

# Public Document Pack

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

**Monday, 24 April 2023 in Washington Hall, Service Training Centre, Euxton commencing at 10.00 am**

Car parking is available on the Main Drill ground.

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

Rooms have been made available for Political Group meetings from 0900 hours onwards, and tea/coffee will be available in the Canteen from 0845 hours.

Labour Group - Pendle Room

Conservative Group - Lancaster House 2

## 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. **Chairman's Welcome and Introduction**

Standing item.

#### 2. **Apologies for Absence**

#### 3. **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.

#### 4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 1 - 28)**

#### 5. **Presentation - UKs International Search and Rescue Team - deployment to Turkey**

Verbal report.

#### 6. **Reports from Members on Outside Bodies (Pages 29 - 32)**

Standing item.

7. **Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 15 March 2023 of Performance Committee (Pages 33 - 56)**
8. **Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 28 March 2023 of Audit Committee (Pages 57 - 62)**
9. **Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 29 March 2023 of Resources Committee (Pages 63 - 72)**
10. **Member Champion Activity Report (Pages 73 - 80)**
11. **Fire Protection Report (Pages 81 - 84)**
12. **Operational Incidents of Interest (Pages 85 - 88)**
13. **Member Complaints**

Standing item.

14. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Authority will be held on **Monday 26 June 2023** at 1000 hours at Washington Hall Training Centre, Euxton.

15. **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.

16. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

The Authority 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.

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Monday, 20 February 2023 at 10.00 am in Washington Hall, Service Training Centre, Euxton

### Minutes

#### Present:

D O'Toole (Chair)

#### Councillors

J Shedwick (Vice-Chair)

S Clarke

M Dad

N Hennessy

D Howarth

J Hugo

T Hurn

F Jackson

A Kay

H Khan

Z Khan

J Mein

S Morris

M Pattison

J Rigby

P Rigby

S Rigby

R Scott

S Serridge

J Singleton

D Smith

R Woollam

B Yates

60/22	<b>Chairman's Welcome and Introduction</b>
	<p>On behalf of the Authority, the Chairman acknowledged the bravery and commitment of Lancashire Firefighters who were amongst those deployed to Turkey as part of the UKs International Search and Rescue Team following the recent earthquakes in Southern Turkey and neighbouring Syria. The Chief Fire Officer added that 77 firefighters from across the UK went to Turkey (including 4 dogs) who were deployed really quickly; with 6 of the Firefighters and 2 dogs from Lancashire. The dogs had been crucial to scent live casualties and the team effected successful rescues. A presentation would be given at a future Authority meeting.</p> <p>The Chairman presented the Director of Corporate Services / Treasurer to the Authority, Mr Keith Mattinson with a clock in recognition of his long service, dedication and hard work. The Authority applauded Mr Mattinson and extended their best wishes to him for the future. In response to a question regarding succession planning from Councillor Hugo, the Chief Fire Officer advised that Members were involved in running the recruitment process last year and Mr Steven Brown would be starting in the role at the end of the month.</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed Councillor Rick Scott who had replaced Councillor Tony Williams on the Authority from Blackpool Council. Following Councillor Williams' departure from the Authority, the Chairman proposed County</p>

	<p>Councillor Stephen Rigby be appointed as Chairman of Resources Committee.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That County Councillor Stephen Rigby be appointed as Chairman of Resources Committee</p>
61/22	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
	Apologies were received from County Councillor Beavers.
62/22	<b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interests</b>
	None received.
63/22	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>
	<b>Resolved:</b> - That the Minutes of the CFA held on 19 December 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.
64/22	<b>Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 29 November 2022 of Audit Committee</b>
	<b>Resolved:</b> That the proceedings of the Audit Committee held on 29 November 2022 be noted and endorsed.
65/22	<b>Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 30 November 2022 of Resources Committee</b>
	<b>Resolved:</b> That the proceedings of the Resources Committee held on 30 November 2022 be noted and endorsed.
66/22	<b>Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 14 December 2022 of Performance Committee</b>
	<p>In response to a question from the Chairman of the Authority regarding long-term sickness absence (referred to on page 55 of the agenda pack) the Head of HR advised that there were robust processes in place to manage absence whereby HR Business Partners and managers worked together to review and support people who were unwell. Absence was reviewed timely with early referral to occupational health as appropriate and staff were encouraged to access the Employer Assistance Programme. It was noted that long-term absence was being influenced by difficulties accessing NHS appointments and delays for treatment.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the proceedings of the Performance Committee held on 14 December 2022 be noted and endorsed.</p>
67/22	<b>Minutes of meeting Monday, 6 February 2023 of Planning Committee</b>
	The Chairman of the Committee, CC Clarke drew Members attention to the following:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Automatic Fire Alarm Attendance Policy</b> The Committee had analysed 9-months of data which demonstrated significant reductions in the number of Automatic Fire Alarm attendances and endorsed the Service continue with the roll out of the revised policy across the full 24-hour period;</li> <li>• The Committee endorsed the Service re-define its 'risk based' inspection programme, to take into consideration national best practice. Performance requirements would then be more realistic and achievable and would free up much needed capacity;</li> <li>• The Authority Chairman had proposed to re-establish a Task and Finish Working Group established some years ago to provide Member engagement in the potential relocation of Service Headquarters. It was now proposed that a reconstituted Task and Finish Working Group would support both the potential relocation of Service Headquarters and the redevelopment of Preston Fire Station.</li> </ul> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the proceedings of the Planning Committee held on 6 February 2023 be noted and endorsed.</p>
68/22	<p><b>Pay Policy Statement 2023/24</b></p>
	<p>The Head of Human Resources presented the report. In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 a pay policy statement for 2023/24 was considered by Members.</p> <p>The pay policy published data on senior salaries and the structure of the workforce and it demonstrated the principles of transparency.</p> <p>The pay policy statement set out the Authority's policies for the financial year relating to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The remuneration of its chief officers;</li> <li>- The remuneration of its lowest paid employees;</li> <li>- The relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and that of other employees who were not chief officers.</li> </ul> <p>The statement included: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The level and elements of remuneration for each chief officer;</li> <li>- Remuneration range for chief officers on recruitment;</li> <li>- Methodology for increases and additions to remuneration for each chief officer;</li> <li>- The use of performance-related pay for chief officers;</li> <li>- The use of bonuses for chief officers;</li> <li>- The approach to the payment of chief officers on their ceasing to hold office under, or be employed by, the authority, and</li> <li>- The publication of and access to information relating to the remuneration of chief officers.</li> </ul>

	<p>It also included the Authority's policies for the financial year relating to other terms and conditions applying to its chief officers.</p> <p>In response to a question raised by the Chairman regarding whether the Service had re-engaged any firefighters after retirement (as referred to on page 106 of the agenda pack) the Head of HR advised that there were no staff at a senior level who had been re-engaged. Some firefighters were interested in returning (to use an essential skill such as appliance driver) but not fully in an operational role. In response to a further question raised by the Chairman regarding how re-engagement would impact on an individual's pension, the Head of HR confirmed that there were rules around abatement. Should an individual earn over a certain amount of money there would be a tax charge imposed therefore the Service recommended individuals seek independent advice prior to re-engagement; following that it was usual to return either part-time or into a lower grade.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Pay Policy Statement be approved.</p>
69/22	<p><b>Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24</b></p>
	<p>The Director of Corporate Services / Treasurer advised that the following 4 items on the agenda were linked, with changes in one impacting on the others: i) the Treasury Management Strategy set out investment, borrowing, repayment and how money was set aside to repay borrowing, ii) the Reserves and Balances Policy set out savings and how they were planned to be used over the next 5 years; iii) the Capital Strategy and Budget set out major expenditure for investment within the Service and iv) the Revenue Budget was for the day to day running of the Service.</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services / Treasurer presented the report that set out the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2023/24.</p> <p><b>Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24</b></p> <p>The Strategy Statement had been prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice. Accordingly, the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority's Treasury Management Strategy would be approved by the full Authority, and there would also be a mid-year and a year-end outturn report presented to the Resources Committee. In addition, there would be monitoring and review reports to Members in the event of any changes to Treasury Management policies or practices. The aim of these reporting arrangements was to ensure that those with ultimate responsibility for the treasury management function appreciated fully the implications of treasury management policies and activities, and that those implementing policies and executing transactions had properly fulfilled their responsibilities with regard to delegation and reporting.</p> <p>The Authority had adopted reporting arrangements in accordance with the requirements of the Code as set out in the report.</p>

The Treasury Management Strategy covered the following aspects of the Treasury Management function: -

- Prudential Indicators which would provide a controlling framework for the capital expenditure and treasury management activities of the Authority;
- Current Long-term debt and investments;
- Prospects for interest rates;
- The Borrowing Strategy;
- The Investment Strategy;
- Policy on borrowing in advance of need.

### **Setting the Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24**

In setting the treasury management strategy the: economic position and forecasts, interest rate forecasts, the current structure of the investment and debt portfolio and the future capital programme and underlying cash forecasts were considered.

### **Economic background**

Key factors to consider when assessing the impact on the Strategy were the expectation for economic growth, inflation and the possible impact on interest rates. CPI inflation was expected to have peaked in the last calendar quarter of 2022 and then fall from early in 2023 partly as a result of previous increases in energy prices dropped out of the annual comparison. The Bank of England forecast that inflation would fall sharply and be below the 2% target, in two years' time and to fall further below the target in three years' time.

### **Arlingclose Forecast**

The Bank of England increased Bank Rate by 0.5% to 3.5% in December 2022. This followed a 0.75% rise in November which was the largest single rate hike since 1989 and the ninth successive rise since December 2021.

The Authority's treasury management adviser Arlingclose in its latest forecast estimated that Bank Rate would continue to rise in 2023 as the Bank of England attempted to subdue inflation which was significantly above its 2% target. The expectation was that there would be further interest rate rises over the forecast horizon despite looming recession. Bank Rate was forecast to rise to 4.25% by June 2023. (Subsequent to the forecast being produced the base rate was increased to 4% in February 2023.)

Details of the latest forecast interest rates were shown in the report.

### **Current Treasury Portfolio Position**

At the 31 December 2022 the debt and investments balances were: -

<b>Debt</b>	Principal £m	%
Fixed rate loans from the Public Works Loan Board	2.000	100
Variable rate loans		-
	2.000	100
<b>Investments</b>		
Variable rate investments with Lancashire County Council	20.730	58
Fixed rate investments	15.000	42
	35.730	100

The level of investment represented the Authority's cumulative surplus on the General Fund, the balances on other cash-backed earmarked reserves and a cash-flow balance generated by a surplus of creditors over debtors and by grant receipts in advance of payments. There was a net investment figure of £34m.

### **Borrowing and Investment Requirement**

In the medium term the Authority borrowed for capital purposes only. 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 CFR forecast included the impact of the latest forecast of the funding of the Capital Programme which currently assumed there would be no borrowing until 2026/27. A voluntary MRP was made in 2019/20 to take the future loans element of the MRP to nil.

CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities recommended that the Authority's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. However, the table in the report showed that the level of loans was above the CFR at 31/3/22. 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. The table indicated that rather than having a need for borrowing it was estimated that the Authority had an underlying need to invest although the available balances were forecast to reduce.

Although the Authority did not have plans for new borrowing until 2026/27 it currently held £2.0m of loans as part of its strategy for funding previous years' capital programmes.

### **Liability Benchmark**

The liability benchmark was an indicator required by the CIPFA Code. It looked to compare the Authority's actual borrowing requirements against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark, which showed the minimum level of borrowing. This assumed the same forecasts as in the table in the previous section of the report, but that cash and investment balances were kept to a minimum level of £10m at each year-end to maintain sufficient liquidity but minimised credit risk.



In addition, it reflected the latest Capital Programme information which showed a borrowing requirement in 2026/27 and 2027/28.

The benchmark showed that from 2026/27 there was likely to be a long-term requirement to borrow but that this did not necessarily have to be at the level of the loans CFR, which represented the maximum borrowing. The borrowing requirement was also reducing over time which may influence the length and type of borrowing to be taken.

### **Borrowing Strategy**

The draft Capital Programme implied there may be a requirement to use borrowing to fund the capital programme in the later years. At this stage it was extremely unlikely that borrowing would be required in 2023/24. However, it was still best practice to approve a borrowing strategy and a policy on borrowing in advance of need. In considering a borrowing strategy the Authority needed to make provision to borrow short term to cover unexpected cash flow shortages or to cover any change in the financing of its Capital Programme.

The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing were: Public Works Loan Board, UK local authorities, any institution approved for investments, any other bank or building society authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority to operate in the UK and UK public and private sector pension funds.

### **Policy on Borrowing in Advance of Need**

In line with the prudential Code, the Authority would not borrow purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. However advance borrowing may be taken if it was considered that current rates were more favourable than future rates and that this advantage outweighed the cost of carrying advance borrowing. Any decision to borrow in advance would be considered carefully to ensure value for money could be demonstrated and that the Authority could ensure the security of such funds and relationships.

### **Debt Restructuring**

The Authority's debt had arisen as a result of prior years' capital investment decisions. It had not taken any new borrowing out since 2007 as it has been utilising cash balances to pay off debt as it matured, or when deemed appropriate with the Authority making early payment of debt. The anticipated holding of debt at 31 March 2023 was £2.0m. All the debt was from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) and was all at fixed rates of interest and was repayable on maturity. This debt was taken out in 2007 when the base rate was 5.75% and when the Authority was earning 5.84% return on its investments. Given the change in interest rates, the opportunities for debt repayment/restructuring had again been reviewed.

The level of penalty applicable on early repayment of loans now stood at £0.199m. Outstanding interest payable between now and maturity was £1.228m.

Any early repayment meant that cash balances available for investment would be reduced and hence interest receivable would also be reduced. The extent of which was dependent upon future interest rates. It was estimated that if interest rates on investments were at 3.43% over the remaining period of the loan, then repaying the loans now would be broadly neutral. It was also noted that the capital budget allowed for additional borrowing within the next 5 years. Current borrowing rates were 4.85% for a 2—year loan and 4.46% for a 50-year loan, both of which exceed the breakeven position noted above. Hence given the penalties it was considered beneficial to retain these loans.

### **Investment Strategy**

At 31 December 2022 the Authority held £35.7m invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus existing balances and reserves. During the year the Authority's investment balance had ranged between £26.7m and £46.9m. The variation arose principally due to the timing of the receipt of government grants. It was anticipated that would be reduced cash levels in the forthcoming year, due to a drawdown in reserves to finance capital expenditure.

Both the CIPFA Code and government 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 receiving unsuitably low investment income. Therefore, in line with the guidance the Treasury Management Strategy was developed to ensure the Fire Authority would only use very high-quality counterparties for investments.

The Authority may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparties as set out in the report.

Whilst the investment strategy had been amended to allow greater flexibility with investments, any decision as to whether to utilise this facility would be made based on an assessment of risk and reward undertaken jointly between the Director of Corporate Services and LCC Treasury Management Team, and consideration of this formed part of the ongoing meetings that took place throughout the year.

The Authority currently had access to a call (instant access) account with a local authority, which paid bank base rate, this was currently 3.5%. Each working day the balance on the Authority's current account was invested to ensure that the interest received on surplus balances was maximised.

In addition, longer term loans had been placed with UK local authorities to enhance the interest earned, the Authority currently held £15m of investments with other local authorities, as set out in the report.

Consideration was given to fixing further investments if the maturity fit with

estimated cash flows and the rate was considered to be attractive. This would continue to be reviewed.

The overall combined amount of interest earned on Fixed/Call balances as at 31 December 2022 was £0.5m on an average balance of £37m at an annualised rate of 1.91%. This compared favourably with the benchmark 7-day LIBID rate which averaged a yield of 1.81% over the same period. In addition, the Authority used NatWest for its operational banking. Balances retained in NatWest were very low, usually less than £5,000. However, if required monies were retained at NatWest this would be in addition to the limits set out.

### **Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)**

Under Local Authority Accounting arrangements, the Authority was required to set aside a sum of money each year to reduce the overall level of debt. This sum was known as the minimum revenue provision (MRP).

The Authority assessed their MRP for 2023/24 in accordance with guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 21(1A) of the Local Government Act 2003.

The Authority made a voluntary MRP in 2019/20 and it was anticipated that the MRP on loans would be nil in 2023/24; this would be the case until capital expenditure was financed by borrowing.

Whilst the Authority had no unsupported borrowing, nor had any plans to take out any unsupported borrowing in 2023/24 it was prudent to approve a policy relating to the MRP that would apply if circumstances changed. As such in accordance with guidelines, the MRP on any future unsupported borrowing would be calculated using the Asset Life Method. This would be based on a straightforward straight – line calculation to set an equal charge to revenue over the estimated life of the asset. Estimated life periods would be determined under delegated powers. However, the Authority reserved the right to determine useful life periods and prudent MRP in exceptional circumstances where the recommendations of the guidance would not be appropriate.

Assets held under PFI contracts and finance leases formed part of the Balance Sheet. This had increased the overall capital financing requirement and resulted in an MRP charge being required. The government guidance permitted a prudent MRP to equate to the amount charged to revenue under the contract to repay the liability. In terms of the PFI schemes this charge formed part of the payment due to the PFI contractor.

### **Revenue Budget**

The capital financing budget currently showed that income received exceeded expenditure. This excluded the PFI and Finance lease payments, which were included in other budgets. Based on the Strategy outlined above then the proposed budget for capital financing was:

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Interest payable	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090
MRP	0.010	-	-	-
Interest receivable	(0.770)	(1.300)	(1.000)	(0.650)
Net budget	(0.680)	(1.210)	(0.910)	(0.560)

**Prudential Indicators for 2022/23 to 2025/26 in respect of the Combined Fire Authority's Treasury Management Activities**

In accordance with its statutory duty and with the requirements of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance and the CIPFA Code for Treasury Management, the Combined Fire Authority produced each year a set of prudential indicators which regulated and controlled its treasury management activities.

The table in the report set out the debt and investment-related indicators which provided the framework for the Authority's proposed borrowing and lending activities over the coming three years. These indicators would also be approved by Members as part of the Capital Programme approval process along with other capital expenditure-related indicators but needed to be reaffirmed and approved as part of this Treasury Management Strategy.

It was noted that contained within the external debt limits, there were allowances for outstanding liabilities in respect of the PFI schemes and leases. However, accounting standards were likely to change in relation to recording leases. In effect, more leases were likely to be included on the balance sheet and therefore would be included against the other long-term liabilities' indicators. At this stage work was ongoing to quantify the impact of the change and therefore the other long-term liabilities limits may be subject to change.

**Resolved:** That the Authority:

- i) Approved the revised Treasury Management Strategy, including the Prudential Indicators as now presented;
- ii) Agreed the Minimum Revenue Provision calculation as now presented; and,
- iii) Agreed the Treasury Management Policy Statement, as now presented.

70/22

**Reserves and Balances Policy 2023/24**

The Director of Corporate Services / Treasurer presented the report. The Fire Authority held reserves to meet potential future expenditure requirements. The reserves policy was based on guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). It explained the difference between general reserves (those held to meet unforeseen circumstances), earmarked reserves (those held for a specific purpose) and provisions (where a liability existed but the extent and/or timing of this was uncertain). In addition, the policy identified how the Authority determined the appropriate level of reserves and

what these were. The policy confirmed that the level of, and the appropriateness of reserves would be reported on as part of the annual budget setting process and as part of the year end accounting process.

### **Review of Level of Reserves**

In determining the appropriate level of general reserves required by the Authority, the Treasurer was required to form a professional judgement on this, taking account of the strategic, operational, and financial risk facing the Authority. This was completed based on guidance issued by CIPFA and included an assessment of the financial assumptions underpinning the budget, the adequacy of insurance arrangements and consideration of the Authority's financial management arrangements. In addition, the assessment should focus on both medium and long-term requirements, taking account of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (as set out in the draft budget report elsewhere on this agenda).

For Lancashire Combined Fire Authority this covered issues such as: uncertainty surrounding future funding settlements and the potential impact of this on the revenue and capital budget; uncertainty surrounding future pay awards and inflation rates; the impact of changes to pension schemes and the remedy for the McCloud judgement; demand led pressures; risk of default associated with investments, cost associated with maintaining operational cover in the event of Industrial Action etc.

There remained a great deal of uncertainty over long term funding, as a result, the anticipated multi-year settlement had been postponed again. The Local Government Finance Settlement only covered 2023/24, although the policy statement that accompanied it stated "The core settlement will continue in a similar manner for 2024-25. The major grants will continue as set out for 2023-24: Revenue Support Grant will continue and be uplifted in line with Baseline Funding Levels". Whilst this provided a basis for estimating future funding increases, as set out in the revenue budget paper, it did not provide any certainty.

Furthermore, the outcome of the fair funding review of relative needs and resources and the Government intention to move to greater retention of Business Rates had also been postponed.

The position in terms of pension awards had still not been resolved however, the likelihood of this being significantly higher than budgetary allowance and the likelihood of industrial action had both reduced as a result of the latest pay offer.

Whilst future pension costs remained uncertain, with authorities still awaiting definitive guidance on how to implement changes following the McCloud judgement, and with the next re-valuation of the firefighter pension scheme being due this year, the draft budget for 2024/25 already included a 3% allowance for this.

As such the Treasurer considered it prudent to reduce the minimum target

reserves level to £3.75m, 5.5% of the 2023/24 net revenue budget, reflecting the level of uncertainty. It was noted that it may be possible to reduce this minimum level further if the current grey book 2-year pay offer was accepted. This was slightly higher than the 5% threshold identified by the Home Office above which the Authority was required to justify why it held the level of reserves, reflecting uncertainty about future funding, pension costs and pay awards.

Should reserves fall below this minimum level the following financial year's budget would contain options for increasing reserves back up to this level which may take several years to achieve.

Based on professional judgement, the Treasurer felt the maximum level of general reserves should be maintained at £10.0m.

Should this be exceeded the following financial year's budget would contain options for applying the excess balance in the medium term, i.e. over 3-5 years.

### **Level of General Reserves**

The overall level of the general fund balance, i.e., uncommitted reserves, anticipated at the 31 March 2023 was £4.0m, providing scope to utilise approx. £0.25m of reserves. The draft budget (as presented elsewhere on the agenda) identified a funding gap of £0.3m in 2023/24, which could be met from a combination of drawdown against this reserve and additional in-year savings. The Treasurer therefore considered this reserve was at an appropriate level.

Looking at the medium term the need to drawdown reserves would be affected by:-

- Council tax – The revenue budget assumed that council tax was increased by the maximum permissible each year, enabling the Service to deliver a balanced budget each year, after allowing for relatively low level of reserve drawdown / additional savings. If this was not the case, then there may be a need to utilise reserves in future years to balance the budget;
- Pension costs – the revenue budget assumed that the only pension costs that fell on the Service were employer contributions, and that all other costs were met by the Government via the Pension Holding Account. If this was not the case, then reserves would be required to meet these one-off costs which would be very significant. Furthermore, it assumed that the employer contribution rate would increase by 3% following the next tri-annual re-valuation exercise., but at the present time no details were available, hence contribution rates could increase by a greater amount;
- Future funding - The revenue budget assumed future funding increased by 5% in 2024/25 followed by 2% increases thereafter. If that was not the case and it was frozen as part of the next multi-year settlement, this would reduce funding levels by £0.6m each year, a cumulative reduction of £1.9m over the medium-term financial strategy, and this would impact on the need to drawdown reserves;
- Future inflation - The revenue budget assumed future pay awards at 5% in 2023/24 before returning to the Government's 2% target. If this was not the

case each 1% more than this increased the recurring budget requirement by £0.4m, i.e. £2.9m over the next 5 years, which may impact on the usage of reserves.

At the present time, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) identified funding gaps in the next 4 years. Assuming 50% of these were met by additional in-year savings with the balances being drawn down from this reserve, the Authority would potentially see this reserve falling to £3.2m by March 2027. This was below the current minimum requirement. However, the forecasts were subject to a number of variable factors, as set out in the report, and these would continue to be reviewed to refine forecasts and ensure that reserves remained above the minimum threshold throughout the duration of the MTFS.

### **Earmarked Reserves**

The earmarked reserves forecast at 31 March 2023 was £2.6m and a breakdown of these alongside the forecast anticipated position at 31 March 2028 was considered by Members.

The Director of Corporate Services highlighted earmarked reserves held for:

- Page 135 - Insurance Aggregate Stop Loss reserve which related to both the Authority's combined liability insurance policy and its motor policy.;
- Page 136 – Innovation Fund which detailed money set aside to meet costs arising from new initiatives / developments with improved service delivery or firefighter safety.

Based on this the Treasurer believed these adequate to meet future requirements in the medium term.

### **PFI Reserve**

At 31 March 2023 the Authority anticipated holding £4.9m of PFI reserve. The reduction of this reserve in subsequent years reflected its drawdown to offset future charges, with the reserve reducing to £3.7m by March 2028. Assuming the retail price index returned to 3% in future years the whole of this reserve was contractually committed over the next 20 years. Based on this the Treasurer believed that was adequate to meet future requirements.

### **Capital Reserves and Receipts**

Capital Reserves had been created from under spends on the revenue budget to provide additional funding to support the capital programme in future years; as such they could not be used to offset any deficit on the revenue budget without having a significant impact on the capital programme that the Authority could support.

Capital Receipts were generated from the sale of surplus assets which had not yet been utilised to fund the capital programme.

At 31 March 2023 the Authority anticipated holding £20.3m of capital reserves and receipts. Based on the capital programme presented elsewhere on this agenda it was anticipated fully utilising these by 31 March 2027. Of the total reserve £5.0m was contractually committed.

Based on this the Treasurer believed these were adequate to meet future requirements in the short to medium term but recognised that they would be exhausted in March 2025.

### **Summary Reserve Position**

The anticipated position in terms of reserves and balances was set out in a graph on page 139 of the agenda pack with a detailed year on year analysis by reserve set out in appendix 1, as now considered by Members.

The level of reserves reduced by over £20m over the next 3 financial years reflecting the scale of the capital programme. The position would be subject to significant change as pension costs, funding, inflation, pay awards etc became clearer in future years. The annual refresh of this policy would identify the impact of any changes as they developed.

### **Provisions**

In addition, the Authority had two provisions to meet future estimated liabilities: -

#### **Insurance Provision**

This covered potential liabilities associated with outstanding insurance claims. Any claims for which we had been notified and where we were at fault would result in a legal commitment, however as the extent of these cannot be accurately assessed at the present time this provision was created to meet any element of cost for which we were liable, i.e. which were not reimbursable from insurers as they fall below individual excess clauses and the annual self-insured limits. This provision fully covered all estimated costs associated with outstanding claims.

This provision stood at £0.6m at 31 March 2022. Given the uncertainty in terms of future insurance claims it had been assumed that the provision would be maintained at this level throughout the 5-year period. There were no existing legal obligations associated with this provision, as the legal obligation only arose when settlement of outstanding claims was agreed.

#### **Business Rates Collection Fund Appeals Provision**

This covered the Authority's share of outstanding appeals against business rates collection funds, which was calculated each year end by each billing authority within Lancashire based on their assumptions of outstanding appeal success rates, as part of their year-end accounting for the business rates collection fund.

At 31 March 2022 this provision stood at £0.9m to cover anticipated costs of outstanding business rates appeals. Whilst a significant element of this would be utilised in the current financial year, reflecting the settlement of outstanding



	<p>appeals, it was impossible to accurately predict the extent of this usage or the need for any additional provision to meet appeals that arose in year, until such time as a full review was undertaken by billing authorities as part of the financial year end process. Therefore, for the purpose of this report it had been assumed that the level of business rates appeals provision remained unchanged. Until the outcome of any appeal was known there was no legal obligation arising from the appeal.</p> <p>The Treasurer felt that the levels of provisions were sufficient to meet future requirements in the medium term.</p> <p>In response to a question raised by CC Mein, the Director of Corporate Services confirmed that the Authority's share of outstanding appeals against business rates collection funds was 1%. This was calculated nationally each year with the Authority's share being set nationally at 1% of each billing authorities estimate.</p> <p>In response to a question from CC S Singleton the Director of Corporate Services confirmed that the reduction in the innovation budget reflected the estimated use of that fund over the period 2023-28.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> The Authority approved the policy and noted the Treasurer's advice on the level of reserves included within it.</p>
71/22	<p><b>Capital Strategy and Budget 2023/24 - 2027/28</b></p>
	<p>The Director of Corporate Services / Treasurer presented the report.</p> <p>The Authority's capital strategy was designed to ensure that the Authority's capital investment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assisted in delivering the corporate objectives;</li> <li>• provided the framework for capital funding and expenditure decisions, ensuring that capital investment was in line with priorities identified in asset management plans;</li> <li>• ensured statutory requirements were met, i.e. Health and Safety issues;</li> <li>• supported the Medium-Term Financial Strategy by ensuring all capital investment decisions considered the future impact on revenue budgets;</li> <li>• demonstrated value for money in ensuring the Authority's assets were enhanced/preserved;</li> <li>• described the sources of capital funding available for the medium term and how these might be used to achieve a prudent and sustainable capital programme.</li> </ul> <p><b>Managing capital expenditure</b></p> <p>The Capital Programme was prepared annually through the budget setting process and was reported to the Authority for approval each February. The programme set out the capital projects taking place in the financial years 2023/24 to 2027/28 and would be updated in May to reflect the effects of the final level of slippage from the current financial year (2022/23).</p>

The majority of projects originated from approved asset management plans, subject to assessments of ongoing requirements. Bids for new capital projects were evaluated and prioritised by Executive Board prior to seeking Authority approval.

A budget manager was responsible for the effective financial control and monitoring of their elements of the capital programme. Quarterly returns were submitted to the Director of Corporate Services on progress to date and estimated final costs. Any variations were dealt with in accordance with the Financial Regulations (Section 4.71). Where expenditure was required or anticipated which had not been included in the capital programme, a revision to the Capital Programme must be approved by Resources Committee before that spending could proceed.

### **Proposed Capital Budget**

Capital expenditure was expenditure on major assets such as new buildings, significant building modifications and major pieces of equipment/vehicles.

The Service had developed asset management plans which assisted in identifying the long-term capital requirements. These plans, together with the operational equipment register had been used to assist in identifying total requirements and the relevant priorities.

### **Vehicles**

The Fleet Asset Management plan had been used as a basis to identify the following vehicle replacement programme, which was based on current approved lives:-

	No of Vehicles				
<b>Type of Vehicle</b>	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Pumping Appliance	13	-	3	6	11
Climate Change Vehicle	2	-	-	-	-
Command Unit	3	-	-	-	-
Water Tower	2	-	-	-	-
Aerial appliance	1	-	-	-	-
All-Terrain Vehicle	1	-	-	-	-
Prime mover	2	-	-	-	-
Pod	3	-	-	-	1
Operational Support Vehicles	37	20	12	16	18
	64	20	15	22	30
	Budget (£m)				
Pumping Appliance	1.930	-	0.660	1.320	2.420
Climate Change Vehicle	0.500	-	-	-	-

Command Unit	0.715	-	-	-	-
Water Tower	1.027	-	-	-	-
Aerial appliance	0.534	-	-	-	-
All-Terrain Vehicle	0.018	-	-	-	-
Prime mover	0.260	-	-	-	-
Pod	0.083	-	-	-	0.030
Operational Support Vehicles	1.030	0.678	0.315	0.512	0.584
	6.097	0.678	0.975	1.832	3.034

It was noted that several of the vehicles shown in 2023/24 had already been ordered and were subject to phased payment, hence the cost shown was the element which is due in 2023/24. Numbers were based on the order date. Several of the vehicles had long lead times, and stage payments, hence the actual timing of spend was subject to change, with any deliveries spanning across years inevitably resulting in the need to move spend between years, usually this would be in the form of slippage into subsequent years, but occasionally there would be a need to pull budget forward to reflect an earlier delivery/stage completion date. This would be reported to Resources Committee as delivery dates are agreed.

All vehicles were replacements for existing vehicles although, in the case of the Water Towers and Climate Change vehicles, these were in lieu of standard pumping appliances.

### Operational Equipment

With the exception of Body Armour, all requirements were replacements for existing end of life equipment. Each of these groups of assets was subject to review prior to replacement, which may result in a change of requirements or the asset life.

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>Replacement of Existing Equipment</b>					
Thermal Imaging Cameras	0.325	-	-	-	-
Breathing Apparatus (BA) and Telemetry equipment	-	-	1.000	0.900	0.320
Cutting and extrication equipment	0.750	0.750	-	-	-
Disposable Gas Tight suits		0.042			
<b>New Equipment</b>					
Body Armour	0.250				
	1.325	0.792	1.000	0.900	0.320

It was noted that the replacement Breathing Apparatus project was in its early stages. Until such time as actual requirements in terms of type, numbers, telemetry and communications were known, it was not possible to produce a more accurate cost or timing projection, however some phasing of the implementation was anticipated, hence costs are spread over 3 years. This may change as the project progressed. Body armour requirements were subject to a trial and hence requirements may change following its outcome.

## ICT

The spend was on replacement/upgraded systems. All replacements identified in the programme would be subject to review, with both the requirement for the potential upgrade/replacement and the cost of such being revisited prior to any expenditure being incurred.

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>Replace Existing Systems</b>					
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	-	-	-	-
<b>New Operational Communications</b>					
Digitisation of Fire appliances - additional VMDS units	0.254	-	-	-	-
<b>Replace Operational Communications</b>					
ESMCP (Airwave replacement – assumed funded by grant)	-	-	1.000	-	-
Incident Ground Radios	0.230	-	-	-	-

UPS	-	-	-	-	0.060
<b>Total ICT Programme</b>	1.219	0.500	1.690	-	0.060

## Buildings

The only new scheme included in the programme was Estate Improvements provision, which was a sum to enable improvements to the estates to be made on an on-going basis.

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>New Schemes</b>					
Estate Improvements	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250
<b>Existing Schemes</b>					
Upgrade WYLFA Prop	0.125				
W30 – Blackpool Welfare	0.500	-	-	-	-
Drill tower replacements (notional 4 per year)	0.600	0.600	0.600	0.600	0.600
C50 – Preston replacement station	-	5.000	5.000	-	-
STC Props	-	2.500	2.500	-	-
SHQ relocation	-	-	-	7.500	7.500
	1.475	8.350	8.350	8.350	8.350

In terms of all the building proposals it was noted that requirements / designs were still being developed hence costings were indicative only.

The replacement of Preston Fire Station was subject to the outcome of a review of response provision within the Preston area and did not include any allowance for acquisition of a new site (should one be required), as it was assumed this would be offset by the sale of the existing site.

The investment in Service Training Centre (STC) Props reflected the need to upgrade/replace some of the training props at STC which were nearing end of life.

The project to replace SHQ had been pushed back to 2026/27, as a definitive decision on the project was required in order to further develop cost and timing. If the relocation did not go ahead, then the existing provision would need to be reviewed and there was a need to undertake improvement works to ensure appropriate accommodation provision for the next 10 years.

The budget did not include any allowance for updating the property infrastructure to meet future Electric Vehicle charging requirements.

## Total Capital Requirements

The following table details capital requirements over the five-year period:

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	TOTAL
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Vehicles	6.097	0.678	0.975	1.832	3.034	12.616
Operational Equipment	1.325	0.792	1.000	0.900	0.320	4.337
IT Equipment	1.219	0.500	1.690	-	0.060	3.469
Buildings	1.475	8.350	8.350	8.350	8.350	34.875
	10.116	10.320	12.015	11.082	11.764	55.297

## Capital Funding

Capital expenditure can be funded from the following sources:

### Prudential Borrowing

The Prudential Code gave the Authority increased flexibility over its level of capital investment and much greater freedom to borrow, should this be necessary, to finance planned expenditure. However, any future borrowing would incur a financing charge against the revenue budget for the period of the borrowing. Given the financial position of the Authority it had not needed to borrow since 2007 and had repaid a large proportion of borrowing in October 2017.

### Capital Grant

Capital grants were received from other bodies, typically the Government, in order to facilitate the purchase/replacement of capital items. There was an expectation that the ESMCP project costs would be offset by capital grant, however this had not been confirmed. To date no other capital grant funding had been made available, nor had any indication been given that capital grant would be available in future years, and hence no allowance had been included in the budget.

### Capital Receipts

Capital receipts were generated from the sale of surplus property and vehicle assets, with any monies generated being utilised to fund additional capital expenditure either in-year or carried forward to fund the programme in future years. The Authority expected to hold £1.7m of capital receipts as at 31 March 2023. This would be fully utilised during the 5-year programme. It was highlighted that the relocation of SHQ would provide an opportunity to sell part or all of the site, subject to any changes at Fulwood Fire Station, however any sale proceeds would not be realised within the timeframe of this programme.

### Capital Reserves

Capital Reserves had been created from under spends on the revenue budget in order to provide additional funding to support the capital programme in future years. The Authority expected to hold £18.6m of capital reserves as at 31 March

2023. Over the life of the programme, it was anticipated utilising all these reserves.

### **Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO)**

Any revenue surpluses may be transferred to a Capital Reserve in order to fund additional capital expenditure either in-year or carried forward to fund the programme in future years.

As referred to in the Revenue Budget report, elsewhere on the agenda, the revenue contribution to capital was currently set at £4.0m per year, giving a total funding of £20.0m over the 5 years. This reduced the need to borrow and hence the capital financing charge associated with this.

### **Drawdown of Earmarked Reserves**

£0.4m had been drawn down from the Innovation Reserve / Earmarked Reserve to fund the digitisation of fire appliances project and part of the Wylfa prop upgrade.

### **Drawdown of General Reserves**

No allowance had been made for the drawdown of any of the general reserve.

### **Total Capital Funding**

The following table details available capital funding over the five-year period:

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	TOTAL
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Capital Grant	-	-	1.000	-	-	1.000
Capital Receipts	1.683	-	-	-	-	1.683
Capital Reserves	4.069	6.320	7.015	1.197	-	18.601
Earmarked Reserves	0.364	-	-	-	-	0.364
Revenue Contributions	4.000	4.000	4.000	4.000	4.000	20.000
	10.116	10.320	12.015	5.197	4.000	41.648

### **Summary Programme**

Based on the draft capital programme as presented there was a shortfall of £13.6m:

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	TOTAL
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Capital Requirements	10.116	10.320	12.015	11.082	11.764	55.297

Capital Funding	10.116	10.320	12.015	5.197	4.000	41.648
<b>Surplus / (Shortfall)</b>	-	-	-	(5.885)	(7.764)	(13.649)

This showed there was a significant funding gap.

### **Impact on the Revenue budget**

The capital programme showed the Authority utilising all of its capital reserves and receipts part way through 2026/27, meaning that the remainder of the capital programme would need to be met from either capital grant (if available), additional revenue contributions or from new borrowing.

The draft budget as set out showed a need to borrow £13.6m. As there had already been £2.0m of funds set aside, this would entail £11.6m of new borrowing. This had a significant impact on the revenue budget, in terms of interest payments and setting aside a sum equivalent to the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), as shown in the table below. (It was noted that both the interest rate and the life over which MRP was charged were subject to change.)

	26/27 Impact	27/28 Impact
Interest per annum	£88k	£350k
MRP (MRP is only charged in year after purchase)	-	£118k
	£88k	£468k

The cost of this borrowing was incorporated into the revenue budget in future years, but the full year effect of this borrowing would not be felt until 2028/29, where the total cost would be £0.8m.

### **Summary**

Without borrowing, the current programme was not balanced, as such the Authority would need to borrow £11.6m over the life of the programme. The cost of this borrowing was incorporated into the revenue budget however, this only impacted the last year of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Given this, the Treasurer considered that the programme was prudent, sustainable and affordable in the medium term.

### **Prudential Indicators**

The Prudential Code gave the Authority increased flexibility over its level of capital investment and much greater freedom to borrow, should this be necessary, to finance planned expenditure. However, in determining the level of borrowing, the Authority must prepare and take account of a number of Prudential Indicators aimed at demonstrating that the level and method of financing capital expenditure was affordable, prudent and sustainable. These



	<p>Indicators were set out at Appendix 1 now presented, along with a brief commentary on each. The Prudential Indicators were based on the programme set out above. These indicators would be updated to reflect the final capital outturn position and reported to the Resources Committee at the June meeting.</p> <p>The main emphasis of these Indicators was to enable the Authority to assess whether its proposed spending and its financing was affordable, prudent and sustainable and in this context, the Treasurer's assessment was that, based on the indicators, this was the case.</p> <p>The Chairman commented that HMICFRS inspection outcome evidenced that the Authority had invested in specialist and appropriate equipment (including vehicles, drones and ICT) to ensure the Service had the right equipment at the right time.</p> <p>The Vice-Chairman added that the majority of capital costs related to the replacement of Preston station and potential relocation of Service Headquarters (as set out on page 149 of the agenda pack). He reminded Members that this had been discussed earlier on the agenda under the Planning Committee item which included a Task and Finish Working Group be established to support these projects.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Authority approved the: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Capital Strategy;</li> <li>ii) Capital Budget; and</li> <li>iii) Prudential Indicators as now presented.</li> </ul>
72/22	<p><b>Revenue Budget 2023/24 - 2027/28 (Incorporating Medium Term Financial Strategy)</b></p>
	<p>The Director of Corporate Services / Treasurer presented the report which set out the draft revenue budget for 2023/24-2027/28 and the resultant council tax implications.</p> <p>The budget requirement had been re-assessed taking account of known / anticipated changes, incorporating current projections, and forecast vacancy factors based on anticipated recruitment resulting in a total requirement of £68.5m.</p> <p>It was noted that the Local Government Settlement was not the anticipated multi-year settlement, as it only covered next year. It did however allow for:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a 6.0% increase in funding, and it had been assumed that this increased by a further 5.0% next year and 2.0% in subsequent years;</li> <li>• a 'Service Grant' of £0.6m;</li> <li>• a change to the council tax referendum principles for Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) increasing this to 3.0% but with a one-off increase in 2023/24 to £5 for all FRAs.</li> </ul>

It was therefore proposed utilising this flexibility to increase council tax by £5 (6.4%, 10p per week), to £82.27. This would still leave a funding gap of £0.3m, which would be met from a combination of drawdown of reserves and unidentified savings delivered in year.

Looking longer term the key variables remained future funding levels, pay awards, pension costs and the successful implementation of the outcome of the Emergency Cover Review. At the present time funding gaps in future years were being forecast and depending upon the extent of these further efficiencies would look to be delivered and / or reserves utilised to offset these.

Members considered the report in detail.

#### Summary of Budget Changes

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Preceding Years Draft Net Budget Requirement	63.0	68.5	71.8	74.5	76.6
Add back previous years unidentified savings target	-	-	-	-	-
Add back previous years Vacancy Factors	1.6	1.8	1.4	0.6	0.7
Inflation	7.5	2.0	1.7	1.7	1.7
Other Pay Pressures	(0.7)	0.7	-	-	-
Committed Variations	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Growth	0.2	-	-	-	-
Efficiency Savings	(1.9)	-	0.1	0.1	0.1
Gross Budget Requirement	70.3	73.2	75.1	77.3	79.6
Vacancy Factors	(1.8)	(1.4)	(0.6)	(0.7)	(0.7)
Net Budget Requirement	68.5	71.8	74.5	76.6	78.9

In summary, the lack of a multi-year settlement made longer term planning more difficult as there could be no certainty around future funding forecasts. Offsetting this was the opportunity provided by the £5 council tax flexibility allowed this year.

Raising council tax by the maximum permissible still only increased the overall council tax bill by £5 but would generate £2.3m of funding for the Authority. It was proposed to utilise a combination of drawdown from reserves and further savings to bridge the funding gap in 2023/24 and beyond, the extent of this requirement being dependent upon final pay award agreement and future

funding settlements.

The council tax increase / budget gave greater long term funding certainty which would form the basis of future investment requirements which were essential to hit the 'road to outstanding' ambition and be the best equipped, best trained and best accommodated Service.

In response to a question raised by CC Pattison the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that there were no foreseen challenges for the recruitment of apprentices to wholetime firefighter vacancies as per the forecast recruitment profile (set out on page 166 of the agenda pack).

In response to a question raised by Councillor Smith, the Director of Corporate Services confirmed that a consortium was used to purchase energy in advance when it was believed that the rates were favourable, as this was recognised as an efficient way of purchasing energy.

CC Howarth commented that even with the 6% increase in grant settlement from Government there was still the need to increase the council tax by 6.4% to maintain services the Authority were proud of. While this increase equated to only 10 pence per week it was in addition to other increases by other precepting authorities. The Government was just offloading the deficit onto the tax payer. In response, the Chairman commented the Authority had no control over the Government grant. He stated that he would never want to increase council tax. Although the Authority managed the budget well, there was a need to have an efficient and effective Service making Lancashire safer.

The proposal based on a council tax band D equivalent of £82.27, an increase of £5.00 was MOVED by County Councillor D O'Toole and SECONDED by County Councillor J Shedwick. The Authority voted unanimously in favour of the proposal by a show of hands.

The motion was therefore CARRIED and it was:

**Resolved:** - That the Authority: -

1. noted the Treasurer's advice on the robustness of the budget.
2. noted the Treasurer's advice on the appropriate level of reserves/balances.
3. agreed the revised budget requirement of £68.183m for 2023/24.
4. noted the level of Revenue Support Grant Funding £9.727m.
5. noted the level of Business Rates Retention Top Up Funding £11.563m.
6. noted the level of Local Business Rates Retention Funding £4.311m.
7. noted the section 31 grant of £3.863m due in respect of the business rate reliefs.
8. noted the business rate tax collection fund surplus of £0.133m.
9. noted the level of Service Grant Funding £0.634m.
10. noted the net council tax collection fund surplus of £0.276m after allowing for the 3-year spread from 2021/22.
11. agreed the council tax requirement, calculated in accordance with Section 42A (4) of the Localism Act of £37.675m.

12. noted the council tax base of 457,949 determined for the purposes of Section 42B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

13. agreed a council tax band D equivalent of £82.27, an increase of £5.00, calculated by the Authority under Section 42B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 agree, on the basis of the fixed ratios between valuation bands set by the Government, council tax for each band as follows:

Band A	£54.85
Band B	£63.99
Band C	£73.13
Band D	£82.27
Band E	£100.55
Band F	£118.83
Band G	£137.12
Band H	£164.54

14. agreed, based on each district and unitary councils share of the total band D equivalent tax base of 457,949, the share of the total LCFA precept of £37.675m levied on each council as follows:

Blackburn With Darwen Borough Council	£2,985,812
Blackpool Borough Council	£3,112,275
Burnley Borough Council	£1,936,965
Chorley Borough Council	£3,154,440
Fylde Borough Council	£2,631,736
Hyndburn Borough Council	£1,805,416
Lancaster City Council	£3,502,975
Pendle Borough Council	£2,038,355
Preston City Council	£3,381,133
Ribble Valley Borough Council	£2,055,105
Rossendale Borough Council	£1,713,520
South Ribble Borough Council	£3,056,600
West Lancashire District Council	£3,134,139
Wyre Borough Council	£3,167,034
TOTAL	£37,675,505

73/22

### **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 – County Councillor Ron Woollam

	<p>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 31 January 2023. During this period all had undertaken their respective role in accordance with the defined terms of reference.</p> <p>Member Champions went through the detail of their reports and expressed thanks to the officers who supported them in their roles.</p> <p>In addition: -</p> <p>Councillor Hugo advised that she had been asked by the Local Government Association Fire Services Management Committee to become an Equalities Advocate and she would welcome a meeting with Councillor Khan in order to present a broader view to that body.</p> <p>CC Kay tabled a copy of the Wellness Events Calendar (referred to on page 185 of the agenda pack) in order for Members to provide support.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Authority noted the report and acknowledged the work of the respective Champions.</p>
74/22	<p><b>Fire Protection Reports</b></p>
	<p>The report summarised Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service prosecutions pertaining to fire safety offences and set out a conviction resulting from arson which had progressed via the criminal justice process.</p> <p>The Assistant Chief Fire Officer drew Members' attention to an unusual fire in a commercial building which led to loss of life (as detailed on page 189 of the agenda pack). The incident occurred in Morecambe in October 2019 which led to a very detailed fire safety prosecution case being brought through the court system.</p> <p>Fire Protection and Business Support information was included in the report to provide Members with an update on the number of Business Fire Safety Checks undertaken, to demonstrate how the Service was ensuring it kept pace with legislative changes and as CC Clarke had referred to earlier (under consideration of the proceedings of the Planning Committee) the Risk Based Inspection Programme was reflective of all risks.</p> <p>In relation to fire safety prosecutions, CC Mein queried whether the Service was satisfied with the sentences given as these seemed lenient. In response, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service presented concise information but the level of sentence was determined by the courts. The Clerk added that it was complex and there was a lot of case law on sentencing. There were sentencing guidelines and while there would be wide discretion, sentencing would be within those guidelines based on many things including previous convictions for previous offences, timely guilty plea, severity of incident and whether or not the entry grade for the offence was custodial or not etc.</p>

	<b>Resolved:</b> That the Authority noted and endorsed the report.
75/22	<b>Operational Incidents of Interest</b>
	<p>The report provided Members with information relating to operational incidents of note over the period 1 December 2022 – 31 January 2023. Members noted the breadth of operational activity including the frequency of the drone deployment and the importance of the role that it played across the whole spectrum of operational response activity.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Authority noted the report.</p>
76/22	<b>Member Complaints</b>
	<p>The Monitoring Officer confirmed that there had been no complaints since the last meeting.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the current position be noted.</p>
77/22	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>
	The next meeting of the Authority would be held on <b>Monday 24 April 2023</b> at 10:00am at the Training Centre, Euxton.
78/22	<b>Exclusion of Press and Public</b>
	<b>Resolved:</b> 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.
79/22	<b>Business Continuity - Industrial Action</b>
	<p>(Paragraphs 3 and 4)</p> <p>The Assistant Chief Fire Officer provided Members with an update on the current approach to business continuity in the event of industrial action.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the report be noted and action outlined endorsed.</p>

**M Nolan**  
Clerk to CFA

**LFRS HQ**  
Fulwood

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 24 April 2023

### Reports from Members on Outside Bodies

Contact for further information – Mark Nolan, Clerk and Monitoring Officer

Tel: 01772 866720

#### Executive Summary

The full Authority receive appropriate reports from Members who sit on outside bodies to provide feedback on key topics discussed in other forums such as Local Government Association meetings.

#### Recommendation

The Authority is asked to note the report for information.

### Information

County Councillor Nikki Hennessy has attended the following Local Government Association (LGA) meetings and is privy to confidential conversations. She would like to draw Members' attention to the following key discussions and decisions:

#### Fire Services Management Committee (Virtual)

- Friday 8 July 2022 (Cllr. Jane Hugo also in attendance)

Rod Hammerton, Chief Fire Officer and Project Executive for the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) Direct Entry Project gave an overview of the project including the issues it was seeking to address, how it fitted in with existing leadership development initiatives and the allocation of costs between the Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) and NFCC. He stressed that the Government was supportive of the project (although not financially) and this was highlighted in their Fire Reform White Paper as best practice.

It was agreed that Direct Entry could be a useful tool for expanding diversity and expertise in fire service management but that it was also important to focus on development opportunities for existing firefighters. Political awareness was seen to be a key skill for senior management in FRSs.

- 22 July 2022

Mark Hardingham, NFCC chair updated members on the latest situation with wildfires across the country. There had been more than 460 wildfires across the country in the calendar year to date (247 at this stage in 2021) with a much longer season.

Unfortunately, 60 properties had been destroyed in the recent spate of wildfires. 19,000 emergency 999 calls had been received on 19 July (daily average of 2,500) and as a result, Operation Willowbeck had been activated for the first time. This had worked well in spreading the load of calls across the country. Mutual aid arrangements had been put under considerable strain due to the number of different FRS's experiencing fires. The London Fire Brigade reported its busiest day since World War 2 and Mr Hardingham

expanded upon some of the implications of this for the service. Conversations were taking place with the Home Office to try and capture learning from the events. The science was clear that such occurrences would become much more common over the coming years and FRSs needed to be adequately resourced to deal with the increased risk.

It was suggested that the discussion needed to include looking at resilience in the broader built environment in addition to the more immediate issues of FRS response.

Mr Hardingham said that the NFCC would be holding an extreme weather conference in the near future, and they would welcome conversations with the LGA about what resources might be needed moving forward. More detail was sought on how fire crews were looked after during challenging incidents such as wildfires. With the recent wildfires, 7 or 8 services had reported heat stress injuries in their firefighters affecting between 30-40 crew members.

- 23 September 2022 (Cllr. Jane Hugo was also in attendance)

Fire Finance was discussion in relation to Fire Fighters pay award. Fire Service Management Commission to add 'sector-led improvement' and 'climate change' to 'people, professionalism and governance' as priorities for the year ahead.

### **Fire Service Management Commission**

- 10 June 2022 (CC David O'Toole, CC John Shedwick and Cllr. Jane Hugo were in attendance)

Anjli Mapara, Deputy Head of Fire Strategy and Reform Unit and Stuart Harwood, Head of Governance from the Home Office gave a presentation on the Fire Reform White Paper.

It was noted that the Government's case for the reforms proposed in the White Paper, included Covid 19, HMICFRS inspection reports and the Grenfell Tower and Manchester Arena disasters. It was stressed that the Home Office was keen to have conversations with local areas, particularly around governance reform, to try and come up with solutions that were acceptable to all parties. Lucy Ellender, LGA Senior Adviser, expanded upon the proposed governance changes and their implications for FRAs highlighting the table in the White Paper on potential demarcation of responsibilities between the political (executive) leader and the Chief Fire Officer (CFO).

Members welcomed the Government's commitment to improving fire and rescue services through the White Paper although it was suggested that they needed to be clearer about exactly what outcomes they wanted from the process. Members felt very strongly that it should be up to local areas to determine the governance arrangements that best suited their individual circumstances, not for central Government to dictate.

Comments included that putting power in the hands of one individual would reduce accountability and scrutiny, and valuable local expertise in Fire and Rescue Authorities would be lost. It was considered that there were several other more pressing issues, such as pensions, recruitment/retention of senior officers and diversity and inclusion that needed to be resolved and would have a much greater impact on improving services. It was noted that none of these issues were addressed in the White Paper. Anjli Mapara confirmed that this process had not yet been determined but reiterated that the Minister's preference remained for a single directly elected individual to take on governance.



Members agreed that the two alternative options put forward by the LGA in the report should be worked up and put forward in the consultation response.

Comments on the task to try to abolish the current NJC structure and collective bargaining included that it would create more problems than it would solve, and the Government should work with the stakeholders to address any perceived issues. A plea was made for regional variations in cost of living and other issues to be considered in any reform of the NJC structure and for local flexibility on possible entry requirements.

Fire Commission agreed the proposed direction of response to the Fire Reform White Paper, encapsulating comments made during the debate.

**NJC for LAFRS Employers side meeting (substitute)**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2022
- 7<sup>th</sup> October 2022
- 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023
- 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023
- 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023

**Business risk**

None

**Sustainability or Environmental Impact**

None

**Equality and Diversity Implications**

None

**Data Protection (GDPR)**

N/A

**HR implications**

None

**Financial implications**

None

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

**List of background papers**

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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

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## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Performance Committee

**Wednesday, 15 March 2023, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room,  
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.**

### Minutes

<b>Present:</b>	
<b>Councillors</b>	
R Woollam (Chair)	
P Rigby (Vice-Chair)	
L Beavers	
T Hurn	
A Kay	
H Khan	
Z Khan	
D O'Toole (for J Rigby)	
D Smith	
J Singleton (for B Yates)	

<b>Officers</b>
J Charters, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) K McCreesh, Group Manager - Prevention (LFRS) M Winder, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery (LFRS) J Rossen, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery (LFRS) D Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)

<b>In attendance</b>
K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union

23/22	<b>Apologies For Absence</b>
	Apologies were received from Councillor J Rigby and County Councillor B Yates.
24/22	<b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests</b>
	None received.
25/22	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>
	<u>RESOLVED</u> : - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on the 14 December 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

26/22

## Performance Management Information

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented a comprehensive report to the Performance Committee. This was the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarterly report for 2022/23 as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-2027.

This quarter, 3 Performance Indicators (KPIs) were shown in negative exception. These were 1.2.1 Staff Absence Wholetime (WT), 1.2.3 Staff Absence Greenbook, and 3.3.2 Fire Engine Availability On-Call Shift Systems.

Members examined each indicator in turn focusing on those KPIs in exception as follows:

### **KPI 1 – Valuing our people so that they can focus on making Lancashire safer**

#### **1.1 Overall Staff Engagement**

Members received an update on how staff were engaged during the period.

From October to December 2022, twenty-two station visits were carried out by principal officers and area managers as part of the service-wide station visits programme. Executive board members held an engagement event at the Service Training Centre for flexi duty officers and seven online question and answer events were held with wholetime and on-call firefighters in relation to winter challenges and the national pay dispute.

Fifty-three wellbeing interactions were undertaken ranging from health and wellbeing workshops to support-dog interactions. The service engaged staff in several trials relating to the fleet including new vehicle Close Circuit Television (CCTV) systems and the latest plug-in and self-charging hybrid car technology. The Service also surveyed on-call (OC) staff to obtain their views and experiences as part of a review of the OC duty system.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed Members that a lot of engagement with staff took place through the threat of Industrial Action and the associated ballot. The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) had now accepted the revised pay offer.

#### **1.2.1 Staff Absence Wholetime**

This indicator measured the cumulative number of shifts (days) lost due to sickness for all wholetime staff divided by the total average strength.

Annual Standard: Not more than 5 shifts lost.

Annual Shifts Lost ÷ 4 quarters: 1.25

Cumulative total number of shifts lost: 6.710

The negative exception report was due to the number of shifts lost through absence per employee being above the Service target for quarter 3.

During quarter 3, October to December 2022, absence statistics showed whole-time personnel absence above target for the quarter.

1,492 Wholetime absence shifts lost = 2.37 against a target of 1.25.

There were 3 cases of long-term absence which spanned over the total of the 3 months; the reasons being:

- Gastro-intestinal (abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhoea)
- Cancer and Tumours
- Mental Health (Other)

There were 28 other cases of long-term absence also recorded within the 3 months:

- Hospital / post operative – 7 cases
- Mental health (other) – 4 cases
- Other known causes (not specified) – 3 cases
- Musculo skeletal (other unable to define) – 2 cases
- Musculo skeletal (Back) – 2 cases
- Musculo skeletal (lower limb) – 2 cases
- Mental health (stress) – 2 cases
- Cancer and Tumours – 1 case
- Cause known, but not specified – 1 case
- Covid-19 Coronavirus (Sickness) – 1 case
- Heart, cardiac and circulatory problems – 1 case
- Respiratory (Cold/Cough/Influenza) – 1 case
- Skin Condition – 1 case

To improve performance, the Service aimed to continue with:

- Early intervention by Occupational Health Unit (OHU) doctor / nurse / physiotherapist.
- Human Resources (HR) supporting managers in following the Absence Management Policy managing individual long-term cases, addressing review periods / triggers in a timely manner and dealing with capability of staff due to health issues.
- To be included again within the leadership conference to assist future managers' understanding and interpretation of the policy.
- Encouraging employees to make use of our Employee Assistance Programme provider Health Assured and The Firefighters Charity.
- HR to be in attendance at Stress Risk Assessment meetings, to support managers and to offer appropriate support to the employee along with signposting.
- OHU to organise health checks for individuals on a voluntary basis.
- Support from Service Fitness Advisor / Personal Training Instructors (PTIs).
- Promotion of health, fitness / and wellbeing via the routine bulletin and Employee Assistance Programme.

The Assistant Chief Officer advised that it would be beneficial to split the data

between long-term and short-term absences as long-term absences were more likely to be cases of serious illness or conditions which were unchangeable. However, he proposed that the emphasis be to reduce short-term absences, as these could be managed and improved with strategies such as access to the Occupational Health Unit, through HR and with effective support from Managers. Members were informed that, due to the higher-than-average sickness levels, the KPI would be in exception in the next quarter. Members agreed that focusing on improving short-term absence would be beneficial and the Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed that the KPI would be reported with a focus on short-term absences in future.

In response to a question from County Councillor O'Toole regarding the definition of a long-term absence, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that long-term absence was determined as an absence that exceeded 28 days. It was acknowledged that some treatable illnesses could last 28 days and were therefore classed as long term, nevertheless, HR followed industry and government guidelines where 28 days was used as the benchmark.

### 1.2.2 Staff Absence On-Call (OC)

This indicator measured the percentage of contracted hours lost due to sickness for all on-call contracted staff.

Annual Standard: No more than 2.5% lost as a % of available hours of cover.

Cumulative on-call absence (as a % of available hours cover) at the end of the quarter, 1.58%.

### 1.2.3 Staff Absence Greenbook

This new indicator measured the cumulative number of shifts (days) lost due to sickness for all green book support staff divided by the average strength.

Annual Standard: Not more than 5 shifts lost.

Annual Shifts Lost ÷ 4 quarters: 1.25

Cumulative shifts lost: 5.427

The negative exception report was due to the number of shifts lost through absence per employee being above the Service target for quarter 3.

During quarter 3, October to December 2022, absence statistics showed non-uniformed personnel above target for the quarter.

507 non-uniformed absence shifts lost = 2.40 against a target of 1.25

There were 3 cases of long-term absence which spanned over the total of the 3 months; the reasons being:

- Cardiovascular
- Heart, cardiac and circulatory problems

- Hospital/post operative

There was one other case of long-term absence which was also recorded within the 3 months:

- Hospital / post operative – 1 case

To improve performance, the Service aimed to continue with:

- Early intervention by Occupational Health Unit (OHU) doctor / nurse / physiotherapist.
- Human Resources (HR) supporting managers in following the Absence Management Policy managing individual long-term cases, addressing review periods / triggers in a timely manner and dealing with capability of staff due to health issues.
- To be included again within the leadership conference to assist future managers' understanding and interpretation of the policy.
- Encouraging employees to make use of our Employee Assistance Programme provider, Health Assured, and the Fire Fighters Charity.
- HR to be in attendance at Stress Risk Assessment meetings, to support managers and to offer appropriate support to the employee along with signposting.
- OHU to organise health checks for individuals on a voluntary basis.
- Promotion of health, fitness and wellbeing via the routine bulletin and Employee Assistance programme.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that many of the short-term illnesses were respiratory infections over autumn/winter.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Hurn regarding the number of staff that take up the offer of a flu vaccine, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer stated that the number was low. He explained that some staff may have received the vaccine externally or from their GP, however, he would bring to the next meeting the numbers of staff who had taken up the offer of a flu jab paid for by the Service.

### 1.3.1 Workforce Diversity

This new indicator measured diversity as a percentage.

Combined diversity percentage of grey book (operational) and green book (support) staff:

Gender:	Female 20%	Male 80%	
Ethnicity:	BME 3%	Not stated 3%	White 94%
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 4%	Heterosexual 51%	Not stated 45%
Disability:	Disability 3%	No disability 94%	Not stated 3%

Separate diversity percentage of grey book (operational) and green book (support) staff:

Gender:	Female	Grey book 9%	Green book 60%
	Male	Grey book 91%	Green book 40%
Ethnicity:	BME	Grey book 3%	Green book 6%
	White	Grey book 95%	Green book 89%
	Not stated	Grey book 2%	Green book 5%
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT	Grey book 4%	Green book 3%
	Heterosexual	Grey book 51%	Green book 53%
	Not stated	Grey book 45%	Green book 44%
Disability:	Disability	Grey book 3%	Green book 3%
	No disability	Grey book 95%	Green book 90%
	Not stated	Grey book 2%	Green book 7%

### 1.3.2 Workforce Diversity Recruited

This new indicator measured workforce diversity recruited as a percentage.

Combined diversity percentage of grey book (operational) and green book (support) staff:

Gender:	Female 26%	Male 74%	
Ethnicity:	BME 2%	White 94%	Not Stated 4%
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 11%	Heterosexual 82%	Not stated 7%
Disability:	Disability 2%	No disability 97%	Not stated 1%

During quarter 3, there were a total of 138 new recruits. It was noted that a further breakdown of the data would not be provided as it may enable the identification of individuals, due to the small numbers of recruits during certain periods.

Members discussed the need to consider people's family life, cultural needs and language skills during recruitment to attract a more diverse workforce. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that there was a requirement for the recruitment strategy to be explored and revised in consultation with the engagement and employee voice groups. He added that there were organisational benefits for workforces to be reflective of their communities.

In response to a question from County Councillor Hurn as to whether gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability had any bearing on the success of a candidate applying for a job, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service adhered to strict recruitment policies and procedures to ensure that the best candidate for a job was recruited and that the Service was careful to avoid any form of positive discrimination.

Members congratulated the Service on winning Fire Brigade of the Year at the GG2 Leadership and Diversity awards. The Service was nominated in 2 categories and won the award for 'Outstanding work in championing diversity, making demonstrable progress in diversifying the talent pool and creating an inclusive working environment.'



#### 1.4 Staff Accidents

This indicator measured the number of accidents which occurred to staff members at work within the quarter: Wholetime, On-Call and Greenbook.

Total number of staff accidents, 11 for quarter 3; year to date 44; previous year to date 61. Quarterly activity decreased 35.29% over the same quarter of the previous year.

### **KPI 2 - Preventing, fires and other emergencies from happening and Protecting people and property when fires happen**

#### 2.1 Risk Map Score

This indicator measured the fire risk in each Super Output Area, of which there were 942. Risk was determined using fire activity over the previous 3 fiscal years along with a range of demographic data, such as population and deprivation. The County risk map score was updated annually and presented to the Performance Committee in the quarter 1 reporting period.

Annual Standard: To reduce the risk in Lancashire – an annual reduction in the County risk map score.

$(\text{Dwelling Fires} \div \text{Total Dwellings}) + (\text{Dwelling Fire Casualties} \div \text{Resident Population} \times 4) + \text{Building Fire} + (\text{IMD} \times 2) = \text{Risk Score}$ .

The current score was 31,576 and the previous year's score was 31,862 which meant that the fire risk continued to reduce.

#### 2.2 Overall Activity

This indicator measured the number of incidents that LFRS attended with one or more pumping appliances. Incidents attended included fires, special service calls, false alarms and collaborative work undertaken with other emergency services i.e.: missing person searches on behalf of the Police and gaining entry incidents at the request of the Ambulance Service.

Incidents attended, year to date 14,979; previous year to date 14,454. Quarterly activity increased 1.60% over the same quarter of the previous year.

In quarter 3, the Service attended 4,693 incidents. The report presented a chart which represented the count and percentage that each activity had contributed to the overall quarter's activity:

- Total False Alarm Calls (due to apparatus, good intent and malicious) – 2273, 49%
- Total Primary Fire Calls (accidental dwelling / building and deliberate dwelling / commercial fires and other primary fires) – 438, 9%
- Total Secondary Fire Calls (deliberate and accidental fires) – 590, 13%

- Total Special Service Calls (critical incidents, gaining entry, RTCs, Flooding and other critical incidents) – 1365, 29%

### 2.3 Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a dwelling had been affected and the cause of the fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

Members noted that a primary fire was one involving property (excluding derelict property) or any fires involving casualties, rescues or any fire attended by 5 or more pumping appliances.

Accidental Dwelling Fires, 200 in quarter 3; year to date 605; previous year to date 642. Quarterly activity decreased 4.76% over the same quarter of the previous year.

#### 2.3.1 ADF – Harm to people: Casualties

This indicator reported the number of fire related fatalities, slight and serious injuries at primary fires where a dwelling had been affected and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental or Not known'.

A slight injury was defined as; a person attending hospital as an outpatient (not precautionary check). A serious injury was defined as; at least an overnight stay in hospital as an in-patient.

Fatal,	1 in quarter 3; year to date 5; previous year to date 4
Injuries appear Serious,	4 in quarter 3; year to date 10; previous year to date 9
Injuries appear Slight	11 in quarter 3; year to date 17; previous year to date 34

Quarterly activity increased 45.45% over the same quarter of the previous year.

#### 2.3.2 ADF – Harm to property: Extent of damage (fire severity)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a dwelling had been affected and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

Extent of fire, heat and smoke damage was recorded at the time the 'stop' message was sent and included all damage types.

The table in the report showed a breakdown of fire severity with a directional indicator that compared:

- current quarter, combined percentage of 83% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 87%.

Combined quarterly percentage had therefore decreased 4% over the same quarter of the previous year.

## 2.4 Accidental Building Fires (ABF) (Commercial Premises)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a building had been affected (which was other than a dwelling or a private building associated with a dwelling), and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

ABF (Commercial Premises), 54 in quarter 3; year to date 195; previous year to date 210. Quarterly activity decreased 20.59% over the same quarter of the previous year.

### 2.4.1 ABF (Commercial Premises) – Harm to property: Extent of damage (fire severity)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a building had been affected (which was other than a dwelling or a private building associated with a dwelling), and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

Extent of fire, heat and smoke damage was recorded at the time the 'stop' message was sent and included all damage types.

The table in the report showed a breakdown of fire severity with a directional indicator that compared:

- current quarter, combined percentage of 70% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 72%.

Combined quarterly percentage had therefore decreased 2% over the same quarter of the previous year.

## 2.5 Accidental Building Fires (Non-Commercial Premises)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a private garage, private shed, private greenhouse, private summerhouse, or other private non-residential building had been affected and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

ABF (Non-Commercial Premises), 16 in quarter 3; year to date 68; previous year to date 65. Quarterly activity increased 23.08% over the same quarter of the previous year.

### 2.5.1 ABF (Non-Commercial premises: Private garages and sheds) – Harm to property: Extent of damage (fire severity)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a private garage, private shed, private greenhouse, private summerhouse, or other private non-residential building had been affected and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

Extent of fire, heat and smoke damage was recorded at the time the 'stop' message was sent and included all damage types.

The table in the report showed a breakdown of fire severity with a directional indicator that compared:

- current quarter, combined percentage of 19% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 23%.

Combined quarterly activity had therefore decreased 4.3% over the same quarter of the previous year.

## 2.6 Deliberate Fires Total: Specific performance measure of deliberate fires

This new indicator provided an overall measure of primary and secondary fires where the cause of fire had been recorded as deliberate.

Deliberate Fires – 421 in quarter 3; year to date 1,892; previous year to date 1,526. Quarterly activity increased 19.60% over the same quarter of the previous year.

### 2.6.1 Deliberate Fires – Dwellings

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a dwelling had been affected and the cause of fire had been recorded as deliberate.

Deliberate Fires – Dwellings, 22 in quarter 3, year to date 57; previous year to date 86. Quarterly activity decreased 24.14% over the same quarter of the previous year.

### 2.6.2 Deliberate Fires - Commercial Premises

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where the property type was a building, other than a dwelling or a private building associated with a dwelling, and the cause of fire had been recorded as deliberate.

Deliberate Fires – Commercial Premises, 32 in quarter 3; year to date 88; previous year to date 97.

Quarterly activity increased 68.42% over the same quarter of the previous year.

### 2.6.3 Deliberate Fires – Other (rubbish, grassland, vehicles etc).

This indicator reported the number of primary and secondary fires where the property type was other than a building, except where the building was recorded as derelict, and the cause of fire had been recorded as deliberate.

The majority of deliberate fires were outdoor secondary fires and included grassland and refuse fires. Derelict vehicle fires were also included under secondary fires.

Deliberate Fires – Other, 367 in quarter 3; year to date 1,747; previous year to date 1,343. Quarterly activity increased 20.72% over the same quarter of the previous year.

## 2.7 Home Fire Safety Checks

This indicator reported the percentage of completed Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC), excluding refusals, carried out where the risk score had been determined to be high.

An improvement was shown if:

- the total number of HFSC's completed was greater than the comparable quarter of the previous year; and
- the percentage of high HFSC outcomes was greater than the comparable quarter of the previous year.

HFSCs completed, 5,800 in quarter 3; year to date 16,256; previous year to date 12,605. Quarterly activity increased 15.7% over the same quarter of the previous year.

HFSCs with high-risk outcomes, year to date 55%; previous year to date 62%. Quarterly activity decreased 7.0% over the same quarter of the previous year.

## 2.8 Numbers of prevention activities such as Childsafe, wasted lives etc

Members received an update on the number of sessions delivered against the following prevention activities during the quarter:

ChildSafe,	241 sessions delivered to 8,274 attendees;
RoadSense,	172 sessions delivered to 5,640 attendees;
SENDSafe,	6 sessions delivered;
Wasted Lives,	9 sessions delivered to 1,146 pupils;
Biker Down,	5 sessions delivered to 75 attendees;
FIRES,	29 completed referrals;
Partner Training,	34 organisations/agencies – 195 people.

Specific Education packages – delivered Water Safety, ASB, Deliberate Fire Setting etc (Covers key stages 2, 3 and 4), across 157 sessions, delivered to 24,849 attendees. These mainly consisted of BrightSparx ASB in quarter 3.

Arson Threat Referrals - 166.

## 2.9 Fire Safety Activity (including Business Fire Safety Checks)

This indicator reported the number of Fire Safety Enforcement inspections carried out within the period which resulted in supporting businesses to improve and become compliant with fire safety regulations or where formal action of enforcement and prosecution had been taken for those that failed to comply.

An improvement was shown if the percentage of audits that required formal

activity was greater than the comparable quarter of the previous year.

Total Fire Safety Enforcement Inspections, Quarter 3, 360;  
Formal Activity in Quarter 3, 9%, same quarter of the previous year 6%.  
Quarterly activity increased 3% over the same quarter of the previous year.

Members noted the cumulative number of Business Fire Safety Checks undertaken for 2022/23 was 1,615.

#### 2.10 Building Regulation Consultations (BRC) (number and completed on time)

Where the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applied to premises (or would apply following building work) the building control body must consult with LFRS for comments / advice regarding fire safety. LFRS should make any comments in writing within 15 working days from receiving a BRC.

This new indicator provided Members with information on the number of building regulations consultations received during the period together with improvement actions.

Building Regulation Consultations received 285, of which 244 were completed within timeframe (LFRS should make comments in writing within 15 working days of receiving a BRC).

Improvement Actions were noted as follows:

To comply with the NFCC Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators, consultations must be completed by Level 4 qualified Fire Safety Inspectors. It was the same inspectors who were required to complete the more complex audits required by the risk-based inspection program, consequently use of finite resources must be fully co-ordinated and balanced. To achieve this and ensure consultation timelines were achieved:

- Development work continued to qualify more of the existing staff to L4 standard.
- Recruitment undertaken in Q3 had increased establishment in the function.
- Improved administration and consultation monitoring arrangements would be implemented.
- The newly formed Built Environment and Ops Liaison team would take an increasing role in co-ordinating the receipt and completion of consultations within timescales.

### **KPI 3 - Responding to fire and other emergencies quickly**

#### 3.1 Critical Fire Response – 1<sup>st</sup> Fire Engine Attendance

This indicator reported the 'Time of Call' (TOC) and 'Time in Attendance' (TIA) of the first fire engine arriving at the incident in less than the relevant response standard.

The response standards included call handling and fire engine response time for

the first fire engine attending a critical fire, as follows: -

- Very high-risk area = 6 minutes
- High risk area = 8 minutes
- Medium risk area = 10 minutes
- Low risk area = 12 minutes

The response standards were determined by the risk map score and subsequent risk grade for the location of the fire.

Annual Standard: to be in attendance within response standard target on 90% of occasions.

Critical Fire Response – 1<sup>st</sup> Fire Engine Attendance, 85.48% in quarter 3; year to date 84.90%; previous year to date 87.18%.

Quarterly response increased 0.93% over the same quarter of the previous year.

### 3.2 Critical Special Service Response – 1<sup>st</sup> Fire Engine Attendance

This indicator reported the 'Time of Call' (TOC) and 'Time in Attendance' (TIA) of the first fire engine arriving at the incident in less than the relevant response standard.

The response standard included how long it took the first fire engine to respond to critical special service (non-fire) incidents where there was a risk to life such as road traffic collisions, rescues, and hazardous materials incidents. For these critical special service call incidents there was a single response standard of 13 minutes (which measured call handling time and fire engine response time).

Annual Standard: to be in attendance within response standard target on 90% of occasions.

Critical Special Service Response – 1<sup>st</sup> Fire Engine Attendance, 88.90% in quarter 3; year to date 89.71%; previous year to date 89.23%.

Quarterly response increased 0.53% over the same quarter of the previous year.

### 3.3 Total Fire Engine Availability

This indicator measured the availability of fire engines by all crewing types. It was measured as the percentage of time a fire engine was available to respond compared to the total time in the period.

Total Fire Engine Availability, 85.32% in quarter 3; year to date 84.65%; previous year to date 88.26%.

Quarterly availability decreased 1.95% over the same quarter of the previous year.

It was noted that the key periods of Covid-19 restrictions/lockdowns were:

- 23<sup>rd</sup> March to 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020. The first national lockdown was announced.
- 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020. New restrictions announced, including working from home.
- 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020 to 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020. Second lockdown in England.
- 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021 to 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Third national lockdown / stay at home order.

### 3.3.1 Fire Engine Availability – Wholetime Shift System

This indicator measured the availability of fire engines that were crewed by wholetime, day crewing and day crewing plus shifts. It was measured as the percentage of time a fire engine was available to respond compared to the total time in the period.

Fire engines were designated as unavailable for the following reasons:

- |                               |                     |                         |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| * Mechanical                  | * Lack of equipment | * Appliance change over |
| * Crew deficient              | * Miscellaneous     | * Debrief               |
| * Engineer working on station | * Unavailable       | * Welfare               |

Annual Standard: 99.5%

Fire Engine Availability – Wholetime Shift System, 99.46% in quarter 3; year to date 99.27%; previous year to date 99.23%.

Quarterly response increased 0.30% over the same quarter of the previous year.

### 3.3.2 Fire Engine Availability – On-Call Shift System

This indicator measured the availability of fire engines that were crewed by the on-call duty system. It was measured as the percentage of time a fire engine was available to respond compared to the total time in the period.

Fire engines were designated as unavailable (off the run) for the following reasons which include the percentage of off the run hours that each reason contributed to the total. Members noted that fire engines can be off the run for more than one reason; hence the percentages were interpreted individually (rather than as a proportion of the total):

- |                         |     |
|-------------------------|-----|
| • Manager deficient     | 60% |
| • Crew deficient        | 78% |
| • Not enough BA wearers | 67% |
| • No driver             | 41% |

Annual Aspirational Standard: 95%

Fire Engine Availability – On-Call Shift System, 73.83% in quarter 3; year to date 72.76%; previous year to date 78.43%.

Quarterly availability decreased 3.77% over the same quarter of the previous



year.

The negative exception report was due to the percentage of On-Call (OC) pumps available to respond to emergencies being below the lower control limit during quarter 3.

Availability of On-Call pumps during the quarter was recorded at 73.83%, with each month being below the 79.43% control limit, and below the Service's 95% aspirational standard.

An On-Call review would be undertaken in the current year to look at fundamental elements of the on-call system with the desired outcome of improving appliance availability. The Service had also invested in the creation of additional On-Call Support Officer (OCSO) posts to further strengthen the support to on-call and help implement changes arising from the review. Five additional OCSOs were appointed in September 2022, increasing the total to 8.

Actions being taken to improve performance:

- The Service appointed 42 new recruits from the October 2022 recruitment campaign.
- The Service would continue to deliver a recruitment strategy, which incorporated a targeted approach to stations that were in exception, whilst utilising data to identify the specific contractual/availability needs of those stations.
- A retention study undertaken by station managers and OCSO team leaders would commence.
- The Service would continue to review on-call contracts to ensure they were effective in improving appliance availability, whilst also ensuring contractual performance of staff was maintained.
- Challenges around Light Goods Vehicle (LGV) and Officer in Charge (OIC) skills continued to be an issue across the Service. To remedy this, Firefighters in development could be nominated for LGV courses, following discussion with Station and Group Managers.
- OCSOs were working with the Incident Command team in workshops to support and develop OICs with their command skills.
- Support national on-call campaigns and utilise their recruitment literature and designs. Align recruitment campaigns with NFCC On-Call Firefighter Days and raise the profile of the occasion during national volunteers' week.
- Invest in on-call using relevant recruitment material and effective allocation of internal resources. Additional resources for the recruitment vehicle had been identified and requested which included new banners, QR code cards for each station, and new on-call staff for advertisement.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that work during 2022 to deliver improvements via the on-call recruit programme, combined with the retention of staff, and post summer leave period had contributed to the improvement of on-call fire engine availability in quarter 3. The Service was currently working to finalise a programme of works for 2023/24 to improve performance with a focus on the areas identified in the report, namely: manager deficient, not enough BA wearers, crew deficient and no driver. This included:

- Whether the method of training staff could be accelerated to improve performance. The current process for new staff was they would undertake 2 weeks basic skills training which once embedded staff would commence BA training which could be 6 months later;
- The need to determine whether staff were deterred from incident command competency training because the expectations were too high;
- Looking at contract options to be more flexible (in consultation with representative bodies) for wholetime firefighters to cover on-call in their free time and to include 3-person crews to respond to incidents rather than the appliance be off the run due to the lack of the availability of a full crew of 4.

In response to Member queries, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the proposed piece of work to review initial on-call training would include a fundamental shift from how training was currently delivered, however, radical steps were required to support a performance improvement in on-call availability.

The 3-person crewing model on on-call appliances was presently in use to attend lower risk/less significant incidents, though the challenge was to create safe systems of work for those 3 people to respond and fulfil a broader operational response role in addition to the normal mobilisations taking place. Key to delivering this work was for staff to have robust knowledge, skills and decision-making to make the right decisions in the right circumstances and delivering further training around this aspect would be a priority. If the Service did move to this model, the intention would be to also deploy the usual resources to incidents. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer stated that he believed that this ambition was in line with public expectations of a modern fire and rescue service and would result in more fire engines being available for more of the time; providing early intervention and greater visibility particularly in more rural areas where travel time for the next closest resource would usually be longer.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Woollam, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that there were 4 on-call recruits' courses per annum; 2 ran back-to-back in the spring and 2 ran back-to-back in the autumn with a maximum capacity of 96. The Service had improved on it's ability to fully populate the courses over the last 2 or 3 years, however the Assistant Chief Fire Officer went on to explain that in on-call, the impact of a leaver was felt immediately due to loss of skills, (as highlighted in the report), whereas it could take up to 2 years for a new on-call firefighter to positively impact on that pump's availability (including as BA wearer and driver) due to limited training time for on-call of 2 hours per week.

In response to a question posed by County Councillor O'Toole regarding candidates struggling with wearing breathing apparatus masks, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that part of the Practical Assessment Day (PAD) included the practical opportunities of wearing a BA mask and working in a confined space. In terms of delivering training, the Service aimed to strike a balance between what worked for staff and the needs of the Service. It was acknowledged that on call staff generally had primary employers and may be required to use their annual leave to attend firefighting training and that the

Service needed to be cognisant of this when designing training for on-call staff.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Singleton regarding contacting the Government to request making allowances for leave from primary employment for training purposes, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the Deputy Chief Fire Officer was the national lead for on-call, and he had high-level strategic objectives to progress which included matters such as this.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that further to Members concerns previously raised at this Committee in relation to the 95% aspirational target for On-Call Fire Engine Availability, work had been undertaken with the data/intelligence team on how best this could be reported. Currently, (as set out on pages 65-67), there was a KPI (3.3) for Total Fire Engine Availability which was broken down into (3.3.1) Wholetime availability and (3.3.2) On-Call availability. Given the wholetime availability was generally stable, the proposal, (which would be taken to the next Planning Committee meeting), would be to continue to report Fire Engine Availability but at first pump level on each of the 39 fire station locations. This would: i) reassure the public that the Service's response and comprehensive across the country and ii) demonstrate that the Service was making the best use of its resources and that it could be flexible and provide operational response in relation to risk.

Currently the Service tried to maintain the availability of its 58 pumps which often required the need for overtime. Going forwards, the efficiency pillar under HMICFRS would likely consider the use of operational resources in terms of value for money and availability with the preference of the Service being to shift towards a response model which allowed the Service, the ability to flex and scale in relation to prevailing risk, such as during spate periods involving wildfires. For this reason, it was appropriate to future-proof the relevant KPIs (1<sup>st</sup> Pump Response and Overall Pump Availability) to ensure that they did not conflict with such an agile service approach.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Woollam, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that under the national framework, the Service was required to produce a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), and then determine its response standards in line with local risks. The Service response standards, (as detailed on page 63 of the report), were: 6, 8, 10 and 12 minutes dependent on the level of risk. Comparison with other Fire and Rescue Services illustrated how fast these times were, particularly given they included call handling times. No changes to the 6, 8, 10 and 12 minute times would be proposed within the paper being developed for Planning Committee.

#### **KPI 4 - Delivering value for money in how we use our resources**

##### **4.1 Progress Against Allocated Budget**

Members received an update on spend against the approved budget for the year.

The figure was not available, presently, due to the move to the new Finance

System. An updated figure would be presented to a future meeting of the Resources Committee.

#### 4.2 Partnership Collaboration

Under the Policing and Crime Act 2017, blue light services were under a formal duty to collaborate to improve efficiency, effectiveness and deliver improved outcomes.

LFRS, Lancashire Constabulary and North West Ambulance Service had met at both tactical and strategic levels and had agreed and signed a strategic statement of intent which contained the following aims:

- Improved Outcomes – The collaboration maintains or improves the service we provide to local people and local communities;
- Reduce Demand – The collaboration should contribute towards our longer-term strategic objective of decreasing risk in communities and reducing demand on services;
- Better Value for Money – The collaboration produces quantifiable efficiencies either on implementation or in the longer term;
- Reduced inequalities within our communities – The collaboration contributes towards reducing inequalities wherever possible.

This new indicator provided Members with an update on partnership collaboration during the period.

#### Update

The Blue Light Collaboration board met on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2022, where a presentation on the initial five projects was delivered to the strategic leads. This presentation incorporated the Project Initiation Documents (PID) and Highlight Reports for each project. Progress for the planning of each project was as follows:

#### Missing Persons (MisPer)

Following a review of the mobilisation data, it was identified that the opportunities to provide LFRS support to missing persons incidents had reduced. Therefore, the main project objective was to improve the existing collaborative approach to identification of the location of missing persons. Learning had been identified from the original process and improvements had been made. LFRS support for the Missing from Home Manager training for Lancashire Constabulary staff would be continued in terms of LFRS assets available. Furthermore, Lancashire Constabulary had provided training to Control staff to raise awareness.

Initially, a small number of the LFRS personnel from the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team and Drone team were to undertake the Missing From Home manager course. Additional crews in LFRS had been identified as specialist teams and would receive a bespoke training programme which was currently being mapped out. These teams would develop an increased knowledge of managing a missing person within the context of potential crime scene management. All LFRS assets would remain available regardless of the

additional skills imparted to the specialist teams.

#### Estates and Co-location

This project was a longer-term work stream with interdependencies, as there were several internal projects within Lancashire Constabulary to review current building stock. This included Lancashire Constabulary headquarters, and various police stations. Property Leads from all three agencies were in contact with each other, and plans were being developed to organise a monthly catch-up meeting. This would ensure that each Blue Light Service was sighted to internal findings and provided with awareness in terms of future opportunities.

#### First Responder

A phased approach was agreed in terms of volunteers signing up to the scheme. Phase 1 was being rolled out to non-operational LFRS staff, such as Community Fire Safety. Subsequently, phase 2 would consider the roll out to operational staff.

Progress on phase 1 had resulted in the successful onboarding of one non-operational member of LFRS, who was responding to category 1 incidents. The NWS reporting system had been modified to include LFRS staff enabling the Service to analyse data and monitor the mobilisations. There were 4 additional volunteers identified, and they would shortly undertake training. Once the 5 initial volunteers had been operation for 3 months, the data would be analysed, and regular welfare checks would be completed. The findings would be used to inform plans for phase 2.

In terms of technology, an NWS application was used to mobilise First Responders and there was an option for them to accept or decline the request forwarded to them. This data would also be used to report on the overall number of calls and responses received.

Further discussion would take place with Lancashire Constabulary to review if there were any suitable non-operational roles that could be added as First Responders. It was noted that operational staff did attend cardiac arrests alongside NWS and that collaboration to this effect was already in place.

#### Leadership Development

Initial scoping had been completed, in terms of what each organisation currently delivered for leadership development. The project was being delivered in two phases. Phase 1 covered some short-term objectives, seeking to maximise existing courses and events, and provide opportunities for staff from all three organisations to utilise places on these courses. An example of this was the 'Inside Out' programme, which was offered by Lancashire Constabulary. A benefit would be improved efficiency, through utilisation of unfilled places. Additionally, it would provide a platform for discussing ideas and sharing learning, as many of the leadership challenges were cross cutting in all three organisations.

Phase 2 would scope opportunities to collaborate on specific elements of supervisory and middle managers leadership programmes. This would lead to some efficiencies, as well as a platform to share ideas.

	<p><u>Command Units</u> The aim of this project was to establish and deliver additional collaborative uses of the command units in LFRS in line with Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) principles. The key objectives were to improve operational effectiveness and in line with the LFRS mission; 'Making Lancashire Safer'.</p> <p>4.3 <u>Overall User Satisfaction</u></p> <p>People surveyed included those who had experienced an accidental dwelling fire, a commercial fire, or a special service incident that the Service attended. The standard was achieved if the percentage of satisfied responses was greater than the standard.</p> <p>Annual Standard: 97.5%</p> <p>Since October, 99 people had been surveyed and the number satisfied with the service was 97; 98.81% against a standard of 97.5%; a variance of 1.34%.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Assistant Fire Officer for his update report.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> - That the Performance Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) noted and endorsed the Quarter 3 Measuring Progress report, including the three negative exceptions; and</li> <li>ii) that the Committee recommend the proposal to review the relevant KPIs and that they be presented to the next Planning Committee for further discussion.</li> </ul>
27/22	<p><b>BrightSparx Presentation</b></p>
	<p>Group Manager Prevention, Kirsty McCreesh, summarised that BrightSparx was a major campaign based around the Bonfire period that included work undertaken across the Service and with a multitude of partners in relation to antisocial behaviour fires, deliberate fires and accidental fires. The bonfire period could be a worrying time for members of the public and the Service was aware of an increase in activity around this time. The preparatory work for the campaign began in the summer months.</p> <p>The campaign was data driven following the principles of the Equality Impact Assessment and applied information collected from previous years to ensure a targeted approach to issues. The bonfire period was a peak period for response activity and firefighting resources were stretched with a subsequent lack of fire appliance availability which could, if uncontrolled, have serious consequences for the community. Attacks on responders were more likely during that period and increased access to fireworks often led to anti-social behaviour, particularly whilst fires were being extinguished.</p> <p>A multi-faceted approach was used, working across many departments within the Service. The Prevention department created the campaign, and the Comms</p>

department used social media to promote education packages to schools, community groups and faith groups. The Protection department worked with Trading Standards to assure the safe sale and storage of fireworks.

Group Manager Prevention, Kirsty McCreesh, explained that the campaign involved a multi-agency approach, working in collaboration with Local Authorities, the Police, North West Ambulance Service and Community Group to deliver a joined up and consistent message.

The BrightSparx campaign objectives for 2022 aimed to: i) maximise public and responder safety; ii) encourage public to attend organised events and displays; iii) target resources at areas of greatest risk based on incident intelligence and data; iv) address legal compliance regarding safe storage and sale of fireworks; v) identify and work closely with appropriate partners to reduce risk and provide effective and safe responses and; (vi) to reassure members of the public.

Group Manager Prevention, Kirsty McCreesh, informed that the BrightSparx education package had been delivered in person to 20,816 learners and virtually to 4,186 learners, which was an increase on the previous year. This package was targeted towards secondary school age pupils and had moved toward in-person delivery. The Service had worked in partnership with local authorities to remove waste alongside arson vulnerability assessments for derelict buildings.

In addition, seven multi-agency assessment vehicles were used with support by additional flexi duty officers. Multi Agency Initial Assessment Team (MAIAT), vehicles were used to aid multi-agency decision making and command and control. MAIAT vehicles were deployed to hotspots to triage and identify areas that had become dangerous to respond into due to anti-social behaviour, therefore reducing risk and unnecessary turn outs for fire engines and leaving them free to deploy to more serious, life critical incidents. The Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) was set up at Blackburn CCTV hub with attendance from Fire, NWAS and Police tactical commanders. Feedback received from the 2021 campaign had led to the TCG being re-located to the CCTV hub to allow better information sharing. The Command Support Room (CSR) had been set up at Service Head Quarters to provide support and an officer from the Service had been based at North West Fire Control (NWFC) to provide them with support.

Furthermore, media campaigns were launched and included a partnership video about attacks on emergency service workers which received over 59,000 views. This was a high engagement rate of 11.9% compared with an industry standard of around 2%. The number of attacks on firefighters over the bonfire night period had decreased over the previous 5 years. Both attacks in 2022 occurred in the Blackburn area with occurring on Bonfire night and involving a group of approximately 15 throwing fireworks at members of the emergency services.

Following a consistent decrease in anti-social behaviour fires over the previous 4 years, activity increased during the 2022 campaign, however, this was due to an exceptionally low number in 2021. Overall, there was a downwards trend with 2022 showing an 8.9% decrease over the previous 4 year average (taking 2021 as an anomaly). The incident data filtered activity on a district basis which

	<p>allowed for identifying trends, directing resources and prevention activity effectively. Eastern and Pennine remained the areas with the most anti-social activity.</p> <p>It was noted that a debrief and evaluation of the 2022 campaign would provide the basis for the 2023 campaign and recommendations were being processed. It was ensured that the campaign would continue to be data driven and the Service would use resources to the best effect. Planning for the 2023 campaign would begin soon and there were plans for a silent firework display at Service Training Centre with no bangs which would take into consideration those with pets and PTSD.</p> <p>County Councillor Beavers asked whether the Service could provide support for an annual firework display in Fleetwood as the event would not be able to go ahead if there were not enough volunteers. The Group Manager Prevention explained that the Service encouraged organised firework displays and if plenty of notice was given regarding a shortfall of volunteers, the Service would seek to provide assistance with the help of Fire Cadets and Community Safety Staff. She stated that, in addition to organised firework displays, the Service was considering diversionary activities in areas of increased anti-social behaviour as these had shown to be effective in achieving reductions.</p> <p>County Councillor Singleton commented that Bonfire Night was a national event and asked if other special events such as the Coronation were considered in terms of anti-social behaviour and firework safety. The Group Manager Prevention stated that events such as the Queen’s Jubilee and the Coronation were rare, however, the Service did link in with the Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF), organised events and representatives at district level. Tom Cookson, Group Manager Response and Emergency Planning worked with the LRF for a joined-up approach to prevention and response work.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor O’Toole, the Group Manager Prevention confirmed that the sale of fireworks was regulated, with supermarkets being especially responsible with their sales, and the Service worked with partners such as Trading Standards to address the risks posed by pop-up firework shops.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Kirsty McCreesh for her clear and informative presentation.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> - That the Committee noted the BrightSparx presentation.</p>
28/22	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p>
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on <b>Wednesday, 28 June 2023</b> at 10:00 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.</p> <p>Further meeting dates were noted for 13 September 2023 and 13 December</p>



	2023 and agreed for 06 March 2024.
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Fulwood**

**M Nolan  
Clerk to CFA**

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## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Audit Committee

**Tuesday, 28 March 2023, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room,  
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.**

### Minutes

<b>Present:</b>	
<b>Councillors</b>	
J Shedwick (Chair)	
N Hennessy (Vice-Chair)	
S Clarke	
F Jackson	
A Kay	
J Singleton	

<b>Officers</b>
K Mattinson, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS) D Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)
<b>In attendance</b>
L Rix, Internal Audit, Lancashire County Council G Jones, External Audit, Grant Thornton K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union

21/22	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
	Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Munsif Dad BEM.
22/22	<b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests</b>
	None received.
23/22	<b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b>
	<p>It was noted that the Minutes had been reformatted due to an error with the tables on pages 18-20. An attachment with the amendment had been provided to Members.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 29 November 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.</p>

24/22	<p><b>Internal Audit Monitoring Report</b></p>
	<p>The Internal Auditors produced a summary of progress against the annual plan for each Audit Committee meeting, setting out progress to date and any significant findings. The report for the period up to 5 March 2023 was presented by Laura Rix, Senior Auditor.</p> <p>To date, 50.5 days had been spent this financial year on completion of the 2022/23 plan, equating to 72% of the total planned audit activity of 70 days. The table in the report showed the current status of all audit work.</p> <p>No areas of concern had come to the attention of the auditors which needed to be brought to the attention of the Committee.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor Singleton regarding the completion dates for those areas on the audit plan which were listed as 'progressing' on page 24 of the agenda, Laura Rix confirmed that work remained ongoing which would conclude in the annual report due for the next meeting. County Councillor Hennessy asked if side notes could be provided as to the reason for those areas of work listed as progressing and Laura Rix agreed this would be added to future reports.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Committee noted and endorsed the report.</p>
25/22	<p><b>Internal Audit Plan 2023/24</b></p>
	<p>The Internal Auditors were required to produce an Annual Audit Plan, setting out areas they intended to review during the year. The plan amounted to a total resource of 70 audit days in 2023/24 which equated to an overall cost of £23,450 which was in line with budget provision.</p> <p>A proposed plan was presented by Laura Rix, Senior Auditor.</p> <p>The internal audit plan was designed to provide the evidence necessary to support an opinion of governance, risk management and control as well as sufficient coverage over operations as a whole either on an annual or periodic basis to enable production of a robust annual audit opinion.</p> <p>Individual items were proposed for inclusion in the annual audit programme based on known changes to operational activity, systems or processes and information obtained from the annual governance review, from the review of the corporate risk register and by liaising with the Director of Corporate Services to establish his view of those areas where independent assurance would be welcomed.</p> <p>Where it was known that assurance would be provided from another body the Internal Audit Service would not duplicate work but would take it into account if it was relevant to the overall opinion on governance, risk management and control.</p>

	<p>The deployment of audit resources was proposed as follows:-</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Governance and business effectiveness</td> <td>3 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Service delivery and support</td> <td>20 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Business processes</td> <td>35 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Follow up audit activity</td> <td>2 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other components of the audit plan</td> <td>10 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td><b>70 days</b></td> </tr> </table> <p>Laura Rix advised that extra time had been allocated to the financial managements systems audit due to the implementation of the Oracle Fusion system.</p> <p>In response to a question raised by CC Singleton, Laura Rix advised that once the plan had been agreed, dates for undertaking the work would be arranged with the Director of Corporate Services and these would be flexible to bear in mind the Service’s operational needs.</p> <p><b>Resolved:-</b> That the Audit Committee agreed the internal Audit Plan for 2023/24.</p>	Governance and business effectiveness	3 days	Service delivery and support	20 days	Business processes	35 days	Follow up audit activity	2 days	Other components of the audit plan	10 days	<b>Total</b>	<b>70 days</b>
Governance and business effectiveness	3 days												
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Other components of the audit plan	10 days												
<b>Total</b>	<b>70 days</b>												
26/22	<p><b>External Audit - Auditors Annual Report 2021/22</b></p>												
	<p>Georgia Jones, Audit Manager presented the report.</p> <p>The Auditor’s Annual Report confirmed the final opinion on the financial statements and the outcome of the review of the Authority’s value for money arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.</p> <p>The report re-affirmed the draft opinion on the accounts previously reported to the Committee that they had completed their audit of the Authority’s financial statements and issued an unqualified audit opinion on 30 November 2022.</p> <p>The review of value for money arrangement covered the 3 areas of: i) financial sustainability; ii) governance and iii) improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The auditor’s review did not identify any significant weaknesses in arrangements across any of these areas, but had made 2 improvement recommendations as set out pages 63 and 64 of the agenda pack as now considered by Members:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recommendation – That the Authority should continue to closely monitor the delivery of its savings and efficiency plans to minimise the reduction of reserves and achieve strategic objectives. Management Comment - Agreed, this was usual practice but had slipped due to staff vacancies;</li> <li>2. Recommendation – That the Authority should closely track the delivery of its capital programme to ensure any ongoing slippage did not impact the</li> </ol>												

	<p>delivery of its strategic objectives and longer-term plans. Management Comment – Agree, we already do this.</p> <p>The Director Corporate Services explained that the Service faced challenges with the deadline for the completion of the accounts for a number of reasons: i) the deadline had moved several times over previous years (including due to the Covid pandemic), ii) experienced officers had left the finance team; iii) and with the Service implementing the new Oracle Fusion financial system. It was noted that the government deadline for preparing the draft accounts was by the end of May (with the creation of the accounts by the end of July) however, there was a consultation taking place to extend this deadline.</p> <p>Georgia Jones advised that the external audit could not take place until the accounts were finalised and therefore the outcome of the consultation was awaited. Even if the deadline for audited local authority accounts to be published moved into September, it still may not be achieved given the challenges outlined. She provided reassurance however, that she would work closely with the newly appointed Director of Corporate Services. CC Singleton queried whether there were any implications if the deadline could not be met. In response, Georgina Jones explained that the government wanted to bring the deadline forward to enable it to generate its own accounts (which included public sector accounts such as from local authorities and other bodies). This was for efficiency purposes and to support decision-making. There was no real impact on the Authority if the deadline could not be met (ie: there were no punitive measures however, questions were sometimes asked at a Public Accounts Committee).</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor Hennessy regarding the improvement recommendation outlined on page 64 of the agenda pack, the Director of Corporate Services provided reassurance that the delivery of the capital programme was monitored by the Resources Committee.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Committee noted and endorsed the report.</p>
27/22	<p><b>Risk Management</b></p>
	<p>The report highlighted actions taken in respect of corporate risk since the last Audit Committee meeting.</p> <p>The latest review of the corporate risk register had not identified any new risks which warranted consideration for inclusion on the corporate risk register.</p> <p>An updated corporate risk register was considered by Members with changes summarised in the report. The Director of Corporate Services highlighted the following key areas:-</p> <p><b>Risk no. 3 – Insufficient staffing resources</b> Following the agreement of the grey book pay award for 22/23 and 23/24 the likelihood of industrial action had reduced.</p>

	<p><b>Risk no. 9 – Retention and recruitment of RDS/on-call staff impacts on appliance availability</b></p> <p>The numbers of vacancies within the on-call system had increased in the current year, as recruitment had not matched leavers, which had led to a reduction in availability therefore the risk had been revised and increased to a high-risk. It was noted that various groups within the Service were looking at how availability could be improved.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that this was a national issue and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer was the National Fire Chief Council lead for this. It was noted that many Fire and Rescue Services struggled to achieve 50% availability whereas LFRS availability was currently circa 70% (although it had been over 90% in the past).</p> <p><b>Risk no. 29 – High levels of staff absence due to the pandemic</b></p> <p>Given the reductions in absence due to the pandemic, it was proposed to reduce the risk to low-risk.</p> <p><b>Risk no. 33 – Removal of DCP/Outcome of Emergency Cover Review (ECR)</b></p> <p>The Emergency Cover Review was approved by the CFA in December 2022, and was reflected in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The implementation of the recommendations would take place over the next 2 years starting with engagement sessions with affected station-based staff (these had already commenced).</p> <p><b>Risk no. 36 – Increase in pay costs</b></p> <p>The 23/24 budget allowed for pay awards of 5%. This was in line with the agreed pay award for grey book and exceeded the pay offer for green book. Hence, it was considered sufficient to meet future costs.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Audit Committee noted the actions taken and endorsed the revised corporate risk register.</p>
28/22	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on <b>Tuesday 25 July 2023</b> at 10:00 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.</p> <p>Further meeting dates were noted for 26 September 2023 and 28 November 2023 and agreed for 28 March 2024.</p>

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## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Resources Committee

**Wednesday, 29 March 2023, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room,  
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.**

### Minutes

<b>Present:</b>	
<b>Councillors</b>	
S Rigby (Chair)	
D O'Toole (Vice-Chair)	
T Hurn	
J Mein	
M Pattison	
R Scott	
R Woollam	
B Yates	

<b>Officers</b>
S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) K Mattinson, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS) B Warren, Director of People and Development (LFRS) M Nolan, Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority J Johnson, Interim Head of ICT (LFRS) D Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer (LFRS)
<b>In attendance</b>
K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union

39/22	<b>Chairman's Announcement</b>
	<p>This was the last meeting which would be attended by Mr Keith Mattinson as Director of Corporate Services and Treasurer to the Authority.</p> <p>Mr Mattinson advised that the new Director of Corporate Services was Mr Steven Brown who, following a hand over period during March would be formally starting in the role from 3 April 2023.</p> <p>On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Mr Mattinson for all his hard work over the years and wished him well in his retirement.</p>
40/22	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
	Apologies were received from County Councillors Lorraine Beavers and Sean Serridge.

41/22	<b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests</b>																
	None received.																
42/22	<b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b>																
	<b>Resolved:</b> That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 30 November 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.																
43/22	<b>Financial Monitoring</b>																
	<p>The Director of Corporate Services presented the report which set out the current budget position in respect of the 2022/23 revenue and capital budgets.</p> <p>The overall position at the end of January was an overspend of £1.3m, largely as a result of unfunded pay awards and inflationary pressures.</p> <p>The year to date and forecast positions within individual departments were set out in the report with major variances relating to non-pay spends and variances on the pay budget being shown separately in the table below: -</p>																
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Area</th> <th>Overspend/ (Under spend) £'000</th> <th>Reason</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Fleet &amp; Technical Services</td> <td>174</td> <td>As reported in November, fuel had continued to overspend to £124k to date due to the sharp increase in fuel costs early this year. A slight reduction was now being seen as fuel prices started to decrease. An increase in mileage post pandemic had also been attributed to increased costs. Repair costs were overspent to date by £70k due to inflationary pressures. It was projected both these areas would continue to overspend.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Information Technology</td> <td>44</td> <td>The overspend had 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 had been a general increase in costs, again reflecting inflationary pressures.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Property</td> <td>583</td> <td>Increased energy costs continued to cause significant overspend totalling £407k to date, however costs were not as severe as initially anticipated following the introduction of the business support scheme. Inflationary pressures continued to cause the maintenance costs to overspend, accounting for the balance of the overspend.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pensions</td> <td>(73)</td> <td>The underspend on pensions was due to fewer individuals retiring on ill health than</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Area	Overspend/ (Under spend) £'000	Reason	Fleet & Technical Services	174	As reported in November, fuel had continued to overspend to £124k to date due to the sharp increase in fuel costs early this year. A slight reduction was now being seen as fuel prices started to decrease. An increase in mileage post pandemic had also been attributed to increased costs. Repair costs were overspent to date by £70k due to inflationary pressures. It was projected both these areas would continue to overspend.	Information Technology	44	The overspend had 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 had been a general increase in costs, again reflecting inflationary pressures.	Property	583	Increased energy costs continued to cause significant overspend totalling £407k to date, however costs were not as severe as initially anticipated following the introduction of the business support scheme. Inflationary pressures continued to cause the maintenance costs to overspend, accounting for the balance of the overspend.	Pensions	(73)	The underspend on pensions was due to fewer individuals retiring on ill health than
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		budgeted. To date there was just one retirement due to ill health.
Non DFM	(585)	The underspend was due to an increase in interest rates resulting in receiving an additional £400k interest to date. Also £102k VAT had been awarded back from the purchase of operational vehicles, having successfully challenged HMRC.
Wholetime Pay	857	Pay had 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 were higher than anticipated, with this and a slight shortfall in recruit numbers being offset by increased overtime.
On Call Pay	5	This was broadly in line with budget having reflected the pay award.
Support staff (less agency staff)	110	The current position reflected the green book pay award, which was £1,925 per full time equivalent. This was significantly higher than the budgeted allowance of 2% and had increased costs over and above budget by approx. £400k by year end (please note at the time of writing the previous report it had been assumed that the pay award would equate to approx. 5%, however based on actual staff mix in year the actual costs were significantly higher at approx. 6.5%). This was partly offset by vacancies within the year, where recruitment had continued to be challenging, reflecting the employment market. And where use of temporary / agency staff had continued to cover some key posts.

Inflationary pressures and pay awards would continue to impact the budget for the remainder of the year, resulting in a year end overspend which was anticipated being approx. £1.5m to £1.75m. (This had not yet been finalised with the move onto a new finance system, provided by Lancashire County Council, which had resulted in some downtime and some challenges in extracting information from the system.)

As such reserves would be needed to offset this. The current general reserves held was £6.0m, having agreed a minimum level of £3.75m, and as such had sufficient reserves to meet this.

### **Capital Budget**

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

	Revised Programme	Spend to 31 January	
	£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 there had been no expenditure occurred in the year to date. Whilst a staged payment profile had been agreed for these vehicles it appeared increasingly unlikely that any such costs would be incurred in year
Support vehicles	0.4	0.3	This budget allowed for the replacement of various operational support vehicles, whilst some of these had already been delivered, the shortage of raw materials had affected both the timeframe for delivery and the cost of vehicles. Again, it appeared increasingly unlikely that all of the allocated funding would be spent in year.
Operational Equipment	0.3	0.1	Spend to date was attributable to the replacement of light portable pumps. An additional £0.2m spend on CCTV for pumping appliances was anticipated in-year.
Building Modifications	0.8	0.6	Spend to date was associated with:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced facilities at Hyndburn fire stations, where works had been completed, at a cost of £0.2m</li> <li>The replacement of drill towers, where Blackpool, Tarleton and Bolton le Sands had all been completed, at a cost of £0.4m</li> </ul>
IT systems	0.9	0.3	Expenditure to date related 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 was clear that the 2022/23 capital programme would not be fully utilised and hence would need to slip funding into 2023/24 to meet future costs, the extent of this would be reported as part of the year end capital outturn.

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

It was highlighted that there remained significant cost increases across various supply chains, and in particular in construction projects which would affect some of the capital projects as they progressed through the procurement stage.

In response to a comment from CC Rigby, the Director of Corporate Services advised that there had been some difficulties with the introduction of a new financial system run by Lancashire County Council (LCC) which had resulted in this report being circulated late and normally it would have been possible to produce a year end forecast. The Service was however, working with LCC to resolve the issues which may have some impact on the year end processes.

**Resolved:** That the Committee:

- i) noted and endorsed the current financial position; and
- ii) noted the anticipated year end forecast overspend of between £1.5m and £1.75m.

44/22

**ICT Plan 2022 - 2027**

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the ICT Plan for Member consideration and introduced Jack Johnson, Interim Head of ICT who was covering the post due to long-term sickness and who had prepared the report.

The ICT Plan supported the Data and Digital Strategy. It set out the programme of investment, which underpinned the business strategies that formed the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-27.

Data and Digital information were essential for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) to improve fire response, prevention and protection services to the public given a huge amount of activity was dependent on effective use of data and information. It was acknowledged that best practice guidelines from central Government, together with other partner agency collaborations, would be considered wherever possible. The Service would also look to align itself with established and accepted best practices and working patterns from across the technology sector.

Key objectives set within the ICT Plan aimed to support the creation of a positive, inclusive culture that encouraged innovation and continuous improvement. Achieving the right culture enabled the delivery of the best

services and supported LFRS to be an outstanding fire and rescue service for our communities and visitors.

The ICT Plan focussed on ensuring that the workforce: i) could make effective use of technology to communicate, safely store and share information; ii) could work effectively from anywhere using the most appropriate device for their role, intrinsically increasing efficiency; iii) had easy access to data and intelligence relevant to their role and that the information was current to help increase safety and reduce risk; iv) was digitally engaged in the organisation and champion a digital first culture; and v) technology solutions were secure, but still allowed the workforce to work effectively and efficiently.

The report contained a glossary of technical terms and acronyms to support understanding. Key elements of the ICT Plan were:

- Service Support kept operations running smoothly as well as taking ICT service requests via the Helpdesk;
- Ongoing partnership work with the Prince's Trust was through the delivery of WiFi, printing, iPads, projectors, and computers/monitors for all Prince's Trust students;
- Network Connectivity provided a robust and reliable network infrastructure that connected services across fire stations essential for effective and efficient service delivery. Network links connected the Service's 39 stations to central data centres located at Headquarters, North West Fire Control, Service Training Centre, Lancashire County Council for collaboration and delivery of the service's financial systems and to the Internet.
- Storage to protect data from unauthorised access, modification, or deletion.
- Virtualisation - The strategic direction across UK Government was now 'Digital by Default, Cloud First' which required public sector organisations to consider and fully evaluate cloud solutions first before considering other options. The term 'virtualisation' meant that software was used to create an abstraction layer over computer hardware which allowed the hardware elements of a single computer processor, memory, storage and more to be divided into multiple virtual computers, commonly called virtual machines each running its own operating system. This enabled more efficient use of physical computer hardware and allowed a greater return on hardware investment. Members noted that 90% of LFRS' servers were virtualised.
- Mobile Device Management was the remote control, monitoring and enforcement of policies on employee devices to support staff to securely work off-premises.
- Telephony Solution – hosted desk-based phone services.
- Communications - to ensure the integrity, performance and availability of 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.
- Cyber Security –given the security landscape was changing rapidly there was the need to evolve at a pace to reduce the likelihood and impact of a cyber-attack; best practice standards set by the National Cyber Security Centre had changed according to that change in the threat landscape. LFRS had been awarded both Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation, which were government backed schemes that involved external auditing of IT systems. The certification also allowed for better

	<p>collaboration with other authorities given the growing requirement to be security compliant.</p> <p>The Authority Chairman thought the document had been laid out in a way which was easy to understand. He requested that a short presentation be given by the Interim Head of ICT at the next Strategy Group meeting, and the ICT Plan be circulated to all Members at that time.</p> <p>CC Woollam queried the Service’s use of TikTok in light of nationally reported potential security concerns. In response, the Interim Head of ICT advised that the Government’s National Cyber Security Centre had removed TikTok from Government devices. He reassured Members that Service mobile devices were managed by ICT and the only department with access to use TikTok was corporate communications.</p> <p>Cllr Scott queried the ability for Fire Services to communicate with each other. In response the Interim Head of ICT advised that Airwave was the system currently being used which would be replaced by the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP). This would move systems from analogue to digital to deliver the new Emergency Services Network (ESN) critical communications system. He reassured Members that Fire Services did communicate effectively with each other. The move to digital would improve efficiencies and enable blue light services to have 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.</p> <p>In response to a question raised by CC Rigby the Interim Head of ICT advised that the 4G network would be upgraded as required to maintain the highest specification.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the report be noted and the ICT Plan endorsed.</p>
45/22	<p><b>Local Pension Board Annual Report 2021-23</b></p>
	<p>The Director of People and Development presented the report which provided an update on the Lancashire Fire Local Pension Board for the period 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2023.</p> <p>Members noted that the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 introduced the requirement to have a Local Pension Board to assist in the governance of the Scheme. The Board had no remit as a decision-making body but was established to assist the Scheme Manager to fulfil functions which covered all aspects of governance and administration of the Firefighters’ Pension Scheme. The Authority was the Pension Scheme Manager and this responsibility had been delegated to the Director of People and Development. The Board’s Terms of Reference required that it met approximately twice a year and the Chair of the Board could call additional meetings as required. It was noted that there were two meetings held per year during the period as planned.</p> <p><b>Membership</b></p> <p>Three new members were appointed to the Board during the year 2021-22, a</p>

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 had contributed to the work activities involved in fire pensions, meant that key activities continued to be delivered and projects progressed. The focus had been on the following 3 major projects: i) the implementation and backdating of pensionable allowances within LFRS e.g., Day Crewing Plus Allowance; ii) the Sergeant/McCloud judgement relating to age discrimination; and iii) 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 its 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, with a focus on delivering the requirements of the Sergeant/McCloud and Matthews cases. Although complex, Officers worked 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 had already taken place and was continuing. The Board had received and considered update reports at key project milestones.

The Board had also been informed about a number of complex cases which had been dealt with over this period, including through the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (Appeals). It continued to focus on key areas identified by the Pensions Regulator and maintaining an oversight of the key risks to the fund. A Risk Register was developed in October 2021 which had 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 were limited during this time, due to the effect of the pandemic however, the Board had access to regular LGA monthly bulletins and the website and had 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 would focus on the principal activities of the



	<p>Scheme as currently anticipated, which included: i) 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; ii) 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; iii) Assessing the impact of and responding to consultations that would have an impact on the Lancashire Firefighters Pension Schemes; iv) Appraising the impact of the implementation of the Pensions Dashboard; and v) Enhancing Board knowledge and skills.</p> <p>The Plan would be reviewed and amended where appropriate to ensure it addressed any relevant issues which arose.</p> <p>The Chairman of the Authority commented that issues with pension arrangements had been ongoing for a considerable length of time which was confusing for everyone and understandably frustrating for staff.</p> <p>In response to questions raised by CC Woollam, the Director of People and Development provided reassurance that part of the role of the Pension Board was to communicate factual and accurate information with staff however, it was acknowledged that the issues were complicated and sometimes people were looking for different answers. He confirmed that no one retired with less pension than they had expected. He also confirmed that regular seminars were held for people approaching retirement. Elements were delivered separately for operational and support staff due to the differing pension schemes and they included presentations from the local pension partnership administrators who outlined options available which did not include investment advice.</p> <p>The Clerk advised that together with the Director of People and Development they had met with a senior barrister in London, over three years ago, to seek advice regarding legislation and case law in order to put the Service in the best possible place to ensure that pension entitlement was properly overseen and there was no agreed algorithm that took into account the significant number of variables involved in calculating each firefighter's pension. In response to a question from CC Mein, the Clerk advised that it was possible to provide a synopsis of the McCloud / Sargeant judgement outside the meeting and most likely at the next Strategy Group Day.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the report be noted.</p>
46/22	<p><b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b></p>
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on <b>Wednesday, 12 July 2023</b> at 1000 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.</p> <p>Further meeting dates were noted for 27 September 2023 and 29 November 2023 and agreed for 27 March 2024.</p>

47/22	<b>Exclusion of Press and Public</b>
	<b>Resolved:</b> 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.
48/22	<b>Pensions Update</b>
	(Paragraphs 4 and 5)  Members considered a report that provided an update on the various issues which had arisen in respect of the changes to the pension schemes applying to the uniformed members of the Fire Sector.  <b>Resolved:</b> that the report be noted.
49/22	<b>IDRP Stage 2</b>
	(Paragraphs 1, 4 and 5)  Members considered a report regarding an IDRP Stage 2 application under the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure. The report outlined the facts of the case.  <b>Resolved:</b> That the Committee declined the application presented.
50/22	<b>High Value Procurement Projects</b>
	(Paragraph 3)  Members considered a report that provided an update on all contracts for one-off purchases valued in excess of £100,000 and high value procurement projects in excess of £100,000 including: new contract awards, progress of ongoing projects and details of new projects.  <b>Resolved:</b> That the Committee noted and endorsed the report.

**M Nolan**  
**Clerk to CFA**

**LFRS HQ**  
**Fulwood**

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 24 April 2023

### Member Champion Activity Report

Contact for further information:

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Steve Healey – Tel No: 01772 866801

#### Executive Summary

This paper provides a report on the work of the Member Champions for the period up to 31 March 2023.

#### Recommendation

The Authority is requested to note and endorse the report and acknowledge the work of the respective Champions.

#### Information

The concept of Member Champions was introduced in December 2007 with a review of the roles in 2017.

The Authority appoints its Member Champions at its Annual Meeting in June, and the current Member Champions are:

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

Reports relating to the activity of the Member Champions are provided on a regular basis to the Authority. During this period, all have undertaken their respective role in accordance with the defined terms of reference. Their activity to date is as follows:

#### Community Safety – Councillor Jean Rigby

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Fire Cadets were represented at the Northwest IFE Junior Lecturette Final by Jack Nicholls from the Morecambe unit, Emily Evans from the Burnley unit and Callum Shorrock from the Preston unit. Jack's presentation was on Equality and Diversity in the Fire Service, Emily presented on 999 Re-Unite and Callum was responsible for keeping the evening on track as Master of Ceremonies. Merseyside and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Services were also represented. There were some fantastic presentations across the evening from all the young people demonstrating so much passion, enthusiasm and knowledge. Jack was awarded the overall winner of the competition.

In Southern area there has been a rise in the number of Automatic Fire Alarm activations in sheltered accommodation so the Prevention Team have started a programme whereby they start the day with a general Fire Safety Talk and then the residents can have a bespoke Home Fire Safety Check, which is person centred and

tailored to their situation and needs. This initiative will be monitored alongside the alarm activations to evaluate effectiveness.

The Prevention Support Team has completed an evaluation of the Winter Safety campaign, which has largely focused on the Cost-of-Living Crisis. The campaign has allowed collaboration with partners, members of the public and third sector organisations. LFRS were able to identify and engage directly with approximately 42,000 people from the target audience and issue resources and safety information to them and delivered nearly 8000 Home Fire Safety Checks. Throughout the campaign, accidental dwelling fires and other related incidents were monitored to allow the identification of any emerging behaviours or trends relating to the cost of living. The evaluation was able to evidence a reduction in the number of accidental dwelling fires from November 2022 to the end of February 2023 in comparison to previous years.

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Councillor Zamir Khan**

The Service has several employee voice groups comprising members of staff from underrepresented groups who undertake activity to make LFRS a better place to work for all.

- We continue to attend recruitment events promoting LFRS as an employer of choice, recently attending an event at UCLAN which was aimed at offering employment opportunities to ex veterans. As we look to recruit to our wholetime recruits course next year we will again be embarking on positive action events.
- We continue to improve the scrutiny and quality assurance arrangements in relation to equality impact assessments.

Further to several cultural reviews in relation to other Services and more recently the HMICFRS spotlight report on values and culture we continue to identify and implement any recommendations and any learning.

- We have adopted the new Code of Ethics and built this into our induction and performance management arrangements, we are relaunching our Code of Ethics development sessions which clearly communicate our standards and expectations in relation to banter and behaviour.
- We have written to all our firefighters in development with key contacts in case they need additional support.
- We are in the process of establishing a confidential reporting hot line which members of staff can utilise to report issues of concern.
- We have promoted our standards in relation to the use of social media in a variety of different ways.
- We currently undertake Enhanced DBS checks for anyone who undertakes regulated activity, we will be extending our checking process to include a basic check of anyone who undertakes an operational role, or a role within community safety. We have written to Lancashire Constabulary to ensure that their Common Law Police Disclosure powers are being used appropriately in circumstances involving fire and rescue employees.
- We continue to deliver management development training to all those in a supervisory, middle or senior leadership role and this includes development on how to undertake investigations and the management of people issues. Further to the development of new Fire Standards Board's leadership standards we are

in the process of reviewing our development programmes against these standards.

## Health and Wellbeing & Climate Change Update – County Councillor Andrea Kay

### Climate Change and Environment

This quarter's environmental focus has been Living Lent. This is an opportunity for people to try making a change for 40 days and commit to changing their lifestyle in support of the climate during Lent. Ideas for this Living Lent include:

- Giving up using single-use plastics
- Going meat-free
- Finding alternative modes of transport
- Reducing electricity use by 10%
- Commit to living/shopping locally
- Buy nothing new for the whole of Lent.

These ideas were shared with the Environmental Champions across the Service as well as being creative with recycled materials to display these and other environmental messages in a Noticeboard at Service Headquarters.



The Environment and Sustainability Promotional Calendar 2023/24 (attached as Appendix 1) has been approved and is ready to be launched in April. Topics this year

include; Earth Day, Recycle Week, Energy Saving Week and the Great British Spring Clean. Further updates will be shared about this as they are promoted.

## **Health and Wellbeing**

In January 2023 we launched a trial wellbeing initiative – Wellbeing Wednesdays. The idea behind the Wellbeing Wednesdays is that a representative from the SHE Department will work from a different station each week (not always on a Wednesday so as to ensure On Call units are included in this trial), with the aim of encouraging mental health conversations and good working relationships between all levels of staff. There is not a specific format to the day, it is entirely up to the crew/staff how the day develops but it could be an opportunity to:-

- enable managers to have a wellbeing chat.
- support managers in having wellbeing conversations and about how to start/have difficult conversations with staff.
- encourage open and honest discussion about wellbeing/mental health/experiencing struggles etc. both in and out of work.
- deliver Workplace Wellbeing Toolbox Talks or facilitate wellbeing sessions for anyone on station.
- other wellbeing related support/activity – pre-arranged by the Station Manager or staff on station.

During Jan – Mar 2023 we have completed 20 sessions and each one has been well received, with staff at all levels taking the opportunity to find out more about the wellbeing resources the Service have in place and also taking part in workshops. To date this has resulted in over 60 wellbeing interactions with colleagues, such as supportive conversations and workshops. The trial will continue until the end of July, after which the impact/feedback from sessions will be reviewed.

A review is underway to refresh the Distress Management and Self-Care course that was developed in 2017. The contract for this course has come to end and we are now updating the content of a new bespoke course to focus on more relevant topic areas; such as, how to deal with impact of attending suicide/attempted suicide incidents as a responder, building personal resilience and maintaining work-life balance, recognising stress reactions and learning coping strategies etc. It is hoped this course will be developed and ready to pilot in Q3 2023/24.

## **Road Safety – County Councillor Ron Woollam**

Road Sense is a Year 6 Road Safety Education Package delivered by LFRS and offered to all primary schools in Lancashire. Delivery since September reached nearly 11,800 pupils. Feedback from teachers is very favourable. An evaluation tool has been trialled and is now in use, this makes the process of evaluation easier for the teachers and results in better data to evaluate effectiveness. An anonymous evaluation has recently been introduced for the children to complete following completion of the session. This will allow evaluation of the effectiveness of the delivery from the pupil's perspective and will feed into a wider piece of work Prevention Support are doing into the evaluation of our Prevention activities.

Biker Down continues to be very popular with nearly 265 attendees since September. Attendees all receive a Safety Helmet Assessment and Rating Programme (SHARP)

information booklet alongside their First Aid Kit. The National Fire Chiefs Council campaign, '2 Wheels Week', in April will deliver 7 courses throughout the month and will aim to increase social media activity. Short clips have been created to release throughout the week promoting the course and highlighting the importance of wearing personal protective equipment when riding, the theme of the campaign. The Facebook followers have increased to over 850 and posts often reach over 1900 people. The course also has a 5-star review status on social media.

LFRS continues to work with partners including the Child and Youth Justice Service. The two sessions that have taken place have been delivered from Burnley Fire Station and more are planned at Chorley and Garstang. The purpose of the sessions is engagement and education in road safety and the young people gain a level two qualification. LFRS is a specified authority under the Serious Violence Duty, so this collaboration is supportive of this.

### **Financial Implications**

Activities are within budget.

### **Business Risk Implications**

Whilst no formal obligation is placed on the Authority to have Champions, effective utilisation of such roles offers a number of benefits.

### **Environmental Impact**

The Member Champion role provides leadership on environmental issues and assists in engaging Authority members in strategic objectives relating to protecting the environment.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

The Member Champion role provides leadership on equality and diversity issues and assists in engaging Authority members in strategic objectives relating to equality and diversity.

### **Human Resource Implications**

Some Member and Officer time commitments.

### **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

#### **List of background papers**

Paper:

Date:

Contact: DCFO, Steve Healey

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

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## Environment and Sustainability Promotional Calendar 2023/24

Environmental Champions to consider for local promotion		SHE Department quarterly promotions via Engine House & Routine Bulletin
April	<a href="#">Stop Food Waste Day</a> (26 <sup>th</sup> April)	Earth Day (22 <sup>nd</sup> April) – focus on pollution prevention
May	<a href="#">No Mow May</a>	
June	<a href="#">World Environment Day</a> (5 <sup>th</sup> June)	
July	<a href="#">Plastic Free July</a>	Recycle Week (September)
August	<a href="#">Cycle to Work Day</a> (TBC)	
September	<a href="#">Great British Beach Clean</a> (15 <sup>th</sup> -24 <sup>th</sup> September)	
October	<a href="#">No Disposable Cup Day</a> (4 <sup>th</sup> October)	Energy Saving Week (October)
November	<a href="#">National Tree Week</a> (26 <sup>th</sup> November to 4 <sup>th</sup> December)	
December	<a href="#">Tips for an Eco-Friendly Sustainable Christmas</a>	
January	<a href="#">Veganuary</a>	Great British Spring Clean (March)
February	<a href="#">Living Lent</a> (starts 22 <sup>nd</sup> February)	
March	<a href="#">Earth Hour</a> (30 <sup>th</sup> March 8.30pm to 9.30pm)	

Please use the links above to find more information on each promotion via relevant websites. Those listed in the right-hand column will be promoted by SHE Department and forwarded to Environmental Champions prior to being included in the Routine Bulletin.

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## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 24 April 2023

### Fire Protection Report

Contact for further information: Assistant Chief Fire Officer Jon Charters

Tel: 01772 866802

#### Executive Summary

This report summarises Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) prosecutions pertaining to fire safety offences, in addition to convictions resulting from arson incidents which have been progressed via the criminal justice process.

Given the rapidly evolving regulatory change in building fire safety, an update on Fire Protection and Business Support is also provided, detailing how the Service is adapting delivery whilst developing our workforce, to ensure that we keep pace with the changes and improve public and firefighter safety within the built environment.

#### Recommendation

The Authority is asked to note the report.

## FIRE SAFETY CONVICTIONS

### Prosecutions

There is currently one case within the court system for offences under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005; a provisional trial date is set for 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

Fire Safety teams continue to investigate and build files in relation to ten further cases wherein offences are believed to have been committed under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005, involving the following types of premises:

- Specialised Housing / Supported Living Scheme
- Care & Nursing Home
- House in Multiple Occupation used as Student Accommodation
- Mixed commercial and Residential (Takeaway with sleeping above) x2
- Residential Flats x3
- Commercial car repair garage
- Mixed commercial and Residential (in-dining restaurant with sleeping above)

## FIRE PROTECTION & BUSINESS SUPPORT INFORMATION

### Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSC)

BFSC continue to support responsible persons along with improving fire safety across Lancashire. To date (end of March 2023) Operational crews have undertaken c2.5k BFSC with 462 identifying significant fire safety concerns resulting in follow up action by Fire Safety teams. This follow-up action has resulted in both enforcement and prohibition activity highlighting the significant value of this service.

## **Legislation Changes Update**

To support the recent Fire Safety England Regulations 2022 which were introduced under Article 24 Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, LFRS Built Environment Team wrote to all affected building owners and hosted engagement sessions with tall building owners, housing authorities and managing agents to discuss the changes and outline how LFRS would approach these changes from an enforcement perspective.

To support new duties placed upon responsible persons the LFRS website was updated to allow critical fire safety defects to be reported digitally, 24hours a day. This information is then acted upon from both a regulatory perspective and to ensure operational risk information is accurate for crews.

From April 2023 all residential buildings at least 18m or 7 storeys and above will legally need to register their premises with the newly created Building Safety Regulator (BSR). Registration is now open and will close in November 2023.

The Built Environment Team are currently working across the region in supporting the BSR by engaging with accountable persons to raise awareness of the need to register.

## **ARSON RISK REDUCTION**

### **R v Joseph NOLAN**

Moorhead Street, Colne

Date and Time of call – 06/10/2022, 09:15

This incident involved the deliberate ignition of various combustible items, including cushions, which were placed on an ignited gas hob. The fire caused severe damage to the kitchen and contents. The remainder of the property, comprising of a two storey mid terraced house, suffered severe smoke damage.

The defendant, who was the partner of the occupier of the house, pleaded guilty to Arson reckless as to whether life was endangered and was sentenced to 3 years 6 months in prison.

### **R v Callum SOUTHWORTH**

7 incidents in Audley area, Blackburn

Date – 22/04/2022

These incidents involved deliberate fires at various properties including a Pizza Hut and three houses. The most serious blaze was set at a house in Cambridge Street when an occupant woke at around 11pm to her smoke detector sounding. They were subsequently rescued by Firefighters who forced entry into the property.

The defendant pleaded guilty to Arson reckless as to whether life was endangered, and other counts, and was sentenced to 4 years 6 months in prison plus 2 further years on licence.

## **R v Restricted (due to age)**

Salam Street (Car Park), Haslingden

Date – 22/01/2023, 13:44

This incident involved a Mercedes camper van which was totally destroyed by fire whilst parked on the car park. Three youths were captured on CCTV, in and around the vehicle at the time of the fire. The youths were subsequently identified and one of them confessed to starting the fire.

One youth aged 12 received a youth conditional caution and was ordered to complete activities with the Youth Offending Team.

### **Business Risk**

Moderate – Members are made aware of prosecutions related to fire safety activity and/or arson within Lancashire to satisfy themselves that the required robust approach is being pursued.

### **Environmental Impact**

None

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

None

### **HR Implications**

None

### **Financial Implications**

None

## **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

### **List of background papers**

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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

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## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 24 April 2023

### Operational Incidents of Interest

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Jon Charters, Director of Service Delivery

Tel: 01772 866801

#### Executive Summary

This report provides Members with information relating to operational incidents of interest since the last report to the Authority.

#### Recommendation

The Authority is asked to note the report.

#### Information

This report provides Members with information relating to operational incidents of interest over the period 1 February 2023 – 31 March 2023.

The following summarises the incidents with further detail provided within the body of the report:

- Person missing in the River Ribble near Clayton le Dale (9/2/2023)
- 6 fire engines attend a building fire in Withnell Fold, Chorley (10/2/23)
- 6 fire engines attend a large outbuilding on fire in Burscough (11/2/23)
- 6 fire engines attend a fire at a restaurant in Rawtenstall (12/2/23)
- 2 people injured in a caravan explosion in Pilling (4/3/23)
- 7 fire engines attend a fire at Lancaster University (8/3/23)
- 6 fire engines attend a fire at a waste management plant in Preston (12/3/23)

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>E71 Blackburn</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> February 2023</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>14:37</b>

The Drone Team was requested to assist the police in the search for a missing angler on the River Ribble, close to Clayton le Dale. Following further information from witnesses, a full attendance was requested from LFRS. Fire engines from Darwen (Swift Water Rescue Team), Water Incident Unit from Preston and a further fire engine from Longridge attended the scene to assist in the search for the missing gentleman. Two swift water rescue technicians entered the river with a rescue sled, along with the power boat. Unfortunately, after a period of searching the river bank and hidden underwater areas, the body of an elderly gentleman was discovered. The casualty was handed over to ambulance staff. LFRS was in attendance for approximately 3 hours.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>S54 Chorley</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> February 2023</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>07:45</b>

Six fire engines from Bamber Bridge, Chorley, Blackburn, Preston, Hyndburn, Darwen, the aerial ladder platform from Preston, the water bowser from Leyland and the command support unit from Fulwood attended a commercial building fire in Withnell Fold in Chorley. The fire was well alight on arrival and involved a multi-occupied commercial building, which was 50m x 20m in size.

Firefighters tackled the fire using the bowser, aerial ladder platform and 4 firefighting water jets. LFRS was in attendance for over 24 hours damping down and working with the local council to make the building safe.

The cause of the fire was not determined, but it is not believed to have been deliberate ignition.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>S51 Ormskirk</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> February 2023</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>22:42</b>

Six fire engines from Ormskirk, Tarleton, Skelmersdale, along with the command unit from Fulwood, the water bowser from Leyland and the drone team, were called to reports of an outbuilding fire in Burscough. On arrival, firefighters discovered a fire in an outbuilding containing a large quantity of straw, which was well alight. The building measured approximately 30m by 20m and contained 100 tonnes of straw.

Firefighters extinguished the building and straw with 3 firefighting water jets. Crews were in attendance for approximately 15 hours. The cause of the fire has not been determined.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>P74 Rawtenstall</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> February 2023</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>16:37</b>

Six fire engines, including one from Greater Manchester, the command support unit from Blackburn, and the aerial ladder platform attended a commercial building fire in Rawtenstall. The fire involved a large pub, restaurant and play area which was well alight when crews arrived. The building consisted of 2 floors and was approximately 50m by 20m in size.

Firefighters wearing breathing apparatus tackled the fire, along with water jets externally. LFRS was in attendance for over 24 hours, damping down and conducting the fire investigation. The most probable cause was an accidental fire, starting in the flat above the pub.



<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>N33 Preesall</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> March 2023</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>18:12</b>

Three fire engines from Preesall, Bispham and Blackpool attended a caravan fire in Pilling. The caravan and a nearby car were fully alight when fire crews arrived. Two casualties were treated for burns at the scene and taken to hospital.

Gas cylinders were involved and were the potential cause of the gas explosion, which led to the fire.

Firefighters wore breathing apparatus and used one hose reel to extinguish the fire. Crews were in attendance for over two hours. The cause is believed to be accidental, with an explosion occurring from a leaking gas connector on the caravan's supply cylinder.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>N11 Lancaster</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> March 20223</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>11:53</b>

Seven fire engines responded to reports of a building fire within the Lancaster University complex. The fire involved a large trolley of Lithium-Ion batteries on the ground floor, which had ignited within the Engineering complex. The building involved consisted of 3 floors and was approximately 150m x 40m in size.

Firefighters wearing breathing apparatus went into the building and were able to roll the trolley out of the building. The fire was extinguished with several firefighting water jets. Once the fire had been suppressed, they were submerged into a tank of water, being overseen by university scientists.

Fire crews were in attendance for approximately 3 hours. The cause of the fire was recorded as accidental.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>C50 Preston</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> March 2023</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>08:10</b>

Six fire engines from Preston, Fulwood, Penwortham, Bamber Bridge, Skelmersdale and Chorley along with the aerial ladder platform from Hyndburn, Incident Command Unit from Blackburn, high volume pumps from Burnley and Greater Manchester, stinger from Skelmersdale and the water bowser, attended a waste fire in Preston.

Firefighters wearing breathing apparatus used water jets and a ground monitor to extinguish the fire, along with water from the aerial ladder platform and the stinger. The drone was deployed to provide an aerial overview and to spot signs of heat travel. On site staff used heavy machinery to move unaffected scrap metal to prevent further fire spread.

The fire involved piles of metallic waste, which had been through an initial shredding process. It is believed that a Lithium-Ion battery in thermal runaway was responsible for the fire. The fire involved approximately 300 tonnes of scrap metal.

Crews were in attendance for over 30 hours. The cause of the fire has been recorded as accidental.

Following the last fire on the premises almost a year ago, work has started to improve water supplies to the site. There is now a small tank containing 30,000 litres next to the main risk area and a 1-million litre tank at the site entrance. This will enable a continuous water supply onto a fire for a number of hours, prior to a further supply being accessed by the high-volume pump in the event of any further incident occurring.

### **Business Risk**

None

### **Environmental Impact**

Potential impact on local environment in relation to operational incidents. Significant incidents benefit from the attendance of specialist water tower resources (Stingers) which make a positive impact on firefighting operations and reduce the environmental impact.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

None

### **HR Implications**

None

### **Financial Implications**

None

## **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

### **List of background papers**

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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