

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Monday, 27 June 2022 at 10.00 am in Washington Hall, Service Training Centre, Euxton

MINUTES

PRESENT:

D O'Toole (Chair)

Councillors

J Shedwick (Vice-Chair)

L Beavers

S Clarke

N Hennessy

D Howarth

J Hugo

F Jackson

A Kay

H Khan

Z Khan

J Mein

S Morris

M Pattison

J Rigby

P Rigby

S Rigby

S Serridge

J Singleton

D Smith

A Sutcliffe

T Williams

R Woollam

B Yates

1/22 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The Clerk invited nominations for the appointment of Chair for 2022/23. County Councillor John Singleton proposed County Councillor O'Toole which was seconded by County Councillor Ron Woollam. No further nominations were received. The Clerk held a vote. All 24 Members present voted in favour.

The motion was therefore CARRIED and it was:

RESOLVED: - That County Councillor O'Toole be appointed Chair of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) for 2022/23.

2/22 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

The Chair invited nominations for the appointment of Vice-Chair. Councillor Tony Williams proposed County Councillor John Shedwick which was seconded by County Councillor Ash Sutcliffe. No further nominations were received. The Clerk held a vote. All 24 Members present voted in favour.

The motion was therefore CARRIED and it was:

RESOLVED: - That County Councillor Shedwick be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) for 2022/23.

3/22

CHAIRS WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair expressed gratitude for the contributions to the work of the Authority made by County Councillors Peter Britcliffe, Keith Iddon and Ged Mirfin who had left the Authority. He also welcomed new Members County Councillors Steve Rigby, Ash Sutcliffe and Barrie Yates to the Combined Fire Authority.

The Chair informed Members of the Service's support to Ukraine. The Service had donated 4 pallets of equipment and 2 ready to use fire engines to firefighters on the frontline in Ukraine. Working with UK charity, FIRE AID and the National Fire Chiefs Council, the Service had donated PPE, including helmets, boots, tunics, protective suits, defibrillators, hoses and other firefighting equipment. The kit had been delivered by two members of staff, Adam Flynn and Paul Rigden, who had driven over to Poland twice, in convoy, with other UK fire and rescue services. The Authority expressed support to all involved in this terrible humanitarian crisis. The Authority agreed to write to Adam Flynn and Paul Rigden to show appreciation for this work.

On behalf of the Authority the Chair congratulated Tim Murrell who had been awarded a Queen's Fire Service Medal (QFSM) in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for his work for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.

The Chair took the opportunity to encourage all Members to attend the Strategy Day.

County Councillor Nikki Hennessy congratulated the Chair and Vice-Chair on their appointments and echoed the Chair's welcome to new Members, the humanitarian support given to Ukraine and in the award of the QFSM to Tim Murrell. In addition, she advised that Councillor Zamir Khan had also been recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours List having received an MBE for his services to the community, which the Authority commended.

4/22

COMPOSITION OF THE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

County Councillor Hennessy commented that representation on the Authority was an opportunity for home authorities to demonstrate equality of opportunity for female councillors. County Councillor O'Toole, in reply stressed that he had made concerted efforts to include better female representation within his administration and any current imbalance of gender was not as a result of neglect of his obligations of equality.

RESOLVED: - That the Composition approved by the 3 Constituent Authorities for 2022/23 for the Combined Fire Authority be noted and endorsed, and the new Members appointed by Lancashire County Council to serve on the CFA for 2022/23 be welcomed.

5/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from County Councillor M Dad.

6/22 DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None received.

7/22 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES

The Chair, County Councillor O'Toole presented the proposed Chairs and Vice-Chairs for the Authority's Committees and Working Groups.

RESOLVED: -

(1) That in accordance with Standing Order 5.1(b) of the Authority, the following Members be appointed as Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees and Working Groups of the CFA for 2022/23:

Appeals Committee	Chair Vice-Chair	Councillor J Rigby County Councillor M Pattison
Audit Committee	Chair Vice-Chair	County Councillor J Shedwick County Councillor N Hennessy
Performance Committee	Chair Vice-Chair	County Councillor R Woollam County Councillor P Rigby
Planning Committee	Chair Vice-Chair	County Councillor S Clarke County Councillor J Singleton
Resources Committee	Chair Vice-Chair	Councillor T Williams County Councillor D O'Toole
Member Training & Development Working Group	Chair Vice-Chair	County Councillor S Morris Councillor D Smith
Resources Sub-Committee for Injury Pensions	Chair	County Councillor S Serridge
Service HQ Relocation Working Group	Chair	County Councillor D O'Toole

(2) That the Authority confirmed appointment of the following four Member Champions for 2022/23 as:-

- Community Safety - Councillor Jean Rigby;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Councillor Zamir Khan;
- Health & Wellbeing - County Councillor Andrea Kay;
- Road Safety – County Councillor Ron Woollam.

8/22

REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Authority was requested to determine its representation on outside bodies for the 2022/23 municipal year.

For the benefit of new Members, the Chair provided an overview and background to the formation and constitution of the North West Fire Control Centre.

He advised that the Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester had written to the Chairs of other constituent Fire Authorities (Cumbria, Cheshire and Lancashire) advising of their intent to consider alternative options for control room facilities; the implications of which were being considered by the North West Fire Control Board of Directors.

RESOLVED:-

- i) That County Councillor D O'Toole, Chair of the Authority be authorised to cast the Authority's vote at the LGA Annual General Assembly;
- ii) That County Councillors D O'Toole and J Shedwick (as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority) be appointed to the Local Government Association Fire Commission;
- iii) That County Councillor D O'Toole, Chair of the Authority can authorise additional representation(s) to either the LGA Fire Commission or the Fire Services Management Committee as appropriate;
- iv) That 2 members of the Conservative Group and 1 member of the Labour Group (County Councillors D O'Toole, J Shedwick and N Hennessy as Chair, Vice-Chair and main Opposition Spokesperson) be appointed to serve as representatives on the North West Fire Forum for 2022/23;
- v) That County Councillors D O'Toole and J Shedwick (as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority) be appointed as North West Fire Control Directors for 2022/23.

9/22

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair requested that new Members receive a copy of the Annual Service Plan.

RESOLVED: - That the Minutes of the CFA held on 21 February 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

10/22

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS FOR 2022/23 AND 2023/24

RESOLVED: - That the proposed programme of meetings for the Combined Fire Authority for 2023/24 be agreed as: -

20 February 2023 (Budget setting meeting)

24 April 2023

26 June 2023 (Annual meeting)

18 September 2023

18 December 2023

19 February 2024 (Budget setting meeting)

11/22

MINUTES OF MEETING THURSDAY, 28 APRIL 2022 OF MEMBER TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

The Working Group Chairman, CC Morris drew Members' attention to the first paragraph on page 20 of the agenda pack where the potential to experience elements of the fire training had been discussed in order to assist Member understanding of the firefighter role. It had been acknowledged that this may not be feasible however, it was recognised that practical demonstrations pre-covid may now be reinstated with Members also able to meet with Service personnel to explain the work of the Service in detail.

RESOLVED: - That the proceedings of the Member Training and Development Working Group held on 28 April 2022 be noted and endorsed.

12/22

REFORMING OUR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE WHITE PAPER

The Chief Fire Officer advised that the long awaited Home Office publication "Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service" White Paper had been published for consultation from 18 May 2022 to 26 July 2022.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that following discussions with the Chair and Vice-Chair he would be drawing together a draft response on behalf of the Authority. To inform the response, this would be discussed at the forthcoming Strategy Day. It was acknowledged there was potential for additional political group and individual responses and he confirmed that the Service would be submitting a separate response.

For the benefit of new Members, it was noted that several years ago the then Police and Crime Commissioner considered options for taking over the responsibilities of fire governance and after consideration had decided not to proceed at that time. The Fire Authority remained resolute that the current governance arrangements represented the best for Lancashire, evidenced by an excellent Fire and Rescue Service.

RESOLVED: - That the Chief Fire Officer would compose and submit responses on behalf of the Authority and Service.

13/22

ANNUAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT REPORT

The Authority considered the Annual Safety, Health and Environment Report for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service covering the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

As the body with ultimate responsibility for staff health, safety and environmental compliance it was important that all CFA Members were aware of performance in this respect. The report therefore provided a summary of key actions, overall progress and outturn performance in respect of accidents and near misses and carbon emissions, together with a look forward.

The report summarised the arrangements in place to deliver the Service's Safety, Health and Environment Policy and provided a summary of safety, health and environment performance data. It included the reporting on occupational safety, health and environmental issues that had arisen during the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

External Audit

Since initial certification in November 2011 surveillance visits had been conducted annually with re-certification every 3 years to maintain external certification of the Health and Safety and Environment Management Systems. In March 2022 the auditor from British Assessment Bureau carried out a surveillance audit against health and safety standard ISO 45001:2018 and environment ISO 14001:2015. The scope for both standards was 'The Provision of Fire, Rescue and Supporting Services across Lancashire'. This broad scope encompassed all Service activities with audit visits to 5 fire stations that operated different duty systems and to a number of supporting departments. Continued certification was granted without any non-conformance and 1 opportunity for improvement was identified. The report included examples of improvements carried out during 2021/22.

Health and Safety Performance

During 2021/22 there were 85 accidents, 94 near misses and 14 RIDDOR events. The report provided a summary of the total accident and ill-health statistics for 2021/22. Comparison against the previous 7 year's performance data showed an overall downward trend from absence following work related injury/illness however the figures reported in 2018/19, 2020/21 and 2021/22 had seen a smaller number of staff away from work for long term absence which related to safety events which had impacted the overall performance.

Health and Wellbeing

During 2021/22 the focus for health and wellbeing had continued to be supporting staff, colleagues, families, and friends in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. A range of material, as outlined in the report had continued to be developed and a new support resource, Wellbeing Support Dogs was introduced.

Firefighter PPE Contamination

The Fire Brigades Union commissioned the University of Central Lancashire to undertake UK specific research on the risk to firefighters of carcinogens and other contaminants. Following publication of the 'Minimising firefighters' exposure to toxic fire effluents – interim best practice report' during 2021 a full gap analysis had been undertaken which looked at the report recommendations to identify any areas for improvement. An action plan had been established which would be monitored by the Service's Health, Safety and Environment Advisory Group.

Environmental Performance

The Service continued to support the Firefighters Charity with 18 fire stations currently having recycling banks on site. In 2020/21 the banks collected over 82 tonnes of textiles.

The total waste created in 2021/22 was 102.2 tonnes a decrease from 113.4 tonnes in 2020/21. General waste reduced by 16.5% and dry mixed recyclable waste by 8.3%. 26 sites saw a decrease in general waste. Only 2 stations had a recycling rate below 20%.

The updated Carbon Management Plan agreed by the Resources Committee in September 2020 included a target of 40% carbon emission reduction by March 2030 from a baseline of 4352 tonnes of CO² in 2007/08. The Service had achieved an overall reduction of 24.9% by March 2021.

A look ahead to 2022/23

The report also detailed key safety, health and environmental priorities for 2022/23 which included: reducing accidents and related sickness absence; improving risk assessments and operating procedures following publication of national guidance and legislative change; maintaining certified standards; embedding safety, health and environment through continued training and interaction with staff; engaging champions to assist in reducing carbon emissions, reduce waste collected and increase recycling; continue to deliver programmes of support to engage staff in maintaining fitness, reducing injury and absence; review impacts of climate change; evaluation management of PPE contaminants against further guidance and best practice to manage the developing risk; develop next generation fire appliances to incorporate design features to minimise risks from fire contaminants and carry out a compliance assessment against ISO 45003:2021 occupational health and safety management – psychological health and safety at work.

In response to a question from Councillor Smith regarding vehicle accidents (as detailed on page 38 of the agenda pack) the Director of People and Development confirmed that the Road Risk Review Panel had met under the leadership of Area Manager Tony Crook who was also the road safety lead officer for the National Fire Chiefs Council.

In response to a question from County Councillor Clarke regarding the 6.9% increase in fuel costs (as detailed on page 43 of the agenda pack) the Director of People and Development confirmed that this was mainly due to greater activity following covid. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer added that the Service had also invested in a number of electric vehicles as a pilot which would be monitored and assessed. He advised that nationally there was now an electric fire appliance but this required a lot of development before it would be considered a replacement vehicle.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Hennessy regarding how health and wellbeing outcomes were measured, the Director of People and Development confirmed that anonymised information was received bi-annually on the support provided by the Employee Assistance Programme and Lancashire's

use of this service could be compared against other Services. The Service welcomed feedback from staff through a wellbeing talk. The wellbeing dogs had been introduced recently which anecdotally was being well received and this would be reviewed after 6 months. Feedback was also received from the occupational health unit. Ongoing training was provided to staff such as Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) practitioners to ensure they remained effective.

County Councillor Singleton queried whether there had been any CCTV evidence which had resulted in a prosecution. In response, the Director of People and Development confirmed that any time there was a physical assault on a member of staff it was reported to the constabulary. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer added that the Authority had approved investment in CCTV for fire appliances primarily in stations suffering lots of minor bumps to evidence procedures were being followed however, it could be used if it captured evidence of physical assaults on staff.

RESOLVED: - That the Authority noted and endorsed the report and associated safety, health and environment performance outcomes.

14/22

POLICY ON DEALING WITH HABITUAL AND VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS - ANNUAL UPDATE

At its meeting held 20 June 2016 the Authority adopted a formal Policy on Dealing with Habitual and Vexatious Complaints (resolution 13/16 refers) which was fair and proportionate, yet which did not prevent genuine complaints from being properly investigated and fair and equitable outcomes promulgated.

On an annual basis the Clerk and Chief Fire Officer reviewed the status of complainants judged to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious and reported this to the Authority. In addition, each year the Clerk reviewed the Policy, as now presented. This year's review concluded that the effectiveness of the Policy was demonstrable, accordingly the Policy remained appropriate, proportionate and effective to the needs of Members, Officers and staff.

During the previous 12 months there had been no complainants judged to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious.

RESOLVED: - That the report be noted and endorsed.

15/22

MEMBER CHAMPION ACTIVITY REPORT

The concept of Member Champions was introduced in December 2007. A review of the areas of focus for Member Champions was considered at the Authority meeting held in June 2017 where new areas of responsibility were agreed. The current Member Champions and their areas of responsibility were:

- Community Safety – Councillor Jean Rigby
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Councillor Zamir Khan;
- Health and Wellbeing – County Councillor Andrea Kay;
- Road Safety – Councillor Ron Woollam.

Reports relating to the activity of the Member Champions were provided on a regular basis to the Authority. This report related to activity for the period up to June 2022. During this period all had undertaken their respective role in accordance with the defined terms of reference.

Member Champions presented their sections of the report for noting.

County Councillor Woollam highlighted the positive impact of social media on the take up of the biker down course, adding a request to use social media more broadly and with support from Members of the Authority to promote this excellent work.

County Councillor Kay added to her report that the Service wellness events calendar had recently included a loneliness week social quiz which she had attended and enjoyed. She advised that monthly events were well planned and Members would be welcome to attend.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that County Councillor Kay had mentioned at the previous meeting the work she was doing work in Wyre with local schools in relation to climate change which could potentially assist the Service shape thinking in how it responded to climate change in future years. Having attended an event co-ordinated with the Station Manager at Fleetwood Fire Station, County Councillor Kay had invited pupils from Cardinal Allen Catholic High School, Fleetwood to give a short presentation to the Authority.

Verity Gray, Archie Horabin, Ava Jones and Daniel Lowe presented their energy saving thoughts for the future which included: better insulation in all public buildings; better public transport systems; the planting of more trees in parks; grants for land owners; campaigns on busses; switching lights off; insulation in houses; encouragement of the bee population and a big wind turbine on the school field.

The Authority thanked and applauded the pupils for their presentation.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Hennessy on what district councillors could do to assist schools to promote the issues of climate change, Ava Gray responded that of benefit would be more press coverage on what's happening locally and the encouragement of people to use the ideas listed in their daily lives. County Councillor Hennessy therefore asked that the PowerPoint presentation be sent to Members in a format that could be used on social media for Members to promote more widely.

County Councillor Kay thanked Mr Harding, Community Co-ordinator and the pupils for attending given the school had closed and some roads were closed due to flooding in Fleetwood that morning.

RESOLVED: - That the Authority noted the report and acknowledged the work of the respective Champions.

The report summarised Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) prosecutions pertaining to fire safety offences and set out convictions resulting from arson incidents for which Officers had contributed evidence to the Police led criminal justice process. Fire Protection and Business Support information were also included in the report to provide Members with an update on the continually evolving regulatory position and how the Service was developing and adapting both its services and workforce to ensure it kept pace with the changes to keep public and firefighters safe in the built environment.

In relation to the business fire safety check process (as detailed on page 60 of the agenda pack) the Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the Service had innovatively developed in-house a fully digitised process which enabled staff to use an app on their tablet device while on a fire safety visit. This followed an outcome from the Grenfell Tower fire to make every visit count. Rather than responsibility for inspection of commercial premises to be solely with fire safety inspectors, this process moved operational crews back to this environment. Staff who undertook a business fire safety check would be trained and equipped to identify and flag deficiencies in buildings and work alongside the responsible person to resolve them. This innovation supported risk reduction work and increased capacity to visit the many non-domestic premises in Lancashire. In addition, it had been recognised as sector leading having recently been shared with the National Fire Chiefs Council and with other Fire Services across the country.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the detailed changes from the Fire Safety (England) Regulations coming into force in January 2023 were set out on pages 61 and 62 of the agenda pack. He highlighted that the Regulations placed significantly more responsibility on the person responsible for those premises (ie: owner, manager, managing agent). He advised Members that the Service had in place a number of projects to extensively prepare and respond to those changes.

The Vice-Chair found the report interesting particularly the risk reduction work and the impact on responsibility for responsible persons. He drew Members attention to 2 of the arson conviction prison sentences which were 8 years and 4 months and 3 years and commended officers who dealt with those cases.

In relation to the business fire safety checks, County Councillor Hennessy queried whether more information could be provided to Members on the detail of these checks at a future Strategy Day.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor O'Toole in relation to the arson conviction in Cleveleys (as detailed on page 63 of the agenda pack) the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that incidents of this nature were subject to a full forensic level fire investigation involving the Service, Police and other agencies as appropriate, part of which considered the history around the occupants and any vulnerabilities the occupants may have. Post-incident the Service undertook a Home Fire Safety Check which included signposting individuals to other support services as required. There were a number of societal

and personal factors for consideration in these types of incident and the aim was to tailor services to best support those individuals and reduce risk in the future.

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

17/22

OPERATIONAL INCIDENTS OF INTEREST

The report provided Members with information relating to operational incidents of note over the period 1 February 2022 – 31 March 2022.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised Members there were a number of incidents in the report that were subject to ongoing investigations.

In relation to the incident at Recycling Lives in Preston (as detailed on page 67 of the report) County Councillor Woollam queried whether car batteries were involved (as per a previous recent fire on that site) and if so, what measures they were taking to limit this type of incident happening again. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service worked very closely with some of the waste recycling sites across Lancashire (including Recycling Lives) to ensure their preparedness was appropriate; given there were complex processes on site and with the emergence of new risks such as the use of lithium-ion batteries in vehicles.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that pages 69-70 of the agenda pack highlighted some of the ongoing challenges the Service faced around vacant and derelict buildings across the county. He advised that the Service was seeing an upward trend in incidents in these types of buildings. The Service had therefore worked extensively with Local Authorities and partners across the county to identify hazards and reduce risks.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer introduced Group Manager Tom Powell who had attended to provide a short presentation on a large fire which had occurred on Church Street, Preston on 19 May 2022 at the former Odeon site (more recently the Evoque nightclub) which was a sizeable incident that ran for a number of days. This was a complex incident because of the condition of the building and reports at an early stage there was potential for people to be inside.

The presentation gave an overview of the incident. Hazards included: an unstable structure, large smoke plume, asbestos suspected, difficult access (due to the proximity of other buildings), electric and gas supplies were present. Operational priorities were to: save saveable lives, firefighter safety, protection of property and the environment and the reduction of the impact on the community. The incident lasted throughout the evening and a number of partnership agencies were on the scene (Lancashire Constabulary, North West Ambulance Service, Preston City Council, Lancashire County Council, Cadent gas and Electricity North West).

Crews and Officers remained on scene for over 3 days. Over that period multi-agency meetings were maintained to conduct a fire investigation, determine the involvement of persons, reduce the cordon and impact on residents and

businesses and safely demolish the affected buildings and dampen hot spots.

GM Powell advised of a similar fire in Preston in May 2021. Since that time proactive work had been undertaken by crews carrying out Arson Vulnerability Assessments of empty buildings and the Service had worked closely with Preston City Council to engage with owners to better secure these premises. There had also been a number of multi-agency meetings to gather intelligence around the risk in these types of building (for example, which buildings were used by rough sleepers and which buildings were used for criminal or unwarranted activity ie: meter by-passing, cultivation of cannabis farms or urban exploring).

Strategically working with partners, actions had been identified. In the short-term letters had been sent to local authority chief executives and all Lancashire schools. Council and Police patrols had increased in the area and 3 surrounding primary and high schools had been jointly visited by the Police and the Service. Medium-term actions included continued education with primary and high schools and joint site visits with partners to address risk. Long-term actions involved working with partners on youth engagement and signposting.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Hennessy regarding whether the stinger appliance was used, Group Manager Powell advised that it had been considered but determined it would not be used due to the close proximity of other buildings (most of which were over 5 storeys high) and that the water supply in Preston was good.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Yates regarding the spread of any asbestos contamination from the incident, GM Powell advised that asbestos was considered to be present in certain parts of the building which was the reason operation Merlin was declared. In relation to the smoke plume, the Service had systems through the met office to monitor wind speed and direction. On the evening the Service was in contact with the Environment Agency and United Utilities in terms of water run off to ensure any run off was contained and once they were happy, the water would be released into the sewage system to get treated. The immediate area was initially evacuated and large crowds gathered. The Police did a really good job managing the cordon. Once firefighters came out of the building, they undertook a decontamination process.

Councillor Smith acknowledged vacant and derelict buildings as a growing problem especially in town centres. He commented that it was the owners' responsibility to make sure the premises were secure however, he noted this was not a criminal offence.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Mein regarding the sentences for arson, the Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service worked with the Crown Prosecution Service in a limited way as an expert witness to determine the cause of the fire and didn't have any input into the sentencing.

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

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that there had been no complaints since the last meeting.

RESOLVED: - That the current position be noted.

19/22

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Authority would be held on Monday 19 September 2022 at 10:00am at the Training Centre, Euxton.

M NOLAN
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood