

Public Document Pack

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Resources Committee

**Wednesday, 29 March 2023 in Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters,
Fulwood 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.

Agenda

Part 1 (open to press and public)

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. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

Members are asked to consider any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests they may have to disclose to the meeting in relation to matters under consideration on the agenda.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 1 - 16)**
4. **Financial Monitoring (Pages 17 - 22)**
5. **ICT Plan 2022 - 2027 (Pages 23 - 42)**
6. **Local Pension Board Annual Report 2021-23 (Pages 43 - 46)**
7. **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee has been agreed for 10:00 hours on **12 July 2023** in the Main Conference Room, at Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Further meetings are: scheduled for 27 September 2023 and 29 November 2023
proposed for 27 March 2024

8. **Urgent Business**

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

9. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

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

PART 2

10. **Pensions Update (Pages 47 - 52)**

(Paragraphs 4 and 5)

11. **IDRP Stage 2 (Pages 53 - 78)**

(Paragraphs 1, 4 and 5)

12. **High Value Procurement Projects (Pages 79 - 88)**

(Paragraph 3)

13. **Urgent Business (Part 2)**

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

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Resources Committee

Wednesday, 30 November 2022, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

MINUTES

<u>PRESENT:</u>	
<u>Councillors</u>	
T Williams (Chair)	
D O'Toole (Vice-Chair)	
J Mein	
M Pattison	
S Rigby	
S Serridge	
A Sutcliffe	
R Woollam	

<u>Officers</u>
S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) K Mattinson, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS) E Sandiford, Head of Human Resources (LFRS) J Hutchinson, HR Business Partner (LFRS) J Meadows, LFRS M Nolan, Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority D Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)
<u>In attendance</u>
K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union

27/22	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>
	Apologies were received from County Councillors L Beavers and B Yates.
28/22	<u>DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS</u>
	None received.
29/22	<u>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</u>
	<u>RESOLVED:</u> - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 28 September 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that this report set out the current budget position in respect of the 2022/23 revenue and capital budgets.

Revenue Budget

The overall position at the end of September was an overspend of £0.5m, largely as a result of price increases associated with energy, fuel and property maintenance costs.

The year-to-date 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) £'000	Reason
Fleet & Technical Services	147	The increase in fuel prices was reflected in the overspend to date. The budget allowed for 12.5% increase in fuel costs, but the actual increase was significantly higher than this, approx. 50%, which equated to approx. £125k. In addition, usage was higher this year than in previous years, reflecting increased activity post pandemic. This gave an overall overspend to date of £75k. In addition, repair costs had increased, reflecting works needed in the first quarter of the year and the increase in costs due to inflationary pressures, currently standing at £75k overspent. Both these areas would remain overspent throughout the remainder of the year, with the latest estimates showing a year end forecast overspend of approx. £275k.
Information Technology	71	The overspend to date was attributable to a combination of the timing of expenditure, with software licenses being paid up front, and a general increase in costs, again reflecting inflationary pressures. This situation was likely to remain throughout the remainder of the year, with a current year end forecast overspend of £100k.
Property	242	The increase in energy prices was reflected in the overspend to date. The budget allowed for 25% increase in fuel costs, but the actual increase was significantly higher than this, approx. 100% in the first half of the year, giving a current overspend of £130k. However, price increases in the second half of the year had again increased significantly, with the current

		<p>forecast showing an increase of approx. 200%. As such a very significant increase would be seen in the overspend in the second half of the year and currently the year end forecast was an overspend of approx. £700k, although it was not clear what impact the Government energy cap would have on this.</p> <p>In addition, the in-year maintenance programme had been 'front loaded', and this coupled with increases in maintenance costs aligned with inflationary pressures, had led to a current overspend of £100k. As a result of the increase in costs and on-going maintenance requirements this was another area that was looking at a year-end overspend, currently forecast at £150k.</p>
Wholetime Pay	15	<p>This was broadly in line with budget, retirements and leavers were broadly in line with forecast, with a slight shortfall in recruit number been offset by increased overtime.</p> <p>Whilst this was broadly in line at the present time, any allowance for the final pay award exceeding the 2% budgeted allowance had not been built in. Based on the existing 5% allowance, this would see an overspend of approx. £750k</p>
On Call Pay	12	<p>This was broadly in line with budget.</p> <p>Whilst this was broadly in line at the present time, any allowance for the final pay award exceeding the 2% budgeted allowance had not built in. Based on the existing 5% allowance, this would see an overspend of approx. £125k</p>
Support staff (less agency staff)	50	<p>The budget was adjusted to take account of the increased level of vacant support posts within the Service. Whilst a number of posts remained vacant, agency staff had been utilised to support some key technical roles within the organisation, resulting in an overspend to date. This would slow down in the second half of the year as vacant posts were recruited thereby reducing the reliance on agency staff.</p> <p>The current position did not allow for the green book pay award, which had now been agreed at £1,925 per full time equivalent. This was significantly higher than the budgeted allowance of 2% and would increase costs over and above budget by approx. £250k by the end of the year.</p>
Apprentice Levy	(20)	<p>The apprentice levy was payable at 0.5% of each month's payroll costs with expenditure slightly less than budgeted.</p>

As highlighted in the report, inflationary pressures were causing costs to increase in several areas, most notably fuel, energy and property costs, approx. £1m of additional pressures. However, more significant than that was the potential costs associated with pay awards, approx. £1.1m more than budgeted. This was partly offset by increased returns on investments, which was currently anticipated generating a surplus of £0.5m. Other areas for delivering savings continued to be reviewed, however it was clear that there would be a very significant overspend at year end, of between £1.0m and £1.5m.

As such reserves would need to be utilised to offset this. £6.0m of general reserves was currently held, having agreed a minimum level of £4.0m, and as such £2.0m of this could be utilised to offset any in year pressures, although clearly this was a short-term measure only.

It was noted that utilising reserves in this manner would also limit the ability to offset financial pressures in 2023/24 and future years.

Capital Budget

Following the slippage agreed at the last Resources Committee the capital budget now stood at £3.3m. Spend to date was just £0.6m as set out in the table below: -

	Spend to 30 September	Year End Forecast	
	£m	£m	
Operational vehicles	-	0.9	As reported previously whilst a significant number of operational vehicles had been ordered (13 pumping appliances, 2 Command Units and an ALP) lead times were such that expenditure had not been incurred in the year to date and were only likely to incur £0.69m by the year end (reflecting agreed staged payments).
Support vehicles	0.1	0.4	This budget allowed for the replacement of various operational support vehicles, whilst some of these had already been delivered, the shortage of raw materials was affecting both the timeframe for delivery and the cost of vehicles. Latest predictions indicated that approx. 50% of the original programme would be completed in year, at a cost of £0.4m.
Operational Equipment	0.1	0.3	Spend to date was attributable to the replacement of light portable pumps. An additional £0.2m was anticipated would be spent on

			CCTV for pumping appliances in-year.
Building Modifications	0.3	0.8	Spend to date was associated with:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced facilities at Hyndburn fire stations, where works had commenced and would be completed by October, with costs to date standing at £0.1m. The replacement of drill towers, where one tower, Blackpool, was completed in June, and where work on replacing two towers, Tarleton and Bolton le Sands, was underway (both were completed and handed over in November), with costs to date of £0.2m.
IT systems	-	0.9	Approximately 50% of the budget related to the placement of Vehicle Mounted Data Systems on appliances, where an order had been placed but no costs had been incurred at the end of September. The balance of the budget related to the replacement of various systems and ICT hardware, in line with the ICT asset management plan. Whilst no costs had been incurred in the year so far, it was highlighted that contracts for several of the systems had been awarded.
Total	0.6	3.3	

The costs to date would be met by revenue contributions.

It was noted that significant cost increases across various supply chains continued to be seen, particularly in construction projects and this would affect some of the capital projects as they progressed through the procurement stage.

In response to questions raised by County Councillor Woollam and County Councillor S Rigby regarding the difficulties in recruiting staff and a timely recruitment process, the Director of Corporate Services advised that this was due to a shortfall of people with the expertise needed to fill some specialist, technical support vacancies. The process of agreeing any changes to the job description, starting the job evaluation process, advertising, recruitment and selection took time and sometimes the process needed to be repeated. In the meantime, agency staff had been used which was more costly. County Councillor O'Toole added that increases in levels of vacancies appeared to be

	<p>more across the public sector, with Lancashire County Council also experiencing the same problems with recruitment.</p> <p>In response to a comment from County Councillor S Rigby regarding the level of reserves falling year on year, the Director of Corporate Services advised that this year the Authority was in a strong position. Future years would be more challenging and would depend on the financial settlement and referendum level for council tax. He advised that in addition to general reserves the Authority also held earmarked reserves and capital reserves. Holding reserves gave time to plan for change such as the Emergency Cover Review. A 5-year financial strategy would be presented to the Authority in February 2023.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> - That the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Noted and endorsed the current financial position; and ii) Noted the anticipated year end forecast overspend of between £1.0m and £1.5m.
31/22	<p><u>TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REPORT 2022/23</u></p>
	<p>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 the content of these reports was used as a basis for this report to the Committee.</p> <p><u>Economic Overview</u></p> <p>The economic backdrop during the April to September period continued to be characterised by ongoing high inflation and its impact on consumers' cost of living and the expectation of low growth. There was no imminent end in sight to the Russia-Ukraine hostilities and its associated impact on the supply chain, and China's zero-Covid policy. Subsequently, UK inflation remained extremely high. Annual headline CPI hit 10.1% in July, the highest rate for 40 years, before falling modestly to 9.9% in August. RPI registered 12.3% in both July and August.</p> <p>To combat inflation the Bank of England increased the official Bank Rate to 2.25% over the period. From 0.75% in March, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) pushed through rises of 0.25% in each of the following two MPC meetings, before hiking by 0.50% in August and again in September. Current expectations were that the Bank Rate would continue to rise.</p> <p>Over the period the 5-year UK benchmark gilt yield rose from 1.41% to 4.40%, the 10-year gilt yield rose from 1.61% to 4.15%, the 20-year yield from 1.82% to 4.13% and the 50-year yield from 1.56% to 3.25%.</p> <p>The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 1.22% over the period. SONIA is calculated by the Bank of England based on actual transactions reflects the average of the interest rates that banks pay to borrow sterling overnight from other financial institutions and other institutional investors.</p>

A table in the report, now considered by Members showed the latest forecast for interest rates from Arlingclose.

Inflation pressures facing the UK were being faced by countries throughout the world. In the US inflation hit 9.1% in June, although there was some slight easing in July and August to 8.5% and 8.3% respectively. The Federal Reserve continued its fight against inflation over the period with a 0.5% hike in May followed by three increases of 0.75% in June, July and September, taking policy rates to a range of 3% - 3.25%.

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 three loans.

It was not anticipated that the new capital expenditure would be funded from borrowing in the year while it was anticipated that there would 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 report showed the maturity profile of the Authority's borrowings, along with the interest rate paid.

There needed to be consideration for the early repayment of the loans, which would be subject to an early repayment (premium) charge. Previous reports on treasury management activities had reported that the premium (approximately £0.8m) and the potential loss of investment income had been greater than the savings made on the interest payments therefore, it had not been considered financially beneficial to repay the loans especially with the potential for increased interest rates. However, the estimated premium charge to repay the three loans was currently £0.100m; reflecting the significant increase in base rate. To offset the net savings on repaying the loans it was estimated that future interest on investments over the remaining period of the loans would need to be 4.1%. If it was estimated that investment interest rates would be lower than this then it may be beneficial to repay the loans, however, current forecasts indicated future base rates in excess of this.

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 (LCC) 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 30 September there was a balance of £36.055m invested in LCC while the average for the period was £35.187m. The current rate for these investments had increased to 2.25% on 22 September. At the beginning of the financial year the rate was 0.75%.

In addition, in order to increase the rate earned on current balances, the Authority had placed fixed investments with other local authorities. To attract a higher rate of interest than was available on the call account these investments would 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 £5m fixed term investment in place, therefore the total investment held at 30 September was £41.055m. The overall rate of interest earned during this period was 1.49% which was favourable when compared with the benchmark 7-day index which averaged 1.30% over the same period.

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

Members noted that 2 further fixed term investments with other Local Authorities had now been taken out as follows:-

Start date	End date	Principal	Rate	Annual interest	Interest in 2022/23
27/10/2022	26/10/2023	£5m	3.30%	£165k	£71k
07/10/2022	06/10/2024	£5m	4.00%	£200k	£96k

Current interest rates available for lending to other Local Authorities were:-

Period	Interest rate	Additional return per annum compared with current base rate for £5m investment
6 months	3.50%	£62.5K
1 year	4.36%	£105.5k
2 year	4.66%	£120.5k
3 year	4.77%	£126.0k

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 2022 the Authority approved the indicators for 2022/23 which were detailed in the report alongside the current actual.

Revenue Budget Implications

The 2022/23 revenue budget for treasury management activity showed that anticipated income exceeded expenditure by £200k. 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 below:

	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23
	Budget	Forecast	Variance
	£m	£m	£m
MRP	0.010	0.000	(0.010)
Interest payable	0.090	0.090	(0.000)
Interest receivable	(0.300)	(0.770)	(0.470)
Net budget	(0.200)	(0.680)	(0.480)

The interest receivable was above budget as the balances and interest rates were higher than anticipated when setting the budget. The forecast assumed interest rates on the call account averaged 3% for the remainder of the financial year.

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

32/22

SUB-SURFACE RESCUES USING REMOTELY OPERATED VEHICLES

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report.

In March 2021, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) published a position statement entitled "Rescues of submerged casualties" which included the following:

"The HSE have indicated that not preparing for a foreseeable risk, including rescues of submerged casualties, is unacceptable. Fire and rescue services may face action if they are found to be exposing their staff to a situation that involves an intervention to save a submerged casualty. Operational discretion is not seen as applicable in circumstances that require actions not supported by legislation, policy and procedure, when there is evidence to support this is foreseeable."

NFCC position: "Unless services are able to address the identified gap in the required resources, equipment, training, and the actions that are required to remain compliant with legislation, when attending an incident involving a casualty that is submerged – All rescues of a submerged casualty should be taken from the land, the surface of the water or by personnel in the water maintaining the correct levels of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)."

Rescuers should be competent to risk assess and carry out rescues and should maintain the correct levels of PPE. Operational discretion should not be used to remove PPE, enter confined spaces underwater or act outside of service policy to go underwater.

There may be specific sub-surface situations that can be controlled to allow a rescue attempt. These situations will usually be when the casualty is visible and submerged in shallow water. The NFCC will consider future National Operational Learning cases but are unlikely to re-evaluate existing guidance unless they include new evidence, alternative safe systems of work or equipment, or other technical solutions that are deemed as a potential improvement in this matter.”

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) Response

LFRS sought to minimise the impact of this necessary operational restriction through investment in Swift Water Rescue Technician (SRT) equipment such as reach poles. This only went a short way in closing the capability gap that existed for submerged casualties.

Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs)

A ROV normally involved a small submersible that housed a battery, propellers, and a camera with high powered lighting. It was connected to the land via a tether cable which carried the command wire. The controller was held by the pilot on the bankside.

In order to fully close this gap, the Drone Team secured a small amount of investment from the Research and Development group (c.£3,000) for an underwater ROV in order to conduct feasibility trials, to prove concept. The purpose of its use was to assess its potential for life saving operations and to identify a list of necessary requirements for a fully capable unit. According to national guidance, as set out in the report, a recently submerged person could present a viable rescue for up to 90 minutes. During that time Fire and Rescue Services and other Blue Light responding partners must be seen to be responding or there was a likelihood that others would intervene.

Research Findings

The LFRS ROV, manufactured by FiFish, was procured for less than £3k, but was capable of demonstrating most of the basic functions of the more expensive industrial ROVs. Importantly it had a claw which could be operated by the pilot.

In order to get a wider understanding, LFRS attended a ROV expo in London and invited two of the largest manufacturers – FiFish and Deeptrekker to demonstrate a number of their ROV models at Fleetwood Campus.

In order to improve LFRS’ understanding of Sound Navigation and Ranging (SONAR) the team also visited Blueprint Subsea in Ulverston who allowed LFRS pilots to use SONAR equipped ROVs in Lake Windermere. The company was very helpful and provided a number of recovery videos to the team to show how casualties were located in real life.

All of the models investigated had a long battery life in excess of 90 minutes. Some were more rugged than others, but several important requirements were

identified beyond the anticipated operational requirements. These were:

Vision

The degree of detritus in the water severely limited normal camera vision, and high-powered lighting (an absolute necessity at night) could further exacerbate rather than solve this problem, similar to using high beam headlights in the fog. During trials the ROV was able to locate a child dummy casualty at the bottom of Rivington Reservoir in good, clear and still water. It was noted though as the operation went on that the propellers quickly stirred up sediment and vision became poor. This was a conceivable scenario for rescues even in excellent conditions. Search was therefore very difficult with normal cameras either day or night.

Requirement: An ROV requires SONAR in order to search and 'see' through the water. SONAR is particularly valuable in identifying air voids in the water created by recently submerged casualties.

Positioning

ROVs cannot access GPS underwater. It was possible however, to know the depth via a barometer and the aspect (the direction the ROV is facing) via a compass. The tether cable was buoyant so it was feasible to get an approximate location of the ROV on a straight run underwater from shore. An available option was to surface the ROV which was not ideal practice once a casualty had been located.

Requirement: An underwater positioning system is required in order to gain precise location data for a casualty. This has a number of other benefits in that the ROV calculates where it is and can stabilise this position accurately against water flows. The positioning system can enable systematic search patterns to be employed by operators (i.e., we know exactly where the ROV has been and where it is going).

Casualty Recovery to Surface

No easily transportable ROV can bring a submerged casualty to the surface using just power from propellers. This idea was quickly dismissed during trials. A number of factors can influence the difficulty in raising a person, including size, weight, clothing, buoyancy and water current. The team looked into the feasibility of attaching and operating items such as air lifting bags. Attaching recovery systems was very difficult with the claw operating in good visibility and no current. The only realistic chance of success was to attach the ROV onto the casualty (or more likely their clothing) using an interlocking claw to allow proper grasp. This was confirmed as being in use for body recovery in other parts of the world. A manual hauling from above/alongside via the tether cable would then be required.

This 'grab and retrieve' method was achieved during the trials at Fleetwood Nautical Campus with a higher rated ROV model (the current LFRS £3k ROV did not have sufficient strength in claw or tether cable). It must be noted that moving a casualty was easier from land (i.e., at a low angle) rather than from directly above which meant lifting the weight of the casualty and the ROV. Much of the recovery involved getting momentum established in the first instance. It

was likely that a recently submerged casualty would be more buoyant than the weights/dummies used in trials.

Requirement: An ROV must have a sufficiently strong claw grasp & tether cable in order to raise a submerged casualty by manual means from bankside/boat.

Operation

Operating a ROV in a 3D 'blind' environment such as murky water was a challenging proposition. The drone pilots were used to operating without sight of an aerial drone but the ROV brought another dimension in that it was able to rotate vertically to face upwards or downwards. Some ROVs such as the FiFish could fully rotate in all three directions and on a number of occasions the ROV was upside down without the pilot being aware of its aspect. Other ROVs were demonstrated however, that stayed level with the surface and the camera rotated on a gimbal much like an aerial drone. This was far more controllable for the pilot and much more suitable for systematic searches.

Requirement: The ROV needs to have a simple operation method which eliminates the ability for the ROV to rotate vertically, giving the ability to carry out systematic searches.

Control

ROVs were provided with a controller for the pilot to operate. In the case of the LFRS FiFish ROV, a simple controller was provided and a smart phone was used to see the camera feed via an app connected by wi-fi. The controller's simplicity added to pilot confusion as many of the commands and settings were located on an app instead. The use of a smartphone to operate the ROV was understandable due to its costs, but the app often required a reset during operations. LFRS had learned this limitation already with drones and thus used standalone, manufacturer-built controllers for its operational drones. In trialling SONAR, it was noted that some manufacturers did not integrate the sonar output into the controller, and a laptop or similar device was also required.

Requirement: The ROV needs to be provided with a manufacturers specific controller which integrates all of its functions and imagery.

Recommendation

LFRS had deployed a ROV three times to incidents (as at 11/2022) over the 2022 summer period in order to assist rescue teams in recovering casualties from under the water. All three incidents demonstrated the value in deploying the ROV. Unfortunately, these incidents also demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the existing subsurface rescue. In fact, a submerged casualty was located within seconds of the first ever ROV deployment despite extensive searches already having taken place by crews and other agencies.

In order to deliver a realistic search and casualty recovery capability Fire and Rescue Services would need to deploy a ROV currently costing in the region of £70-80k. The complex nature of operations would require a significant investment in training for SRT or boat crews, but much less so with the Drone

Pilots who had immediately transferable skills. The ability for the ROV to search for objects in addition to casualties should not be overlooked in this regard.

Therefore, the recommendation was for the Combined Fire Authority to support the procurement of a higher capability subsurface ROV, thereby enabling the Service to become the first nationally to have improved underwater body location and potential rescue capability.

An investment of around £80,000 was anticipated which would be funded from the existing innovation budget and be built in to the capital programme, if approved. The deployment of this would place additional pressures on the Drone Teams revenue budget, which was currently overspent. A review of its deployment was currently underway to ensure it was only mobilised where required.

County Councillor O'Toole had been impressed at a demonstration of the drones recently at the Strategy Day. He commented that during his tenure of office, the Authority ensured its firefighters had the best equipment and he considered the underwater drone to be essential.

County Councillor Woollam queried who would be trained to use the underwater drone. In response the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service had an on-call drone team which operated the aerial drone. They were responsible for doing the feasibility trials for the underwater drone and had been working with the manufacturing company to undertake further trials. It would be that team which would deploy the underwater drone to approximately 10 – 20 incidents per year.

County Councillor S Rigby queried how the overspent budget (as detailed on page 34 of the agenda pack) would be managed. In response, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the overspend related to the aerial drone and the development of the new Drone Team. Previously the deployment of the aerial drone was by full time officers who also carried out fire investigations. Due to the number of deployments the workload was too much therefore a separate team was set up. As the aerial drone was new and innovative everyone requested it. The drone team were now managing a process to ensure it was only deployed where it could add value / benefit.

Councillor Williams queried if other Fire and Rescue Services were also interested in procuring underwater drones, whether there was the potential for a national preferred supplier which would bring financial benefits. In response, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service's Drone Manager chaired the NFCC National Tactical Group and Lancashire was leading the way regarding the use of aerial drones. To move to underwater capability provided an additional opportunity to do something others were not doing. Alternative suppliers had been considered and there had been a lot of interest in the underwater drone from other Fire and Rescue Services however, not all were in a position where they could currently invest.

RESOLVED: - That a high-specification Remotely Operated Vehicle be procured from the innovation budget at a cost of circa £80,000 and this be built into the

	capital programme.
33/22	<u>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</u>
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday <u>29 March 2023</u> at 1000 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.</p> <p>Further meeting dates were noted for 12 July 2023 and 27 September 2023 and agreed for 29 November 2023.</p>
34/22	<u>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC</u>
	<p>County Councillor Pattison left the meeting at this point.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u>: - 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.</p>
35/22	<u>PENSIONS UPDATE (STANDING ITEM)</u>
	<p>(Paragraphs 4 and 5)</p> <p>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.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u>: - That the report be noted.</p>
36/22	<u>REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF PAID SICK LEAVE</u>
	<p>(Paragraphs 1 and 2)</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u>: - That the Committee approved the Chief Fire Officer's recommendation as outlined in the report.</p>
37/22	<u>HIGH VALUE PROCUREMENT PROJECTS</u>
	<p>(Paragraph 3)</p> <p>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.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u>: That the Committee noted the report.</p>

38/22	<u>URGENT BUSINESS (PART 2) - EXECUTIVE BOARD SUCCESSION ARRANGEMENTS</u>
	<p>(Paragraph 1)</p> <p>Members received an update from the Clerk to the Authority on the appointment of Treasurer / Director of Corporate Services by the Resources Sub-Committee Appointments Panel.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u>: - That the report be noted and endorsed.</p>

M NOLAN
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Resources Committee

Meeting to be held on 29th March 2023

Financial Monitoring 2022/23 (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 2022/23 revenue and capital budgets.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>The Committee are requested to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note and endorse the current financial position • note the anticipated year end forecast overspend of between £1.5m and £1.75m.

Revenue Budget

The overall position at the end of January is an overspend of £1.3m, largely as a result of unfunded pay awards and inflationary pressures.

The year-to-date 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 budget position by department

Area	Overspend/ (Under spend) £'000	Reason
Fleet & Technical Services	174	As reported in November, fuel has continued to overspend to £124k to date due to the sharp increase in fuel costs early this year. We are now seeing a slight reduction in trend as fuel prices start to decrease. An increase in mileage post pandemic has also attributed to increased costs. Repair costs are overspent to date by £70k due to inflationary pressures. It is projected both these areas will continue to overspend.
Information Technology	44	The overspend has reduced since November mainly due to timing of expenditure. Several software licences were prepaid earlier in the year levelling out in the latter part. There has been a general increase in costs, again reflecting inflationary pressures.

Property	583	Increased energy costs continue to cause significant overspend totalling £407k to date, however costs are not as severe as initially anticipated following the introduction of the business support scheme. Inflationary pressures continue to cause the maintenance costs to overspend, accounting for the balance of the overspend.
Pensions	(73)	The underspend on pensions is due to fewer individuals retiring on ill health than budgeted. To date there is just one retirement due to ill health.
Non DFM	(585)	The underspend is due to an increase in interest rates resulting in receiving an additional £400k interest to date. Also we have been awarded £102k VAT back on purchase of operational vehicles, having successfully challenged HMRC.
Wholetime Pay	857	Pay has significantly increased by £1m since November reporting due to the agreed 7% pay award for grey book, considerably higher than the budgeted 2%. Retirements and leavers are higher than anticipated, with this and a slight shortfall in recruit numbers being offset by increased overtime.
On Call Pay	5	This is broadly in line with budget having reflected the pay award.
Support staff (less agency staff)	110	The current position reflects the green book pay award, which was £1,925 per full time equivalent. This is significantly higher than the budgeted allowance of 2% and has increased costs over and above budget by approx. £400k by year end (please note at the time of writing the previous report we had assumed that the pay award would equate to approx. 5%, however based on our actual staff mix in year the actual costs are significantly higher at approx. 6.5%). This is partly offset by vacancies within the year, where recruitment has continued to be challenging, reflecting the employment market. And where we have continued to utilise temporary/agency staff to cover some key posts.

Inflationary pressures and pay awards will continue to impact the budget for the remainder of the year, resulting in a year end overspend which we anticipate being approx. £1.5m to £1.75m. (We have not yet finalised this as we have moved onto a new finance system, provided by Lancashire County Council, which has resulted in some downtime and some challenges in extracting information from the system.)

As such we will need to utilise reserves to offset this. We currently hold £6.0m of general reserves, having agreed a minimum level of £3.75m, and as such we have sufficient reserves to meet this.

Capital Budget

Following the slippage previously agreed at the last Resources Committees the capital budget now stands at £3.3m. Spend to date is just £1.3m.as set out below, with further details in Appendix 2: -

Table 3 Details of current and forecast capital spend during the year by spend category

	Revised Programme	Spend to 31 January	
	£m	£m	
Operational vehicles	0.9	-	As reported previously whilst we have ordered a significant number of operational vehicle (13 pumping appliances, 2 Command Units and an ALP) lead times are such that we have not incurred any expenditure in the year to date. Whilst we have agreed a staged payment profile for these vehicles it appears increasingly unlikely that we will incur any such costs in year
Support vehicles	0.4	0.3	This budget allows for the replacement of various operational support vehicles, whilst some of these have already been delivered, the shortage of raw materials has affected both the timeframe for delivery and the cost of vehicles. Again it appears increasingly unlikely that we will spend all of the allocated funding in year.
Operational Equipment	0.3	0.1	Spend to date is attributable to the replacement of light portable pumps. We anticipate spending an additional £0.2m on CCTV for pumping appliances in-year.
Building Modifications	0.8	0.6	Spend to date is associated with:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced facilities at Hyndburn fire stations, where works have been completed, at a cost of £0.2m The replacement of drill towers, where Blackpool, Tarleton and Bolton le Sands have all been completed, at a cost of £0.4m
IT systems	0.9	0.3	Expenditure to date relates to a combination of replacement Vehicle Mounted Data Systems on appliances, the purchase of new Coverage Software, to aid with dynamic mobilizing, and the purchase of Incident Command Software.
Total	3.3	1.3	

It is clear that we will not fully utilise the 22/23 capital programme and hence will need to slip funding into 23/24 to meet future costs, the extent of this will be reported as part of our year end capital outturn.

The costs to date will be met by revenue contributions, as reflect in the revenue budget year end forecast.

It is still worth highlighting that we continue to see significant cost increases across various supply chains, and in particular in construction projects and this will affect some of the capital projects as they progress through the procurement stage.

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**

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate: N/A

Appendix 1

Table 4 Revenue Budget Monitoring Statement

BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT January 2023	Revised Budget	Revised YTD Bud	Year to Date Total	Year to Date Variance	Variance Pay	Variance Non-Pay
	£000	£003	£007	£008	£009	£010
Service Delivery						
Service Delivery	36,062	29,867	30,750	884	959	(75)
Prevention & Protection	2,972	2,655	2,586	(68)	(123)	55
Covid-19	-	-	(1)	(1)	-	(1)
Control	1,346	1,346	1,414	69	-	69
Youth Engagement (inc Princes Trust)	52	67	77	10	-	10
Special Projects (ISAR)	13	11	15	5	-	5
Strategy & Planning						
Service Development	1,552	1,293	1,407	114	153	(38)
Training & Operational Review	4,429	3,775	3,703	(72)	(103)	31
Fleet & Technical Services	2,709	2,270	2,483	213	40	174
Information Technology	2,860	2,235	2,311	77	33	44
Digital Transformation	562	459	491	32	32	0
People & Development						
Human Resources	903	747	795	48	13	35
Occupational Health Unit	242	203	217	14	20	(6)
Corporate Communications	331	273	320	47	48	(1)
Safety Health & Environment	248	210	190	(20)	(8)	(11)
Corporate Services						
Executive Board	1,064	895	925	30	32	(3)
Central Admin Office	866	721	619	(102)	(94)	(9)
Finance	166	131	153	21	19	2
Procurement	988	838	917	80	48	32
Property	2,179	1,828	2,433	605	22	583
External Funding	3	(5)	(5)	0	(1)	1
Pay						
TOTAL DFM EXPENDITURE	59,544	49,816	51,802	1,986	1,089	897
Non DFM Expenditure						
Pensions Expenditure	1,351	1,126	1,053	(73)	-	(73)
Other Non-DFM Expenditure	2,122	(2,269)	(2,868)	(599)	(14)	(585)
NON-DFM EXPENDITURE	3,473	(1,143)	(1,815)	(672)	(14)	(658)
TOTAL BUDGET	63,017	48,673	49,987	1,314	1,075	239

Table 5 Capital Budget Monitoring Statement

CAPITAL BUDGET 2022/23	Revised Prog	Spend to 31 January 23
Vehicles		
Operational Vehicles	0.924	-
Support Vehicles	0.431	0.286
	1.355	0.286
Operational Equipment		
Operational Equipment	0.300	0.149
	0.300	0.149
Buildings Modifications		
STC	0.036	0.007
Enhanced station facilities	0.150	0.152
Preston Rebuild	-	-
Drill tower replacements	0.564	0.433
	0.750	0.592
ICT		
IT Systems	0.866	0.306
	0.866	0.306
Total Capital Requirement	3.271	1.333
Funding		
Capital Grant	-	-
Revenue Contributions	3.271	1.333
Earmarked Reserves	-	-
Capital Reserves	-	-
Total Capital Funding	3.271	1.333

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Resources Committee

Meeting to be held 29 March 2023

ICT Plan 2022-2027 (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 ICT Plan (attached as appendix 1) details how we will support the Data and Digital Strategy, which underpins the business strategies that form the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-27.

Data and Digital information are essential for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS); they are vital for improving fire response, prevention and protection services to the public. A huge amount of what LFRS does depends on the effective use of data and information.

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.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note and endorse the ICT Plan 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 ICT Plan, 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 ICT Plan has been crafted to underpin the Data and Digital Strategy which in turn supports 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;
- Our technology solutions are secure, but still allow our workforce to work effectively and efficiently.

Business risk

Delivery of key elements of the ICT Plan 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

The focus throughout the ICT Plan to ensure product sets are kept up to date and in line with security best practices that are highlighted by the National Cyber Security Centre. We will ensure retired hardware is either appropriately re-purposed or recycled alongside WEEE guidelines. We will also ensure the objectives set out in the Digital Strategy are supported to reduce printing and paper consumption wherever possible.

Equality and diversity implications

The ICT Plan 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: N/A

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service ICT Plan 2022-2027

Introduction

The ICT landscape has changed considerably which has been driven by the adoption of cloud-based services, an increase in remote working as well as a significant increase in cyber threats. Data and Digital information are essential for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS); they are vital for improving fire response, prevention and protection services to the public. A huge amount of what LFRS does depends on the effective use of data and information.

The 2022-2027 ICT plan maximises the effectiveness and efficiency of our workforce to ensure the best possible service and levels of engagement for our communities and it ensures a strong foundation is in place that supports and underpins the delivery and development of the service's Data and Digital Strategy.

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.

Glossary

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.

On Premises (on prem)

On-premises software and technology, also called on-prem, is housed within the physical location of an enterprise, rather than in the cloud or on hosted servers in a remote facility.

National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)

The LFRS Cyber Security strategy is underpinned by adopting the National Cyber Security Centre's (NCSC) Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF), which is the assurance framework for local Government.

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
- Trust
- Respect
- Integrity
- Value
- 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

Service Support

The Helpdesk (Service Desk) is the front facing operating arm of the ICT department that's there to keep operations running smoothly as well as taking ICT service requests. The Helpdesk handles everything from individual technical problems to larger scales systems issues and outages and it provides a single point of contact for staff and external agencies to interact with ICT.

The ICT Helpdesk will work to re design it's processes to better align with Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) best practice guidelines and look for opportunities to extend its support services into other areas of the support departments.

What is ITIL?

ITIL, is a well-known set of IT best practices designed to assist businesses in aligning their IT services with customer and business needs. Services include IT-related assets, accessibility, and resources that deliver value and benefits to customers.

The Service Design stage focuses on developing new IT services, as well as modifying or improving existing IT services to enhance their value to the business.

We will:

- Implement a service desk portal which will allow staff members to log and monitor their own support tickets against agreed SLAs and against a catalogue of supported ICT technologies. This will be developed to include other areas of the service that provide internal application support.
- Provide automation where possible for maximum efficiency and less reliance on manual intervention. This will extend to being able to reset passwords without the involvement of ICT.
- Focus on reducing the amount of time it takes to resolve a support ticket by using service desk pods consisting of 1st, 2nd and 3rd line support staff. This model will help to ensure a ticket is closed in one round of escalation and it will also encourage cross skilling.
- Re design the asset management solution and offer that function out to other areas of the service for maximum cost savings.

Prince's Trust

What is Prince's Trust?

The Prince's Trust and the Fire and Rescue Service have a long and proud history of working in partnership. Since 1992, together we've helped many thousands of young people to change their lives through Prince's Trust programmes.

The Trust and the FRS share many common objectives which impact on communities we serve. Our work together is guided by the values of social responsibility and inclusiveness.

ICT deliver WiFi, printing, iPads, projectors, and computers/monitors for all Prince's Trust students.

We will:

- In 2023 replace all desk-based computers within the Prince's Trust sites with modern Windows 10 / 11 flavours.
- Evaluate a cloud first option which is likely to be either Citrix in the Cloud or Azure Desktop.
- Provide support where needed to ensure staff have the equipment they need to deliver the support and training for the students.
- Continue to evaluate the solutions we offer to ensure they are fit for purpose in a fast-paced technology environment.

Many of the service's core business functions would not operate without network connectivity, so a robust and reliable network infrastructure is essential for effective and efficient service delivery.

LFRS has several network links which connects the services 39 stations to the central data centres located at Headquarters, North West Fire Control and Service Training Centre, to Lancashire County Council for collaboration and delivery of the service's financial systems and to the Internet.

We will:

- Work with Northwest Shared Infrastructure Services (NWSIS) on the re-procurement of the current WAN contract which expires in October 2023. Engagement with the NWSIS team will commence in 2022 and involve specification and design workshops that will allow us to tailor the next iteration of the WAN to complement and underpin the strategic direction of the FRSs objectives of adopting cloud-based services.
- In 2022 invest in dedicated fast and reliable connections direct into the Microsoft Azure network, to ensure that future needs of those services remain available. These services extend to other parts of the service and are fundamental in the delivery of the services Data and Digital strategy.

What is Azure ExpressRoute?

ExpressRoute enables LFRS to extend our on-premises networks into the Microsoft cloud over a private connection with the help of a connectivity provider. With ExpressRoute, the Service can establish connections to Microsoft cloud services, such as Microsoft Azure and Microsoft 365.

ExpressRoute connections don't go over the public Internet. This allows ExpressRoute connections to offer more reliability, faster speeds, consistent latencies, and higher security than typical connections over the Internet.

The benefit of having a dedicated route is mainly down to speed. If we pushed all our cloud/365 traffic down our normal Internet link then we would start to see performance issues for both Internet traffic, i.e., web browsing and the cloud traffic, therefore it's best practice to separate this out.

WiFi

The current WiFi estate was installed to support a small number of features and functions and over the last five years LFRS has seen an increase in demand and reliance of WiFi.

We will:

- In 2023 procure and implement the next generation WiFi to support the service's requirement for a modern, secure WiFi implementation that allows and encourages innovation.
- Digitilise our fire appliances to provide a more efficient and effective service to our communities, maximising the productive time of our firefighters and officers when they are off station. The digitisation of the appliances, including the replacement of our current Mobile Data Terminals will be a key focus for the service during 2023-24.
- Following the global Coronavirus pandemic, we will continue our digitisation improvement journey including improving the use of Microsoft Teams and other digital platforms across the service.
- Our adoption of technology, for example our Drones, will further require improved WiFi and connectivity to deliver improved situational awareness to operational commanders remotely, including improvements in our hardware within our Command Support room.

Storage

Protect data where it is vulnerable.

Data needs to be protected from unauthorised access, modification, or deletion. This involves ensuring data is protected in transit, at rest, and at end of life (that is, effectively sanitising or destroying storage media after use). In many cases data will be outside of our direct control, so it's important that we consider the protections that we can apply, as well as the assurances we need from third parties. With the rise in increasingly tailored ransomware attacks preventing organisations from accessing their systems and data stored on them, other relevant security measures need to include maintaining up-to-date, isolated, offline backup copies of all important data.

LFRS currently host several storage platforms across the service including dedicated storage for the service's on-premises database estate as well as unified shared storage for file data and virtualisation. It's designed for maximum reliability, availability, and includes two copies across two different sites for resiliency.

In June 2018 LFRS procured and implemented the service's main storage system called NetApp under a 3+1+1 support and maintenance contract. It is our intention to extended

further as there is no End of Support (EOS) advertised, which will effectively take us forward to at least 2024.

We will:

- Align with the National Cyber Security Centre's 3-2-1 approach for better data resiliency. The '3-2-1' rule is a popular strategy that can be used in most scenarios; at least 3 copies, on 2 devices, and 1 offsite backup. This helps ensure that if one copy is compromised, there is at least one other copy intact.
- Evaluate linking the NetApp storage tier into cloud-based storage such as Microsoft Azure and Amazon Web Services. There will still be a storage presence kept to allow for a controlled migration, which is why we will extend the support of the NetApp into at least 2024. This staged migration will allow us to fully understand any cost implications, which are very difficult to forecast accurately.
- Look to replace the service's three Dell database storage arrays, which become EOS in August 2025 and therefore will need replacing. In 2024 a scoping exercise will be carried out to understand the current storage landscape and where appropriate migrate services into the cloud.

Virtualisation

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 virtualisation:

Virtualisation uses software to create an abstraction layer over computer hardware that allows the hardware elements of a single computer processor, memory, storage and more to be divided into multiple virtual computers, commonly called virtual machines (VMs). Each VM runs its own operating system (OS) and behaves like an independent computer, even though it is running on just a portion of the actual underlying computer hardware.

It follows that virtualisation enables more efficient utilisation of physical computer hardware and allows a greater return on an organisation's hardware investment.

90% of LFRS' servers are virtualised and are located either at HQ, Service Training Centre or North West Fire Control.

We will:

- Over the next five years, deliver a cloud-based option for each server or service replacement to ensure we are aligned with the government's digital directive and

our own Data and Digital strategy. For example, we will consider replacing our Helpdesk software, but as part of that procurement process, we will ensure we evaluate against a cloud-based service first.

Initially there may be a small increase in costs as we run two environments to host servers/services which are on prem and cloud-based, however as more and more services are migrated or built new into the cloud then we can start to decommission the on prem virtualisation stack which will bring down the overall cost of the virtualisation platform.

Mobile Device Management

Migration from AirWatch to inTune

What is a Mobile Device Management?

A Mobile Device Management (MDM) service combines device applications, built-in device management features and infrastructure services. Together, these components allow us to remotely control, monitor, and enforce policies on employee devices.

Why use MDM?

Mobile Device Management is designed to simplify management of devices.

Typical functionality includes mobile device enrolment, the ability to control device configuration, protect data, monitor the status and compliance of devices, and manage enterprise approved apps across a range of platforms and operating systems.

Most MDM services work over the Internet, allowing devices to be managed and remotely controlled wherever they are in the world. This means staff can work off-premises, securely.

We will:

- In 2023/2024 Migrate from our current mobile device management system, Workspace One over to Microsoft inTune to achieve cost savings and align with the Microsoft ecosystem ensuring better protection across our estate.
- Enrol all corporate remote laptops and mobile devices to remain compliant with Cyber Essentials Plus, to increase visibility and therefore security, and to ensure greater support is on offer for staff who are hybrid or remote working.
- Replace any non-compliant mobile devices, such as iPads and iPhones so they meet with the requirements of the Cyber Essentials Plus certification

Telephony Solution

Cisco CUBE replacement

LFRS currently hosts its telephony solution from HQ and Service Training Centre. This solution runs the desk-based Cisco phones, which operate as a traditional office phone solution. It dials internally, externally and internationally as you would expect. Other features such as call forwarding, answer phone services and call handlers that direct options 1,2,3 to other areas of LFRS are also delivered through this solution.

We will:

- Evaluate a solution that allows for the integration of Microsoft Teams into desk-based phones.
- Carry out requirements gathering to ensure all the current features remain available, whilst delivering a solution that compliments remote working.
- Replace the CISCO cube with a modern, supported solution that has the flexibility to meet our needs. The CUBE is an integral part of the current system but may be replaced with another cloud-based solution.

Communications

The Communications Officer's role is to ensure the integrity, performance and availability of the LFRS operational communications infrastructure, in particular the key functional areas of the Airwave radio system and Mobile Data Terminal, in adherence with published and acknowledged best practice standards.

Incident ground radio replacement

The BA Set replacement project is expected to go to tender during 2023/24 ready to purchase 2024/2025 and the Incident ground radio replacement will align with those timings. The BA replacement project is a regional project and the Incident Ground Radio is currently local to LFRS. Currently the purchase for replacement for the Incident Ground Radios is estimated at £230,000.

We will:

- During 2024/2025 replace the Incident Ground Radios in conjunction with the BA Set replacement project. The incident ground radio model that's chosen is a vital component in delivering clear audible voice transmission from the BA teams to the officer in charge, therefore it should not be done in silo.
- Evaluate opportunities for a joint purchase across the region to achieve a cost savings.

On-call Duty System / Day crewing plus alerter replacement

The On-call alerters are still functioning, however there are modern technologies that could enhance this capability making it easier for on call staff to receive notifications about an incident at their On Call station. The expected costs are in the region of £65,000.

We will:

- Evaluate several modern ways to alert on call staff. These are to include text alerts, e-mail and notifications via an app.
- Ensure the final solution is in line with officers' requirements to ensure the maximum benefit is realised.

SAN J Radio Replacement

The Fire Contract in GB is a Managed Service operated by Airwave on behalf of the Home Office. The currently installed MTH800 handheld terminal (SAN C/J) was declared 'End of Service Life' in April 2017 and is currently supported on a "break-replace" service from used stock.

The Airwave National Shutdown Date agreed with the Home Office has extended from 31 December 2022 to 31 December 2026.

Understanding the length of the extension, a spares issue has been identified in supporting the MTH800 post December 2022.

Airwave has a contractual obligation to replace the radio as per the Firelink requirements in the Statement of Brigade Requirements (SOBR) as part of the managed service and to ensure the managed service support continues with the same service levels (SLA) as part of the Firelink contract.

Therefore, a hardware changeover is needed for the SAN C/J devices that were originally provided as part of the Fire contract. No operational risk can be taken through a radio failing on the network so a business case was compiled to upgrade and swap out the existing MTH800 radio to ensure a radio can be put in place with minimal disruption and that will provide longevity to the FRS and is robustly supported from a spares point of view. Alternative options have been reviewed with the Home Office.

Change notices are being agreed between Airwave and the Home Office and technical testing has been completed, including Airwave reference system testing. All tests were completed with no issues found. The Airwave Configuration Team has completed the appropriate fleet mapping work centrally and from an individual FRS perspective there will be no change.

The last part of the preparatory work was to complete a user trial to see if when 'live' on the network if any issues were found or any changes were needed.

The replacement SAN C/J radios (MXP600 radios) have now been ordered to replace the 3,791 SAN C/J devices across the Great Britain for Fire and Airwave is in the process of recruiting a Project Manager (PM) to lead this work.

As part of the 'like for like' replacement of existing installs a new MXP600 device will be swapped for the existing MTH800 by Airwave. The install is not a full install as it was in the Firelink rollout, all wiring and the antenna stays the same for existing installs. The radio cradle and junction box will be swapped out by Airwave and new kit installed as part of the replacement.

We will:

- Assist Airwave with the replacement of the SAN J devices, which is anticipated to commence in January 2023.
- Purchase any additional auxiliary kit which is outside of the contract to ensure full functionality is kept until the introduction of the Airwave/SAN J replacement which is currently estimated for 2026/2027

PSTN End of Life

What the PSTN?

The Public Switch Telephone Network (PSTN) is aging and will reach the end of life in December 2025. The PSTN supports the services tertiary (3rd route) method for mobilising crews.

We will:

- Prepare for ESN which will be utilised as a data bearer for station end mobilisation thereby removing the requirement for PSTN, however if that's delayed then there are several methods that will be investigated in January 2025 to replace those links with more modern methods of communication such as fibre/ADSL/5g.

VMSD/MDT hardware replacement

The current Mobile Data Terminals (Motorola MDT2) utilised within LFRS are becoming end of life. A replacement is required before any potential issues arise.

We have waited until this time so that we can be sure that the new solution would be compatible with the ESN network, which is due to replace Airwave in the life of these units.

The current Mobile Data Terminals are fixed vehicle mounted terminals that allow crews to access risk data and applications which are download to the appliance via Wi-fi when in station and then available when mobile.

The MDT's are connected to the Airwave data network that allows the crew to receive and update mobilising information to from and to Northwest Fire Control.

We will:

- In 2022/2023 implement and validate Mobile Data Terminals which will be compatible with both Airwave and its replacement Emergency Services Network as a bearer.
- Pilot the concept of a second demountable MDT installed in the rear of the appliance, connected to ESN and suitable for both Operational and non-operational activities. (This forms the basis of the Digitising Fire Appliances functionality)
- Continue to work with operational crews and support staff to fully realise all benefits of the rear MDT. This would include options to either add to or replace the functionality on the current iPads on appliances.

The initial pilot is expected to start in February 2023 and follow in March/April with the full roll out across the service, which is to run for 12 months. The budget has been split into two parts, the first at £406,000 for the replacement front MDT units and £254,000 for the additional rear MDTs.

ESMCP/ESN

The Home Office is leading a cross-government programme to deliver the new Emergency Services Network (ESN) critical communications system. This will replace the current Airwave service used by the emergency services in Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland) and transform how we operate. ESN will enable fast, safe and secure voice, video and data across the 4G network and give first responders immediate access to life-saving data, images and information in live situations and emergencies on the frontline.

This is now set to be delivered in 2026 with the optional extension to 2030. Due to current slippage in the ESN Beta product the focus of work for 2022/2023 is around coverage assurance. In March 2022 LFRS received a new device which allows us to independently assure ESN coverage at our stations and Critical Operational Locations. This new device plots coverage over floor plans and site plans showing what levels of coverage exist. Giving the capability to look at our operational requirements in these areas. This will allow us to understand any gaps in coverage and look at solutions required to fix these ahead of transition. This will assist our acceptance to transition onto ESN in a safe manor.

All our stations and critical working areas will require a 'passport' with a high level sign off on coverage acceptance. This will live with the location for the entirety of ESN and provide evidence of coverage and operational requirements should there be any issues in the future.

In the Northwest we have already established strong links with the other Emergency Services ESN teams and regular meet up.

We will:

- Seek assistance from the relevant personnel to complete the coverage 'passports'. There is currently an opportunity to update our Critical Operational Location list held with the programme the service may wish to update.
- Towards the end of 2022, we will be looking at the resilience of the ESN network should we be put in a national grid outage or suffer damage during storms. Plans will need to be reviewed on what coverage would be available during these times and if it would be sufficient for our operational requirements.
- Continue to work closely with the Home Office to help prevent any future project slippage where we can.
- Look to become early adopters of ESN, even if this is just for piloting to ensure coverage assurance and to also assist with buy in from other FRSs.
- Migrate to ESN once it has been approved and is fit for operational purpose, which is estimate currently to be 2026, however this could extend to 2030.

Cyber Security

The security landscape is rapidly changing, and we need to evolve at pace to reduce the likelihood and impact of a cyber-attack.

The following Cyber Security section and subsequent longer terms objectives have been identified for three main reasons.

1. The threat landscape has changed significantly, which has been witnessed globally, regionally and across multiple emergency services and local authorities.
2. Best practice standards set by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) have changed according to that change in the threat landscape, which means it's far more challenging to remain compliant.
3. The necessary adoption of cloud-based services and remote working has effectively tipped the services attack vector.

We have been awarded both Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation, which are government backed schemes that involve external auditing of IT systems. This certification also allows for better collaborate with other authorities such as the Lancashire County Council and Lancashire Constabulary as there is a growing requirement to be security compliant.

Cyber Essentials:

Cyber Essentials is a minimum standard of cyber and information security that your organisation should be able to demonstrate to customers and business partners.

The requirement to demonstrate that your organisation is doing what it feasibly can to keep data safe is also a key principle of the UK GDPR (Article 5) and is therefore a legal requirement under data protection legislation.

Certification also comes with commercial benefits, with prospective customers (especially government clients) seeing this certification as a mandatory requirement to engage a new supplier.

Cyber Essentials Plus:

Cyber Essentials Plus still has the Cyber Essentials trademark simplicity of approach, and the protections you need to put in place are the same, but for Cyber Essentials Plus a hands-on technical verification is carried out.

The LFRS Cyber Security Strategy is underpinned by the adoption of the National Cyber Security Centre's (NCSC) Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF), which is the assurance framework for local Government.

We have combined and prioritised the "10 Steps to Cyber Security" identified by NCSC down into four distinct categories.

Engagement and training

People should be at the heart of any cyber security strategy. Good security considers the way people work in practice and doesn't get in the way of people getting their jobs done. Supporting our staff to obtain the skills and knowledge required to work securely is often done through the means of awareness or training. This not only helps protect LFRS, but also demonstrates that we value staff, and recognise their importance to the service.

We will:

- Work closely with DTX and Corporate Communications to publish changes to working practice and engage closely with staff members to reinforce a positive cyber security culture.
- Delivery annual cyber security LearnPro modules to keep staff members up to speed with the latest security threats.

Future enhancements

There are a few different ways in which we need to fortify ICT defences, starting at the perimeter. Investment in Firewalls with tools that include next generation detection and prevention, which include automation that allows them to learn what's safe and what isn't to proactively protect the service.

What is a Firewall?

A firewall is a device that filters and determines the network traffic that is allowed to go to or from other sections of the network and/or Internet.

Firewall technology has advanced over recent years to help mitigate more of the wide spread of potential threats. These offer us greater protection, enhanced visibility and alerting to what is happening on the perimeter and on our network. These new firewalls are called next generation NGFW.

The global pandemic and current geopolitical landscape have caused great issues with supply chains across all sectors. With all forms of technology becoming advanced, a global computer chip shortage has been exacerbated due to this, with vendors struggling to meet demand and imposing long wait times for hardware. This project along with our Wi-Fi estate, which is also becoming end of support is not immune to this, however there are vendors that offer a quick turnaround that will be evaluated.

We will:

- In 2022-2023 we will carry out a procurement exercise which is expected to cost in the region of £200,000 to purchase the Next Generation Firewall. This Firewall will be in place until at least 2027, which is the duration of the expected contract.
- Remove the issue with chip shortage by using an industry leader which is not reliant on chip sets from overseas.
- Install and enhance the next generation security features to allow for better automation which will mean less reliance on manual intervention.

Microsoft 365 License Model

Currently the service purchases a M365 E3 Premium 1 license for each staff member and in June 2022 an elevated security license was purchased which gave the us Microsoft Defender for Endpoint. This aids with the security and management of the mobile estate as well as providing enhanced threat analytics.

The NCSC best practice guides point to regular desk based BCP exercises.

We will:

- Renew the Microsoft license using the most cost-effective model, which will include evaluating options for a joint procurement.
- Develop awareness of the features that the licenses bring across the LFRS and support for the governance and use where possible.
- Continue to evaluate the threat landscape and propose changes to the license model.
- Collaborate with LFRS Business Continuity and Emergency Planning Officer to ensure cyber threats are included within the scope of BCP exercises and that desk-based scenarios are played out to closely simulate an attack.
- Look at achieving a license model that is both cost effective and rich in security features.

How do we deliver this Plan?

The 2022-2027 ICT Plan maximises the effectiveness and efficiency of our workforce to ensure the best possible service and levels of engagement for our communities and it ensures a strong foundation is in place that supports and underpins the delivery and development of the service's Data and Digital Strategy.

It will be monitored via the ICT departmental plan with key items being referenced in the Annual Service Plan, with each major project featuring in the Capital Programme (Appendix A)

Individual checkpoint reports will be delivered via our Business Process Improvement Programme Board (BPIP) to ensure any risks to projects are highlighted and recorded, and that the projects meet their projected completion time scales and associated costs.

Appendix A

Capital budget requirement 2023/24-2027/28

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Replace Existing Systems					
Pooled PPE system	-	0.100	-	-	-
Stock Management system	-	0.100	-	-	-
Asset Management system	0.100	-	-	-	-
HFSC referral system	0.100	-	-	-	-
Fire Risk Management System	0.100	-	-	-	-
Rota management package (WT/On call)	-	0.100	-	-	-
Storage Area Network	-	0.200	0.090	-	-
GIS Risk Info	-	0.100	-	-	-
WAN	-	-	0.450	-	-
IRS/MIS	-	-	0.050	-	-
Firewall	0.235	-	-	-	-
Wi-Fi	0.135	-	-	-	-
New Operational Communications					
Digitisation of Fire appliances - additional VMDS units	0.254	-	-	-	-
Replace Operational Communications					
ESMCP (Airwave replacement – assumed funded by grant)	-	-	1.000	-	-
Incident Ground Radios	0.230	-	-	-	-
UPS	-	-	-	-	0.060
Total ICT Programme	1.219	0.500	1.690	-	0.060



Lancashire Fire
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For further information on our services please visit
www.lancsfirerescue.org.uk

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Resources Committee

Meeting to be held on 29 March 2023

Local Pension Board Annual Report 2021-23

Contact for further information – Steve Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Tel: 01772 866801

Executive Summary

The report presents an update on the Lancashire Fire Local Pension Board for the period 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2023.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note the report.

Information

The Public Service Pensions Act (PSPA) 2013 introduced the requirement to have a Local Pension Board to assist in the governance of the Scheme. The Board has no remit as a decision-making body but is established to assist Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service (LFRS) as the Scheme Manager to fulfil its functions which cover all aspects of governance and administration of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS).

The Board's Terms of Reference requires that the Board meet approximately twice a year and that the Chair of the Board may call additional meetings. There were two meetings held per year during the period as planned.

Membership

Three new members were appointed to the Board during the year 2021-22, a Chair, one employer and one employee representative. All changes were carried out in accordance with the Board's Terms of Reference. There were no further changes to the Board membership in 2022-23.

Work Programme during 2021/22

During the period 2021/23, the hard work and commitment of everyone who has contributed to the work activities involved in fire pensions, has meant that key activities have continued to be delivered and projects progressed.

Three major projects have been the focus during this time:

- the implementation and backdating of pensionable allowances within LFRS e.g., Day Crewing Plus Allowance
- the Sargeant/McCloud judgement relating to age discrimination
- Matthews's judgement affecting on-call members commonly referred to as the 'Second Options Exercise'.

The implementation of pensionable allowances within LFRS commenced in June 2020 when certain allowances were deemed pensionable for future payments. Around April 2021 significant and complex work commenced on arrangements for backdating contributions for existing and former employees. Knowledge and capacity to undertake this project was initially sought via two existing members of the Human Resources Team. However, in September 2021 a Temporary Pensions Coordinator was appointed to assist with this workload. Over 350 individual calculations were undertaken to ensure employee pension contributions for the whole of the backdating period (1/6/2015 – 31/5/2020) were corrected, with repayment arrangements put into place where appropriate. In addition, LFRS worked with our pension administrators, the Local Pensions Partnership (LPPA) to ensure backdated pension payments to retired members.

In March 2022, a Temporary Pensions Advisor was also appointed, this role will initially focus on delivering the requirements of the Sergeant/McCloud and Matthews cases. Although complex, Officers are working with key stakeholders to gain understanding and establish the workloads involved, to successfully process the relevant pensions once the regulations are in place. Significant work has already taken place and continues. The Board has received and considered update reports at key project milestones.

The Board has also been informed about a number of complex cases that have been dealt with over this period, including through the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (Appeals).

The Board continued to focus on key areas identified by the Pensions Regulator and maintain an oversight of the key risks to the fund. A Risk Register was developed in October 2021 and has been reviewed at subsequent Board meetings.

Training

To support their work on the Fire Local Pension Board, Members continued to maintain and develop their knowledge and skills. External training opportunities continued to be limited due to the effect of the pandemic during this time, but members of the Board had access to the regular LGA monthly bulletins and website and have utilised The Pension Regulators Public Service toolkit to develop their knowledge. In addition, one member attended the LGA Fire pension Scheme Annual General Meeting.

Looking forward to 2023/24:

The Work Plan of the Board will focus on the principal activities of the Scheme as currently anticipated, including:

- Continuing to improve pension administration arrangements for the benefit of all members and employers of the Scheme including the continual improvement programme for the quality of data held by the Scheme.
- Appraising the impact of any revised regulations arising from the resolution to the Sargeant age discrimination and the Matthew's cases and implementing any required changes to the Scheme.
- Assessing the impact of and responding to consultations that will have an impact on the Lancashire Firefighters Pension Schemes
- Appraising the impact of the implementation of the Pensions Dashboard; and
- Enhancing Board knowledge & skills.

The Plan will be reviewed and amended where appropriate to ensure it addresses any relevant issues arising.

Business risk

The situation in relation to pension changes has a potential to cause adverse reactions both to employees internal and external to the Service.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

Nil.

Equality and Diversity Implications

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because this report is not associated with a policy, function or decision.

Data Protection (GDPR)

Personal data will be processed in line with working practices.

HR implications

There are no human resources implications arising directly from this report as the report is for information only.

Financial implications

The training of Board members is largely carried out in house at no direct cost, and national events such as the LGA conference have been free of charge so far.

The Authority continues to pay a levy to the Scheme Advisory Board, and this will cover the cost of the national fire pensions technical advisor post and support the work of the SAB. The aim of the SAB in setting the levy is to help fire authorities to achieve cost savings by producing guidance and communications centrally for authorities to share. The cost in 2021-22 was £12K and in 2022-23 was £6,495.72 this has been provided for within the revenue budget.

Out of pocket expenses have not been paid to members.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate: N/A

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