed for the replacement of various operational support vehicles. Whilst some of the operational support vehicles had been ordered and delivered, others were still being reviewed and it appeared increasingly unlikely that the budget would be fully utilised in year.
Operational Equipment / Future Firefighting	0.1	This budget allowed for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • replacement of capital items from the equipment replacement plan, namely defibrillators and a replacement drone which had been delivered • replacement of light portable pumps, which had yet to be ordered • progression of CCTV on pumping appliances, where it was proposed trialling this in the first instance and hence the project would not be complete by year end The anticipated slippage relating to the latter two programmes
Building Modifications	2.4	This budget allowed for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a new workshop, BA Recovery and Trainer facility at STC. Committed spend to date was £2.4m. Work had been completed and the building was handed over to the Authority at the end of October 2021. A contact variation of £42k had been agreed for Compressor and furniture items that ISG

		<p>had manufactured and installed;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced station facilities comprising the final payment in respect of South Shore refurbishment and extension, and changes at Hyndburn fire station, where final designs were being reviewed prior to moving to the procurement phase, but where budget seems likely to slip into 2022/23; Replacement drill towers where a partner contractor had been appointed to take the project forward, with a view to commencing construction prior to the year end; Fees associated with progressing the business case for a SHQ relocation, which were unlikely to be spent in year. <p>As with the revenue budget, current departmental capacity to progress these was previously limited, hence the slippage indicated in Appendix 2.</p>
IT systems	-	The budget related to the replacement of various systems and ICT hardware, in line with the ICT asset management plan. Whilst initial scoping work was on-going to facilitate the replacement of some of these systems, utilising the budget in the current year was still forecast.

The committed costs to date would be met by revenue contributions (£2.4m) and capital reserves (£0.3m). With the remaining in year spend being funded from a further £1.3m use of capital reserves.

As highlighted earlier significant cost increases were being seen across various supply chains, and in particular in construction projects and this may affect some of the capital projects as they progressed through the procurement stage.

Delivery against savings targets

The performance to date was already ahead of the annual target, largely due to staffing vacancies.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Pattison regarding whether the apprentice scheme had an age limit the Director of People and Development confirmed that the Service recruited apprentices at the start of their career with the fire service which could be aged 18 or much older. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that apprentice operational firefighters had a minimum age of 18. The Service also recruited apprentices for green book staff from the age of 16.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Beavers regarding continued provision of covid support monies, the Director of Corporate Services advised that the Government had previously issued funding in tranches. The

Service was currently awaiting a decision on the ongoing level of funding in light of the recent new covid-19 variant (Omicron) and any potential impact on the Service given the pace of its support to the vaccination programme had slowed in recent months.

Councillor Williams commented that nationally, businesses appeared to be experiencing recruitment problems. He expressed concern regarding firefighters leaving before their pensionable age and the challenge of recruiting back-office staff.

RESOLVED: - That the Committee:

- i) Noted and endorsed the financial position; and
- ii) Approved the virement to transfer £68k RCCO into the capital programme to fund the purchase of an all-terrain vehicle.

33-20/21 TREASURY MANAGEMENT - MID YEAR REPORT 2021/22

In accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice and to strengthen Members' oversight of the Authority's treasury management activities, the Resources Committee received a treasury management mid-year report and a final outturn report. Reports on treasury activity were discussed on a quarterly basis with Lancashire County Council Treasury Management Team and the Authority's Director of Corporate Services and were used as a basis for this report to the Committee.

Economic Overview

The economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic continued to dominate the first half of the financial year both in the UK and many other parts of the world. However, in its September 2021 policy announcement, the Bank of England (BoE) noted it now expected the UK economy to grow at a slower pace than was predicted in August, as the pace of the global recovery had shown signs of slowing and there were concerns inflationary pressures may be more persistent. Bank expectations for GDP growth for the third (calendar) quarter were revised down to 2.1% (from 2.9%), in part reflecting tighter supply conditions.

The BoE held Bank Rate at 0.1% and maintained its Quantitative Easing programme at £895 billion throughout the first half of the year. However, there were some concerns around inflation with the CPI inflation now expected to rise slightly above 4% in the last three months of 2021, due to higher energy prices and core goods inflation. Therefore, although policy rates had remained unchanged there was a greater expectation that rates may increase in late 2021 or early 2022.

An increase in gas prices in the UK and EU, supply shortages and a dearth of HGV and lorry drivers with companies willing to pay more to secure their services, had caused problems for a range of industries and, in some instance, will likely lead to higher prices.

Treasury Management position and Policy

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes was measured by the

Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital were the underlying resources available for investment. The treasury management activity was influenced both by the position at the beginning of the year and the plans in year. The position at the start of the financial year was summarised in the report indicating that the level of loans was above the borrowing requirement. This was the result of the Authority adopting a policy of setting aside additional Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) in order to generate the cash to repay loans either on maturity or as an early repayment. This had resulted in the CFR being reduced but due to early repayment charges it had not been financially beneficial to repay the existing loans.

It was not anticipated that the new capital expenditure would be funded from borrowing in the year while it was anticipated that there may be some reduction in the level of reserves held.

Borrowing

There had been no new borrowing in the first six months of the financial year. This was consistent with the position that the current borrowing was already above the CFR and that the capital programme did not include any expenditure to be financed from borrowing.

The long-term debt outstanding of £2m was from the Public Works Loan Board. The maturity profile of the Authority's borrowings, along with the interest rate paid was summarised in the report. It was noted that consideration had been given to the early repayment of the loans. However, these would be subject to an early repayment (premium) charge. It was not considered to be financially beneficial to repay the loans with the estimated premium charge to repay the three loans being £1.180m.

Whilst there was no need to borrow at the present time it was worth highlighting that a key source for long term borrowing was the PWLB. The PWLB lending was offered at a fixed rate of 1% above the gilt yields. For most authorities which qualify for the certainty rate, including the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority, this meant a 0.2% reduction on these standard rates so equated to 0.80% above the gilt yields.

Current PWLB maturity loan rates were at extremely low levels of 1.81% for 10 years, 2.19% for 25 years and 2.06% for 40 years.

Investments

Both the CIPFA Code and the MHCLG Guidance required the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money was to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving low investment returns and having the value of reserves eroded by inflation.

The Authority principally invested in a call account provided by Lancashire County Council which paid the base rate. Each working day the balance on the Authority's Current Account was invested in this to ensure that interest was received on surplus balances within an acceptable risk framework. During the

period all new investments were placed with the County Council via this arrangement. At 30th September there was a balance of £31.900m invested in LCC while the average for the period was £26.115m.

In addition, in order to increase the rate earned on current balances, the authority have placed fixed investments with other local authorities. To attract a higher rate of interest than is available on the call account these investments will need to be fixed for a longer period of time. The report identified the investments that had been in place during the year. At 30 September there was £10m fixed term investment in place, therefore the total investment held at 30 September was £41.900m. The overall the rate of interest earned during this period was 0.51% which compared favourably with the benchmark 7 day index which averaged 0.14% over the same period.

All investments were made in accordance with the current Treasury Management Strategy and the CIPFA treasury management code of practice.

Prudential Indicators

In order to control and monitor the Authority's treasury management functions a number of prudential indicators were determined against which performance may be measured. At its meeting on 22 February 2021 the Authority approved the indicators for 2021/22 which were detailed in the report alongside the current actual.

Revenue Budget Implications

The 2021/22 revenue budget for treasury management activity showed that anticipated income exceeded expenditure by £36k. Taking into account the activity for the first six months of the year and estimated cash-flow for the remainder of the year the latest forecast was as shown below:

	Budget	Forecast	Variation
	£m	£m	£m
Interest Payable	0.090	0.090	-
Minimum revenue provision	0.010	0.010	-
Interest receivable	(0.136)	(0.193)	(0.057)
Net budget	(0.036)	(0.093)	(0.057)

The interest receivable was above budget as the balances were slightly higher than anticipated when setting the budget. The forecast assumed interest rates remained constant for the remainder of the financial year.

RESOLVED: - That the Committee noted and endorsed the report.

34-20/21 PEOPLE STRATEGY 2021 - 2024

The Director of People and Development presented the People Strategy 2021 – 2024 which set out the strategic direction over the next 3 years, setting out the areas of priority that were required to ensure the development of a Service that was capable of continuous improvement and which responded positively to change. It sought to recruit and deliver a workforce that was resilient, highly skilled, flexible, diverse and which could deliver the aim of keeping the people of Lancashire safer.

The report set out the current position, its values and ethics and aspirations. The delivery of the strategy would be achieved through the delivery of the plans for: Organisational Development, Training, Equality Action, Workforce and Health, Safety and Wellbeing.

RESOLVED: - That the Committee noted and endorsed the report.

35-20/21 WELLBEING AND WELLNESS INITIATIVES

The Director of People and Development introduced Bekki Ford, Safety, Health and Environment Advisor who presented Members with the various opportunities that the Service had enabled to address the wellbeing and wellness agenda. The support resources included: -

- Employee Assistance Programme – short-term solution focussed counselling and advise;
- Engine House – Library of information;
- Mental Health First Aiders – courses on an ad hoc basis predominantly for Community Fire Safety;
- Occupational Health – in-house provision available on a referral basis for all staff;
- Pre-retirement course – information from a financial, psychological and physical point of view;
- Personal Training Instructors and Service Fitness Advisor – to support operational staff to maintain levels of required fitness;
- Signposting Peer Support Pocketbook – to help individuals signpost colleagues or choose the most appropriate support for themselves;
- Social Events – to foster positive relationships
- Sports Events – to encourage all members of staff to be more active therefore improving and maintaining both physical and mental health and wellbeing;
- Trauma Risk Management – intervention to support staff to be able to reflect on a traumatic event without emotion and be able to ‘file’ the experience away as a memory to refer back to if needed;
- Wellbeing Support Dogs – to improve wellbeing, build self-esteem / confidence and help someone open up about their feelings and provide signposting;
- Workplace Wellbeing Toolbox Talks – initiative started in July 2019, in the first instance delivered to all stations and groups of staff across the whole of the Service to support crews with a range of wellbeing related topics during face-to-face sessions.

In addition, as a responsible and considerate employer the Service also provided day-to-day support via:

- Ageing Workforce Task & Finish Group
- Apprenticeship Health and Wellbeing Session
- CFA Member Health and Wellbeing Champion
- Coaching and Mentoring/Pastoral Care
- Distress Management and Self Care course

- Flexible Working Arrangements
- Healthy Eating Choices (at STC)
- Leadership Visits
- Leave Entitlement
- Oscar Kilo Blue Light Wellbeing Framework
- Personal Training Instructors/Service Fitness Advisor
- Routine Bulletins
- Service Orders/Standard Operating Procedures
- Time to Change Employer
- Top Management 'buy-in'
- Wellness Events Calendar
- Workplace Wellbeing Toolbox Talks

In response to a question raised by County Councillor O'Toole regarding the arrangements in place to deal with any allegations of harassment, bullying or racism the Director of People and Development advised that all allegations were taken very seriously, were recorded and investigated. Individuals could raise their concerns with their line manager, senior manager, HR or use the whistleblowing policy.

In response to a further question raised by County Councillor O'Toole, regarding how involved the Service was with the Firefighters Charity, the Safety, Health & Environment Advisor confirmed that the Service remained heavily involved and undertook a lot of fundraising either in groups or individual firefighters set their own challenges. The Service had also collaborated with the Firefighters Charity during the pandemic which was hoped would be developed further.

In response to a further question raised by County Councillor O'Toole regarding how well attended were the social and sports events the Director of People and Development advised that this was dependent on the event however, attendance was encouraged.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the Authority Chairman had attended an awards event the previous week (which celebrated long service, good conduct, commendations, staff who had received academic qualifications and staff nominated by their peers for demonstrating the Service STRIVE values). The event was followed by the Firefighters Charity Ball which was attended by over 300 people. He advised that for the year 2020/21 a total of circa £120k had been raised by staff across the Service.

Councillor Williams advised that he had attended a Prince's Trust event the previous week held in Blackpool which had been a fabulous opportunity to see the young people at the end of the programme become focussed, to have worked as a team and gain additional skills.

In response to a query from Councillor Williams regarding the provision of support to staff regarding domestic abuse and suicide prevention the Safety, Health & Environment Advisor advised that although there was nothing specific for domestic abuse Trauma Risk Management support was available for traumatic events occurring at home and work.

The level of training provided for those supporting individuals was dependent on the role e.g. the Wellbeing Support Dog Handler 3 day peer support programme was developed in-house by the Safety, Health & Environment Advisor, mental health first aid was provided by an external training provider, LFRS had a bespoke mental health course developed by Lancashire MIND – Distress Management and Self-care, collaboration with Fire Fighters Charity to deliver mental health and wellbeing sessions jointly between Safety, Health & Environment Advisor and the charity’s Wellbeing coaches.

The Director of People and Development added that there was an array of interventions and activities which ranged from talking to a friend through to medical interventions dependent upon the situation. He reassured Members that where staff needed training the Service was careful to monitor activity. There was no expectation to go beyond their knowledge base. He confirmed that the Service was also involved in safeguarding issues if required.

In response to a further question from Councillor Williams the Safety, Health & Environment Advisor confirmed that she had quarterly account meetings with providers to review their services. She also reviewed the signposting directory at least every 6 months which included at the last update Frontline Assistance for Stress and Trauma.

County Councillor Mein queried the availability of support resources for staff, how much support was delivered face-to face and who could access the Trauma Risk Management counselling including who determined the referral. In response the Safety, Health and Environment Advisor advised that it was not possible to measure every interaction with the wellbeing resources. The Service received usage data from EAP. This was a mini citizens advice service that covered a lot of information. It was independent to the Service, providing short-term counselling and advice to staff and their immediate family. She confirmed that the Service was above benchmark re: usage. She advised that the Trauma Risk Management intervention team were volunteers who could meet at any time. The requests to the TRIM team would be made by the individual concerned so that they would be engaged. She also confirmed that wellbeing visits were instigated by the individual with their watch or crew manager and line managers made referrals to occupational health. She also confirmed that the idea of wellbeing dogs was scientifically proven to lower blood pressure, stress and anxiety levels and various interventions were available.

RESOLVED: - That the report and comprehensive nature of interventions available to assist staff be noted.

36-20/21 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday 30 March 2022 at 1000 hours Washington Hall, Service Headquarters, Euxton.

Further meeting dates were noted for 6 July 2022 and 28 September 2022 and agreed for 30 November 2022.

37-20/21 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: - That the press and members of the public 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.

38-20/21 PENSIONS UPDATE

(Paragraphs 4 and 5)

Members considered a report that provided an update on the various issues which had arisen in respect of the changes to the pension schemes applying to the uniformed members of the Fire Sector.

RESOLVED: - That the report be noted.

39-20/21 PFI CONTRACT - RE-FINANCING OF THE SENIOR DEBT

(Paragraph 3)

Members considered a report concerning the refinancing of the senior debt within the PFI Contract.

RESOLVED: - That the recommendations outlined in the report be agreed including that the agreeing and signing and sealing of any re-financing deal and associated documentation be delegated to the Treasurer, following consultation with the Chief Fire Officer and Chairman of the Authority.

40-20/21 HIGH VALUE PROCUREMENT PROJECTS

(Paragraph 3)

Members considered a report that provided an update on all contracts for one-off purchases valued in excess of £100,000 and high value procurement projects in excess of £100,000 including: new contract awards, progress of ongoing projects and details of new projects.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted and endorsed the report.

M NOLAN
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Resources Committee

Meeting to be held on 30 March 2022

Financial Monitoring 2021/22

(Appendices 1 and 2 refer)

Contact for further information - Keith Mattinson - Director of Corporate Services
Tel: 01772 866804

Table 1 Executive Summary and Recommendations

<p>Executive Summary</p> <p>The report sets out the current budget position in respect of the 2021/22 revenue and capital budgets and performance against savings targets.</p> <p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>The Committee is requested to note and endorse the financial position.</p>

Information

The overall position at the end of January is an underspend of £0.3m, with a forecast outturn position of an underspend of £0.2m. Both are a combination of the level of staffing vacancies, the slow return to business as usual spending activities, less the funding gap identified at budget setting and the unbudgeted pay awards.

The year to date and forecast positions within individual departments are set out in Appendix 1, with major variances relating to non-pay spends and variances on the pay budget being shown separately in the table below: -

Table 2 Details of current and forecast budget position by department

Area	Overspend/ (Under spend)		Reason
	31 Jan 2022	Forecast	
	£'000		
Service Delivery	(130)	(153)	<p>The underspend to the end of January and the year-end forecast both largely relate to the reduced activity levels in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smoke detectors, in addition recent difficulties in the supply chain for smoke alarms are partially resolved, however a potential increase in costs has been identified which may impact final spend in year;

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel budgets, which are significantly underspent, it is expected that changing working practices for non-operational staff will mean reduced usage in the future therefore we have reflected this reduction in next years' budget
Covid-19	-	-	<p>We have received total funding of £1.6m since March 2020. In addition, as previously reported, we have transferred £0.2m of travel/mileage budgets into this reserve to reflect savings in respect of differing working practices during the pandemic, resulting in total funding of £1.8m. As at the end of January we have fully utilised the £1.8m, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional staff costs £0.6m Additional cleaning £0.1m Consumable items £0.2m Remote working and video conferencing equipment £0.2m PPE £0.7m Total £1.8m
TOR	(186)	(164)	<p>As previously reported, the current and forecast underspend largely relates to the position with apprentice levy income for wholtime recruits. At the time of setting the budget it was anticipated that the recruit numbers would fully utilise the balance in the levy account, therefore the income budget was set at £0.2m. During the year, levy drawdown forecasts have been updated as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following a nationwide review of the wholtime fire-fighter apprenticeship programme, which LFRS participated in, the government apprentice levy setting body agreed an uplift to the funding for each apprentice starting after January 2021 from £12k to £14k over the 24 month apprenticeship, resulting in additional income circa £46k in 2021/22; levy account shortfalls will be met by 95% funding (known as co-investment) from the Government, which means we will benefit from £163k additional levy income in the financial year. We have reflected the revised assumptions in next years' budget. <p>TOR have been catching up on training during the year and spend on external training is currently in line with budget.</p>

Property	(227)	(203)	Whilst non-essential maintenance was re-instated prior to the end of the last financial year, departmental capacity due to a vacant surveyor post, and the ongoing situation means that there is an underspend to date. The post was filled from the start of November, and the outturn forecast assumes that there will be some further catch up spend for the final few months, slightly reducing the current level of underspend.
Non DFM	595	654	Both the year to date and outturn overspend position reflect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the £0.3m funding gap identified at the time of setting the budget in February 2021 additional RCCO approved during the year as previously reported the transfer of £0.5m into the PFI earmarked reserve, as set out in the reserves and balances report at the CFA meeting in February, net of the PFI re-financing gain of £0.2m. note we are still assuming that the existing £2.4m pension accrual, set aside in previous years, will be sufficient to meet any costs associated with the changes to the pensionability of allowances.
Wholetime Pay (including associate trainer costs)	191	140	As previously reported there have been significantly more early leavers than allowed for in the budget. At the end of January we had 27 fewer wholetime members of staff than budgeted. In addition, as previously reported, there is a shortfall in recruit numbers this year, with 35 recruits compared with a budgeted 48, These result in an anticipated underspend of approx. £0.6m at the end of March. Broadly speaking these are offset by:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the unbudgeted grey book pay award of 1.5%, at a cost of £0.4m, as previously reported. Continued increased overtime costs, associated with covering vacancies and staff absences. The net of all the above factors is the forecast overspend of £0.1m.
On Call Pay	(128)	(118)	The position within On-call staffing is underspent, with the unbudgeted pay award being more than offset by higher staff vacancies and lower ad hoc payments than budgeted.

Support staff (less agency staff)	(308)	(259)	The underspend relates to vacant posts across various departments, circa 12% of the establishment in early February, far in excess of the 3.75% vacancy factor built into the budget. This is partly offset by spend on agency staff, which amounted to £102k in the period. As previously reported, the labour market remains extremely challenging, and we are experiencing difficulties in filling posts. As such we anticipate the high level of vacancies continuing until year end. This will be partly offset by the pay award for green book staff, which was agreed at the end of February at 1.75% and will be paid in March salary, which has been reflected in the forecast outturn position.
Apprentice Levy	(16)	(23)	The apprentice levy is payable at 0.5% of each months payroll costs, the budget for this was set at anticipated establishment levels, hence the underspend against this budget reflects the various pay budget underspends reported above.

It is worth noting that we are seeing significant cost increases across various supply chains, and in particular in construction projects and this may affect the final outturn expenditure levels. We will continue to monitor this, and other trends, to ensure that they are reflected in future year's budgets, as well as being reported to Resources Committee.

Grant Funding

The Authority receives specific grants from the Government in respect of various new initiatives. These are included in the revenue budget position shown above, but are separated out below for visibility:

Table 3 Details of utilisation of government grants received during the year

	S31 Covid grant £000	Protection uplift £000	Building Risk Review £000	Accreditation £000	Grenfell Infrastructure £000	Pensions Admin £000
Grant	(1,622)	(584)	(60)	(35)	(150)	(94)
Tfr in from budgets	(172)	-	-	-	-	-
Utilised	1,754	431	60	3	132	94
Bal Remining	(40)	(153)	-	(32)	(18)	-

Our forecast outturn assumes that all grant is spent in year, but any that is not will be carried forward as an earmarked reserve to use in the new financial year.

Capital Budget

The approved capital budget for 2021/22 stands at £4.5m.

To date we have committed £3.3m of the programme, with an anticipated year end spend of £3.5m, as set out below, with further details in Appendix 2: -

Table 4 Details of current and forecast capital spend during the year by spend category

	Spend to 31 January	Forecast to 31 March	
	£m	£m	
Other vehicles	0.3	0.3	This budget allowed for the replacement of various operational support vehicles. Whilst some of the operational support vehicles have been ordered and delivered, we are still progressing the purchase of 9 operational support vehicles and 2 PODs, hence the slippage of £0.3m shown in appendix 2.
Operational Equipment/Future Firefighting	0.1	0.1	This budget allowed for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • replacement of capital items from the equipment replacement plan, namely defibrillators and a replacement drone which have been delivered • replacement of light portable pumps which have been ordered and will be delivered in April 2022, resulting in slippage of £0.1m • progression of CCTV on pumping appliances, where we are proposing trialling this in the first instance with an initial budget of £0.1 the trial has not yet begun and will result in the budget being slipped into 2022/23
Building Modifications	2.8	3.0	This budget allowed for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a new workshop, BA Recovery and Trainer facility at STC. Committed spend to date is £2.7m. Work has been completed and the building was handed over to the Authority at the end of October 2021. • Enhanced station facilities comprising the final payment in respect of South Shore refurbishment and extension, and changes at Hyndburn fire station, where final designs are being reviewed prior to moving to the procurement phase, but where £0.1m budget will slip into 2022/23;

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement drill towers where spend to date of £0.1m relates to various site investigation works and planning applications; • Fees associated with progressing the business case for a SHQ relocation, £0.2m, which will slip into 2022/23. <p>As with the revenue budget, current departmental capacity to progress these was previously limited, hence the slippage indicated above and detailed in Appendix 2.</p>
IT systems	0.1	0.1	<p>The budget relates to the replacement of various systems and ICT hardware, in line with the ICT asset management plan. Spend in year relates to replacement hardware (Vehicle Mounted Data Systems). The balance of slippage relates to various items of hardware, where we are experiencing a shortage of raw materials and expect deliveries to take place in the new financial year, resulting in slippage of £0.2m.</p>
Total	3.3	3.5	

The committed costs to date will be met by revenue contributions (£2.4m) and capital reserves (£0.9m). With the remaining in year spend being funded from a further £0.2m use of capital reserves.

We continue to see significant cost increases across various supply chains, and in particular in construction projects and this may affect some of the capital projects as they progress through the procurement stage. In addition, shortages of raw materials are more frequently being cited as reasons for delays in delivery of goods ordered, which has led to higher slippage in some instances than originally anticipated.

Delivery against savings targets

The following table sets out the savings targets identified during the budget setting process, hence removed from the 2021/22 budget, and performance to date against this target: -

Table 5 Details of performance against savings targets set for the current year

	Annual Target	Target at end of Jan	Savings at end of Jan
	£m	£m	£m
Staffing, including post reductions plus management of vacancies	0.058	0.048	0.319
Reduction in the vehicle R&M budget in line with contract management	0.095	0.079	0.079
Procurement savings	-	-	0.234
Balance – cash limiting previously underspent non pay budgets	0.026	0.022	0.022
Total	0.179	0.149	0.653

The performance to date is already ahead of the annual target, largely due to staffing vacancies, plus savings on the procurement of several vehicles.

Business Risk

None

Environmental Impact

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

None

HR Implications

None

Financial Implications

As set out in the report

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

Table 6 Details of any background papers

Paper:	
Date:	
Contact:	
Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate:	

Table 7 Detailed analysis of current and forecast performance against the revenue budget by department and directorate

BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT JANUARY 2022	Total Budget	Budgeted Spend to Jan 2022	Actual Spend to Jan 2022	Variance O/Spend (U/Spend)	Variance Pay	Variance Non-Pay	Forecast
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Service Delivery							
Service Delivery	34,989	29,199	29,120	(80)	50	(130)	(153)
Prevention & Protection	2,497	2,186	2,150	(36)	(66)	30	29
Covid-19	0	(0)	0	0	-	0	0
Control	1,298	1,298	1,298	0	-	0	0
Youth Engagement (inc Princes Trust)	22	153	147	(6)	-	(6)	(10)
Special Projects (ISAR)	13	11	(1)	(11)	-	(11)	(14)
Strategy & Planning							
Service Development	1,518	1,260	1,258	(2)	70	(72)	(34)
Training & Operational Review	4,165	3,590	3,204	(386)	(200)	(186)	(164)
Fleet & Technical Services	2,732	2,401	2,428	27	1	26	31
Information Technology	2,791	2,451	2,448	(4)	(27)	23	88
Digital Transformation	347	289	275	(14)	(14)	0	0
People & Development							
Human Resources	731	600	628	28	35	(7)	(8)
Occupational Health Unit	244	204	177	(27)	(7)	(20)	(24)
Corporate Communications	350	294	250	(44)	(28)	(16)	(19)
Safety Health & Environment	242	187	158	(29)	(17)	(12)	(14)
Corporate Services							
Executive Board	1,039	874	878	4	20	(16)	(19)
Central Admin Office	758	620	564	(56)	(50)	(6)	(7)
Finance	148	123	124	1	(2)	3	3
Procurement	945	794	757	(37)	4	(41)	(49)
Property	1,902	1,597	1,354	(244)	(16)	(227)	(203)
External Funding	-	(7)	(9)	(2)	(0)	(2)	(2)
Pay							(270)
TOTAL DFM EXPENDITURE	56,731	48,124	47,207	(917)	(247)	(670)	(841)
Non DFM Expenditure							
Pensions Expenditure	1,387	1,276	1,312	36	-	36	(45)
Other Non-DFM Expenditure	58	(2,207)	(1,626)	581	(13)	595	654
NON-DFM EXPENDITURE	1,445	(932)	(314)	618	(13)	631	609
TOTAL BUDGET	58,175	47,192	46,893	(299)	(260)	(39)	(232)

Table 8 Detailed analysis of current and forecast performance against the capital budget by spend category

CAPITAL BUDGET 2021/22	Revised Prog	Committed Exp	Year End Outturn	Slippage	Est final Cost	Over/ (Under) Spend
Vehicles						
Pumping Appliance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Vehicles	0.606	0.315	0.341	(0.270)	0.611	0.004
	0.606	0.315	0.341	(0.270)	0.611	0.004
Operational Equipment						
Operational Equipment	0.329	0.095	0.095	(0.189)	0.284	(0.045)
	0.329	0.095	0.095	(0.189)	0.284	(0.045)
Buildings Modifications						
STC Workshop	2.783	2.737	2.783	-	2.783	-
Enhanced station facilities	0.183	0.040	0.040	(0.150)	0.190	0.007
Drill tower replacements	0.150	0.059	0.150	(0.000)	0.150	-
SHQ Relocation	0.150	-	-	(0.150)	0.150	-
	3.266	2.836	2.973	(0.300)	3.273	0.007
ICT						
IT Systems	0.250	0.055	0.055	(0.195)	0.250	-
	0.250	0.055	0.055	(0.195)	0.250	-
Total Capital Requirement	4.451	3.301	3.464	(0.954)	4.418	(0.033)
Funding						
Capital Grant	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revenue Contributions	2.373	2.373	2.373	-	2.373	-
Earmarked Reserves	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Reserves	2.078	0.928	1.091	(0.954)	2.045	(0.033)
Total Capital Funding	4.451	3.301	3.464	(0.954)	4.418	(0.033)

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Resources Committee

Meeting to be held on 30 March 2022

Digital Strategy (Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information DCFO Steve Healey – Director of Strategy and Planning
Tel: 01772 866802

Executive summary and recommendations

Executive Summary

The Digital Strategy (attached as appendix 1) sets out a framework of how we will seek to exploit emerging technology across the service to improve our communication and process efficiency and underpin the business strategies that form the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-27.

These include active engagement in digital and data workstreams that are underway in the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and which are attempting to standardise data and technology approaches within FRS across the country.

In addition, we will consider best practice guidelines from central Government together with other partner agency collaborations wherever possible.

The underpinning focus throughout the digital strategy is on the use of modern technology to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of our workforce, to ensure the best possible service and levels of engagement for our communities.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note and endorse the Digital Strategy that will help to enable delivery of elements of the 5 key strategies that underpin the CRMP 2022-2027.

Information

Through key objectives set within the digital strategy, we aim to support the creation of a positive, inclusive culture that encourages innovation and continuous improvement.

Achieving the right culture will enable us to deliver the best services and be an outstanding fire and rescue service for our communities and visitors.

The digital strategy has been crafted to underpin critical elements of the business strategies that form the CRMP and will be an enabler for many of the key objectives set out within each.

To help achieve this, the focus will be on ensuring that:

- Our workforce can make effective use of technology to communicate, safely store and share information
- Our workforce can work effectively from anywhere using the most appropriate device for their role, intrinsically increasing our efficiency
- Our workforce has easy access to data and intelligence relevant to their role and that the information is current to help increase safety and reduce risk
- Our workforce is digitally engaged in the organisation and champion a digital first culture
- We strive to reduce paper, printing and increase our process efficiency through digitisation and automation
- Our digital solutions focus on the needs of our communities and that they are able to engage with us in a more digitally enabled way

Business risk

Delivery of key elements of the digital strategy are critical enablers for many of the objectives set out in the business strategies that underpin the CRMP, which is produced in line with National Framework guidance issued by central government.

Environmental impact

One of the key objectives of the digital strategy is to minimise process and maximise efficiency across the organisation and to reduce printing and paper consumption wherever possible. Digital solutions will be delivered through devices and equipment either currently in use or will augment equipment already planned for rollout through other initiatives, further increasing their effective use. In line with government directives digital solutions will be hosted in the cloud where possible, minimising the potential for increased carbon footprint and helping to reduce energy consumption of the life of the strategy.

Equality and diversity implications

The nature of the strategy allows for accommodating digital products that are accessible to all employees and the wider community in line with government accessibility standards. Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken where appropriate to ensure that any solutions intrinsically consider all users.

HR implications

Any potential for temporary increases to establishment in order to enable or accelerate critical elements of the strategy will be undertaken within guidance and policy frameworks. Any significant implications will be brought before Resources Committee for full disclosure and proper consideration.

Financial implications

No abnormal expenditure is anticipated to fall outside of capital programme plans or existing departmental budgets.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate:

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Digital Strategy 2022-2027



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Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service

Digital and Data Strategy

Introduction

In recognition of the significant role that technology can play in a modern fire and rescue services (FRS), we are actively seeking ways to exploit emerging technology across the service to improve our communication and process efficiency.

This strategy sets out a framework of how we will progress that agenda together with setting out some of the external influences that we need to consider. These include our active engagement in digital and data workstreams that are underway in the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and which are attempting to standardise data and technology approaches within FRS across the country. This will ensure best practice and best value to the communities that we serve.

In addition, we will consider best practice guidelines from central Government together with other partner agency collaborations wherever possible. We will also look to align ourselves with established and accepted best practices and working patterns from across the technology sector.

The underpinning focus throughout our digital journey will be on maximising the effectiveness and efficiency of our workforce to ensure the best possible service and levels of engagement for our communities.

Service key principles

Our culture plays an integral part in enabling the service to achieve our priorities of:

- Preventing fires and other emergencies from happening
- Protecting people and property when they happen
- Responding to fires and other emergencies quickly and competently
- Valuing our people
- Delivering value for money

Our service “STRIVE” values underpin everything we seek to achieve, which fundamentally aligns to the fire and rescue service national code of ethics:

- | | |
|-----------|---------------|
| ▪ Service | ▪ Integrity |
| ▪ Trust | ▪ Value |
| ▪ Respect | ▪ Empowerment |

Through the key objectives set within the digital strategy, we aim to support the creation of a positive, inclusive culture that encourages innovation and continuous improvement. Achieving the right culture will enable us to deliver the best services and be an outstanding fire and rescue service for our communities and visitors.

To help achieve this, we will align our digital landscape with these organisational values to ensure that:

- Our workforce can make effective use of technology to communicate, safely store and share information
- Our workforce can work effectively from anywhere using the most appropriate device for their role, intrinsically increasing our efficiency
- Our workforce has easy access to data and intelligence relevant to their role and that the information is current to help increase safety and reduce risk
- Our workforce is digitally engaged in the organisation and champion a digital first culture
- We strive to reduce paper, printing and increase our process efficiency through digitisation and automation
- Our digital solutions focus on the needs of our communities and that they are able to engage with us in a more digitally enabled and accessible way

Digital horizon

Government digital directive

The strategic direction across UK Government is now Digital by Default, Cloud First. This requires public sector organisations to consider and fully evaluate cloud solutions first before considering other options.

What is the cloud?

The cloud allows users to access the same files and applications from almost any device, because the computing and storage is on servers in global data centre accessed through the internet, instead of locally on the users own device or network.

Why is it called the cloud?

In the early days of the Internet, technical diagrams often represented the servers and networking infrastructure that make up the Internet as a cloud and the phrase stuck.

Furthermore, the Government Functional Standard for Digital, Data and Technology outlines the following key principles:

1. Digital services align with government policy and meet clearly identified user needs.
2. Management and governance are proportionate and appropriate to the work and risk profile of the organisation.
3. Business processes are evaluated as part of a technical or digital project or programme so that they meet the needs of the business and the end users.
4. Delivery teams comprise appropriately skilled people, with the expertise required to undertake their assigned work.
5. Digital services are designed as end-to-end services, from a citizen's or user's viewpoint.
6. Appropriate levels of security and privacy are designed as an integral part of the digital service.
7. Digital and technology components are designed using mandatory government open standards where needed; and are adaptable, interoperable and shareable.
8. Performance data and analytics are shared or published where possible to improve policy development and government transparency.
9. Data is collected, stored, used and deleted in the appropriate and ethical way.
10. Public service codes of conduct and ethics and those of associated professions are upheld

This is further explored in the following definitions that we will use as reference guides throughout our digital journey:

- Technology Code of Practice: [The technology code of practice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-technology-code-of-practice)
- Government Service Standard: [Service Standard - Service Manual - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/service-standard-service-manual)
- Data Ethics Framework: [Data Ethics Framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-ethics-framework)

To embrace these standards, we will ensure that the customer (both internal and external) is at the heart of everything we do and that the customer experience is optimised at every point of that journey. We will also engage with partner agencies in an efficient and automated way to ensure that customer transition and data exchange between agencies is smooth, seamless and complete to ensure effort is minimised wherever possible.

LFRS digital landscape

In accordance with government guidance, as well as maintaining a fit for purpose on-premise network we are making the shift to cloud technology wherever there is a suitable use case for it, wherever it ensures best value for money while also improving service quality and availability.

Horizon scanning and innovation

We will ensure that we consistently evaluate new products, features and technology with a view to embracing them across the service to continue our drive for innovation, service improvement and operational effectiveness and efficiency.

More specifically, to establish whether there are any real-world use cases where emerging technologies can provide advantage to either efficiency or quality across our service portfolio, we are evaluating things like:

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Sets of logic, rules and algorithms programmed into computers and other devices to provide smarter, more enriched and engaging experiences. Some examples include Siri, Alexa, Google and other smart assistants, or chatbots on consumer websites.

Machine Learning (ML)

Taking AI to the next level are self-improving algorithms that are able to “learn” from data, identify complex patterns and make decisions with minimal intervention. Examples include spatial awareness of self-driving cars, or the ability to recognise objects in photographs and images.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA)

Essentially using elements of both AI and ML to automate common, repetitive and largely manual processes. If you remember recording macros in the 1990's to automate spreadsheet tasks, think of RPA as far more powerful versions that are not limited to spreadsheets.

Internet of Things (IoT)

Essentially the ability to connect any device to a network or the internet, so that it can exchange data and trigger processes or actions. Examples include smart

thermostats, or printers that are able to order ink when it detects that it's running low.

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7 digital themes

We have reverse engineered the organisation’s strategic objectives and identified seven key themes that will help us to enable delivery of them:

Delivery	Departmental Empowerment	Data Accessibility and Self Service	Efficiency and Automation
Delivery Partners Gold Partners DT Pro Dev Team DT Business Analysts Business Developers	Apps Digital Data Collection Process Automation Automatic Notifications	Data Warehouse Business Intelligence Platform Data Resilience	Integrated ecosystem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apps • Digital Data Collection • Process Automation • Automatic Notifications
Collaboration and Sharing Securing Content National Alignment			
Partner and Sector Collaboration Digital Solution Sharing Data Sharing Tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity Management • Conditional Access • Cyber Security Controls • Information Governance 	Identity Management Conditional Access Cyber Security Controls Information Governance	Government Directive NFCC Standards Sector Collaboration	

Theme 1: Delivery

To deliver cost effective digital solutions across the service **we will:**

Implement the following delivery model:

- **Delivery partners**

Whenever we need to implement at pace or if we need specialist skills or knowledge that fall outside of our workforce, we will engage with 3rd party specialist partners. We will do this in an open and transparent way and will use compliant routes to market such as G-Cloud (Digital marketplace), Crown Commercial Services or approved procurement frameworks.

- **Pro DT team**

We will maintain a core establishment of experienced technical experts who will engage with customers across the Service to develop and build professional, integrated solutions using the most relevant technology. We will integrate off the shelf products or inter-agency collaborative solutions where this is appropriate and more cost effective or will develop bespoke solutions to cater for a specific requirement which enables delivery of a quality service to our communities.

- **Business developers**

We will develop and skill a cohort of power users, or business developers, at more local levels that are able to make use of low code products and workflow tools to produce digital solutions

Continue to mature our Agile development methodology, using established tools and techniques to embed principles that underpin:

The Agile Manifesto

We are uncovering better ways of developing software by doing it and helping others do it.

Through this work we have come to value:

Individuals and interactions over processes and tools

Working software over comprehensive documentation

Customer collaboration over contract negotiation

Responding to change over following a plan

That is, while there is value in the items on the right, we value the items on the left more.

Source: [Agile Manifesto for Software Development | Agile Alliance](#)

Work with our Project Management Office to align this methodology with the Axelos published PRINCE2 AGILE standard.

Theme 2: Departmental empowerment

To help embed the Service key principles **we will**:

Engage with the organisation to champion a cohort of business (or citizen) developers at more local levels, that are able to make use of low code products and workflow tools to produce digital solutions that help to automate processes and create efficiency in their own area.

This will reduce the volume on the pro team, add to the development resource pool and will help to empower departments to create their own business solutions under proper guidance and governance.

Make available common data sets to consume through these solutions that will further enable departments to be self-service enabled and to maximise efficiency through technology at a local level.

Theme 3: Data Accessibility and Self Service

To encourage a culture of integration and self-service **we will**:

Create a cloud-based service wide Intranet that is accessible on any device from any location, giving our workforce easy access to data and intelligence that is relevant to their role.

Utilise the cloud to create and publish core data sets that are made available throughout the organisation and will ensure consistency and uniformity across reporting and line of business systems.

Further extend these data services by using integration to enable seamless communication between our line of business systems, to ensure that data and information relating to the services we provide to the community are consistent and efficiently used across the organisation.

Create a cloud first data warehouse to ensure all of our data that serves our Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reporting is available and current.

Implement a Business Intelligence platform that will compliment this and make it possible for users to create their own reporting solutions with contextualised data that is relevant and accurate at a local level. It will also ensure that every user has access to the most up to date data across the service to assist with accurate and informed decision making.

Continue to enable a mobile workforce, ensuring that every user has a device that is suitably enabled to perform their role with maximum efficiency, placing the focus on improving our service to the community.

Help to achieve this by creating our service portfolio to be mobile enabled using cloud hosted services to communicate with mobile devices through:

- Native mobile apps (developed by the pro team to align with a specific feature)
- Low code mobile solutions (developed by the pro team or business developers)
- Mobile data analysis and reporting tools

Theme 4: Efficiency and Automation

Wherever possible **we will**:

Look to introduce emerging technologies to create efficiencies in traditionally labour inefficient and manual processes

This will include:

- workflow tools and RPA to automate processes
- AI to more easily signpost our workforce to relevant content and support
- perimeter integrations and interfaces to create a seamless flow of data and content between on-premise and cloud-based solutions

Make these tools available to our cohort of business developers.

Theme 5: Collaboration and Sharing

To foster a culture of collaboration and sharing **we will**:

Actively seek to engage with partner agencies and the wider FRS community with a view to building and delivering digital solutions.

Make any solutions we build available to our partner agencies and will seek to adopt solutions developed by them in return, where they align with our processes and demonstrate best value for money.

Leverage the tools made available through our cloud ecosystem to share content easily and securely with partner agencies, following the security controls set out below.

Theme 6: Securing content

Working with our Security, Information Governance and Records Management teams **we will**:

Use our cloud-based security and content control solutions to ensure that:

- Our data and content are secured in transit and at rest using relevant and current cyber security measures (security and encryption, Data Loss Prevention, Information Protection)
- Only content relevant to the role of our workforce is accessible to them
- Our data is classified and controlled across the organisation according to its content and sensitivity
- Our data and content are archived and removed relevant to our processing needs and in accordance with legislation

Ensure that the sharing of data and content with partner agencies is done in a secure and controlled way and that this content is removed or archived when it is no longer relevant.

Ensure that our cloud-based data and content is backed-up and resilient and that adequate tactical plans are in place to ensure business continuity across our service portfolio.

Theme 7: National alignment

Wherever possible **we will**:

Seek to align our digital solutions with partner agencies and government standards such as Government Digital Services (GDS).

Actively seek involvement and alignment with National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Digital and Data initiatives, workstreams and published standards.

Make any interfaces that we create, through which we exchange data, compliant with government and NFCC data service standards.

Link in to the NFCC Data Hub when fully operational and in service.

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How will we enable the organisational strategies to deliver?

In order to ensure that our digital strategy is relevant and successfully aligns with the organisation's objectives, the following matrices outline elements of the digital strategy that will help to deliver our other organisational strategies. These enablers refer to the 7 digital pillars defined earlier in the document.

Prevention Strategy	
Strategic deliverable	Digital theme enablers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working collaboratively with our partners and communities 	Data accessibility and Self Service Collaboration and Sharing Securing content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using incident intelligence and data to drive our activities 	Data accessibility and Self Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire safety in the home 	Delivery (HFSC refresh) National alignment (NFCC)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arson risk in the home, built environment and outdoors 	Delivery Departmental Empowerment

Protection Strategy	
Strategic deliverable	Digital theme enablers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working collaboratively 	Collaboration and Sharing Securing content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering our services intelligently 	Data accessibility and Self Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operating a risk-based inspection programme 	Delivery (RBIP / AG solution) Data accessibility and Self Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapting to new legislation and responsibilities 	Departmental Empowerment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enforcing compliance through transparent enforcement management and prosecutions 	Delivery (PORIS, BFSC, RBIP) National alignment (NFCC) Departmental Empowerment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linking protection activity to community safety 	Data accessibility and Self Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linking protection activity to response and preparedness 	Data accessibility and Self Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measuring and evaluating our performance 	Data accessibility and Self Service

Response Strategy	
Strategic deliverable	Digital theme enablers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work collaboratively in preparing and developing operational/response policy and procedures 	Collaboration and Sharing Securing content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update existing policy and procedures following research and development activities 	Data accessibility and Self Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and report on activities internal and external to the service 	Data accessibility and Self Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver service improvement to support the objectives of the CFA 	Delivery Departmental Empowerment Data accessibility and Self Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and provide options to improve service performance in all areas of operational response 	Departmental Empowerment Data accessibility and Self Service

People Strategy	
Strategic deliverable	Digital theme enablers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to embed the Service values, behaviours, and the Code of Ethics making LFRS a place where everyone feels valued and included 	Departmental Empowerment Collaboration and Sharing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to develop the capability and resilience of leaders who can energise their teams, who encourage flexibility, innovation and who promote continuous improvement 	Departmental Empowerment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to actively engage with our workforce responding to feedback and involving staff in the shaping of our plans and decision making 	Departmental Empowerment Collaboration and Sharing

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