

# Public Document Pack

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

**Monday, 18 December 2023 in Washington Hall, Service Training Centre, Euxton commencing at 10.30 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 refreshments will be available in Washington Hall from 0845 hours.

Conservative Group - Pendle Room  
Labour Group - Lancaster House 5

## 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 - 6)**

#### 5. **Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 13 September 2023 of Performance Committee (Pages 7 - 30)**

#### 6. **Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 27 September 2023 of Resources Committee (Pages 31 - 44)**

#### 7. **Minutes of meeting Thursday, 2 November 2023 of Member Training & Development Working Group (Pages 45 - 52)**

8. **Minutes of meeting Monday, 20 November 2023 of Planning Committee (Pages 53 - 64)**
9. **Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 28 November 2023 of Audit Committee (Pages 65 - 74)**
10. **Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 29 November 2023 of Resources Committee (Pages 75 - 92)**
11. **North West Fire Control - Continuing the Collaboration (Pages 93 - 110)**
12. **Updated Whistleblowing Policy (Pages 111 - 126)**
13. **Member Champion Activity Report (Pages 127 - 132)**
14. **Fire Protection Report (Pages 133 - 136)**
15. **Operational Incidents of Interest (Pages 137 - 142)**
16. **Member Complaints**  
  
Standing item.

17. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Authority will be held on **Monday 19 February 2024** at 10:30 hours at Washington Hall Training Centre, Euxton.

18. **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.

19. **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.

**Part 2**

20. **Proceedings of Capital Building Projects Working Group (Pages 143 - 150) (Paragraph 3)**

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

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

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## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Monday, 18 September 2023 at 10.30 am in Washington Hall, Service Training Centre, Euxton

### Minutes

#### Present:

D O'Toole (Chair)

#### Councillors

J Shedwick (Vice-Chair)  
G Baker  
L Beavers  
S Clarke  
L Cox  
M Dad BEM  
D Howarth  
J Hugo  
T Hurn  
F Jackson  
H Khan  
Z Khan MBE

J Mein  
S Morris  
M Pattison  
J Rigby  
P Rigby  
M Salter  
S Serridge  
J Singleton  
D Smith  
R Woollam  
B Yates

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| 23/23 | <b>Chair's Welcome and Introduction</b>  |
|       | <p>The Chair welcomed County Councillor Matthew Salter who had replaced County Councillor Andrea Kay on the Authority. The Chair advised that CC Kay had been unwell. The Authority wished her a speedy recovery and asked that their wishes be passed on to her.</p> <p>Mark Nolan, Clerk to the Authority, requested that Members complete an anonymous Equality Impact Assessment questionnaire for attendance at Combined Fire Authority Meetings. This would inform an Equality Impact Assessment which supported Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service to consider all reasonable adjustments for meeting attendees.</p> <p>The Chair advised that the International Search and Rescue (ISAR) Team had won the Bravery Award at the BBC Make a Difference awards, following their deployment to Turkey earlier this year. He congratulated the team on a well-deserved award.</p> <p>The Chair explained that, due to the devastation caused by the earthquake in Morocco, the ISAR Team (plus Search dog) had been deployed to assist with the rescue effort. The Authority wished them well and a quick return.</p> |
| 24/23 | <b>Apologies for Absence</b>   |
|       | <p>Apologies were received from County Councillor Nikki Hennessy.</p>  |

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| 25/23 | <b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interests</b>   |
|       | None received.   |
| 26/23 | <b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>   |
|       | <b>Resolved:</b> That the Minutes of the CFA held on 26 June 2023 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.  |
| 27/23 | <b>Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 28 June 2023 of Performance Committee</b>   |
|       | <p>The Chair acknowledged that, regarding KPI 1.3.1 (Workforce Diversity), workforce diversity in the Service had improved greatly.</p> <p>In relation to KPI 2.9 (Fire Safety Activity – including Business Fire Safety Checks), the Chair praised the Service on the impressive number of Business Fire Safety Checks.</p> <p>The Chair was pleased that North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) had joined to collaborate with LFRS and Lancashire Constabulary in relation to KPI 4.2 (Partnership Collaboration).</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the proceedings of the Performance Committee held on 28 June 2023 be noted.</p>  |
| 28/23 | <b>Notes of meeting Monday, 3 July 2023 of Strategy Group</b>  |
|       | <p>In response to a query raised by County Councillor Singleton regarding the Service's position on the funding gap for the current financial year, the Director of Corporate Services explained that there was a slight overspend of £200k. An update would be reported in line with usual practice to the next meeting of the Resources Committee.</p> <p>County Councillor Singleton queried how the proposed renovations in the Capital Programme would be funded. The Director of Corporate Services advised that the Capital Programme Member Working Group had been established and would consider the 3 Capital Building Projects (Service Headquarters Relocation, Preston Fire Station and Service Training Centre Props review). The first meeting was due to be held at the beginning of October and once a programme had been developed, costings could be calculated, and it would be known whether external borrowing would be needed. An update would be brought to a future Authority meeting.</p> <p>The Chair asked, for the benefit of those Members who were unable to attend the Strategy meeting, for a comment on the appointment of an On-Call Station Manager. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained that an On-Call station Manager had been appointed to address some of the local and national challenges (identified from nationwide research) which faced the on-call duty system in order to increase on-call availability.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the proceedings of the Strategy Group held on 3 July 2023 be noted.</p> |

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| 29/23 | <b>Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 12 July 2023 of Resources Committee</b>  |
|       | <b>Resolved:</b> That the proceedings of the Resources Committee held on 12 July 2023 be noted.   |
| 30/23 | <b>Minutes of meeting Monday, 17 July 2023 of Planning Committee</b>  |
|       | <b>Resolved:</b> That the proceedings of the Planning Committee held on 17 July 2023 be noted.  |
| 31/23 | <b>Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 25 July 2023 of Audit Committee</b>  |
|       | <b>Resolved:</b> That the proceedings of the Audit Committee held on 25 July 2023 be noted.   |
| 32/23 | <b>Member Champion Activity Report</b>  |
|       | <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Safety – Councillor Jean Rigby</li> <li>• Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Councillor Zamir Khan</li> <li>• Health and Wellbeing – County Councillor Andrea Kay (up to 30 August 2023)</li> <li>• Road Safety – County Councillor Ron Woollam.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair announced that County Councillor John Singleton would replace County Councillor Andrea Kay as Member Champion for Health and Wellbeing.</p> <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 August 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>Members commented on the valuable work of the Prince’s Trust, in conjunction with LFRS, and that they would like an update on the achievements that had been made. It was noted that members were invited to attend Princes Trust Presentations throughout the county. The Chief Fire Officer stated that Lancashire had the largest delivery of the Prince’s Trust programme in the UK and a presentation would be brought to a future meeting of the Fire Authority to highlight the achievements of the programme.</p> <p>County Councillor Ron Woollam advised that he had attended the ‘Alive to Drive’ demonstration organised by the Lancashire Road Safety Partnership on Preston Flag Market and he urged Members to attend as it was a very interesting and important campaign to raise awareness of road safety in Lancashire.</p> |

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|       | <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Authority noted and endorsed the report and acknowledged the work of the respective Champions.</p>  |
| 33/23 | <p><b>Fire Protection Report</b></p>   |
|       | <p>The report summarised Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service prosecutions pertaining to fire safety offences under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005. One case was currently within the court system with the trial provisionally set for 16 October 2023. Protection teams continued to investigate and build files in relation to further cases where offences were believed to have been committed, which involved a number of types of premises as outlined in the report. Of those cases one had been served a summons with the first hearing scheduled for 20 September 2023. Two of the other cases had draft summonses drawn and four were currently under review by legal counsel. There was also one further case currently being investigated which might see a joint prosecution with the Health and Safety Executive.</p> <p>Given the rapidly evolving regulatory change in building fire safety, an update on Fire Protection and Business Support was also provided, detailing how the Service was adapting delivery whilst developing its workforce, to ensure that it kept pace with the changes and improved public and firefighter safety within the built environment.</p> <p>Members noted that, as at the end of July 2023, circa 3,685 Business Fire Safety Checks had been undertaken across Lancashire, with 619 identifying significant fire safety concerns resulting in follow up action by Protection teams. The delivery of this valuable risk reduction work was well established across fire stations and continued to receive system refinements.</p> <p>From 1 October 2023 the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, would be amended by the introduction of Section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022 which required all responsible persons to record their fire risk assessment in full (including all findings) along with the fire safety arrangements for premises, in all circumstances. This was a significant change for responsible persons, as the Fire Safety Order currently only required a written fire risk assessment if the business had five or more employees or required a license. The new legislation would also introduce several additional duties on the responsible person, regarding information they must record and provide along with increasing the level of fines for some offences.</p> <p>To better prepare responsible persons for these changes, LFRS continued to undertake engagement activities, which included: i) the production of a letter outlining all relevant changes. This was being distributed as part of the protection department's day-to-day interactions with businesses and premises; ii) digital media and digital copies of the letter were being shared via partners; and iii) a campaign highlighting the changes was being conducted through LFRS' social media channels and the website.</p> <p>LFRS would also be supporting Business Safety Week (11 to 17 September) where specific activities, engagement and media would raise awareness and support businesses and responsible persons to prepare for change and keep fire safety a priority.</p> <p>Members also noted that following a trial for 'arson being reckless as to whether life</p> |



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|       | <p>is endangered' the defendant was found guilty and sentenced to five years in prison plus two further years on licence.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the report be noted.</p>  |
| 34/23 | <p><b>Operational Incidents of Interest</b></p>  |
|       | <p>The Authority received a report that provided information relating to operational incidents of note since the last meeting. As this had been a very busy operational period, the report detailed only the larger deployments or more complex incidents. Full details of the following incidents were provided in the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building fire in Fleetwood</li> <li>• Storage yard in Accrington</li> <li>• Multiple houses on fire in Accrington</li> <li>• Derelict chapel in Rossendale</li> <li>• Explosives discovered during police operation in Leyland</li> <li>• Commercial building fire in Haslingden</li> <li>• Road traffic collision on the M6, closing the motorway in both directions due to a spillage</li> <li>• Commercial building fire in Burnley</li> <li>• Commercial building fire in Barnoldswick</li> <li>• Commercial building fire in Blackburn</li> </ul> <p>County Councillor Clarke commended the excellent work of the Service and superb operation tackling the fire at the Mount Hotel in Fleetwood.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Authority noted the report.</p> |
| 35/23 | <p><b>Member Complaints</b></p>  |
|       | <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>  |
| 36/23 | <p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p>   |
|       | <p>The next meeting of the Authority would be held on Monday <b>18 December 2023</b> at 10:30am at the Training Centre, Euxton.</p>  |
| 37/23 | <p><b>Exclusion of Press and Public</b></p>  |
|       | <p><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.</p>  |

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| 38/23 | <b>Re-Appointment of Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority</b>   |
|       | <p>(Paragraphs 1 and 2)</p> <p>The Clerk to the Authority withdrew from the meeting for this item.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Authority approved the re-appointment of Mr Mark Nolan as Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority for a period of twelve months, to the September meeting of the Authority in 2024.</p> |

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

**LFRS HQ**  
**Fulwood**

## **Lancashire Combined Fire Authority**

Meeting to be held on 18 December 2023

### **Proceedings of Performance Committee held 13 September 2023 (Appendix 1 refers)**

Contact for further information:

Diane Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer - Tel: 01772 866720

#### **Executive Summary**

The proceedings of Performance Committee meeting held 13 September 2023.

#### **Recommendation(s)**

To note the proceedings of Performance Committee as set out at appendix 1 now presented.

#### **Information**

Attached at Appendix 1 are the proceedings of the Performance Committee meeting held on 13 September 2023.

#### **Business Risk**

Nil

#### **Environmental Impact**

Nil

#### **Equality & Diversity Implications**

Nil

#### **Financial Risk**

Nil

#### **HR Implications**

Nil

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

### **List of background papers**

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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

# Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Performance Committee

Wednesday, 13 September 2023, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

## Minutes

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Present:</b>            |  |
| <b>Councillors</b>         |  |
| T Hurn (Chair)             |  |
| P Rigby (Vice-Chair)       |  |
| Z Khan MBE                 |  |
| M Pattison (for L Beavers) |  |
| J Rigby                    |  |
| M Salter                   |  |
| D Smith                    |  |
| B Yates                    |  |

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| <b>Officers</b>   |
| J Charters, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)<br>S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS)<br>M Hamer, Area Manager, Prevention and Protection (LFRS)<br>N Taylor, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery (LFRS)<br>L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS) |

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

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| 9/23  | <b>Apologies For Absence</b>  |
|       | Apologies were received from County Councillor Lorraine Beavers, County Councillor Loraine Cox, and County Councillor Hasina Khan.            |
| 10/23 | <b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests</b>  |
|       | None received.  |
| 11/23 | <b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>  |
|       | <b>Resolved:</b> - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on the 18 June 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. |

The Chair welcomed new Member, Matthew Salter to the meeting and gave County Councillor Andrea Kay his best wishes.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that, due to the devastation caused by the earthquake in Morocco, the Foreign Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) and government ministers, along with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), had agreed a UK response to help assist with the rescue effort. Wayne Ward, Rick Cutler, Ian McGee, and Lindsey Sielski (plus Search Dog Davey) were deployed from Lancashire Fire and Rescue (LFRS) to Morocco to assist with the effort for an expected 7-10 days. Attendees of the meeting wished them well and a safe return.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented a comprehensive report to the Performance Committee. This was the 1<sup>st</sup> quarterly report for 2023/24 as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-2027.

Members were informed that the proposed alterations to some KPIs had been agreed at Planning Committee and implemented within the report from the current quarter. The changes to KPIs included the removal of KPIs 3.3.1 (Fire Engine Availability – Wholetime Shift System) and 3.3.2 (Fire Engine Availability – On-Call Shift System). The data would be reported within KPI 3.3 (Total Fire Engine Availability), for first pump availability of wholetime and on-call fire engines across the 39 stations in Lancashire with a revised overall availability target of 90%, which would be reviewed annually. The addition of a new Key Performance Indicator for Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSC) (2.9) had also been applied.

This quarter, one Key Performance Indicator (KPI), 2.9 Business Fire Safety Checks, was shown in positive exception and four Key Performance Indicators were shown in negative exception. These were 1.2.1 Staff Absence Wholetime (WT), 1.2.3 Staff Absence Greenbook, 2.6.2 Deliberate Fires – Commercial Premises, and 3.3 Total Fire Engine Availability.

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 April to June 2023, five station visits were carried out by principal officers and area managers as part of the service-wide station visits programme. Nine station visits involving Corporate Planning and Human Resources (HR) departments were undertaken to engage with members of staff affected by duty system changes as part of the emergency cover review. Seventeen wellbeing interactions were undertaken ranging from wellbeing sessions with crews to support dog interactions.

The Service engaged staff in several trials relating to the fleet and equipment including rope rescue equipment and wildfire welfare bags. Three staff engagement sessions were held with On-Call firefighters over policy changes relating to operational response. A briefing event for flexi duty officers was held and six service delivery briefings for operational managers were held: one in each area of the county.

### **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: 2.098

The negative exception report was due to the number of shifts lost through absence per employee being above the Service target for quarter 1.

During quarter 1, April to June 2023, absence statistics showed whole-time personnel absence above target for the quarter.

1,301 Wholetime absence shifts lost = 2.098 against a target of 1.25 which was 0.85 shifts over target. During the same quarter of the previous year 1.88 shifts were lost which was an increase of 0.22 shifts lost per wholetime employee. Cases of long-term (greater than 28 days) absence over the whole quarter had increased by 0.19 shifts from the previous quarter, which accounted for the increase in shifts lost.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that, as discussed at the previous committee meeting, the data had been split between long-term and short-term absences.

The number of cases of long-term absence which spanned over the total of the 3 months had increased from two cases in Q4 of 2022-23 to five cases in Q1 2023-24. The absence reasons being:

- Mental Health - Other
- Cancer and Tumours
- Musculo Skeletal
- Hospital/Post Operative

As a result of the five cases of long-term absences, 208 shifts were lost during Q1 compared to 91 shifts lost during the previous quarter. These cases accounted for 0.34 shifts lost per person over the quarter.

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

- Mental health (Encompassing: Mental health – Other, 6 cases and Mental

Health – Work Related Stress, 4 cases) – 10 cases

- Musculo skeletal (Other/Unable to define) – 9 cases
- Hospital/Post Operative – 6 cases
- Other absence types (single returns) – 3 cases

In Q1, 121 shifts lost were related to respiratory related absences, which included Coronavirus absence and equated to 0.20 shifts lost per person.

Following Member queries, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer highlighted to the committee that the Service had a robust Absence Management Policy which detailed the approach to managing periods of workplace absence to ensure that staff were supported back to work at the appropriate time based upon their individual needs and in a compassionate way.

The Human Resources (HR) system, I-Trent, automatically generated monthly reports to line managers and HR Business Partners in relation to employees and their periods and reasons for absence, and these were closely monitored. Where employees were absent due to mental health, or a stress related condition, they were referred to the Occupational Health Unit (OHU) as early as possible. Employees returning to work had a return-to-work interview and stress risk assessment, or individual health risk assessments were completed where required.

The Service had several support mechanisms available to support individuals to return to work or be exited as appropriate including guidance from Occupational Health, access to Trauma Risk Management (TRiM), an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), and the Firefighters Charity.

Where an employee did not return to work in a timely manner, an absence review meeting would take place with the employee, the line manager and a representative from Human Resources. The meetings were aimed at identifying support to return an individual back to work which could include modified duties for a period, redeployment, but ultimately could result in dismissal, or permanent ill health retirement from the Service.

The Absence Management Policy detailed when a formal review of an employee's performance levels would normally take place. In terms of short-term absence, a formal review would take place where an employee had 3 or more periods of absence in 6 months, or an employee had 14 days absent. In terms of long-term absence, a formal review would normally take place at 3, 6, 9 and 11 months.

A key challenge for supporting operational staff returning to work was that the threshold for fitness and returning to work for operational firefighters was higher than in other occupations due to their hazardous working conditions.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer highlighted that the statistics for the quarter had been impacted by a number of individuals having stress related sickness absence due to significant investigations, some of which had subsequently been resolved.

In response to a question from County Councillor Salter in regard to benchmarking against data from other Fire & Rescue services, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that in the last quarter report, LFRS had benchmarked sickness absence



levels and performance against other Fire & Rescue services by utilising the National Occupational Health data, Office for National Statistics (ONS) data, and Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) data. Data showed that absence levels within the Service were equal to or lower than the national average. It was noted that a review of sickness absence targets could be prompted following an extended period of consistent negative exception, although post covid impacts were still affecting figures. In this respect, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer had asked Liz Sandiford, Head of Human Resources, to undertake some preliminary work to consider options.

### **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, 1.50%.

### **1.2.3 Staff Absence Greenbook**

This 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: 1.740

The negative exception report was due to the number of shifts lost through absence per employee being above the Service target for quarter 1.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised Members that Wholetime Staff were those in a firefighter, uniformed, grey book role. Green book staff were typically those in non-uniformed, support roles such as Human Resources and Health and Safety etc.

The agreed target performance level was 5 shifts lost per employee per year for green book staff. The actual shifts lost for the period for this group of staff was 1.74 which was 0.49 above target. During the same quarter of the previous year, 1.33 shifts were lost which was an increase of 0.41 shifts lost per Greenbook staff.

During quarter 1, April to June 2023, absence statistics showed non-uniformed personnel above target for the quarter.

362 non-uniformed absence shifts lost = 1.74 against a target of 1.25

During the quarter there were no cases of long-term absence which spanned over the total of the 3 months. There were seven cases of long-term absence which were recorded within the 3 months:

- Musculo Skeletal – 4 cases
- Other absence types (single returns) – 3 cases

During quarter 1, 212 shifts were lost as a result of the above seven cases of long-term absences. These cases accounted for 1.01 shifts lost per person over the quarter.

In quarter 1, 20 shifts lost were related to Respiratory related absences, this included Coronavirus absence and equated to 0.10 shifts lost per person. This showed a decrease of 0.39 shifts lost from the previous quarter (quarter 4, 2022-23).

The Service had an Absence Management Policy which detailed its approach to how it would manage absence ensuring that staff time was managed effectively, but also members of staff were supported back to work or exited from the Service in a compassionate way.

The Human Resources (HR) system, ITrent, automatically generated monthly reports to line managers and HR Business Partners in relation to employees, with the periods and reasons for absence, and those were closely monitored. Where Employees were absent due to a mental health, or stress related conditions, those employees were referred to the Occupational Health Unit (OHU) as early as possible. Employees returning to work had a return-to-work interview and stress risk assessment, or individual health risk assessments were completed where required.

Where an employee did not return to work in a timely manner, an absence review meeting would take place with the employee, the line manager, and a representative from Human Resources. The meetings were aimed at identifying support to return an individual back to work which could include modified duties for a period, redeployment, but ultimately could result in dismissal, or permanent ill health retirement from the Service.

The Absence Management Policy detailed when a formal review of an employee's performance levels would normally take place. In terms of short-term absence, a formal review would take place where an employee had 3 or more periods of absence in 6 months, or an employee had 14 days absent. In terms of long-term absence, a formal review would normally take place at 3,6,9 and 11 months.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the policies and procedures relating to absences were consistent for both green book and grey book staff.

County Councillor Salter queried whether a low sickness target impacted on sickness provision for staff and if the target should be reviewed. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that the robust policies and procedures the Service had in place helped to manage absences and maintain low numbers of absences. The post pandemic effects were still being experienced and the Service monitored absence levels to assist prediction of whether they were gradually returning to pre-pandemic volumes. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the Head of HR

could be invited to the next committee to discuss findings in absence levels against comparable data sets and whether targets should be reviewed should Members welcome this.

### 1.3.1 Workforce Diversity

This indicator measured diversity as a percentage.

Combined diversity percentage of grey book (operational) and green book (support) staff. The percentages outside of the brackets represented the current quarter, with the percentage within the brackets illustrating the same quarter of the previous year:

|                     |                   |   |
|---------------------|-------------------|---|
| Gender:             | Female 20%(3%)    | Male 80%(81%)                             |
| Ethnicity:          | BME 3%(3%)        | Not stated 3%(3%) White 94%(94%)          |
| Sexual Orientation: | LGBT 4%(3%)       | Heterosexual 53%(48%) Not stated 43%(49%) |
| Disability:         | Disability 3%(3%) | No disability 94%(94%) Not stated 3%(3%)  |

Diversity percentage by Grey Book Staff and Green Book Staff. Counts included double counts if the member of staff was dual contracted between Grey and Green Book.

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

|                     |               |               |                |
|---------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Gender:             | Female        | Grey book 9%  | Green book 59% |
|                     | Male          | Grey book 91% | Green book 41% |
| Ethnicity:          | BME           | Grey book 3%  | Green book 5%  |
|                     | White         | Grey book 95% | Green book 88% |
|                     | Not stated    | Grey book 2%  | Green book 7%  |
| Sexual Orientation: | LGBT          | Grey book 4%  | Green book 3%  |
|                     | Heterosexual  | Grey book 52% | Green book 57% |
|                     | Not stated    | Grey book 44% | Green book 40% |
| Disability:         | Disability    | Grey book 3%  | Green book 2%  |
|                     | No disability | Grey book 95% | Green book 91% |
|                     | 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. The percentages outside of the brackets represented the current quarter, with the percentage within the brackets illustrating the same quarter of the previous year:

|                     |                   |                        |                    |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Gender:             | Female 41%(32%)   | Male 59%(68%)          |                    |
| Ethnicity:          | BME 6%(0%)        | White 76%(95%)         | Not Stated 18%(5%) |
| Sexual Orientation: | LGBT 6%(14%)      | Heterosexual 76%(81%)  | Not stated 18%(5%) |
| Disability:         | Disability 6%(0%) | No disability 94%(97%) | Not stated 0%(3%)  |

During quarter 1, there were a total of 17 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.

#### **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, 16 for quarter 1; year to date 16; previous year to date 8. Quarterly activity increased 100% 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 31,170 and the previous year's score was 31,576 which meant that the fire risk continued to reduce.

In response to a query from Councillor Smith regarding the visibility of the Risk Map, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer stated that he would share data relating to risk gradings of areas, if possible, down to ward level, with Members outside of the meeting. He added that Members could assist with lowering risk by sharing the Service's social media messages and signposting any relevant premises to the Service prevention and protection offerings.

#### **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 5,116; previous year to date 4,900. Quarterly activity increased 4.41% over the same quarter of the previous year.

In quarter 1, the Service attended 5,116 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) – 2071, 41%
- Total Primary Fire Calls (accidental dwelling / building and deliberate dwelling / commercial fires and other primary fires) – 543, 11%
- Total Secondary Fire Calls (deliberate and accidental fires) – 1239, 24%
- Total Special Service Calls (critical incidents, gaining entry, RTCs, Flooding and other critical incidents) – 1246, 24%

### **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, 204 in quarter 1; year to date 204; previous year to date 204. Quarterly activity remained static 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,                  | 0 in quarter 1; year to date 0; previous year to date 2 |
| Injuries appear Serious | 3 in quarter 1; year to date 3; previous year to date 4 |
| Injuries appear Slight  | 8 in quarter 1; year to date 8; previous year to date 1 |

Quarterly activity increased 57.14% 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 84% against same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 85%.

Combined quarterly percentage had therefore decreased 0.49% 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), 68 in quarter 1; year to date 68; previous year to date 68. Quarterly activity remained static 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 66% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 68%.

Combined quarterly percentage had therefore decreased 1.5% 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), 36 in quarter 1; year to date 36; previous year to

date 29. Quarterly activity increased 24.14% 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 39% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 24%.

Combined quarterly activity had therefore increased 14.8% over the same quarter of the previous year.

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

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

Deliberate Fires – 681 in quarter 1; year to date 681; previous year to date 730. Quarterly activity decreased 6.71% 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, 24 in quarter 1, year to date 24; previous year to date 16. Quarterly activity increased 50.00% 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, 43 in quarter 1; year to date 43; previous year to date 33.

Quarterly activity increased 30.30% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The negative exception report was due to the number of deliberate fires being

above the upper control limit during June of quarter 1.

The count of deliberate fires within the first quarter was within the normal range for the months of April and May, however, June had recorded an unusual high of 22 which accounted for 51.2% of fires over the three-month period. In June, the county experienced a protracted period of hot weather which tended to contribute to an increase in the number of secondary fires which, in the case of this KPI, could spread to a building and were then classed as a primary fire.

Over the period April, May, and June, 10 of the incidents occurred in prisons which accounted for almost a quarter of all deliberate fires at commercial premises. On average, this property type had 2.3 fires per month, therefore, the figures for quarter 1 were higher. The most common ignition source was smoking materials where an electronic vape was used to intentionally cause a fire.

Buildings that were not currently in use also made up a significant proportion of quarter 1's figures.

Existing partnerships were being used across areas to tackle the increase and included: LFRS were linking with the owners of buildings and the local authority which would improve security and limit access, targeted work was taking place with Lancashire Constabulary (LanCon) to address areas of anti-social behaviour, and there was joint working between LFRS and the LanCon to secure successful prosecutions and therefore, act as a deterrent.

Prevention activity had been targeted to areas which experienced relatively high levels of activity. This involved the utilisation of education delivery packages to address and educate young people around the consequences of deliberate fire setting and the more bespoke Fire Intervention Response and Education Scheme (FIRES) package aimed specifically towards deliberate fire setters between the ages of four and seventeen.

Targeted Environmental Visual Audits (EVAs) had been carried out to identify waste build up and refer to partners to remove.

Business Fire Safety Checks were being used in areas identified as having a greater risk to identify and educate premise owners in ways they could mitigate against arson.

Work was being carried out with prisons to identify trends and following on from that, preventative measures.

Members discussed the hazards associated with lithium-ion batteries and electronic smoking devices.

### **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, 614 in quarter 1; year to date 614; previous year to date 681. Quarterly activity decreased 9.84% 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, 5,547 in quarter 1; year to date 5,547; previous year to date 5,025. Quarterly activity increased 10.4% over the same quarter of the previous year.

HFSCs with high-risk outcomes, Quarter 1, 54%; previous year Quarter 1, 58%.

Quarterly activity decreased 4.0% 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,        | 123 sessions delivered to 3,333 attendees; |
| RoadSense,        | 141 sessions delivered to 4,090 attendees; |
| SENDSafe,         | 6 sessions delivered to 210 attendees;     |
| Wasted Lives,     | 17 sessions delivered to 1,487 pupils;     |
| Biker Down,       | 13 sessions delivered to 237 attendees;    |
| FIRES,            | 53 completed referrals;                    |
| Partner Training, | 15 organisations/agencies – 84 people.     |

Specific Education packages – delivered Water Safety, ASB, Deliberate Fire Setting etc (Covers key stages 2, 3 and 4), across 61 sessions, delivered to 6,933 attendees. 6 virtual Water Safety Education sessions delivered to 14,598 prior to Summer Break.

Arson Threat Referrals - 215.

## **2.9 Business Fire Safety Checks**

This indicator reported the number of Business Fire Safety Check (BFSC's) completed and whether the result was satisfactory or unsatisfactory. If the result of a BFSC was unsatisfactory, fire safety advice would be provided to help the business comply with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. If critical fire safety issues were identified, then a business safety advisor would conduct a follow-up intervention.

- The pro rata BFSC target was delivered through each quarter.

A +/-10% tolerance was applied to the completed BFSCs and the year to date (YTD) BFSCs, against both the quarterly and YTD targets. When both counts were outside of the 10% tolerance they would be deemed in exception which enabled local delivery to flex with the needs of their district plan over the quarters.

BFSCs completed, 820 in quarter 1; Cumulative 820; YTD target, 625; previous YTD 231.

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being satisfactory, 698. Top 5 completed satisfactory premise types (Shops 313, Offices 76, Factories/Warehouses 66, Schools 58, Other workplaces 58).

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being unsatisfactory, 122. Top 5 completed unsatisfactory premise types (Shops 60, Licensed premises 16, Schools 14, Other workplaces 11, Offices 5).

The positive exception report was due to the number of completed Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSCs) being greater than 10% of the quarterly target, and the cumulative year to date target.

Since the initial BFSC training in 2022/23 that upskilled all Wholetime (WT) crews on built environment risk, crews had been directed to ensure they embedded the training and delivered as many BFSCs as possible to help gain confidence and competency in carrying out this service and using the newly developed digital products. This had ensured that the BFSC project was being embedded for crews and businesses and the project team were able to conduct effective evaluation to continually improve the delivery of this service.

Area Manager, Matt Hamer explained that the classification of commercial premises was carried out by the Local Authority, and many were unidentified which placed them under the category of 'other workplaces.' The Service's app would be refined to allow a change to a building classification and the Local Authority would be informed once a building type had been identified, allowing for more comprehensive data to be collated in the future.

### **2.9.1 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 1, 530;  
Formal Activity in Quarter 1, 7%, same quarter of the previous year 6%.  
Quarterly activity decreased 1% over the same quarter of the previous year.

Members noted the cumulative number of Business Fire Safety Check follow-up visits undertaken for 2023/24 was 530.

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

In Quarter 1, Building Regulation Consultations received 262, of which 239 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 and ensured the Service had competent staff to undertake future buildings regs, giving consideration to the retirement profile of competent staff.
- Invested in dedicated Schools building regulation (BRegs) training courses for staff to deliver the Service's schools BRegs.
- Improved BRegs administration and consultation monitoring with a more centralised system.
- Introduced a pan-Lancashire targeting approach, rather than area based.
- Assigned a Building Safety Regulator (BSR) single point of contact to ensure new Building Safety Act requirements were implemented and embedded.

## **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.

Standards were achieved when the time between the 'Time of Call' (TOC) and 'Time in Attendance' (TIA) of the first fire engine arriving at the incident, averaged over the quarter, was less than the relevant response standard. Expressed in minutes & seconds.

Critical Fire Response – 1<sup>st</sup> Fire Engine Attendance, Quarter 1, Very High 05:39 min; High 05:47 min, Medium 06:54 min, Low 09:18 min.

Q1 overall 07:38 min. Year to date overall 07:38 min. Previous year to date overall 06:57 min.

It was noted by Members that the response times for all critical fire response categories were less than the response standard.

### **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).

Critical Special Service Response – 1<sup>st</sup> Fire Engine Attendance, 08:26 min in quarter 1; year to date 08:26 min; previous year to date 08:17 min.

In response to a question from the Chair in relation to Special Appliance Attendance, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that the nearest fire engine would still attend an incident along with specialist appliances but that this KPI specifically measured the time for the first fire engine to attend rather than any subsequent special appliance.

### **3.3 Total Fire Engine Availability**

This indicator measured the availability of the 1<sup>st</sup> fire engine at each of the 39 fire stations. It was measured as the percentage of time the 1<sup>st</sup> fire engine was available to respond compared to the total time in the period.

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

Total Fire Engine Availability, 89.48% in quarter 1; year to date 89.48%; previous year to date 89.38%.

Quarterly availability increased 0.10% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The negative exception report was due to the 1<sup>st</sup> fire appliance availability percentage being below the lower control limit during quarter 1.

Overall availability across all stations for the quarter recorded 89.48%, just 0.52% below the 90% standard.

The availability by each of the stations designated first pump crewing type:

Wholetime – 99.29%

Day Crewing Plus – 99.25%

Flexi Day Crewing – 99.44%

On-Call – 76.78%

Total – 89.48%

Whilst all of the Whole-Time appliances achieved exceptional availability, the 1<sup>st</sup> appliance at the 12 wholly On-Call stations contributed to the availability falling below the 90% standard. As such, the exception report was focused on On-Call availability.

A shortage of staff with the Officer in Charge (OIC), Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) and Emergency Response Driver (ERD) skill was a significant contributing factor to low On-Call availability. On-Call Support Officers (OCSO) were working with station-based staff and management, along with Training Centre, to support those in development and identify opportunities for high-performing individuals to acquire those skills earlier in their career.

The Breathing Apparatus (BA) skill was another factor contributing to low On-Call availability, however, a rolling programme of BA initial training combined with BA Team Leader courses was ensuring demand for those skills was met.

A new inter-service transfer policy would assist with On-Call recruitment, simplifying the process for transferees to join LFRS.

Actions being taken to improve performance:

- The Service would continue to deliver a recruitment strategy, which incorporated targeted recruitment. The latest recruitment window closed on 2<sup>nd</sup> July. 157 applicants had passed the application stage and were completing their Saville and Holdsworth (SHL) tests or had been booked on to the fitness tests.
- Increase visibility of On-Call units in the community. This could inform off

station training, or community engagement events.

- Broadening the skills of On-Call staff (as per the Emergency Cover Review) in addition to exploring new opportunities or ways of working for On-Call or Dual Contract staff would further improve On-Call availability.

## **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 annual budget for 2023/24 was set at £68.5 million. Spend at the end of June was £17m, £0.3m less than budget. The majority of the underspend was linked to pay due to vacancies in quarter 1.

Quarter 1 variance -0.44%.

### **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 indicator provided Members with an update on partnership collaboration during the period.

#### **Update**

At the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023 meeting of the Blue Light Collaboration board, an update on the ongoing projects was presented to the strategic leads. An agreement was also made in terms on ensuring that a suitable evaluation process was implemented for each project. This would provide evidence in terms of outputs and outcomes, additionally, it would enable learning to be identified.

#### **Missing Persons (MisPer)**

It had been identified that LFRS mobilisations 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 was reviewing the mobilisation of specialist assets and the memorandum of understanding would be updated.

In terms of practical items, the Missing from Home Manager training for specific LFRS staff was being planned. This training would develop knowledge and understanding regarding aspects of planning and undertaking a search.

Furthermore, Lancashire Constabulary had provided training to Control staff to raise awareness. There had already been an increase in the number of LFRS mobilisations.

LFRS had actively supported a number of high-profile cases for missing persons, demonstrating the effectiveness of the collaborative workstream.

### **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 had been in regular contact and the most recent meeting was on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023 and bi-monthly meetings were now scheduled. LFRS were also working with LanCon to renew existing collaborative arrangements at both Lytham and St Annes Fire Stations.

### **Community First Responder**

A phased approach had been 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 Flexi Duty Officers (FDOs) and On-Call 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 and had already provided lifesaving care whilst responding. A further 4 members of staff had successfully been on-boarded and would receive the relevant training through quarter 2 of the current year.

In terms of technology, the NWAS application that was used to mobilise First Responders had been updated, which had significantly improved effectiveness. Staff using the system had an option to accept or decline the request forwarded to them which offered some flexibility.

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, including Armed Response units did attend cardiac arrests alongside NWAS and that collaboration to this effect was already taking 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. Staff from Lancashire Constabulary's organisational development team attended LFRS values and behaviours module that new firefighter apprentices completed, to observe the content and how it was delivered.

LFRS had also identified 3 middle managers to participate in the 'Inside Out' leadership programme, which was offered by LanCon. It was anticipated that the 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. It also provided opportunity to strengthen relationships across the blue light sector and build upon raising awareness of capabilities which led to more effective and efficient collaborative working.

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

### **Command Units**

The aim of this project was to establish and deliver additional collaborative uses of the command units in LFRS to support effective multi agency working amongst emergency responders. The key objectives were to improve operational effectiveness and in line with the LFRS mission; 'Making Lancashire Safer.'

LFRS were currently rolling out a small command unit and had two further large command units in build as part of a previously agreed capital vehicle replacement project. It was anticipated the two larger units would be in Service by October 2023. It was expected that the initial benefits to be realised would be technological advances that would further develop information sharing and situational awareness aligned to improving and embedding the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP). Further scoping and development would be overseen by the Blue Light Collaboration board to ensure opportunities for joint working were effectively co-ordinated and delivered.

### **4.3 Overall User Satisfaction**

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.

Annual Standard: 97.50%

In quarter 1, 74 people had been surveyed and the number satisfied with the service was 73. The running number of people surveyed for the year was 3,340 with 3,299 of those people being satisfied with the Service; 98.77% against a standard of 97.50%; a variance of 1.31%.

Members gave thanks for an excellent report and the work of the Service.



|       |  |
|-------|--|
|       | <p>The Chair thanked the Assistant Fire Officer for his comprehensive report and congratulated the Service on keeping Lancashire safe.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Performance Committee noted and endorsed the Quarter 1 Measuring Progress report, including one positive and four negative exceptions.</p> |
| 13/23 | <b>Date of Next Meeting</b>  |
|       | <p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on <b>13 December 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 6 March 2024 and 26 June 2024 and agreed for 4 September 2024.</p>                 |

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

**LFRS HQ**  
**Fulwood**

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## **Lancashire Combined Fire Authority**

Meeting to be held on 18 December 2023

### **Proceedings of Resources Committee held 27 September 2023 (Appendix 1 refers)**

Contact for further information:

Diane Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer - Tel: 01772 866720

#### **Executive Summary**

The proceedings of Resources Committee meeting held 27 September 2023.

#### **Recommendation(s)**

To note the proceedings of Resources Committee as set out at appendix 1 now presented.

#### **Information**

Attached at Appendix 1 are the proceedings of the Resources Committee meeting held on 27 September 2023.

#### **Business Risk**

Nil

#### **Environmental Impact**

Nil

#### **Equality & Diversity Implications**

Nil

#### **Financial Risk**

Nil

#### **HR Implications**

Nil

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

### **List of background papers**

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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

# Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Resources Committee

Wednesday, 27 September 2023, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

## Minutes

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Present:</b>        |  |
|                        |  |
| <b>Councillors</b>     |  |
| R Woollam (Chair)      |  |
| D O'Toole (Vice-Chair) |  |
| P Britcliffe           |  |
| H Khan (Substitute)    |  |
| J Mein                 |  |
| M Pattison             |  |
| S Serridge             |  |
| B Yates                |  |

|   |
|---|
| <b>Officers</b>   |
|   |
| S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)<br>S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS)<br>B Warren, Director of People and Development (LFRS)<br>E Sandiford, Head of Human Resources (LFRS)<br>J Meadows, Head of Finance (LFRS)<br>D Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer (LFRS) |
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|       |  |
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| 13/23 | <b>Apologies for Absence</b>   |
|       | The Chair welcomed County Councillor Peter Britcliffe to his first meeting of the Resources Committee.<br><br>Apologies were received from County Councillors L Beavers and T Hurn and Councillor Baker. |
| 14/23 | <b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests</b>   |
|       | None received.   |
| 15/23 | <b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b>   |
|       | <b>Resolved:</b> That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 12 July 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.   |

The Assistant Director / Head of Human Resources presented the report. As a public body there was a requirement to publish information which demonstrated compliance with the Equality Duty created under the Equality Act 2010. In the exercise of functions there was a requirement to: i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act; ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who shared a protected characteristic and those who did not; and iii) foster good relations between people who shared a protected characteristic and those who did not.

Regulations enabled by the Equality Act required public authorities to publish their equality objectives and information to demonstrate their compliance with the Equality Duty. The Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report was one of the ways in which the Service demonstrated this compliance.

Members considered the report (attached at appendix 1 now presented) which demonstrated performance in terms of meeting legal duties for the period 2022/23 and setting out plans for 2023/24. It was noted that this was part of a suite of delivery plans that supported the delivery of the People Strategy (which detailed areas of focus in terms of improved accessibility, training and development, recruitment and selection, engagement, consultation, performance management and in the development of policies and strategies).

Since last year, several cultural reviews in other Services had prompted His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to encourage Services to deliver on a number of tasks and to report on a number of areas; the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group also monitored progress in relation to these activities.

The report detailed some of the actions the Service was undertaking in response to HMICFRS March 2023 Values and Culture report recommendations and the subsequent National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) recommendations which related to: i) how members of staff could raise concerns; ii) appropriate background checks; iii) misconduct handling; iv) training and development; and v) the implementation of the Core Code of Ethics.

### **Core Code of Ethics**

The code identified five primary ethical principles which reflected best practice principles and had been designed to underpin the way we serve our communities, carry out our role, and work together:

- i) Putting our communities first (putting the interest of the public, the community and service users first);
- ii) Integrity (acting with integrity including being open, honest and consistent in everything we do);
- iii) Dignity and respect (making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias);
- iv) Leadership (we are all positive role models, always demonstrating flexibility

- and resilient leadership. We are all accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards); and,
- v) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), (continually recognising and promoting the value of EDI both within the LFRS and the wider communities in which we serve. We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations and celebrate difference).

All employees and those working with or on behalf of the Service were required to behave in accordance with the Service values and to follow the Core Code.

### **Equality Objectives**

Further to the review of risks within the communities of Lancashire, the Service had developed the following equality objectives in supporting:

Our Communities:

- Support local businesses to reduce the risk of fire and remain compliant within fire safety legislation.
- Reduce the number and impact of fire and other emergencies to our diverse communities across Lancashire.
- Develop and deliver a prevention service targeting our most vulnerable communities.

Our Workforce:

- Promote equality in our workforce policies and workforce practices.
- Develop our staff to ensure they can respond competently meeting the different needs of our diverse communities.

### **Protected Characteristics (or protected groups)**

LFRS aimed to ensure that no one received less favourable treatment for reasons relating to all recognised protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010.

### **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) - Equality Analysis**

Equality analysis within an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was an effective tool to demonstrate how the Service was meeting its legal requirements under the public sector equality duty, identifying the impact of policies and decisions on staff and communities ensuring that the impact was fully understood, and any negative impact was mitigated. EIAs were completed where there was an impact on people, or the community. The Service complied with the NFCC equality impact assessment tool kit. The Service had strengthened its approach to EIA, by incorporating an element of quality assurance to provide more scrutiny. Further to the review of fire cover delivered during 2022 an external company was utilised to undertake the EIA, this ensured that the EIA was robust and independent. The assessment process was also used as a learning opportunity for staff in undertaking equality analysis. Comprehensive training had previously been undertaken in relation to the completion of an EIA and this continued to be part of

the middle manager development programme. A peer review was planned as part of the external audit for 2023.

### **Commissioning and Procuring Services**

LFRS would ensure that any partnership it was involved in operated in line with equality principles and associated equality duties. All contracts were required to agree to LFRS terms and conditions, which would include relevant clauses in relation to equalities. Additional scrutiny was incorporated within the procurement process where it was considered appropriate. For each procurement project, the lead stakeholder was responsible for completing an equality impact initial screen and subsequent assessment where required.

Where an assessment was required and undertaken, the internal customer / lead stakeholder must ensure this was done pre-procurement and any required changes made to their specification / requirements before any exercise progressed. The Head of Property was part of the NFCC National Fire Estates Group and one of its priorities was to support the development of dignified facilities / EDI standards and improvements.

### **Workforce Profile**

Members considered annex A to the report which demonstrated the workforce equality profile as of 31 March 2023<sup>2</sup> in relation to all protected groups (apart from gender reassignment due to the sensitive confidential nature of the data).

Information was provided across:

- i) workforce demographics for the Service – demonstrated there had been a slight increase in the number of women employed (from 18% to 18.9%), a slight reduction in the number of people who were BME (from 3.7% to 3.2%), a slight reduction in the number of people employed who declared a disability (from 2.8% to 2.6%) and an increase in the number of people who identified as LGBT+ (from 3% to 3.7%);
- ii) prevention and protection (business fire safety staff, district community safety staff and headquarters prevention staff and Prince's Trust green book staff) – showed that diversity within prevention and protection was more positive. Although there had been a slight reduction in the number of women and people who were BME in the Prince's Trust, there had been an increase in men which had increased the diversity of the department;
- iii) response grey book operational staff - Wholetime firefighters including apprentices (there had been an increase in women employed and a slight reduction in the number of people who were BME and a slight reduction in the numbers of people who declared a disability), On-call (there had been a slight reduction in the number of women employed, the number of people who were BME continued to fluctuate slightly and there had been a slight increase in the number of people who declared a disability);
- iv) female firefighter operational staff – the total number of women had increased from 86 to 91 and female supervisory managers had increased from 21 to 23;
- v) business support green book staff – while the number of BME staff was increasing there was a slight reduction the previous year. The number of women



within support services was high and remained fairly static;

vi) turnover – there was a slight reduction in the number of women leaving the Service, there had been a slight increase in the number of people who declared a disability and who were BME; and

vii) age profile – there had been an increase in the total number of people employed aged under 34 years and 35-39 years and a reduction in the number of people aged 45 – 55 years. Within the on-call service the numbers of people progressing from the under 34 category was reflective of those who had moved into the aged 35-39 category.

Annex B to the report provided an analysis of recruitment which showed increased applications from underrepresented groups (female applicants had increased by 16% and BME applicants had increased by 30% when compared with a 28% increase the previous year, making over 12% of all applicants and there was 1 more disabled applicant, a rise of 1% of total applications). There was an increase of 26 more applicants from the LGBTQ+ community, an increase of 21% from the previous year. These figures showed that LFRS continued to make progress in becoming an employer of choice for under-represented groups. The report also showed the Service becoming more diverse from appointments made. 25% of new employees were women (an increase of 6% from the previous year); those employed from BME groups comprised 8% (an increase of 3.5%), with 5% coming from LGBTQ+ groups and 5% declaring themselves as having a disability.

Monitoring equality and diversity in the workforce enabled the Service to identify how employment policies were working and to identify areas where these may appear to be working disproportionately on certain groups of staff. It was noted that with effect from 2022, the Service reported on its workforce as part of its performance reporting arrangements

Detail of progress in relation to EDI was summarised in the completed action plan for 2022-23 as set out in annex D with the new Action Plan for 2023-24 considered at annex E.

### **Other areas of focus relating to EDI**

The Head of Human Resources also highlighted that the report included broad activity undertaken (set out in section 7 of the report, pages 22 and 23 of the agenda pack). This included engagement through the corporate communications department who provided information in a variety of formats using multiple channels to best reach Lancashire's diverse communities. The department supported positive action campaigns, prevention and protection activity (through targeted campaigns), national campaigns and special events (ie: PRIDE events). Information was published in 26 other languages; videos were produced with subtitles and British Sign Language was used in fire safety videos. Guidance was provided and delivered to social media users on how to create accessible content. The department also applied measures from the Dyslexia Association Style Guide in both internal and external material to consider the visual stress experienced by some dyslexic people and to facilitate ease of reading.

## **Values and Culture**

A review of the London Fire Brigade had identified several key areas of failing which contributed to its poor organisational culture. Further to the review several Services identified similar issues relating to misogyny, racism, and bullying. In response the HMICFRS produced a series of recommendations which Services were expected to report progress. LFRS had adopted all the recommendations and these were in the process of being implemented. The national Code of Ethics had been immediately adopted when it was launched and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer had been confirmed as the senior officer responsible. It was noted that development sessions had been delivered 407 employees and these would continue to be progressed.

In response to changes in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act the Service was now undertaking standard DBS checks for new grey book firefighters and existing firefighters, checks would also be rolled out to some categories of support staff, including community safety advisors.

Detail in relation to disciplinary, grievances and recruitment and selection was also included in the EDI Annual Report. It was noted that this was being provided to the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group thereby providing greater scrutiny and to ensure there was no negative impact on a particular minority group in terms of recruitment, progression and the application of the Services policy and processes.

## **Gender Pay Gap Information**

On the snapshot date, 31 March 2023, LFRS employed 1313 people with a significantly higher proportion of men than women. The Service had a far larger volume of operational roles and currently those roles have traditionally been more commonly occupied by men, where turnover was low. However, women made up the larger proportion of staff in support roles.

The mean (average) Gender Pay Gap was calculated by adding together the hourly pay rates of all female employees and dividing by the total number of females to create a mean (average). This calculation was repeated for men and the difference in the two figures identified the Gender Pay Gap. Using this calculation methodology across LFRS, the mean Gender Pay Gap was significantly different than the national average which was 12.74% in favour of women who on average earned on average £1.76 per hour more than men.

To calculate the median Gender Pay Gap all women's earnings were ranked and all men's earnings were ranked, by their hourly pay, to establish the middle of the female pay range compared to the middle of the male pay range. The difference between the two was the median pay gap. The median Gender Pay Gap at LFRS equated to 6.38%. This meant that men on average earned £1.00 more than women. The inclusion of On-Call and dual contracted staff who were primarily male significantly skewed the mean and the median Gender Pay Gap on the basis of the way their earnings were accrued, resulting in a large number of men with lower earnings at the bottom of the ranking which accounted for the results.

An analysis of the quartile distribution by occupational group demonstrated that 84% of the employees in the lower quartile were On-Call staff. This group of staff equated to 21% of the employee population.

Most female part time support staff were found in the lower-middle quartile, with fewer in the upper middle and upper quartiles.

The proportion of women in the upper-middle and upper quartile was representative of the overall proportion of women within the LFRS workforce. The upper-middle quartile was predominantly male, but this was where most members of staff were undertaking the role of Firefighter. A high proportion of men undertook the role of Firefighter, so it was therefore unsurprising that this quartile was male dominated.

A high proportion of male employees employed on the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Service terms and conditions (known commonly as the 'Grey Book'), attracted additional allowances that were not available to staff conditioned to the NJC for Local Government Service ('Green Book') support staff, the majority of which were female. These additional allowances increased Grey Book average earnings and moved this staff group to the lower middle quartile, as demonstrated in the report.

It was recognised that women were significantly under-represented in the operational workforce and consequently LFRS was committed to increasing the number of female firefighters. This formed an important part of LFRS's approach to EDI within the Service. LFRS was now undertaking positive action initiatives aimed at encouraging people from under-represented groups to apply for positions in the organisation. Recruitment activity was locally monitored (including the levels of attraction and appointment) to identify problem areas to drive forward improvements.

In response to a question raised by CC Pattison, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the DBS checks were funded by the Service.

CC O'Toole was pleased that the recruitment campaign in August 2022 attracted 577 valid applications and that applications from females and minority groups had increased.

In response to a question raised by CC H Khan regarding the availability of flexible working policies to attract more females into the Service, the Assistant Director / Head of Human Resources advised that last year the Service had invested in improving terms and conditions in relation to some policies which included: maternity pay provision, paternity pay, special leave and flexible working arrangements. It was also noted that it was powerful to have representatives within the Service from minority groups as role models. The Service had looked to introduce more flexible shifts as part of the Emergency Cover Review but this had not been supported by the FBU.

Colleagues leading positive action included firefighters and representatives from community fire safety. This positive action included visiting and talking to different community and faith groups and visiting sports clubs and schools to provide

information on the role of a firefighter, particularly the broader role however, this was resource intensive. CC Woollam was pleased with the targeted social media campaign to reach under-represented groups (as referenced on page 25 of the agenda pack) which had reached circa 1.2m people.

In response to a question raised by CC Mein regarding procedures for confidential concerns the Assistant Director / Head of HR advised that the anonymous reporting line 'Safe Call' had been launched in June and corporate communications colleagues had promoted this. Some reports had been received, although in small numbers, early indications were that they would not have been received through another route. This is reflective of the feedback given by Safecall.

**Resolved:** that the report be noted.

17/23

**Financial Monitoring**

The Director of Corporate Services advised that this report set out the current budget position in respect of the 2023/24 revenue and capital budgets.

**Revenue Budget**

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's 2023/24 revenue budget had been set at £68.493m. The budget profiled to the end of July 2023 was £22.017m. Expenditure to the end of July 2023 was £22.295m, an overspend on the year-to-date budget of £0.176m. The overspend position was broken down between pay and non-pay budgets; an underspend of £0.014m on pay and a £0.190m overspend on non-pay activities.

The year-to-date positions within individual departments were set out in the report with major variances of note being shown separately in the table below:

| Area £'m | Overspend/ (Under spend) | Reason  |
|----------|--------------------------|---|
| Pay      | (0.014)                  | <p>The year-to-date position was broadly breaking even albeit there were some variances within the position to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Service had met its legal responsibilities in relation to the Bear Fulton legal case regarding holiday pay. This had resulted in a payment of £0.285m for backdated costs, that had largely been accrued for in previous years, and ongoing costs of £0.011m per month resulting in year-to-date pressure of £0.057m. There was a forecast pressure of £0.140m that would need to be included in the 2024/25 budget.</li> <li>• The Emergency Cover Review (ECR)</li> </ul> |

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|  |       | <p>approved by the Authority resulted in an overall increase of 8 Wholetime Firefighter across the Service and ongoing efficiency savings. There was currently an in-year shortfall of £0.200m against the savings profile due to timing delays but overall, the ECR was on target.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through improvement in the management of overtime arrangements the service had seen a significant reduction in overtime costs in the period to date that was offsetting the above pressures.</li> </ul> |
| Fleet and technical Services - Non Pay | 0.052 | The year-to-date position was a small overspend broadly consistent with reporting in May 23; with higher vehicle insurance premiums that were experienced across the market and higher than budgeted fuel costs.   |
| Apprenticeship Levy Funding – Non Pay  | 0.100 | Total Apprenticeship Levy income for the year was forecast to be lower than budgeted resulting in an annual pressure of approximately £0.300m; due to a reduction in the number of recruits meeting the eligibility criteria for funding. On call fire fighters and recruits with significant prior learning did not attract levy funding. This might require an adjustment to the income budget for 2024/25 if this trend was expected to continue.   |
| Training Centre Courses – Non Pay      | 0.070 | The Training Centre Courses overspend was mainly due to associate trainers and external training course providers. This pressure was partly offset by vacancies however, the Service was putting in place arrangements to try to increase the number of internal trainers.   |

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| Service Delivery / Heads of Service Delivery – Non Pay | (0.047) | <p>There was a (£0.160m) underspend on National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) due to rebates received for Eastern and Pennine stations resulting from surveyor revaluations.</p> <p>This saving was partly reduced by an overspend of £0.078m on protective equipment, including the roll out of wildfire kit and Urban Search And Rescue (USAR) kit.</p>   |
| Fire Link Grant  | 0.025   | <p>This Home Office grant which supported expenditure on data costs associated with using Airwave service radios was budgeted at (£0.200m). The Home Office had advised authorities that the grant was to decrease by 20% per annum, ending in 2026/27, resulting in a £0.025m year to date pressure, and full year pressure of £0.050m. This pressure would need to be included in the 2024/25 budget.</p> |

### Capital Budget

The Capital Programme for 2023/24 was £11.7m, after allowing for the year end slippage agreed at the last Resources Committee meeting. Spend to date was £2.5m predominantly on pumping appliances. The current year end forecasts had been reviewed and were currently anticipating an in year spend of £10.9m, leading to slippage of £0.9m. Details of capital projects are outlined in the table:

| Area   | Budgeted Items  |
|--|---|
| <p>Operational Vehicles<br/>Budget £5.991m<br/>Forecast £5.795m<br/>Slippage £0.301m</p> | <p>The budget allowed for the remaining stage payments for 10 pumping appliances purchased in previous financial years.</p> <p>In addition, the budget allowed for the first stage payments of the 3 pumping appliances for the 2023/24 programme. It also included two climate change vehicles and three command units.</p> <p>All were on target in 2023/24, except for extended lead time of the smaller climate change vehicle.</p> |
| <p>Other vehicles<br/>Budget £1.03m<br/>Forecast £1.03m</p>                              | <p>This budget allowed for the replacement of various operational support vehicles. Delivery of all vehicles were expected in year.</p>   |

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| Operational Equipment<br>Budget £1.47m<br>Forecast £1.22m<br>Slippage £0.25m | This budget allowed for equipment purchases including thermal imaging cameras and cutting and extrication equipment 2023/24. Slippage on Ballistic Vest and Helmet PPE would enable exploration and pilot of equipment. |
| Building Modifications<br>Budget £1.6m<br>Forecast £1.6m                     | This budget included the continuation of Drill Tower replacements and an upgrade to the Wylfa prop facility. Completion of works was on target.   |

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| IT systems<br>Budget £1.7m<br>Forecast £1.3m<br>Slippage £0.3m | This budget included for the upgrade Firewalls and digitisation of fire appliances. The new Firewall (£0.235m) was expected to be completed in quarter four, therefore the WIFI (£0.1m) would slip to quarter 1 of 2024/25. The Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP) was a national project that had been paused to 2025 delaying slippage (£0.1m) from 2022/23 further. |
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Appendix 2, as now considered by Members set out the capital programme and the committed expenditure position against this, as reflected above. The committed costs to date would be met by revenue contributions and usage of capital reserves and capital receipts.

In response to a question raised by CC O'Toole regarding the potential for a sizeable increase to external audit fees, the Director of Corporate Services advised that the current fees were circa £44k which was relatively low when compared with others and reflected the work of an organisation that delivered on time with minor adjustments. An increase was estimated in the region of 100% of the total fee.

The Director of Corporate Services added that the standards and guidance for auditors were set against international audit standards which the sector felt were not suitable and confirmed that Treasurers had been lobbying for a risk-based model. He advised that the potential for increased fees had been expected for some time. It was recognised that the audit profession were under pressure which had led to delays in completing audits and that there were a very small number of auditors that wanted or could undertake the work. In addition, he advised that the Service was looking to attract Government support through 'new burdens funding' and that Public Sector Audit Appointments was currently undertaking a consultation on proposals for setting the fee scale for 2023/24 audits with responses due mid-October.

**Resolved:** that the committee noted and endorsed the financial position and approved slippage in the capital programme of £0.9m to 2024/25.

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| 18/23 | <b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>  |
|       | <p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on <b>Wednesday 29 November 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 March 2024 and 3 July 2024 and agreed for 25 September 2024.</p>  |
| 19/23 | <b>Exclusion of Press and Public</b>  |
|       | <p><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.</p> |
| 20/23 | <b>Pensions Update (Standing Item)</b>  |
|       | <p>(Paragraphs 4 and 5)</p> <p>Members considered a report that provided an update on the various issues which had arisen in respect of the changes to the pension schemes applying to the uniformed members of the Fire Sector.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the report be noted.</p>  |
| 21/23 | <b>High Value Procurement Projects</b>  |
|       | <p>(Paragraph 3)</p> <p>Members considered a report that provided an update on all contracts for one-off purchases valued in excess of £100,000 and high value procurement projects in excess of £100,000 including: new contract awards, progress of ongoing projects and details of new projects.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the report be noted.</p>                       |

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

**LFRS HQ**  
**Fulwood**



## **Lancashire Combined Fire Authority**

Meeting to be held on 18 December 2023

### **Proceedings of Member Training & Development Working Group held 2 November 2023 (Appendix 1 refers)**

Contact for further information:

Diane Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer - Tel: 01772 866720

#### **Executive Summary**

The proceedings of Member Training & Development Working Group meeting held 2 November 2023.

#### **Recommendation(s)**

To note the proceedings of Member Training & Development Working Group as set out at appendix 1 now presented.

#### **Information**

Attached at Appendix 1 are the proceedings of the Member Training & Development Working Group meeting held on 2 November 2023.

#### **Business Risk**

Nil

#### **Environmental Impact**

Nil

#### **Equality & Diversity Implications**

Nil

#### **Financial Risk**

Nil

#### **HR Implications**

Nil

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

### **List of background papers**

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

### Member Training & Development Working Group

Notes of hybrid meeting held on Thursday, 2 November 2023.

|                      |  |
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| <b>Present:</b>      |  |
|                      |  |
| <b>Councillors</b>   |  |
| D Smith (Vice-Chair) |  |
| N Hennessy           |  |
| Z Khan MBE           |  |
| J Rigby              |  |
| M Salter             |  |

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| <b>Officers</b>   |
|   |
| B Warren, Director of People and Development (LFRS)<br>L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS) |

#### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from the Chair, County Councillor Stuart Morris.

#### **Notes of Previous Meeting**

The notes of the previous meeting held on 20 April 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

#### **Member Training & Development - Update Report**

The Vice-Chair presided over the meeting in place of the Chair.

The Chair gave thanks to County Councillor Kay for her time on the Working Group and welcomed County Councillor Salter. Members requested that their best wishes and hope for a speedy recovery were sent on to County Councillor Kay.

The Director of People and Development, Bob Warren, presented the report which detailed the various means available for elected Members of the Combined Fire Authority to access training and development opportunities.

#### **Personal Development Plans**

Predominantly, PDPs were held face to face, although they could be held over the telephone and electronically to support Members with busy diaries.

Three new Councillors had joined the CFA since the April 2023 meeting, of which two had

received an initial PDP and induction discussion. Of the 25 elected Members of the Authority, 96% had drawn up or reviewed their Personal Development Plan. The remaining 1 Member was in the process of reviewing their annual PDP and Action Plan.

### **e-Learning**

Members were encouraged through the Member Information Bulletin, to view North West Employers Organisation and the Local Government Association websites to access training opportunities. Training opportunities for these organisations were also emailed to Members directly by Democratic Services.

### **Members' Handbook**

The handbook for the municipal year 2023/24 had now been issued to all Members.

### **Member Information Bulletin**

Further to Member discussion at previous meetings, the Member Information Bulletin had been reformatted to web-based and was accessed via an electronic link with tabs for information. Although development was continuous, the link to the first digital Bulletin had been emailed to Members on 01 April 2022. The Bulletin was now being issued more frequently, on a monthly basis.

In addition to providing meeting dates, Member Training and Development opportunities, news and events, the Bulletin also provided upcoming safety campaign information for Members to forward as appropriate to their constituents and key partners using their social media channels together with reporting to Members on the success of those campaigns in subsequent issues. Members were actively encouraged to provide information to officers for inclusion in the Bulletin and to provide feedback on any improvements they would like to see.

### **Co-ordination of Training**

Democratic Services continued to contact home authorities where relevant to co-ordinate member training and development opportunities and avoid duplication.

Matthew Salter expressed that, as a new Member, he was very happy with the induction process, the material provided by Democratic Services and the support of the Democratic Services Officers. He found the induction meeting with the Chief Fire Officer beneficial, and the Member Handbook a useful resource. Furthermore, he believed that the Annual Service Report was impressive, interesting, and very accessible. Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) compared favourably with the induction processes at other Local Authorities.

County Councillor Hennessy highlighted the importance of the Local Government Authority (LGA) and of attending the Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials Programme. Members noted that County Councillor Morris was attending the course that day and County Councillor Salter was enrolled to attend in February 2024.

**Resolved:** - That Members noted and endorsed the content of the report.

## **Member Training Needs Analysis 2022 - 23**

The Member Training and Development Working Group was responsible for analysing and agreeing the training needs of Members that linked to the objectives, priorities, and vision of the Authority.

Members were updated on the action that had been taken in response to training needs identified from the Training Needs Analysis undertaken last year and the Personal Development Sessions that had been held with Members throughout 2022/23.

Following consideration, Members agreed that their training needs were being met and agreed the training needs for 2023/24 as follows:

- To continue to promote Fire Safety / Safe and Well Service and the work of the Member Champions;
- To continue to attend service area inductions / meetings at stations and information sessions on key issues to support decision-making;
- To maintain good attendance at all Strategy Group meetings, encouraging all Members to attend;
- To continue with the informal buddy system;
- To support the use of electronic systems where needed, preferred / available;
- To attend a Prince's Trust presentation;
- To continue to promote all available training;
- To offer new Members LGA Fire Leadership Essentials Training;
- To support Member knowledge around the Service, terminology, and operational / staff roles.

Members discussed firefighter pensions issues within the Authority and requested further information at a future Strategy Meeting and within a brief, written summary.

It was noted by Members that County Councillor Singleton had replaced County Councillor Kay as the Member Champion for Health and Wellbeing.

The Vice-Chair informed the group that the Darwen Fire Cadet Unit had given an interesting presentation which highlighted their work to Darwen Town Council. He advised that Blackburn and Darwen Council had awarded the Cadets with a funding grant and requested that Members of other authorities encouraged Cadet Units to apply for any community grant schemes they had in place.

**Resolved:** - That the Committee agreed the training development needs for 2023/24.

## **Monitoring, Review & Evaluation of Activities**

The report provided an update on Member Training and Development activities since the previous meeting. The report showed opportunities and outcomes of activity taken by Members to support the achievement of Service objectives or positive outcomes for communities.

## **Involvement at Area Level**

Members were invited to attend local events such as open days and Members were encouraged to contact area personnel to arrange to visit their local fire station to discuss local key issues.

Through the Member Information Bulletin, Members had been invited to and had attended Prince's Trust presentations in the community. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Leader of the Opposition had been invited to attend the Wholetime Recruits Passing Out Parade on 14<sup>th</sup> December but were unable to attend due to prior commitments, therefore a Member had agreed to attend on their behalf. A Member had also attended a Cadet's Passing Out Parade at Morecambe Fire Station.

### **LGA Culture in the Fire Service 2023**

Three Members attended the Culture in the Fire Service Conference held in London on 27 June 2023 which was chaired by Councillor Jane Hugo with the programme consisting of: i) Culture in the Fire Service: where we are now; ii) Voices from around the sector – experiences, reflections and way forward; iii) Leading cultural change; iv) Exploring Fire and Rescue Authority Members Role; and, v) Overview of Employment Law.

Feedback from the conference included that it was important and valuable as culture in the fire sector was a big issue across the country.

### **LGA Leadership Essentials Training**

Initially, new councillors had been invited to attend the LGA Fire & Rescue Leadership Essentials Programme with the invitation then being extended to all Members. Six Members were scheduled to attend the course which was being held in November 2023 and February 2024 (with a maximum of 3 Members per authority on each programme).

Members had also been invited to attend the LGA Leadership Essentials: Audit Committee with one Member due to attend in February.

### **Cheshire Fire & Rescue Training Centre Visit**

Members of the Capital Projects Working Group were invited to visit Cheshire Fire & Rescue Training Centre on 6 October 2023 which included a tour of the facilities.

Positive feedback was received which included that the facilities were impressive, and the trip was informative and interesting.

### **North West Fire Control Visit**

Positive feedback was received from a previous visit to North West Fire Control and a visit had been arranged for 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023, however, the visit had been cancelled due to low interest and / or availability of Members.

### **Annual LFRS Open Day**

This event was postponed in 2023 and was next planned for 2024.

## **IT and Mileage Claim Sessions**

Democratic Services Officers provided ongoing support on a 1-2-1 basis assisting Members to access the internet, submit mileage claims, and access the Mod.Gov app to view private papers.

At the last meeting, it was agreed that Members would be encouraged to move away from having printed paper copies of committee documents by providing any further necessary training. It was noted that although Members could effectively use the Mod.Gov app to view committee papers, Members preferred paper copies instead.

## **Social Media**

Through the Member Information Bulletin and by email, links and updates for the Service's podcast, (Out of the Ashes: Stories from Lancashire), were shared with Members and positive feedback had been received. In particular, the view of one Member who was impressed with the podcast and had stated that it was positive communication for the public, was shared by the group.

## **Training on Member Code of Conduct**

The Clerk provided training on the Member code of conduct at the last Strategy Group meeting and it was intended that guidance on this would be added to future editions of the Member Information Bulletin.

## **Informative Videos**

Democratic Services would look into finding whether videos could be used to improve Members' operational knowledge.

County Councillor Hennessy requested that the Chair, Vice-Chair and Leader of the Opposition monthly briefing sessions with the Chief Fire Officer be included in the Monitoring, Review and Evaluation of Activities Report.

The Vice-Chair asked that a message be included in the Member Information Bulletin to remind Members to advise Democratic Services of any training undertaken.

Members highlighted the importance of receiving and sharing social media posts and it was confirmed that they would continue to receive them.

Interest was expressed by County Councillor Salter in attending a visit to North West Fire Control (NWFC) as the previous planned visit had been cancelled. Members were advised that another trip would be planned in 2024 pending Member interest at the time. The Director of People and Development, stated he was HR Advisor to NWFC, and offered to explain in greater detail the role and activity of NWFC to County Councillor Salter alongside a visit if required and include any other Members of the Working Group if needed.

Members discussed the upcoming His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection and how the fundamental processes for reviewing,

evaluating and supporting Member training and development would provide the inspectorate with valuable insight if required. The HMI Inspection was due to take place in 2024 although the date was unknown. A discussion took place pertaining to equality & diversity, and culture and values within the Fire and Rescue sector, in which it was emphasised, that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service had been recognised as outstanding. The Members requested, and it was agreed, that information would be shared with the group outside of the meeting in relation to the Authority's objectives, work carried out, and work to be done in respect of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, and Culture and Values.

**Resolved:** - That the Group noted and endorsed the content of the report as presented.

### **Future Meetings Dates**

The next meeting of the Working Group would be held on Thursday **25 April 2024**. A further meeting was agreed for Thursday 07 November 2024.

LFRS HQ  
Fulwood

B Warren  
Director of People and Development



## **Lancashire Combined Fire Authority**

Meeting to be held on 18 December 2023

### **Proceedings of Planning Committee held 20 November 2023 (Appendix 1 refers)**

Contact for further information:

Diane Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer - Tel: 01772 866720

#### **Executive Summary**

The proceedings of Planning Committee meeting held 20 November 2023.

#### **Recommendation(s)**

To note the proceedings of Planning Committee as set out at appendix 1 now presented.

#### **Information**

Attached at Appendix 1 are the proceedings of the Planning Committee meeting held on 20 November 2023.

#### **Business Risk**

Nil

#### **Environmental Impact**

Nil

#### **Equality & Diversity Implications**

Nil

#### **Financial Risk**

Nil

#### **HR Implications**

Nil

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

### **List of background papers**

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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

# Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee

Monday, 20 November 2023, at 10.00 am in the Washington Hall, Service Training Centre, Euxton.

## Minutes

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Present:</b>          |  |
|                          |  |
| <b>Councillors</b>       |  |
| S Clarke (Chair)         |  |
| J Singleton (Vice-Chair) |  |
| G Baker                  |  |
| M Dad BEM                |  |
| N Hennessy               |  |
| J Hugo                   |  |
| F Jackson                |  |
| D O'Toole                |  |
| P Rigby                  |  |
| J Shedwick               |  |

|  |
|--|
| <b>Officers</b>  |
|  |
| S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)<br>S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS)<br>E Price, Group Manager, Planning, Performance and Assurance (LFRS)<br>D Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer (LFRS)<br>L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS) |
|  |

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 12/23 | <b>Apologies for Absence</b>   |
|       | None received.   |
| 13/23 | <b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests</b>   |
|       | None received.   |
| 14/23 | <b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>   |
|       | <b>Resolved:</b> - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 17 July 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.   |
| 15/23 | <b>Emergency Cover Review - Implementation Update</b>  |
|       | The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report. He introduced Group Manager Emma Price from the Planning, Performance and Assurance team and advised that the team had been working hard towards achieving the changes identified from the Emergency Cover Review (ECR). |

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) was required to review emergency response arrangements periodically to ensure that provision remained effective and commensurate with its dynamic risk profile. This process was a robust assessment of historic data and emergent risk and was delivered in the format of an Emergency Cover Review (ECR).

The changes identified in the ECR 2022 reflected the most effective and efficient use of resources for the whole of Lancashire. The Authority agreed all the proposed changes on 19 December 2022 which would result in LFRS:

- Maintaining all 39 fire stations and 58 fire appliances;
- Maintaining its outstanding response standards;
- Creating an increase in overall firefighter jobs by eight.

An ECR implementation plan was developed with five key workstreams, with updates on the workstreams detailed as follows:

### **1. Introduce more resilient and flexible crewing arrangements**

The Service had hoped to introduce more flexible crewing arrangements if agreement could be reached with trade unions. However, the proposed flexible whole-time duty system was not agreed by the trade union. The Service subsequently proposed a trial of flexible rota management and leave arrangements; however, an agreement could not be reached. Therefore, changes of duty systems at some stations would still take place but with the re-introduction of the 2-2-4 whole-time duty system as opposed to flexible whole-time.

Engagement sessions had taken place with all the members of staff affected. Implementation of the changes to crewing arrangements were led by people's preferences in terms of the duty system they wished to work, subject to the skill requirements and the demands of the Service. Members of staff permanently employed on Day Crewing Plus (DCP) stations were offered a role at an alternative DCP station, or a position at their current station depending on their preference with some members of staff securing promotion opportunities. The Service continued to work with members of staff who were currently temporary on the DCP system to identify a suitable posting. A training needs analysis had been completed and training was being commissioned and delivered to meet the needs of staff.

Property alterations at Morecambe, Fleetwood and Skelmersdale were currently being planned to accommodate an increase in staff at those stations.

It was anticipated that the go live date for implementation of the change of duty systems, or establishment numbers, would be 1 March 2024. Changes for each station (with the exception of Penwortham) would take place at the same time as follows:

- Morecambe, Fleetwood and Skelmersdale (changing from DCP to 2-2-4 Whole-time) increasing establishment numbers from 14 to 24;
- St Annes (changing from DCP to Flexible Day Crewing) reducing establishment numbers from 14 to 13;
- Hyndburn, South Shore and Lancaster (remaining 2-2-4 Whole-time) reducing establishment numbers from 28 to 24;

- Darwen, Rawtenstall, Nelson and Bispham (remaining DCP) reducing establishment numbers from 14 to 13;
- Fulwood, Bacup, Ormskirk and Leyland (remaining Flexible Day Crewing) reducing from 14 to 13;
- Penwortham will remain as DCP whilst the Preston area review is carried out, the establishment number will reduce from 14 to 13 in line with other DCP stations.

In response to Member questions the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that one of the main areas in the ECR had been the need to reduce the number of stations on the DCP system. The above changes were across each station and would result in an overall increase of 8 firefighter roles. He confirmed that the Service had worked hard liaising with Union representatives and with individuals who would be changing stations or roles. The proposed flexible rostering system could have affected circa 100 staff however agreement could not be reached with the FBU.

Changes to St Annes had provided opportunities for a number of on call firefighters to pick up wholetime roles and there had not been the need for anyone to move their home into the area. Changes on single pump stations (such as Hyndburn, South Shore and Lancaster) had meant a slight difference in establishment numbers with crews that currently had seven dropping to six to support a balanced budget.

CC Hennessy requested information regarding firefighter promotion opportunities. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service ran annual promotional boards for aspiring crew and watch managers. Current DCP stations had one watch manager B and three crew managers which when the stations returned to wholetime, would become four watch manager A roles. He agreed to bring a breakdown to the next meeting.

In response to further questions from CC Hennessy, the Deputy Chief Fire officer provided reassurance that skill requirements across all stations had been analysed. He confirmed that training was delivered in-house at the training centre with some specialist training (such as swift water rescues) being out sourced.

## **2. Optimise emergency cover through dynamic cover software**

The dynamic cover software was now in use in LFRS, both within the Command Support Room at Service Headquarters and through the mobile devices of all Flexi Duty Officers. The software had been used successfully during a number of large-scale incidents and periods of high incident activity, to move resources according to the risk. The next phase of this project was to embed the software and its use at North West Fire Control (NWFC). A standalone facility would be made available on the Lancashire pod at NWFC so that Control Room Operators could start to use the software.

In response to a question raised by CC Hennessy, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that currently spate flooding or large fires were managed by the LFRS command support room, crewed by group and station managers who used the dynamic software to assist North West Fire Control to move appliances across the county to spread fire cover based on current risk, availability and demand. He added that flexi duty officers were based across the county and worked a rota system to cover at night and during the weekends.

In response to a comment from CC Shedwick the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that of the Fire and Rescue Services within NWFC, LFRS was currently the only Service that used the dynamic cover software.

In response to Cllr Hugo who had received a query regarding why one of the appliances from Blackpool had been moved to Burnley to provide cover, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that he was not aware of that occurrence but could look into it. The software was designed to provide efficient and effective cover across the fifty-eight fire appliances, of which thirty-two were crewed by on call staff. It was therefore possible on occasion that one of the four appliances at Blackpool would be relocated elsewhere to provide efficient and effective cover. Members were aware that on call availability had been an issue for the fire sector for a number of years and that the Service was investigating ways to improve this. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer added that the use of the dynamic cover software provided for an effective deployment of resources.

### **3. Strengthen our response to climate change emergencies**

#### **Investing in Four Fire Appliances with Off-Road Capabilities**

The Service was currently finalising the last stage of evaluation for the first large fire appliance with off-road capabilities and a contract award was expected by the end of November 2023. It was anticipated that this appliance would be delivered to LFRS within the next 12 months. The smaller fire appliance would be explored once the contract for the large fire appliance had been awarded. The procurement of this vehicle was anticipated to be quicker and was also expected to be in Service within the next 12 months. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that these vehicles were not in addition to the current fleet but would be replacing standard fire appliances. Both vehicles would then be evaluated prior to the purchase of two further vehicles (one large and one small).

#### **Introduce Flood Water Incident Managers and Flood Water Tactical Advisors**

Eight flexi duty officers had been trained as Flood Water Incident Managers. These officers would be informed of any incidents within the water or large area flooding, and they would either attend the incident or provide advice remotely depending on the nature of the incident. Two Flood Water Tactical Advisors were yet to be trained as this was a nationally run accredited course and LFRS was awaiting availability.

CC Shedwick commented that he was pleased to see more swift water training and asked whether liaison was made with local mountain rescue teams and flood forums (such as the Wyre flood forum which was very active in his area). The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that multi-agency responses were provided and the Service would always respond even though there was not a statutory duty under the Fire Services Act nor funding received from government.

### **4. Strengthen firefighting and rescue capabilities in high-rise and commercial buildings**

#### **Introduce a 45m Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP)**

The Service's largest ever ALP was currently in build and was on track for delivery January 2024. There would then be a period of familiarisation and training for operational crews prior to the appliance going on the run at Preston.

**Invest in two Additional Water Towers**

The project was currently on target with the new appliances due for delivery by the end of March 2024. Similar to the new ALP, there would be a period of familiarisation and training prior to the appliances going on the run, which were anticipated to be located at St Annes and Lancaster.

**5. Broaden on-call firefighting capabilities to strengthen operational response**

**Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) Driving**

On Call staff at Hyndburn were now trained to drive the ALP to incidents and they had already successfully utilised this skill on a number of occasions. On Call staff at Morecambe were currently undertaking driver training which would be completed by the end of November 2023.

**Command Support Unit (CSU)**

The CSU went live on 1 November 2023 and was crewed by On Call staff from Bolton-le-Sands and Carnforth. The CSU attended its first incident on 7 November 2023 at the large commercial building fire in Longridge.

In response to a query raised by CC Rigby, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that in addition to the small CSU mentioned two large CSUs were currently in build for replacement at Fulwood and Blackburn.

**On Call and Specials Review**

The On Call review was progressing and had identified a number of additional options to strengthen operational response. These items alongside the implementation of the Specials Review, would see On Call staff being developed to support a number of specialist appliances in the future. The Service was currently exploring options around potentially training the On Call staff at Lancaster in the swift water rescue specialist skill.

The Authority Chairman commented that over the last decade, in a rapidly changing world, investment had been made in equipment and software and he was pleased that there was much better co-operation with neighbouring authorities to provide cross-border support at incidents. He advised that it was not for Members to get involved in operational matters as that was for the Service who had excellent Officers.

The Authority Chairman also commented that the reduction in highway services provided by local authorities (ie: the lack of litter picking or removal of grass-cuttings) resulted in blocked drains which added to difficulties the multi-agencies faced during flooding incidents. He therefore asked Members to take this issue back to their local authorities.

**Resolved:** that the report be noted and endorsed.

16/23

**Blue Light Collaboration Board Update**

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report that updated Members the progress against the five key workstreams being progressed under the Blue Light Collaboration Board (BLCB). It was noted that the workstreams were effectively

managed through the Strategic and Tactical Collaboration Boards.

## **1. Missing Persons (Missing from home)**

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) continued to support Lancashire Constabulary (LanCon) with this successful collaboration and a closure report was now in development for this workstream.

It was noted that there were over 220 police requests into North West Fire Control (NWFC) for the Service's specialist drone team within the last 12 months and most of these incidents were for missing persons.

The Missing Persons project was being enhanced further with the aim of training teams from several on-call stations within Lancashire. The locations were identified from data and analysis which showed where people were most likely to go missing from home, and where LanCon's resources were limited. This enabled LFRS' specialist teams to search familiar ground in reduced time and improve the likelihood of a positive outcome. This training developed the knowledge of what was required by LanCon in the management of a missing from home incident: including intelligence gathering, record keeping, search areas, and ensuring a crime scene wasn't contaminated.

Training was also planned for the contact centre staff in LanCon to increase their knowledge of LFRS' search capabilities.

A Memorandum of Understanding had been developed to provide a framework to further support the collaborative use of LFRS and LanCon drones. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service would be starting to recharge to cover costs.

CC Shedwick commented that the fire service played a major part in collaboration and given the level of support to the Police was pleased the Service would be making a recharge.

In response to a further comment from CC Shedwick the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the drone team were on call and dependent on the level of incident it was not always necessary to mobilise a fire engine.

## **2. Estates and Co-location**

This was a long-term workstream which may deliver significant efficiencies and effectiveness where co-location sites were identified.

A set of principles were being developed in relation to co-location sites and a mapping exercise of the current co-location sites and benefits had commenced.

Blue Light partners were currently reviewing their strategic property asset plans to coordinate the future development plans over the next 5-10 years. The development plans would consider the potential for co-location, and with a view to further developing the integration of services at co-location sites to enhance the shared ethos and principles.

All Blue Light partners were included in the scoping work for the LFRS' Preston



area review.

### **3. First Responder**

As part of the Annual Service Plan priorities this year, the Service was running a trial involving staff volunteering as community first responders, supporting North West Ambulance Service (NWAS). Volunteers respond to life threatening emergencies in their communities from the workplace and administer first aid in the initial vital minutes before NWAS colleagues arrive. This collaboration aimed to save lives in Lancashire's communities.

Phase 1 of the first responder scheme involved 5 non-operational LFRS' staff from various departments across the Service volunteering to take part in the scheme. At least one life has been saved by LFRS' volunteers.

Phase 2 had commenced which has enabled operational staff to volunteer for the scheme. Eight Flexible Duty Officers had so far volunteered to be a community first responder and were currently progressing through the onboarding process with NWAS.

In response to a question raised by CC Hennessy, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the FBU locally would not agree to a first responder scheme without agreement at national level; however, it was supported by the other grey book union bodies Fire Officers Association and Fire and Rescue Services Association. He confirmed that discussions were ongoing and that staff currently on the trial were volunteers. There was a benefit to the community given fire engines carried defibrillators and could often attend a cardiac arrest incident quicker than an ambulance. He also stated that fire and rescue mobilisations would be in addition to an ambulance / NWAS response, not instead of. There was also a duty under the Policing and Crime Act to collaborate and provide more effective and efficient public services.

### **4. Leadership Development**

The Learning and Development leads from each of the Blue Light partners were investigating leadership development collaboration opportunities.

An analysis of leadership development was ongoing between the three organisations, with the services currently exploring an additional mentorship programme for command and control.

### **5. Command Units**

The aim of this project was to establish and deliver additional collaborative uses of the command units in LFRS to support effective multi agency working amongst emergency responders. The key objectives were to improve operational effectiveness and in line with LFRS' mission; 'Making Lancashire Safer'.

LFRS' Command Support Unit (CSU) project was listed in this year's Service Plan and aims to upgrade not only the vehicles but to take advantage in recent technological advances to support operational incidents. The first new CSU went live on 1st November, crewed by on-call staff from Carnforth and Bolton-le-Sands fire stations. As part of the agreed capital vehicle replacement project, two larger

|       |   |
|-------|---|
|       | <p>command units would also be in service by the end of 2023.</p> <p>It was expected that the initial benefits to be realised would be technological advances that would further develop information sharing and situational awareness aligned to improving and embedding the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles. Further scoping and development would be overseen by the Blue Light Collaboration Board to ensure opportunities for joint working were effectively coordinated and delivered.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the report be noted.</p>   |
| 17/23 | <p><b>His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services</b></p>   |
|       | <p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided an update on His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) activity.</p> <p>HMICFRS had commenced Round 3 inspections in early 2023. The three pillars of effectiveness, efficiency and people remained the same as Round 2 as did the 11 diagnostics under each pillar which the inspectorate graded judgements against.</p> <p>It was noted that HMI Michelle Skeer, recently retired Chief Constable of Cumbria Constabulary, had three meetings planned with the Chair of the Authority, the Chief Fire Officer and Trade Union officials / staff network group representatives at the start of December. In addition, the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer had recently attended a HMICFRS' Chief and Chairs event in London.</p> <p>Early engagement with the Service's liaison lead, Dominic Mika had taken place with Chief Fire Officer Justin Johnston and Area Manager Tom Powell (Service Liaison Officer). Dominic would start to be introduced into the Service over the coming months in the build up to LFRS' inspection which was anticipated would take place around late spring / early summer 2024. The Organisational Assurance Team within the Service Improvement Department continued to track progress against our previous inspection, monitor national themes and prepare LFRS for our Round 3 inspection.</p> <p>HMICFRS was publishing reports on a rolling basis for Round 3 and had so far published eight reports on fire and rescue services (FRS). With the introduction of the 'adequate' grading, many FRS's had seen 'good' gradings from Round 2 change to 'adequate' gradings in Round 3 due to identified 'areas for improvement'. A summary of the gradings for all eight FRSs inspected so far in Round 3 was detailed in the report.</p> <p><b>Misconduct within fire and rescue services</b></p> <p>Members noted that HMICFRS had commissioned Crest Advisory to carry out research on misconduct within fire and rescue services in England. The goal was to better understand misconduct within the fire sector so its processes and policies could be strengthened and improved.</p> <p>Crest Advisory was conducting two online surveys; one aimed at current members of staff and the other aimed at former members of staff who had worked in a fire and rescue service within the last five years. Current members of staff could take part in the survey which was open until 4 December 2023. Former members of staff could register their interest to take part in research interviews with registration open</p> |

until 11 December 2023. LFRS had shared details of the surveys with both current and former members of staff. Information shared in the research would typically remain confidential, unless there were safeguarding, or criminal issues raised that require it to be shared with a third party (e.g., the police). Reporting of data obtained via surveys and interviews would be anonymised. The findings would be reported by HMICFRS in June 2024.

**Values and culture in fire and rescue services**

Values and culture in fire and rescue services remained a focus for HMICFRS and LFRS had already been working proactively in terms of promoting its values and engendering an organisational culture where all employees could thrive.

Members noted that the Authority’s Resources Committee had recently received a report on the progress the Service had made in relation to equality diversity and inclusion (EDI) as part of our EDI Annual Report.

The Resources Committee was also updated on progress the Service was making regarding the HMICFRS and National Fire Chiefs Council recommendations in relation to values and culture. In response to Member questions, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that there were 35 recommendations and 20 of those were for Chief Fire Officers to implement which included: methods for individuals to raise concerns (including an anonymous reporting line), the review of background checks, the implementation of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and a 360° feedback process for leaders and managers in the Service.

The Principal Member Services Officer confirmed that the progress report to the Resources Committee was publicly available on the Service website and agreed that this would be circulated separately to Members of the Committee for information.

The Authority Chairman commented that collaboration was discussed at a national conference he had attended where the vast majority of attendees were against governance of fire by a Police and Crime Commissioner; this was something that the Authority had previously unanimously opposed.

**Resolved:** that the report be noted and endorsed.

18/23

**Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on **5 February 2024** at 1000 hours in the main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Further meeting dates were noted for 15 July 2024 and agreed for 18 November 2024.

**M Nolan  
Clerk to CFA**

**LFRS HQ  
Fulwood**

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## **Lancashire Combined Fire Authority**

Meeting to be held on 18 December 2023

### **Proceedings of Audit Committee held 28 November 2023 (Appendix 1 refers)**

Contact for further information:

Diane Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer - Tel: 01772 866720

#### **Executive Summary**

The proceedings of Audit Committee meeting held 28 November 2023.

#### **Recommendation(s)**

To note the proceedings of Audit Committee as set out at appendix 1 now presented.

#### **Information**

Attached at Appendix 1 are the proceedings of the Audit Committee meeting held on 28 November 2023.

#### **Business Risk**

Nil

#### **Environmental Impact**

Nil

#### **Equality & Diversity Implications**

Nil

#### **Financial Risk**

Nil

#### **HR Implications**

Nil

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

### **List of background papers**

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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

# Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

## Audit Committee

Tuesday, 28 November 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  |   |
| M Salter   |   |
| J Singleton  |   |
| <b>Officers</b>                                      |   |
| S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS)       |   |
| J Meadows, Head of Finance (LFRS)                    |   |
| A Latham, Financial Accountant (LFRS)                |   |
| E Hardman, Management Accountant (LFRS)              |   |
| L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)               |   |
| <b>In attendance</b>                                 |   |
| G Jones, External Audit, Grant Thornton              |   |
| A Dalecki, Internal Audit, Lancashire County Council |   |
| L Rix, Internal Audit, Lancashire County Council     |   |
| I Winston, Internal Audit, Lancashire County Council |   |
| 12/23  | <b>Apologies for Absence</b>  |
|  | Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Munsif Dad BEM.  |
| 13/23  | <b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests</b>  |
|  | None received.  |
| 14/23  | <b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b>  |
|  | <b>Resolved:</b> - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 25 July 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. |

15/23

**External Audit - Addendum to the Annual Audit Plan**

The Chair welcomed new County Councillor Matthew Salter to his first Audit Committee meeting.

Jacque Meadows, Head of Finance, introduced new members of the Finance Team Adam Latham, Financial Accountant, and Emma Hardman, Management Accountant, who were in attendance to observe the meeting.

Georgia Jones, Key Audit Partner, Grant Thornton presented the report for the Addendum to the Audit Plan to the meeting.

It was noted that the external auditors had identified an additional risk to the audit plan which had been agreed by the Audit Committee on 25 July 2023. The additional risk related to incomplete or inaccurate information transferred to the new general ledger hosted by Lancashire County Council (LCC) which would require additional work in order to respond to the risk.

In January 2023, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service moved from using Oracle E-Business Suite (EBS) ledger system to Oracle Fusion, which was a cloud-based system. Lancashire County Council hosted the Oracle Fusion system on behalf of LFRS and processed employee, supplier, and customer personal and financial data.

It was important when implementing a new significant accounting system that sufficient controls were in place to ensure the integrity of the data. There was also a risk over the completeness and accuracy of the data transfer from the previous ledger system and potential challenges in producing robust control account reconciliations and detailed transaction reports.

LCC experienced problems with the data migration from the Oracle EBS to the Fusion system and there were also instances of data breaches. Therefore, it had been identified that the completeness and accuracy of the transfer of financial information to the new general ledger was a significant risk which was one of the most significant assessed risks of material misstatement.

The additional work to respond to the risk included: -

- completing an Information Technology (IT) environment review by IT specialists to document and evaluate the design and implementation of controls within the new general ledger system; and
- map the closing balances from the previous ledger to ensure accuracy and completeness of the financial information.

In response to a query from County Councillor Salter regarding the reason that migration to Oracle Fusion had not been identified as a significant concern at the Audit meeting in July, Georgia Jones explained that external audit were unaware of significant concerns in July and it was only when system controls were investigated that the concerns were found by IT on the control issues on the implementation of the new system. At the July meeting, the planning had been carried out and the reports had been drafted and so the November meeting had been the first



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|       | <p>opportunity for external audit to bring the update.</p> <p>County Councillor Singleton asked if additional costs relating to the addendum were included in the agenda. Georgia Jones advised that the item was related to the following year 2023/24 audit work, therefore once the current audit work had been completed, potential costs could be assessed, discussed with the Director of Corporate Services, and brought to the Committee for approval.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Committee noted and endorsed the report.</p>  |
| 16/23 | <p><b>External Audit - Audit Findings Report</b></p>  |
|       | <p>Georgia Jones, Key Audit Partner presented the Audit Findings report to the Committee.</p> <p>Under the statutory Code of Audit Practice for Local Government bodies the Authority's external auditors, Grant Thornton were required to issue a report to those charged with governance summarising the conclusions from their audit work.</p> <p>Georgia Jones advised that at the time of writing the report the audit work was substantially complete and there were two recommendations that were agreed by management listed below: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a review of the fixed asset register to ensure excess depreciation was not charged against fully depreciated assets; and</li> <li>• to consider if the general ledger could be updated to include additional journal details which had now been implemented.</li> </ul> <p>The two recommendations and management responses were set out on page 26 of the report (page 46 of the agenda pack): -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "We recommend the Authority examine the fixed asset register to ensure excess depreciation is not charged against fully depreciated assets and correct this for future years." <p style="margin-left: 40px;">"The assets with a negative net book value will be corrected during 2023/24 and new procedures will be put in place to ensure assets are not depreciated beyond their cost or value in the future."</p> </li> <li>2. "We recommend the Authority looks into whether the system can be updated to include details of preparer/authoriser." <p style="margin-left: 40px;">"A new process was implemented towards the end of 2022/23 to record the journal preparer and approver. The approval of journals is required by Accountants, or more senior members of the Finance Team, and this is required to be saved within the journal file. A journal register records the unique journal reference, accounting period, preparer, and approver. This is reviewed to minimise the risk of self-authorisation on journal postings".</p> </li> </ol> <p>The Value For Money (VFM) work had not yet been completed, however, a draft report had been issued the Auditors Annual Report was expected to be reported by</p> |

the end of the calendar year.

Georgia Jones informed that there were no matters of which they were aware that that required would require modification of the audit opinion or material change to the financial statements, subject to outstanding matters listed below: -

- responses from the pension fund auditor to gain assurance on underpinning controls and supporting data for the pension fund net liability;
- an international Financial Reporting Interpretation Committee (IFRIC 14) assessment from the actuary on the amount of pension fund asset (surplus) in the LGPS scheme;
- an update Government Actuary Department (GAD) report to reflect part year inflation for the valuation of the Firefighters pension fund (currently in discussion);
- completing testing on areas of land and buildings valuations, including an assessment of the impact of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC);
- completion of testing on the fair value of financial instruments;
- our Information Technology (IT) assessment on the data migration controls to the new Oracle Fusion system;
- receipt of management representation letter;
- review of the final set of financial statements; and
- final quality procedures.

Georgia Jones drew the Members attention to pages 8 (page 28 of the agenda pack) to 11 (page 31 of the agenda pack) which detailed significant risk which required special audit consideration, which were management override of controls (which was a mandatory risk for all audit and journal testing had been completed with nothing to report), improper revenue recognition, valuation of land and buildings, and valuation of pension fund net liability.

The Chair confirmed that the security of Oracle Fusion had now been enhanced by increasing the length of user passwords to a minimum of 16 characters.

County Councillor Salter asked if there had been a known issue with passwords in relation to password security for the Oracle Fusion database referenced on page 27 (page 47 of the agenda pack), Georgia Jones stated, last year, it had been identified that the password configuration was weak, and the strength could be improved which was then amended when the new ledger was implemented. The Chair added that, as the external auditors worked closely with LCC, it had led to early detection of the issues with the security of passwords.

County Councillor Salter inquired how the Committee would be updated when the VFM work had been completed. Georgia Jones explained that there would be a comprehensive report with more detail included in the External Auditors Annual Report with the potential for a meeting to be held before the March Committee to present the report.

County Councillor Singleton commented that, as referenced on Page 5 (Page 25 of the agenda pack), some local authorities had taken excessive risks by borrowing more than their revenue budgets whereas no areas of risk had been identified in

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|       | <p>the Service's Treasury Management activities.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Georgia Jones for her report.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Committee: -</p> <p>i) Noted and endorsed the matters raised in the report;</p> <p>ii) Noted and endorsed the two recommendations and management responses on page 26 of the report.</p>  |
| 17/23 | <p><b>External Audit - Letter of Representation</b></p> <p>As part of the year-end process the Authority was required to sign a letter of representation on completion of the audit. This letter confirmed that the Authority had disclosed all relevant information in its accounts for the year in question and that all issues which should have been brought to the attention of the auditors had been.</p> <p>It was noted that an additional representation had been included this year in relation to Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC); that was identified in one building which had been highlighted to the auditor and the Service was not aware of any other property in its portfolio that was impacted by this issue.</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services informed that he was requesting that the authorisation for the signing of the letter be agreed in principle. He proposed that a meeting of the Audit Committee be held before the planned meeting in March to receive the financial statements once adjustments had been made following the external audit, along with the Letter of Representation.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to defer the signing of the letter and the Treasurer confirmed he would sign the letter when there were no issues which he felt required disclosure following any further matters determined from the work by the auditors.</p> <p>In response to a query from County Councillor Singleton regarding a full breakdown of additional costs, Georgia Jones advised that the Final Audit Findings Report 2022/23 as well as the Letter of Representation would contain a full breakdown of the original agreed fee and any additional costs.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Audit Committee authorised the signing of the letter by the Chair of the Audit Committee on completion of the audit.</p> |
| 18/23 | <p><b>External Audit Fees</b></p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services presented the External Audit Fees to Members which provided an update on the proposed audit fees from 2023/24 advised by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) following the appointment process reported to the CFA in December 2021.</p> <p>The CFA accepted the Public Sector Audit Appointments invitation to opt-in to the national scheme in December 2021. Following a process, the auditors Grant Thornton, were appointed for a further five years from 2023/24. The procurement</p>  |

took place against the challenging backcloth of a troubled audit profession, a turbulent market and a local audit system facing unprecedented difficulties including large volumes of delayed audit opinions.

The Committee was advised that in Autumn 2023, the PSAA would consult on the proposed scale of audit fees payable by bodies in respect of the audit of 2023/24 accounts and to expect increases of the order of 150% on the total fees for 2022/23.

Audit requirements had increased in recent years as a result of increased regulatory challenge, changes to the audit work required under the Code of Audit Practice and updated auditing and financial reporting standards. On the 19 September, the Chief Executive of the PSAA advised the Authority of the proposed fee for 2023/24 of £92,606; representing a 151% increase. Alongside this, the PSAA launched a consultation on the fee scales which the Service responded to.

The consultation on the 2023/24 fee scale was taking place at a time of change in the local audit system. The audit profession had been subject to high levels of scrutiny in recent years following several widely reported financial failures in the private sector and increase in reported Section 114 notices across the sector. It was noted that the 2023/24 auditor appointments and fee scale was due to be published on 30 November 2023.

The financial pressure would be included in the 2024/25 budget report to the Authority in February 2024.

The Director of Corporate Services thanked the External Audit Team for their work.

Georgia Jones, Key Audit Partner, Grant Thornton explained that the PSAA set the Audit fees which were also affected by an annual increase, changes in the regulatory environment, work for the valuation of land and buildings, and work around pension figures. New audit standards had been introduced such as ISA 315 regarding IT controls and ISA 240 concerning fraud which created additional work. Additionally, there were recruitment difficulties due to the specialist nature of the work and a limited number of accredited individuals who were able to sign-off accounts.

The Chair stated that external audit fees was something well-rehearsed in all councils and County Councillor Singleton who was present was the Vice-Chair for Audit Risk and Governance at Lancashire County Council.

County Councillor Singleton commented that discussions had taken place at Lancashire County Council regarding audit risk and governance in relation to increased fees. He acknowledged that audit specialism was becoming a scarce skill.

County Councillor Hennessy advised that she understood the background and history of audit and how the process had changed, affecting fees. Georgia Jones commented that Audit fees were currently lower than they were in 2011 when the Audit Commission ended.

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|       | <b>Resolved:</b> That the Committee noted the proposed 2023/24 audit fees and response to the consultation.   |
| 19/23 | <b>Internal Audit - Monitoring Report</b>   |
|       | <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 11 November 2023 was presented by Laura Rix, Senior Auditor.</p> <p>Laura Rix introduced Ian Winston, Senior Auditor who had assisted with the work and would become more involved.</p> <p>To date, 22 days had been spent this financial year on completion of the 2023/24 plan, equating to 28% of the total planned audit activity of 80 days. The table in the report provided the current status of all audit work.</p> <p>One audit, Management of Change within LFRS, had been completed with substantial assurance. Since the report was written, the Equality Impact Assessment audit had been completed with substantial assurance which would show in the next report. District planning activity had also been completed and would be reported back to the Committee, and HR/payroll was currently in progress. Going forward, work was being progressed with Heads of Service with all work being completed by the end of the financial year. The audit plan would be proposed at the March Audit Committee.</p> <p>No areas of concern came to attention in conducting the assurance work to date that required bringing to the attention of committee members.</p> <p>In response to a request from County Councillor Hennessy for more detail on the Management of Change within LFRS audit, Laura Rix explained that the change was with how projects were managed across the Service, how the process was managed, if projects were being signed off, if benefits were realised and if Project Managers were trained. It was found to be positive, and projects were managed well.</p> <p>County Councillor Singleton queried if the remaining work would be completed by the end of the financial year given the number of days spent and the number remaining and asked for improved visibility. Laura Rix assured that the work would be completed and informed that going forward, she would add an extra column to the report for the quarter in which work would be completed. Andrew Dalecki, Head of Internal Audit added that with work of a financial nature, it was necessary to leave a period to allow transactions to go through.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Internal Audit Team for their report.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Committee noted and endorsed the report.</p> |
| 20/23 | <b>Date of Next Meeting</b>   |
|       | The next meeting of the Committee would be held on <b>a date to be confirmed</b> at   |

10:00 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Further meeting dates were noted for 28 March 2024, 25 July 2024 and 26 September 2024 and agreed for 28 November 2024.

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

**LFRS HQ**  
**Fulwood**

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 18 September 2023

### Proceedings of Resources Committee held 29 November 2023 (Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information:

Diane Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer - Tel: 01772 866720

#### **Executive Summary**

The proceedings of Resources Committee meeting held 29 November 2023.

#### **Recommendation(s)**

The Authority is asked to:

- i) Note the proceedings of Resources Committee as set out at appendix 1 now presented;
- ii) Approve the Committee's recommendation (resolution 27/23 refers) that the Fleet Asset Management Plan 2023 – 2027 be endorsed (subject to budget considerations) as part of the budget approval process in February 2024;
- iii) Approve the Committee's recommendation (resolution 28/23 refers) that the Property and Estate Assets Management Strategy 2023 – 2034 also be endorsed (subject to budget considerations) as part of the budget approval process in February 2024.

#### **Information**

Attached at Appendix 1 are the proceedings of the Resources Committee meeting held on 29 November 2023.

The Authority is asked to consider and approve the recommendation that the Fleet Asset Management Plan 2023 – 2027 be endorsed (subject to budget considerations) as part of the budget approval process in February 2024.

In addition, the Authority is asked to consider and approve the recommendation that the Property and Estate Assets Management Strategy 2023 – 2034 also be endorsed (subject to budget considerations) as part of the budget approval process in February 2024.

#### **Business Risk**

Nil

#### **Environmental Impact**

Nil

#### **Equality & Diversity Implications**

Nil

## **Financial Risk**

### **Fleet Asset Management**

The current Fleet Asset Management spend was approximately £1.5m on vehicles and £0.5m on equipment and breathing apparatus assets per annum. Within the current revenue and capital budgets, the plan was affordable and ensured value for money. However, both revenue and capital budgets were subject to approval by the Authority at its budget setting meeting in February.

### **Estate Asset Management**

The revenue budget requirement to maintain the Estate Assets in their current condition was in the region of £3.7m per annum (which excluded the costs associated with PFI station assets, staff costs and waste management). The capital allocation required to deliver the plan over the initial five-year period of the strategy was: £1.45m in 2023/24 and £8.350m in each of the years 2024/25 – 2027/28 an overall total of £34.875m).

Should the Authority approve the proposed Fleet and Estate Asset Management plans it would set the strategic direction for the Service and allow for longer term planning.

### **HR Implications**

Nil

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

### **List of background papers**

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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



# Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

## Resources Committee

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

### Minutes

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Present:</b>        |  |
|                        |  |
| <b>Councillors</b>     |  |
| R Woollam (Chair)      |  |
| D O'Toole (Vice-Chair) |  |
| G Baker                |  |
| L Beavers              |  |
| P Britcliffe           |  |
| T Hurn                 |  |
| J Mein                 |  |
| M Pattison             |  |
| S Serridge             |  |
| B Yates                |  |

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| <b>Officers</b>   |
|   |
| J Charters, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)<br>S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS)<br>B Warren, Director of People and Development (LFRS)<br>M Nolan, Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority<br>J Meadows, Head of Finance (LFRS)<br>T Cousins, Head of Fleet and Engineering Services (LFRS)<br>D Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer (LFRS) |

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| 22/23 | <b>Apologies for Absence</b>   |
|       | None received.   |
| 23/23 | <b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests</b>   |
|       | None received.   |
| 24/23 | <b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b>   |
|       | <b>Resolved:</b> - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 27 September 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.            |
| 25/23 | <b>Financial Monitoring</b>  |
|       | The Director of Corporate Services advised that this report set out the current budget position in respect of the 2023/24 revenue and capital budgets. |

## Revenue Budget

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's 2023/24 revenue budget had been set at £68.493m. The forecast outturn position was £68.888m, an overspend of £0.395m; an overspend of £0.594m on non-pay activities and an underspend of (£0.199m) on pay.

The year-to-date and forecast positions within all departmental budgets were set out in the report with major forecast variances of note shown separately in the table below:

| Area £'m                               | Overspend/<br>(Under spend) | Reason   |
|--|-----------------------------|--|
| Pay                                    | (0.199)                     | <p>The forecast was consistent with the position reported to the Committee in September:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a forecast pressure of £0.140m as a result of the Service meeting its legal responsibilities in relation to the Bear Fulton legal case regarding holiday pay;</li> <li>• Whilst the Emergency Cover Review (ECR) remained on target, there had been some initial timing delays compared to the budget which had resulted in an in-year pressure that had been offset through improvement in the management of overtime arrangements; and</li> <li>• Other savings included some vacancies particularly at the training centre of (£0.179m).</li> </ul> |
| Fleet and technical Services - Non Pay | 0.358                       | The forecast overspend was mainly due to inflationary pressures on the supply of parts and increase in repairs. It was hoped that this pressure would reduce in future years as inflation fell and the older fleet stock was replaced.   |
| Apprenticeship Levy Funding – Non Pay  | 0.300                       | As previously reported the Apprenticeship Levy income for the year was forecast to be lower than budgeted resulting in an annual pressure of approximately £0.300m; this was due to a reduction in the number of recruits meeting the eligibility criteria for funding. On call fire fighters and recruits with significant prior learning did not attract levy funding.   |

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| Training Centre Courses – Non Pay                      | 0.163   | Due to vacancies in the Training Centre, as previously reported, the department had had to appoint more associate trainers than budgeted to meet the training needs of the service such Driver Training and specialist training such as swift water rescue as a result of the ECR. This pressure was offset by vacancies and the service was putting in place arrangements to try to increase the number of internal trainers. |
| Service Delivery / Heads of Service Delivery – Non Pay | 0.108   | As previously reported, there was a forecast overspend of £0.108m on protective equipment, including the roll out of wildfire kit and Urban Search And Rescue (USAR) kit.  |
| Non – DFM – Bank Interest                              | (0.302) | There was a forecast saving on interest earned on cash balances invested.  |

### Capital Budget

The Capital Programme for 2023/24 was £11.7m, after allowing for the year end slippage agreed at the last Resources Committee meeting. Spend to date was to date was £3.79m which was predominantly on pumping appliances.

Following a review of the current year end forecasts an in year spend of £9m was anticipated. This would lead to total slippage of £2.6m; an additional £1.566m slippage for approval by the Resources Committee. Details of capital projects are as outlined in the table below with the additional slippage for approval:

| Area   | Budgeted Items  |
|--|---|
| Operational Vehicles<br>Budget £5.991m<br>Forecast £4.507m<br>Approved Slippage £0.301m<br>Additional Slippage £1.136m | The budget allowed for the remaining stage payments for 10 pumping appliances purchased in previous financial years.<br>In addition, the budget allowed for the first stage payments of the 3 pumping appliances for the 2023/24 programme. It also included two climate change vehicles and three command units.<br>All were on target in 2023/24, except for extended lead time of the smaller climate change vehicle. The following additional items had slipped to 2024/25 due to extended lead times: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 Water Towers (£1.027m) due for delivery quarter 1 2024/25;</li> <li>• 2 Prime movers (£0.260m) have slipped pending specification certification from the supplier.</li> </ul> |
| Other vehicles<br>Budget £1.03m<br>Forecast £0.925m  | This budget allowed for the replacement of various operational support vehicles. The supply of 3 rescue team vans had been delayed to 2024/25.  |

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| Approved slippage<br>£0.123m   |   |
| Operational Equipment<br>Budget £1.47m<br>Forecast £1.22m<br>Approved slippage<br>£0.25m                 | As reported in September, this budget allowed for equipment purchases including thermal imaging cameras and cutting and extrication equipment 2023/24. Slippage on Ballistic Vest and Helmet PPE would enable exploration and pilot of equipment.   |
| Building Modifications<br>Budget £1.6m<br>Forecast £1.6m   | This budget included the continuation of Drill Tower replacements and an upgrade to the Wylfa prop facility. Completion of works was on target. There was a risk works may slip into early 2024/25.   |
| IT systems<br>Budget £1.7m<br>Forecast £1.3m<br>Approved slippage<br>£0.3m<br>Additional Slippage £0.430 | This budget included for the upgrade Firewalls and digitisation of fire appliances. Slippage was expected on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The national Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP) has paused to 2025 (£0.1m);</li> <li>• Upgrade of Asset Management (£0.1m) due to review of interdependencies;</li> <li>• WIFI (£0.135m) could only be completed after the Firewall scheduled in quarter 4 of 2023/24;</li> <li>• Incident ground radios (£0.23m) had slipped in line with helmet communications and the breathing apparatus replacement programme; and</li> <li>• RDS Alerters (£0.065m) had slipped due to period of soft market research.</li> </ul> |

Appendix 2 as now considered by Members set out the capital programme and the committed expenditure position against this, as reflected above. The committed costs to date would be met by revenue contributions and usage of capital reserves and capital receipts.

In response to a question from CC Pattison the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that firefighter apprenticeships were for a two-year period; this was broadly commensurate with the firefighter initial recruits course and development programme completed prior to the apprenticeship route being introduced into the Service. He confirmed that the apprenticeships scheme brought in income via a levy.

In response to a question from CC Woollam regarding staffing of Service Training Centre (STC), the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the change to shift patterns associated with working there sometimes deterred applicants, however, the Service was clear in the developmental benefits to staff of working at STC and that staff received payment of an additional responsibility allowance whilst undertaking instructional duties. He confirmed that there were contingency arrangements in place via the use of associate trainers who worked as trainers on their days off, to support the delivery of training required by the Service.

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|       | <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the committee noted and endorsed the financial position and approved the additional slippage in the capital programme of £1.566m to 2024/25.</p>  |
| 26/23 | <p><b>Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2023/24</b></p>  |
|       | <p>The Director of Corporate Services presented the report. In accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Treasury Management Code of Practice and to strengthen Members' oversight of the Authority's treasury management activities, the Resources Committee received a treasury management mid-year report and a final outturn report. Reports on treasury activity were discussed on a quarterly basis with Lancashire County Council Treasury Management Team and the Authority's Director of Corporate Services and the content of these reports was used as a basis for this report to the Committee.</p> <p><b>Economic Overview</b></p> <p>Treasury management activity was taken within the context of prevailing and forecasted economic conditions. The first half of the year saw the continuation of high levels of inflation. As measured by the CPI, inflation was 10.1% in March 2023. Although the rates had fallen during the year to a level of 6.7% in September this was still above the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) target for inflation of 2%. In addition to high inflation there continued to be strong wage growth. As a consequence, the MPC raised the Base rate several times in the year. The rate on the 1 April was 4.25% which had increased to 5.25% in August.</p> <p>Many economic forecasters considered that interest rates had reached a peak with the economy showing signs of low growth and the potential of a recession increasing. However, despite this and the Bank of England's expectation that inflation would continue to fall during the year it was not anticipated that there would be a fall in the Base rates in this financial year with the Bank stating that "we will keep interest rates high enough for long enough to ensure that we achieve our goal" (of meeting its 2% target).</p> <p>A table in the report, now considered by Members showed the latest forecast for interest rates from Arlingclose.</p> <p><b>Treasury Management position and policy</b></p> <p>The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes was measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital were the underlying resources available for investment. The treasury management activity was influenced both by the position at the beginning of the year and the plans in year. The position at the start of the financial year was summarised in the report indicating that the level of loans was above the borrowing requirement. This was the result of the Authority adopting a policy of setting aside additional Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) in order to generate the cash to repay loans either on maturity or as an early repayment. This had resulted in the CFR being reduced but due to early repayment charges it had not been financially beneficial to repay three loans.</p> |

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

### **Borrowing**

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

The long-term debt outstanding of £2m had been borrowed from the Public Works Loan Board. A table in the report showed the maturity profile of the Authority's borrowings, along with an interest rate paid.

If the loans were to be repaid early there would be an early repayment (premium) charge. Previous reports on treasury management activities had reported that the premium and the potential loss of investment income had been greater than the savings made on the interest payments therefore it had not been considered financially beneficial to repay the loans especially with the potential for increased interest rates. However, on 30 September 2023 the estimated premium charge to repay the three loans was minimal although rates and the premium changed on a daily basis. To offset the net savings on repaying the loans it was estimated that future interest on investments over the remaining period of the loans would need to be 4.5%. If it was estimated that investment interest rates would be lower than this figure, then it may be beneficial to repay the loans.

### **Investments**

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 of receiving low investment returns and having the value of reserves eroded by inflation.

The Authority principally invested in a call account provided by Lancashire County Council which paid the base rate. Each working day the balance on the Authority's Current Account was invested in this to ensure that interest was received on surplus balances within an acceptable risk framework. During the period all surplus balances were placed with the County Council via this arrangement. At 30<sup>th</sup> September there was a balance of £24.970m invested in LCC while the average for the period was £20.080m. The current rate for these investments was 5.25% in line with the increase in the Base Rate in August 2023. At the beginning of the financial year the rate was 4.25%.

In order to increase the rate earned on current balances, the Authority had placed fixed term investments with other local authorities. To attract a higher rate of interest than was available on the call account these investments would need to be fixed for a longer period of time. The report identified the investments that had been in place during the year. At 30 September there was £15m fixed term investment in place, therefore the total investment held at 30 September was £39.970m.

The overall rate of interest earned during this period was 4.06% which was less favourable when compared with the benchmark 7-day index which averaged 4.73% over the same period.

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

Members noted that there had been a further three fixed term investments taken out with other Local Authorities during the period which only started later in the financial year as follows: -

| Start Date | Finish Date | Principal £m | Interest Rate | Annual interest | Interest in 2023/24 |
|------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 14-Dec-23  | 12-Dec-24   | 3.5          | 5.05%         | £176,750        | £52,783             |
| 20-Nov-23  | 18-Nov-24   | 5            | 5.85%         | £292,500        | £106,582            |
| 17-Oct-23  | 15-Oct-24   | 5            | 5.55%         | £277,500        | £126,966            |

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

| Period   | Interest rate |
|----------|---------------|
| 6 months | 5.30%         |
| 1 year   | 5.50%         |
| 2 year   | 5.10%         |
| 3 year   | 4.90%         |

### Prudential Indicators

In order to control and monitor the Authority's treasury management functions, a number of prudential indicators were determined against which performance may be measured. The indicators for 2023/24 were approved by the Authority on 20 February 2023 which were detailed in the report alongside the current actual.

### Revenue Budget Implications

The 2022/23 revenue budget for treasury management activity showed that anticipated income exceeded expenditure by £105k. Taking into account the activity for the first six months of the year and estimated cash-flow for the remainder of the year the latest forecast was as below:

|                     | 2023/24 | 2023/24  | 2023/24  |
|---------------------|---------|----------|----------|
|                     | Budget  | Forecast | Variance |
|                     | £m      | £m       | £m       |
| MRP                 | 0.000   | 0.000    | (0.000)  |
| Interest payable    | 0.090   | 0.090    | (0.000)  |
| Interest receivable | (1.300) | (1.520)  | (0.220)  |
| Net budget          | (1.210) | (1.430)  | (0.220)  |

The interest receivable was above budget as the balances and interest rates were

|       |   |
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|       | <p>higher than anticipated when setting the budget. The forecast assumed interest rates on the call account averaged 5.25% for the remainder of the financial year.</p> <p>Further to a comment from CC O'Toole regarding the difficulties to accurately forecast interest rates, Cllr Baker requested information which set out the Authority's level of investment and borrowing for the previous five years. The Director of Corporate Services agreed that this would be included in the next Treasury Management report.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the Committee noted and endorsed the report.</p>   |
| 27/23 | <p><b>Fleet Asset Management Plan 2023 - 2027</b></p>   |
|       | <p>The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented the report and introduced Tom Cousins, Head of Fleet and Engineering who was in attendance.</p> <p>The Fleet Asset Management Plan (FAMP) had been refreshed. It continued to build on a structured approach to the management of operational vehicles, equipment, breathing apparatus and hydrant assets and was designed to support the delivery of the Authority's Community Risk Management Plan and associated strategies, predominantly the response strategy. Therefore, the FAMP was key in determining strategic decisions regarding assets and defining how resources were efficiently and effectively utilised. This would ensure that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) vehicles and equipment provided a resilient service to meet the changing needs of a modern Fire and Rescue Service and the communities it served.</p> <p>Running a modern Fleet was a safety critical operation which must ensure employee and public safety. This was achieved through best practice in vehicle inspection, maintenance, operation and procurement. LFRS also ensured compliance to Department of Transport and Driver &amp; Vehicle Standards Agency regulations on construction, use and roadworthiness.</p> <p>Whilst the FAMP projected asset replacement over the next eight years, the Plan sets out capital investment requirements over the next four years and would be refreshed over that period in line with risk, to ensure it continued to accurately reflect the operating environment. This approach secured stability in capital and revenue budgets and facilitated the introduction of new technologies through a staged approach.</p> <p>The FAMP also covered short to medium term business planning improvement objectives. The Service's Fleet and Engineering Services department would continue to strive for improvement by maintaining a strong focus on customer care.</p> <p>Key projects in the 2023-27 FAMP were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Body worn and vehicle CCTV;</li> <li>• Battery Road Traffic Collision Tools;</li> <li>• Aerial Appliance provision;</li> <li>• Replacing Command Support Units;</li> <li>• Breathing Apparatus and Telemetry Equipment;</li> <li>• A Greener, more environmentally sustainable fleet;</li> </ul> |



- Suitable vehicles and equipment to meet the changing risk, in particular that resulting from climate change;
- Investment in modern firefighting technology, including introducing flow meters and larger diameter hose reels on our Fire Engine fleet;
- To continue our journey towards being the most innovative Fire and Rescue Service in the country by investing in technology, including drones and the potential for robotics to improve firefighter safety.

CC O'Toole queried whether the larger diameter hose reels meant all connections would need to be changed. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the larger diameter hose reels would only require changes on the lockers of fire appliances. He added that the changes followed the science in firefighting compartment fires, which continued to essentially centre around high pressure / low quantity of water, had proven very successful for fighting fires in domestic premises.

Running alongside the FAMP, the Fleet and Engineering Services department also held an improvement plan, which focused on four key performance areas:

- Customer – building stronger working relations and meeting requirements;
- Financial – achieve efficiency savings and maintain a healthy replacement plan;
- Systems – continued development of asset management systems;
- Development / Growth – invest in staff training and development.

The above, in conjunction with the FAMP ensured that Fleet and Engineering Services continued to provide the best possible support to Service Delivery.

The current spend was approximately £1.5m on vehicles and £0.5m on equipment and breathing apparatus assets per annum. Within the current revenue and capital budgets, the plan was affordable and ensured value for money. However, both revenue and capital budgets were subject to approval by the Authority at its budget setting meeting in February. Should the Authority approve the plan it would set the strategic direction for the Service and allow for longer term planning.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer drew Members attention to the following from the plan:

### **Life Expectancy and Efficiency**

To improve efficiency, the current nominal lifecycle for an operational fire appliance would increase from 12 to 13 years, followed by 2 further years at Training Centre, achieving a total life of 15 years. The 15-year cycle equated to a fleet turnover of circa five appliances per annum. The lifecycles for special appliances range from 8 to 15 years. Their economic life was determined on whole life costs generated through operational use. To achieve a smoother asset replacement programme some flexibility regarding replacement was required to even out costs. However, equipment such as Breathing Apparatus needed to be replaced en-bloc due to the complexities of training introduced through having a wide product range.

The FAMP aimed to smooth out vehicle purchases over the period to ease pressures on capital and maintenance costs. However, extended lead-times over the past 2 years inevitably meant annual capital replacement costs were often carried over. To address this, 3-year contracts were normally awarded, which would address such slippages more effectively.

### **Capital Replacement Programme**

The capital replacement programme for vehicles and major operational equipment were set out as appendices to the Plan (as now considered by Members). Each year the plan would be reviewed against the specific needs of the Service and the ever-changing fire and rescue service landscape. Smoothing the replacement plan was fundamental in providing equipment and vehicle assets when required, enabling capital profiling which was more predictable and aligned with the Service's procurement function.

### **Fleet and Engineering Services Procurement**

The department continued to work closely with procurement colleagues in all capital replacement purchases, using mainly framework agreements to reduce the procurement timeline, while ensuring compliance. In addition, regional and national procurement partnerships were actively sought to improve economies of scale, at the same time offering value for money across the fire and rescue community.

### **Innovation**

Climate change presented considerable challenges for the UK fire sector and remained a significant risk in Lancashire. The Service had invested in specialist all-terrain vehicles, fully equipped to address wildfire and flooding in the county. These vehicles had been developed by LFRS to meet the climate change conditions experienced locally, the first in the UK to do so. The units and specialist wildfire response teams were strategically placed to provide an efficient and effective response.

Wide area and localised flooding could devastate local communities, leaving lasting effects well beyond the event, and causing considerable financial loss. With the potential for flooding at any time of the year, there was a need to provide LFRS with an effective and appropriate equipment asset to address these challenges.

The Service had strategically positioned water rescue appliances and water incident units in preparation for flooding events. LFRS was a host service for a high-volume pump (HVP), as part of the national response capability. The HVP's were embedded into core business, with the capability of moving large volumes of water quickly. In addition, the Service continued to invest in staff training and development around flooding, including the use of climate change all-terrain vehicles to enhance the flood response.

The Service had continued to build on the Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) technology, introducing enhanced models to further improve their capability. Now, LFRS hosted some of the most sophisticated UAV operations within the sector, which included an underwater Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV) capability. The ROV, which was a UK first within the Fire and Rescue Service sector, was capable not only of detection using the latest sonar capabilities, but could also offer a grip and retrieval facility, which was of major benefit to the Service during waterborne search and rescue operations. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer added that the Service would continue to support this development including extending the scope to include research into potential use of robotics in firefighting and rescue response scenarios.

Two of the new pumping appliances would undergo conversion into Technical Rescue Units providing a dual role of pumping appliance and enhanced rescue capability, thus removing the need to have both in the Service. As part of this project, the Service would reduce its pod capacity, ensuring a more efficient and effective deployment of heavy rescue assets when the need arose.

CC Woollam was pleased that the Service was a sector leader for innovation particularly the remote operated vehicles.

### **Carbon Footprint and Environmental Impact**

While the Service continued to reduce its carbon footprint by implementing electric vehicles, switching from diesel-powered light vehicles to hybrid technology to eliminate nitrogen oxide emissions, the environmental changes continued to affect LFRS operational demands.

Over the lifespan of this FAMP, the existing Carbon Management Plan would be replaced with a revised Environmental Sustainability Plan. The new plan would set out environmental aspirations to move forward to a net zero carbon emissions position.

Vehicle related emissions were a significant contributor to carbon emissions within the Service, and as part of ongoing commitments, reducing emissions from vehicles and improving the environmental performance of fleet vehicles remained a key aspect of revised aspirations.

In response to a question from CC O'Toole, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the new appliances which were currently at Service Training Centre would replace vehicles across the fleet in line with the replacement programme after final refinements had been completed.

CC O'Toole queried whether there was a policy of buying locally to support the local economy. In response, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that detailed specifications were produced and the Service went out to the market in a transparent manner to procure the best product however, sometimes the best technology was found outside UK borders. He confirmed that the procurement team ensured the Service was compliant with regulations. CC Mein agreed with a policy of local procurement and queried whether that could be built into the contract as a weighted part of the assessment criteria. In response the Head of Fleet and Engineering Services reassured Members that social value was included in the procurement process and there were a lot of local suppliers however, the UK fire and rescue vehicle market was limited.

In response to Member requests for information on what was procured locally, the Director of Corporate Services agreed to bring details to the next meeting which was timely as there had been a change in public sector procurement regulations.

In response to a request from CC Woollam for information regarding the use of body armour, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that this was something that the Service had been looking at for a while in response to risk in the community which had shifted over time. It was not uncommon to attend an incident where the address had a Police marker (for knife crime, alcohol or substance misuse etc) and attacks on firefighters had seen an increase nationally; quite often on bonfire night.

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|       | <p>He advised that suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) had been identified (similar to that used in other counties) for a proposed pilot in the Blackpool area. The PPE would be available for the crew to wear if they chose to do so during a heightened risk or to an incident at a flagged address. The pilot would be evaluated before making any commitment to a sizeable spend. In response to a question from Cllr Baker the Assistant Chief Fire Officer added that wearing the PPE would not increase the time of response or impede firefighter capabilities. The proposed PPE was a vest, secured by Velcro (similar to those worn by the Police over the top of their uniform). It would largely be down to the officer in charge to make the decision as to whether the PPE should be worn and it would not necessarily be needed to be worn by all staff; this would be a dynamic judgement based on the situation.</p> <p>In response to a question from CC Woollam regarding whether there was any risk in extending the life of the vehicles the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that vehicle technology had moved on considerably over the last 10-20 years with vehicles now cleaner, more efficient, reliable and greener. He confirmed that vehicles were rotated around the fleet to balance usage and wear, to increase their longevity. The Service did benefit from a new fleet and had very reliable and well-maintained vehicles. He was confident therefore that by extending the nominal vehicle lifecycle by one year would not cause any significant risks.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the Committee recommend to the Authority that the Fleet Asset Management Plan 2023-2027 be endorsed (subject to budget considerations) as part of the Budget approval process in February 2024.</p> |
| 28/23 | <p><b>Property and Estate Assets Management Strategy 2023-2034</b></p>   |
|       | <p>The Director of Corporate Services presented the report. The Property and Estate Asset Management 10-year Strategy had been updated to set out the approach for the management of property and estates assets over the medium to longer term.</p> <p>The aim of the strategy was to deliver property and an estate that supported the creation of positive, inclusive environments that were fit for purpose, encouraged best practice, innovation and continuous improvement and that promoted the right culture to meet the changing needs of a modern Fire and Rescue Service and the communities it served. The strategy was set over four parts which highlighted the medium to longer term approach, as follows:</p> <p><b>Part 1 – Overview of the existing Property and Estate assets</b></p> <p>The key functions of the Property Department included all aspects of estate maintenance, estate management, the majority of facilities management services and capital build projects related to the estate. The strategy included: i) reviewing the team structure to ensure the best service; ii) procurement, appointment and management of specialist consultants to support the services to be delivered; and iii) investment in a new computer aided facility management system to enable better information management, improved service delivery and longer-term management of the property and estates assets.</p>  |

## **Part 2 – Property and Estates Strategic aims and objectives**

There was a need to provide a flexible and adaptable approach to the management of property and estate assets that continued to deliver and improve operational effectiveness while responding to changing risks and resources. The property and estate assets would be measured against four core objectives to inform the decisions made about revenue and capital budgets and areas of focus:

- i) to provide functional and fit for purpose facilities, constructed, refurbished and maintained to fulfil Service and legislative requirements and standards and to ensure property assets supported skills and training for staff and community resilience, providing suitable training and educational facilities;
- ii) to provide assets that were in optimal locations to achieve Service priorities set out in the community risk management plan;
- iii) to provide assets that delivered better services and efficiencies through collaboration, to deliver best value and engagement with blue light partner agencies, fire service support agency groups and local communities;
- iv) to make the most efficient use of property assets and manage workspaces effectively, efficiently, reducing running costs and environmental impact and generating income including strategic rationalisation.

## **Part 3 – Property and Estates Priorities**

While the primary focus was on ensuring property and estate assets met the four core objectives (listed above) the Property Department constantly sought to enhance and improve certain aspects of the property and estate assets for a modern fire service. However, given finite resources it was necessary to prioritise the enhancements and improvements to be made over the next 10 years which were:

- i) to ensure the estate provided high quality welfare and dignity accommodation as standard;
- ii) to understand the implications on staff and for buildings in relation to decontamination and contamination reduction;
- iii) to ensure the estate provided safe and secure places of work for staff, visitors and site-sharing partners;
- iv) to ensure the estate provided high quality training facilities which were aligned to the community risk management plan and upgrading facilities on stations which were deemed to fall below our minimum standards;
- v) to provide good quality office working environments that support collaboration, provide modern accommodation and are fit for purpose;
- vi) to understand long-term requirements for the reduction of carbon emissions;
- vii) to ensure existing space is managed and utilised effectively and efficiently, meeting the needs of the Service to deliver against its core priorities and core values; and
- viii) to ensure that staff understand the function of the department and estate assets through a set of property standards.

## **Part 4 – Delivering our Strategy**

The projects identified in the 10-year capital programme were: i) Estate improvements; ii) upgrade WYLFA prop; iii) Blackpool Welfare; iv) drill tower

replacements; v) Preston replacement station; vi) Service Training Centre props; and vii) SHQ relocation. These would be reviewed annually and were subject to CFA approval. They required significant investment by the Service to be successfully delivered to achieve long-term aspirations. The completion of these projects would reduce future revenue funding requirements by reducing existing maintenance backlog, predicted future maintenance and running costs. They would ensure that the Service had estate assets that were fit for purpose and enable the core priorities and core values to be achieved.

The report also set out factors that would influence future projects and outlined the strategy's governance and implementation arrangements.

To deliver the Strategy, revenue and capital funding was required to be allocated from the overall budget. The expenditure would be managed to ensure value for money was achieved at all stages of delivery.

The revenue budget requirement to maintain the estate assets in their current condition was in the region of £3.7m per annum (which excluded the costs associated with PFI station assets, staff costs and waste management). It was noted that over recent years inflationary pressures had impacted on the budgets, particularly those relating to the maintenance of contracts and consumption of energy (gas and electric).

The capital allocation required to deliver the plan over the initial five-year period of the strategy was: £1.45m in 2023/24 and £8.350m in each of the years 2024/25 – 2027/28 an overall total of £34.875m).

County Councillor O'Toole commented that it made sense to keep property in good order. He queried whether Preston station was in the right location (given the development of the retail park opposite the site meant travel to the station was hindered by traffic) and stated the need to make a decision regarding whether it should be redeveloped or relocated. The Director of Corporate Services advised that the redevelopment of the station was in years 3 and 4 of the capital programme. There had been a huge amount of work undertaken looking at alternative sites for potential relocation which remained ongoing. Training facilities and the relocation of Service Headquarters had been prioritised in the capital programme however, the Service needed to look at what that meant for Preston station in the short-term to ensure value for money. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer added that while priorities had been identified there needed to be flexibility and if suitable land became available in Preston the Service needed to be in a position to potentially move quickly to secure it.

County Councillor Mein did think Preston station was in the right location however, work was needed with Lancashire County Council to ensure the road network was fit for purpose. She queried whether the fire station could be set back from its current location thereby potentially facilitating the road to be widened.

In response to a question raised by CC Mein the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that all options were being considered as part of the Preston Review which included whether alternative site(s) provided an opportunity to improve incident response times.

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|       | <p>The Clerk to the Authority added that Member engagement was through the Member Working Group for Capital Building Projects. The Working Group had met twice and had received at the second meeting a summary project plan across a proposed six-year timeframe. The Working Group Terms of Reference setting out its composition and range of responsibilities would be taken to the next full CFA meeting.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the Committee recommend to the Authority that the Property and Estate Assets Management Strategy 2023-2034 be endorsed (subject to budget considerations) as part of the Budget approval process in February 2024.</p> |
| 29/23 | <b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>   |
|       | <p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on <b>27 March 2024</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 3 July 2024 and 25 September 2024 and agreed for 27 November 2024.</p>   |
| 30/23 | <b>Exclusion of Press and Public</b>   |
|       | <p><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.</p>  |
| 31/23 | <b>Pensions Update</b>   |
|       | <p>(Paragraphs 4 and 5)</p> <p>Members considered a report that provided an update on the various issues which had arisen in respect of the changes to the pension schemes applying to the uniformed members of the Fire Sector.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the current situation be noted.</p>  |
| 32/23 | <b>Internal Dispute Resolutions Procedure - Stage 2</b>  |
|       | <p>(Paragraphs 1, 4 and 5)</p> <p>Members considered a report regarding an IDRP Stage 2 application under the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure. The report outlined the facts of the case.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Committee declined the application presented.</p>  |
| 33/23 | <b>High Value Procurement Projects</b>   |
|       | <p>(Paragraph 3)</p> <p>Members considered a report that provided an update on all contracts for one-off</p>   |

purchases valued in excess of £100,000 and high value procurement projects in excess of £100,000 including: new contract awards, progress of ongoing projects and details of new projects.

**Resolved:** that the report be noted and endorsed.

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

**LFRS HQ**  
**Fulwood**



## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 18 December 2023

### North West Fire Control – Continuing the Collaboration (Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information: Justin Johnston – Chief Fire Officer  
Tel: 01772 866800

#### Executive Summary

To update Members about the future of North West Fire Control (NWFC).

#### Recommendation

The Committee is requested to:

- Note the Fire Authority's commitment to the NWFC collaboration.
- Agree the Fire Authority's contribution of 28.05% to the collaboration as explained in the report.
- Note that the Chief Fire Officer will make all necessary decisions associated with the new mobilising system on behalf of the Fire Authority within his delegated powers.
- Approve the CFAs share of the New Mobilising System and Additional Resourcing costs and proposed funding as described in the report and set out in the financial implications section.

#### Background

North West Fire Control (NWFC) was created after the collapse of a national project to create nine regional control centres. The Government provided significant financial support to the North West fire control project (and continues to pay a substantial sum towards the rent of the building occupied by NWFC).

NWFC serves Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester and Lancashire. Staff at NWFC answer 999 calls, mobilise resources to incidents and assist operational staff with the management of incidents.

NW Fire Control Limited (the Company) is the legal entity that provides the services to the partner fire and rescue services. The Company is jointly owned by the fire and rescue authorities and liability is limited by guarantee. Each fire and rescue authority appoints two Directors to sit on the Board (from the CFA it is the Chair and Vice Chair). The Chief Fire Officers and some advisers also attend the Board, together with staff from NWFC.

NWFC started dealing with calls for Lancashire in May 2014. For those Members that have been appointed to the Fire Authority since NWFC came into being a copy of a report that was considered in September 2011 (less the appendices) is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

## Information

### General

Creating NWFC was a difficult and costly exercise. The parties to the collaboration were advised that it should be seen as a long-term and ‘almost permanent’ arrangement, due to the complexity and cost of ending it. Creating a separate fire control solely for one of the partners to NWFC would take at least two years (probably nearer to three) and involve:

- investment in a new mobilising system which would be likely to cost almost as much as the system utilised by NWFC;
- creation of a resilient control room; and
- recruitment of staff to be suitably trained in readiness for go-live.

The CFA is committed to NWFC until at least July 2033 (which is the date that the lease of the fire control building comes to an end). A new mobilising system is required to be procured by NW Fire Control Limited and when a number of other pressures exist that have been impacting on NWFC.

*Members are asked to note the Fire Authority’s continued commitment to the NWFC collaboration.*

### Sharing the Costs of NWFC

When NWFC was created there was a significant investment by the Government (which continues in the form of circa £1m per annum towards the lease of the NWFC building at Lingley Mere in Warrington). Almost all up-front costs to create NWFC were paid for by the Government.

NWFC is now paid for by the partners in proportions that were agreed before the original project was fully committed to. The proportions were intended to reflect the relative demand placed upon NWFC by the respective partners, i.e. call volumes were seen as a meaningful driver for establishing the respective shares of the costs. The proportions are recorded in various governance documents, with the Co-Operation Agreement between the fire and rescue authorities stating that the ‘... proportions will be reviewed from time to time. Such reviews will take into account the relative benefits to the respective Authorities derived from the Services provided by the Company.’

The percentage call volumes per partner have generally been extremely close to the proportions and therefore the partners have not sought to review them. More recently, however, the call volumes have changed to such an extent that at least for the time being they no longer align with the proportions.

The proportions have not changed since the original project was commenced and continue to apply at present. They are:

| <b>Fire Authority</b>                       | <b>Proportion (%)</b> |
|---|-----------------------|
| Cheshire Fire Authority                     | 18                    |
| Cumbria Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner | 8                     |
| Greater Manchester Combined Authority       | 48.5                  |
| Lancashire Combined Fire Authority          | 25.5                  |

The need to fund a new mobilising system and the requirement for additional funding for NWFC, as well as the fact that the call volumes no longer align with the original proportions, have led to a debate about the proportions that should be paid by the partners going forward. The Chief Fire Officers have reached a position which they feel able to justify to their respective fire authorities. For Lancashire this would see the proportion change from 25.5% to 28.05%, the impact of which is explained in the Financial Implications section of this report. This would be expected to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

*Members are asked to agree the Fire Authority's contribution of 28.05% to the collaboration.*

### New Mobilising System

NWFC uses a computerised mobilising system which assists the control room operators when answering and handling emergency calls. The current system is now nearing 'end of life' and needs to be replaced.

This replacement project requires a significant investment by the partners (both time input and money) as well as from the team at NWFC. An important first step will be the agreement of an extension to the contract for the current mobilising system, which will need to be available to NWFC until the new mobilising system is in place. The partner fire and rescue services are fully engaged in the project. Currently, the tender documentation is being prepared with involvement of a range of staff from the partner fire and rescue services, some staff from NWFC and external legal and procurement advisers.

During the project there will be a number of important decisions, which will need to be taken by the partner fire authorities and NW Fire Control Limited. For example, all parties will need to be:

- satisfied with the procurement arrangements/tender documentation before the tender process can commence; and
- in agreement over the appointment of a supplier once the tender process has run its course.

In addition, the Chief Fire Officer for each partner fire and rescue service will make the decision about 'going-live' onto the new mobilising system once they are satisfied with the implementation work and readiness of the new mobilising system.

*Members are asked to note that the Chief Fire Officer will make all necessary decisions on behalf of the Fire Authority within his delegated powers.*

### Funding the New Mobilising System

There are two aspects to this. Unfortunately, at this point it is not possible to share firm figures with Members; these will only become clear as the project is delivered. There are, however, some estimates and assumptions that can be shared with Members.

The procurement and implementation of a new mobilising system is a large undertaking, encompassing work that will span three financial years (at least). Based on the latest

estimates and assumptions this will require a one-off investment of around £6m. This cost is shared by the partner fire authorities. Currently, Lancashire's share of the cost is 25.5%.

Once the system is live there will be recurring annual costs for licensing, maintenance, development etc. Currently, the cost is circa £0.800m. It is hoped that the recurring cost will not increase substantially but given the recent impact of inflation on wage increases, there will undoubtedly be some uplift. It is probably prudent to budget for up to £1m per annum. Again, this cost will be shared by the partner fire authorities.

### Additional Resourcing

Since NWFC started handling emergency calls back in 2014 a number of things have changed. Firstly, the expectations of the partner fire and rescue services have risen. Secondly, the requirements placed upon the fire control have grown, e.g., as a result of recommendations from the Manchester Arena Inquiry. Thirdly, quite recently, a new Fire Standard aimed at fire control rooms has been published, which NWFC will need to comply with and prove that it does (if it cannot do so already).

The Chief Fire Officers have given a considerable amount of attention to NWFC in recent years. Various pieces of work have been commissioned and some investment has taken place. As a result, a form of business plan (with annual delivery plans) has been created which the Chiefs believe needs to be supported. For now, they have considered the support that is necessary for the next twelve months (2024-25) as well as building in some additional resource the cost of which they believe should be built into NWFC's base budget. Inevitably, there will be further resourcing requirements, because the delivery plan contains some challenging elements that NWFC cannot deliver from its existing establishment.

In 2024-25 the following matters are due to be progressed:

- a new training regime and system for capturing that training;
- an appraisal of and action plan which needs to be delivered associated with the fire control Fire Standard; and
- a capacity review and work on a future operating model.

These will require a project management team. Some elements will lead to permanent growth to be built into the base budget, e.g., additional operations managers and project management resource.

*Members are asked to approve the CFAs share of the New Mobilising System and Additional Resourcing costs and proposed funding as described in the report and set out in the financial implications section.*

### **Financial Implications**

Whilst NWFC has been a great success, saving the Fire Authority in excess of £4m to-date (per the original business case), this report describes a number of necessary investments that need to be made by the partners to the collaboration. This will help to ensure the continued success of the collaboration until 2033 as well as helping the partners understand what happens from that date. The costs are summarised in the following paragraphs:

## Current Budget

Current Lancashire CFA budget for NWFC - £1.609m (25.5% of the overall cost).

### The impact of increasing the Fire Authority's share of the cost of NWFC

If the Fire Authority's share increases by 10% of the current proportion, i.e., rises from 25.5% to 28.05% and for the purpose of illustration we use the current, 2023-24 budget for the Authority's share of NWFC (£1.609m) the cost to the Fire Authority would increase by £0.161m to £1.770m.

The table below provides details of the position reached by the Chief Fire Officers:

|  | <b>Cheshire</b> | <b>Cumbria</b> | <b>Greater Manchester</b> | <b>Lancashire</b> |
|--|-----------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Current Proportion (%)                                 | 18              | 8              | 48.5                      | 25.5              |
| Proposed Proportion (%) / (change)                     | 19.8<br>(+1.8%) | 8.8<br>(+0.8%) | 43.35<br>(-5.15%)         | 28.05<br>(+2.55%) |
| Change – expressed as percentage of Current Proportion | +10%            | +10%           | -10.62%<br>(rounded)      | +10%              |

Members will see that each of Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire have offered to increase their proportion by ten percent of their current proportion; for Lancashire the proportion of the overall costs would increase by 2.55%; from 25.5% to 28.05%. Greater Manchester will see a reduction in its contribution of 5.15%; from 48.5% to 43.35%.

It should be noted that the cost to Lancashire, even at 28.05% is a very significant saving on the sum that would be required for its own control function. It would be responsible for the considerable expenses described earlier in the report if it wished to set up its own control. This simply would not make financial sense.

## New Mobilising System

The procurement and implementation costs, estimated to be in the region of £6m, will be payable over the next three years (2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27).

The share payable by Lancashire at 25.5% would be £1.530m, or at 28.05% would be £1.683m (an additional £0.153m). It is proposed that will be met from the Fire Authority's capital reserves.

Ongoing costs for the existing mobilising system are circa £0.800m. It would be wise to budget for these to increase from 2026-27 when the new mobilising system is expecting to go live and a figure of £1m has been suggested. This means that the cost payable by NWFC could increase by £0.200m per annum. This would be a long-term commitment, i.e. until the end of the contract which is intended to run until July 2033. It may be index-linked; this will depend upon the tender process and contractual position.

The share of this increased ongoing cost (£0.200m) that would be payable by Lancashire at 25.5% would be £0.051m, or at 28.05% would be £0.056m (an additional £0.005m).

The Fire Authority already budgets to pay its share of the £0.080m ongoing costs for the current system within the sum that it pays towards NWFC at present.

### Additional Resourcing

During 2024-25 the sum of £0.639m is needed to deliver those aspects of NWFC's business plan that will be contained in its annual delivery plan (with £0.466m of this being one-off costs and £0.173m becoming part of NWFC's base budget as it will be required in subsequent years).

The Fire Authority's share of the addition to the base budget of £0.173m at 25.5% is £0.044m, or at 28.05% is £0.049m (an additional £0.004m) and its share of the one-off cost of £0.466m at 25.5% is £0.119m, or at 28.05% is £0.131m (an additional £0.012m).

### Summary

A summary of the financial implications on both capital reserves and the ongoing revenue budget is set out below for both the current contributions percentage (25.05%) and proposed contribution percentage (28.05%):

With no change to the 25.50% contribution percentage:

|   | 24/25         | 25/26         | 26/27         | 26/27         | 27/28         | Total            |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| <b>Proposed to be funded from reserves</b>                  |               |               |               |               |               |                  |
| Share of £6m procurement and implementation costs           | 510,000       | 510,000       | 510,000       | -             | -             | 1,530,000        |
| Share of £0.466m additional resourcing                      | 118,830       | -             | -             | -             | -             | 118,830          |
|   |               |               |               |               |               | <b>1,648,830</b> |
| <b>Impact on base revenue budget</b>                        |               |               |               |               |               |                  |
| Share of Ongoing increase in costs of new mobilising system | -             | -             | 51,000        | 51,000        | 51,000        |                  |
| Share of ongoing additional resourcing costs                | 44,115        | 44,115        | 44,115        | 44,115        | 44,115        |                  |
| <b>Increase in ongoing costs</b>                            | <b>44,115</b> | <b>44,115</b> | <b>95,115</b> | <b>95,115</b> | <b>95,115</b> |                  |

With a 10% increase in contribution percentage to 28.05%:

|   | 24/25          | 25/26          | 26/27          | 26/27          | 27/28          | Total            |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| <b>Proposed to be funded from reserves</b>                  |                |                |                |                |                |                  |
| Share of £6m procurement and implementation costs           | 561,000        | 561,000        | 561,000        | -              | -              | 1,683,000        |
| Share of £0.466m additional resourcing                      | 130,713        | -              | -              | -              | -              | 130,713          |
|   |                |                |                |                |                | <b>1,813,713</b> |
| <b>Impact on base revenue budget</b>                        |                |                |                |                |                |                  |
| 10% increase in share of NWFC costs                         | 160,874        | 160,874        | 160,874        | 160,874        | 160,874        |                  |
| Share of Ongoing increase in costs of new mobilising system | -              | -              | 56,100         | 56,100         | 56,100         |                  |
| Share of ongoing additional resourcing costs                | 48,527         | 48,527         | 48,527         | 48,527         | 48,527         |                  |
| <b>Increase in ongoing costs</b>                            | <b>209,401</b> | <b>209,401</b> | <b>265,501</b> | <b>265,501</b> | <b>265,501</b> |                  |

### Legal Implications

The collaboration is captured in various legal documents which, thankfully, have stood the test of time. In reality they have not been needed as the partners have always worked towards the resolution of issues that have caused concern/tension.

NW Fire Control Limited will enter into the contract for the new mobilising system. Partner fire authorities can be assured that fire and rescue service staff are working with colleagues at NWFC to ensure that the arrangements are robust so that future provision of fire control services will be suitably supported by the new system.

### Business Risk Implications

The function that NWFC undertakes on behalf of the CFA is business critical.

### Environmental Impact

None

### Equality and Diversity Implications

None

### Human Resource 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

Appendix 1: FUTURE OF FIRE CONTROL (12 September 2011)



**LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY**

Meeting to be held on 12 September 2011

**FUTURE OF FIRE CONTROL  
(Appendices 1 and 2 refer) – NOT INCLUDED**

Contact for further information: Chris Kenny, Assistant Chief Fire Officer/Director of Service Delivery. Tel: 01772 866801

**Executive Summary**

The report presents the updated information on the options for Fire Control and seeks a decision on the way forward.

Since this matter was considered by the Authority in June the DCLG have confirmed the provision of a £36.7m subsidy to support the North West (NW) collaborative project. This is payable as a grant of £9.76m towards project costs and a further £26.94m towards facilities costs payable monthly for the duration of the lease (22 years). In addition to the above figure, legacy assets have also been made available in the form of equipment to access the Airwave network, together with control room infrastructure and furnishings, amounting to circa £1m.

There has also been further DCLG correspondence to all Fire and Rescue Authorities inviting bids for a share of an £81m provision for improving resilience, efficiency and technology of fire controls. Plans need to be submitted by 4 November 2011.

**Decision Required**

Consider the information and options presented within the paper and agree one of the options below:-

Option 1 – North West Fire Control (NWFC)

- Approve entering into joint arrangements with other North West (NW) Fire and Rescue Services in providing a North West Fire Control (NWFC) at Warrington.
- Approve the Joint Working Agreement (Appendix 2) which indicates how joint arrangements would work.
- Note the Outline Business Case (Appendix 1) and agree the indicated £0.54m revenue saving in 2014/15 and an ongoing revenue saving of circa £0.48m/annum within a 15% tolerance.

Option 2 – Separate bid for DCLG support

- Agree to replacing our existing mobilising system.
- Agree if Fire Control is required to move, the preferred site is STC.

- Agree to submitting a bid for up to £1.8m for improving Fire Control, acknowledging this has no guarantee of success and the outcome will not be known until early 2012 at current estimates.
- Agree to further investigate combined arrangements with other Fire and Rescue Services to build resilience and realise further efficiencies.

Members should also note that even if the NWFC is the selected choice, its viability is dependent upon the decisions of other Authorities. Should decisions elsewhere make the NWFC unachievable within the approved tolerance then it is recommended that Option 2 is pursued.

## Information

Following the demise of the national FiReControl Project in December 2010, Members have considered previous reports on Control at the February Authority meeting, at the Strategy Day in April and more recently at the June Authority meeting.

At these meetings 3 options were considered.

1. Joint arrangements with other NW Fire and Rescue Services at the existing building in Warrington.
2. Joint arrangements on a sub-regional basis.
3. Replace our existing mobilising system and remain separate.

### 1. NWFC at Warrington

At the last meeting the DCLG was yet to confirm its subsidy in response to a NW bid for joint arrangements. A letter agreeing the arrangements was received on the 12 July. Two days later, members from across the NW met to consider future joint arrangements. The Chair, Vice Chair and County Councillor De Molfetta represented Lancashire. The confirmed DCLG subsidy of £36.7m is broken down below:

- Provision of funding for a technical solution (£2.5m)
- Provision of funding for re-structuring costs (£5m)
- Support for a project team at Lingley Mere (£2.26m)
- Building, Estate & Utility costs in full until Go Live followed by a 66% subsidy for the full duration of the lease (£26.94m)

Additional to the above is the provision of legacy assets which includes a data connection to the Airwave network, furniture and fittings amounting to circa £1m.

The NW Business Case is attached at Appendix 1 and demonstrates a combined total of £2.5m cashable savings in 2014/15 (first year of operation) and £2.2m savings in 2015/16 (steady state year) and a total of £19.4m over the next 12 years. The business case has been scrutinised by each FRS Director of Finance and externally verified by Risktec Ltd. An extract from the Business Case is shown below.

| Provision of <u>Current Control</u> - Annual Costs for FRS at <b>2014/15</b> rates |               |                       |                    |                     |                       |                 |
|--|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| <b>2014/15 Costs</b>   | <b>GM FRS</b> | <b>Merseyside FRS</b> | <b>Cumbria FRS</b> | <b>Cheshire FRS</b> | <b>Lancashire FRS</b> | <b>NW Total</b> |
| Based upon updated data in 2011 indexed forward to 2014/15                         | £2.54m        | £1.37m                | £0.57m             | £1.0m               | £1.43m                | <b>£6.96m</b>   |
| Provision of <u>New Control</u> - Annual Costs for FRS at <b>2014/15</b> rates     |               |                       |                    |                     |                       |                 |
| <b>2014/15 Costs</b>   | <b>GM FRS</b> | <b>Merseyside FRS</b> | <b>Cumbria FRS</b> | <b>Cheshire FRS</b> | <b>Lancashire FRS</b> | <b>NW Total</b> |
| Based upon predicted costs in 2011 indexed forward to 2014/15                      | £1.73m        | £0.97m                | £0.27m             | £0.61m              | £0.89m                | <b>£4.47m</b>   |
| Provision of <u>New Control</u> - <b>Annual Savings</b> for FRS                    |               |                       |                    |                     |                       |                 |
|  | <b>GM FRS</b> | <b>Merseyside FRS</b> | <b>Cumbria FRS</b> | <b>Cheshire FRS</b> | <b>Lancashire FRS</b> | <b>NW Total</b> |
| <b>2014/15</b>   | £0.82m        | £0.40m                | £0.30m             | £0.44m              | £0.54m                | <b>£2.49m</b>   |
| <b>2015/16</b>   | £0.70m        | £0.33m                | £0.29m             | £0.40m              | £0.48m                | <b>£2.20m</b>   |

There has been much publicity over the cost and the high specification of the buildings intended for Regional Control Centres. They have been designed to the demanding requirements of the Critical National Infrastructure and are larger than required for a Control Centre alone. However, this drain on the public purse is at least offset by putting the building to a productive and intended use as would be the case with the NWFC option. There would also be opportunities to let or use the additional space in the future.

The NWFC would be differentiated from the failed national FiReControl Project in the following ways. Firstly the project would be driven by a dedicated project team working from Warrington not directed by civil servants working from London. The North West have a successful record of working together, the most recent example being the delivery of 16 community fire stations through the PFI involving Lancashire, Cumbria and Merseyside. The plan would need to accommodate 5 FRS not 44. It is recognised that some level of convergence in operational procedures would be required to improve interoperability. It is also acknowledged that this should not compromise the benefits FRS have realised through their existing IRMPs. The technical solution would be procured from an established supplier of mobilising systems. Lastly unlike the national system which sought to automate most of the processes, the NW recognises the expertise and the professionalism of its Control staff. It is content for them to continue to add value through making professional mobilising decisions.

## 2. Retaining a LFRS Control or developing joint arrangements

On 5 July the DCLG wrote to Fire and Rescue Authorities inviting bids for a share of £81m provision for improving the resilience, efficiency and technology of control services. Bids will be assessed to ensure they provide value for money and

resilience improvements. The document says as a guide this will provide up to £1.8m for each Fire and Rescue Authority. Bids are required by 4 November. It is anticipated that any grant funding will be confirmed by 31 January 2012 and paid in 2011/12 and 2012/13.

There is explicit guidance that bids must improve resilience. Therefore replacing a like for like control room in isolation is unlikely to attract funding. Although physical co-locating may not be required, connecting together control rooms and promoting a degree of inter-operability and resilience will be a feature of any successful bid. Therefore a Lancashire or sub-regional replacement can be considered as a single option with the degree of joint working with one or more NW Fire and Rescue Services still under consideration. This is the reason the options placed before the Authority have reduced from three to two.

Until a single option is selected Lancashire is actively developing a separate bid alongside the NWFC proposals. Given time constraints it is unlikely that a cohesive joint bid for shared Control arrangements on a single site could be developed in the timeframes indicated. Emphasis is now on upgrading the existing control and working with other FRS to build resilience. Lancashire are therefore committing time and resources in arranging a workshop during early September with an established provider and other existing NW users. This may steer LFRS into procuring a common mobilising platform through an approved Sprint 2 procurement framework, which may be the only way to establish compatible systems in time to submit a bid to the DCLG.

Assuming that a bid is developed and submitted in the required timeframe, it remains unclear as to the detail required for a successful bid or how the bid will be assessed and there are no guarantees of any funding by this route.

## **CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

At the June CFA meeting members approved the principle that any new approach should only enhance and not compromise current arrangements.

The Control function has two different facets. These are the mobilising systems and the advance use of the Airwave radio. In the first area Lancashire lag behind some other Fire and Rescue Services, Merseyside and Cheshire in particular, who have migrated to more modern and effective Fortek platforms as their existing systems neared obsolescence. The other Fire and Rescue Services have avoided this cost by extending the life of existing systems. In the second area Lancashire are clear leaders. In partnership with the police, Lancashire adopted the Airwave radio system in 2002 and are now mature and effective users. We have developed and integrated mobile data terminals (similar to laptops) to the radio system as a dynamic way of providing critical information to responding crews. The intention of any new system is to combine both areas of best practice into a single approach.

The table overleaf summarises the positions of NW Fire and Rescue Services.

## BENEFITS ANALYSIS

|  | LANCASHIRE | MERSEYSIDE | CHESHIRE | GREATER MANCHESTER | CUMBRIA  |
|--|------------|------------|----------|--------------------|----------|
| STATUS                                     | IN PLACE   |            |          | IN PLACE           |          |
| MOBILE DATA TERMINAL INTEGRATED TO AIRWAVE | IN PLACE   |            |          |                    |          |
| USE OF TALK GROUPS/ CCI PORTS              | IN PLACE   |            |          |                    |          |
| DYNAMIC MOBILISING                         |            | IN PLACE   |          |                    |          |
| AUTOMATIC VEHICLE LOCATION                 |            | IN PLACE   |          |                    |          |
| MOBILE PHONE CALLER IDENTIFICATION         |            | IN PLACE   | IN PLACE |                    | IN PLACE |
| PREMISE –BASED MOBS GAZETTEER              |            | IN PLACE   | IN PLACE |                    |          |
| INTEGRATED GIS                             | IN PLACE   | IN PLACE   | IN PLACE |                    | IN PLACE |

The shading indicates areas that will be introduced by new arrangements. Even if the systems are already in place there is no guarantee they are mature or optimised.

From the table above it can be seen that Lancashire are strong in the first three areas that relate to using the Airwave network. Being mature users of that system we already allocate radio frequencies or talkgroups to each incident and rely on the use of data rather than voice transmissions. Data transmissions can be more easily automated and improve efficiency. Using data also reduces cost in the way that generally text messages (data) are cheaper than telephone conversations.

However with regard to mobilising systems Lancashire would make significant gains by adopting a new system. Other NWFRS have caller identification of mobile phones. Also they can plot their vehicles on a active map and determine and dispatch the most appropriate fire engine.

To support NWFC Option, a Concept of Operations document has been developed. Its purpose is to:

- Define what the system will do
- Explain how it does it
- Reassure on standards of service delivery
- Ensure standards are not compromised
- Reflect the business case
- Describe benefits

This will be developed into a technical specification to support system procurement. The recommended procurement route for a technical solution will be either through a national framework (for example Sprint 2) or a restricted OJEU process.

Regarding the aspirations for any new system there is much commonality between NWFC and Separate Bid. However, there are differences in how they will operate in practice. A Lancashire focused system will be able to see the nearest appropriate resource in Lancashire and send it to the incident. Integral in the proposals for joint arrangements is the ability to see resources in neighbouring NW Fire and Rescue Services and if an appropriate resource is closer, that will be sent to any incident where lives are in danger. This is a fundamental advantage of working collectively over a larger geographical area.

### **Business Risk:**

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service and Manchester are in similar positions in that they have not replaced their existing mobilising systems. Support for the Lancashire legacy systems has been committed until December 2014. An early decision on new arrangements would mitigate the risk of needing support beyond the December 2014 cut off.

There is also a risk that, even if Lancashire decide in favour of joint arrangements, other NW Fire and Rescue Services do not agree. Should this be the case a pessimistic assumption is that the subsidy from the DCLG would reduce by £1.8m for every Fire and Rescue Service that did not enter into joint arrangements. Contingency options indicate that joint arrangements are still viable if only one of the four bigger NW Fire and Rescue Services were to withdraw. Should this be the case savings should still remain within 15% of the steady state revenue savings per year presented in this paper. It is therefore recommended that the business case is still viable if the £0.48m steady state revenue saving for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service dropped to £0.41m.

A further risk to joint arrangements is a lack of clarity on how future project decisions will be taken. Through the PFI for new community fire stations Lancashire, Merseyside and Cumbria have a proven track record on delivering successfully. This was achieved through a Joint Working Agreement. This has provided a template that can be adapted for the 5 NWFRS for the delivery of a NWFC and is provided in full in Appendix 2.

The Joint Working Agreement sets out the governance arrangements that will operate to support collaborative work to provide a shared emergency control facility. It lays out how the project will be organised and the key milestones in the project. It also defines how the decision making process will work. For example CFA approval would be required for awarding of contract, to agree the Final Business Case and if any additional expenditure was required.

### **HR Implications:**

The national FiReControl project placed on hold any plans to develop or change our existing Control arrangements. Staffing has remained unchanged pending the delivery of the national project.

Given the demise of the FiReControl project, the steady reduction in calls and incidents, as presented in previous papers, must logically result in a reduced establishment. It would therefore be unrealistic to compare the Business Case

against the approved establishment of 41 Full Time Equivalents, as the status quo is not a realistic option. It has been assumed that a more realistic comparator for the NWFC Business Case would be a reduced establishment of 8 posts which equates to 33 staff, which also approximates to our actual current staffing level. This does not mean the establishment could not be reduced below this in the future. Using 33 staff as the benchmark ensures that the Business Case provides tangible advantages over what is in place now and in the medium term. An eight post reduction equates to a saving of £0.296m.

If the NWFC option is selected the Outline Business Case is based on the new terms and conditions that have been developed, although some work is still to complete. The basic principle is by matching the staffing levels to call volumes and collecting the spare capacity which is used as a contingency in each FRS on a single site then overall staff numbers can be reduced.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service have a track record of dealing with downsizing in a sympathetic manner to minimise adverse effects on staff. The aim of this restructuring is to use a combination of transfer to the new NWFC, voluntary redundancy, early retirement and redeployment to accommodate displaced staff. This could also be managed more effectively by early selection of staff for NWFC by the end of 2011.

Within Lancashire all prospective applicants for the NWFC and nearly all staff have been supported through a 3 phase change management programme run by the Service. A further phase is planned for 2012/2013. Their professionalism, positive attitude and behaviour makes them a highly attractive proposition for securing a position in the NWFC should they apply.

#### **Environmental Impact:**

The NWFC at Warrington has been designed with environmental issues such as energy efficiency very much in mind and has successfully achieved a BREEAM rating of excellent. Currently Lancashire aims to achieve a rating of very good or better for all new buildings, which would apply to any new building for Control.

#### **Equality and Diversity implications:**

An initial Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of the national FiReControl Project. This will be revisited and updated in light of the decisions made by the Authorities. However one advantage of NWFC is that it provides a career path potentially to the top of the organisation, whilst currently the highest level for current Control staff is Station Manager.

#### **Financial Implications:**

Whichever option is selected this project is set to deliver a new control function in 2014. During this period the Service will be required to deliver an estimated £5.7m of additional savings by 2014/5.

Both options require a provision of £0.2m to interface new systems to existing ICT provision. The Lancashire based Option 2 assumes a reduction in 8 posts saving

£0.296m/annum. However, this saving is already built into Option 1 and the steady state revenue saving of £0.48m/annum is additional to that figure.

The remaining differences revolve around capital costs. For the NWFC option, apart from the above, only £0.25m capital is required . The following additions are required for to be included in the Separate Bid to the DCLG , namely option 2:

|                   |        |
|-------------------|--------|
| Building          | £1.25m |
| Systems           | £0.8m  |
| Airwave Interface | £0.5m  |
|                   | £2.55m |

The Airwave Interface refers to an upgrade of our existing provision. Although not essential, in the first few years it would be a longer term requirement. This provision is included in the NWFC Option.

Following the DCLG invitation of bids Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service would submit proposals for the potential £1.8m allocation. However as previously stated there are no guarantees that that amount will be secured. London are the only single FRS that has secured support so far. Despite being nearly seven times the budget of Lancashire they have only secured £2.25m of subsidy. Even if Lancashire was successful in securing the maximum £1.8m there would be a £0.75m capital funding gap. To provide a revenue comparison if this was unsupported borrowing repaid over 15 years the equivalent annual revenue cost would be £0.087m/annum.

Regarding NWFC, there are also additional opportunities whose benefit has not been quantified in the Business Case.

- Income generation by rental of facilities
- Potential to take on further work with existing staff
- There is an existing provision of £400k capital and £182k/annum revenue to develop and operate a secondary control. There are potential savings should mutual fallback arrangements be agreed with another control
- Opportunities to adopt best practice as review work to converge current approaches progress.

Regarding additional costs for a separate bid that have not yet been quantified, these are:

- Support for a project team to deliver any new approach.
- Staff restructuring costs.

The subsidy on the accommodation is provided until 2033. At this time a new business case will be developed and presented to members on what arrangements should then prevail.



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

| Paper   | Date | Contact<br>Chris Kenny |
|---|------|------------------------|
| Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate: Paragraphs 1,2 3 & 4 |      |                        |

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## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 18 December 2023

### Updated Whistleblowing Policy

(Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information – Liz Sandiford – Assistant Director Human Resources  
Tel: 01772 866804

#### Executive Summary

The Whistleblowing Policy has been updated to include reference to Safecall, an anonymous reporting line which allows for anonymous reporting of unethical conduct, fraud or illegal activities.

#### Recommendation

The Lancashire Combined Fire Authority agrees the amended Whistleblowing Policy.

#### Information

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services published a report on values and culture in Fire and Rescue Services in March 2023. This report recommended that Chief Fire Officers should make sure that their Service provides a confidential way for staff to raise concerns via their Whistleblowing processes by 1 October 2023. This recommendation was supplemented by the National Fire Chief Council's recommendations on values and culture.

In response to those recommendations the Service has established Safecall, with effect from August 2023. Safecall is an anonymous independent external reporting line where calls can be made or emails sent. All communications are treated confidentially by independent trained staff who will preserve the individual's anonymity if they so wish. If Safecall receives a report out of hours and they feel that this indicates a risk to life or other emergency they will contact the relevant Duty Group Manager.

The establishment and process of Safecall has resulted in a need to update the Whistleblowing Policy (attached at Appendix 1) to reflect the new arrangements.

#### Business risk

There are no business risks arising from this report.

#### Sustainability or Environmental Impact

The Whistleblowing Policy does not have any sustainability or environmental impact.

#### Equality and Diversity Implications

The establishment of Safecall, within the Whistleblowing Policy, has a positive impact from an equalities perspective, as it gives individuals experiencing any form of harassment or discrimination another route by which they raise and report issues of concern.

**Data Protection (GDPR)**

The processing of data by Safecall will be undertaken in accordance with the principles of Data Protection.

**HR implications**

The establishment of Safecall could result in an increased number of concerns being fed into the Human Resources Team which require action or intervention. This will be kept under review.

**Financial implications**

The establishment of Safecall has cost £2,310 per annum and will be piloted for 12 months and then reviewed.

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985****List of background papers**

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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

# Service Order – Human Resources

## Whistleblowing Policy

### Section 35



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## Whistleblowing Service Order – Aide Memoire

1. The Service has policies in place if you wish to raise a complaint about your own employment:
  - Bullying and Harassment Service Order
  - Grievance Service Order
2. The Whistleblowing Policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures which may include:
  - Conduct which is an offence or a breach of law (e.g., misconduct in public office)
  - Disclosures related to miscarriages of justice.
  - Health and Safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees.
  - Damage to the environment
  - The unauthorised use of public funds
  - Possible fraud and corruption (also see the anti-bribery policy)
  - Other unethical conduct (e.g. serious breaches of the LFRS Code of Conduct or the LCFA Principles in Public Life)
3. Any reasonable concerns that you have about any aspects of Service provision or the conduct of staff or members of the LCFA, LFRS or others acting on their behalf can be reported under the Whistleblowing Policy. This may be about something that:
  - Makes you believe there has been a serious breach in terms of known standards or your experience or the standards you believe LFRS subscribes to; or
  - Is in major breach of important service orders or policies or;
  - Falls well below established standards of practice; or
  - Amounts to improper conduct.
4. LFRS will support you and take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in the public interest if you have a reasonable belief that what you are saying is true and requires to be disclosed. No investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will be influenced by, or will influence, any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that affect you at the time you raise a concern.
5. Whilst all concerns will be treated in confidence, it may be necessary for you to come forward as a witness at some point.
6. You are encouraged to put your name to your allegation, as concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful. The Lancashire Combined Fire Authority (LCFA) will exercise discretion in accepting a wish for anonymity, considering the following:
  - The seriousness of the issue raised.
  - The credibility of the concern: and

- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.
7. Raising a complaint
- raise concerns with your immediate manager or their supervisor where possible.
  - if you believe management are involved, approach the Clerk to the LCFA on 01772 866720.
  - If you don't wish to approach your line manager, contact the Deputy Chief Fire Officer on 01772 866801.
  - Raise your concerns verbally or in writing.
  - If raising a report in writing use the following format:
    - Give the background and history of the concern, with relevant dates,
    - Give the reason you are particularly concerned about the issue,
    - The earlier you raise a concern, the sooner it may be possible to take action,
    - You must show you have reasonable belief for your concerns and that they are reasonably in the public interest.
  - Advice and guidance on how to pursue matters of concern from:
    - Clerk to the Fire Authority 01772 866720
    - Deputy Chief Fire Officer 01772 866801
    - Director of People and Development 01772 866804
    - Service Solicitor [REDACTED]
8. Utilise 'Safecall' as an independent reporting 'hotline'
- Freephone 0800 915 1571
  - [www.safecall.co.uk/report](http://www.safecall.co.uk/report)
9. You may wish to discuss your concern with a colleague – you might find it easier to raise if more than one of you has the same concerns.
10. You may invite a Trade Union representative or friend to be present at any meetings or interviews you attend in connection with the concerns you have raised.
11. The LCFA will respond to your concerns – following scrutiny, they may accept or reject them.
12. The matters raised may:
- Be investigated by management, internal audit or through the disciplinary process
  - Be referred to the police if there is a believe that a criminal offence has been committed
  - Be referred to the external auditor
  - Form the subject of an independent enquiry

13. The overriding principle which the LCFA will have in mind is the public interest. Matters which fall within the scope of specific procedures, for instance discrimination issues, will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.
14. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action. Any urgent action required will be taken before any investigation is conducted.
15. You will receive written confirmation, within ten working days:
- Acknowledging the concern has been received,
  - Indicating who is dealing with the matter,
  - An estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response,
  - Whether any initial enquiries have been made,
  - Providing information on staff support mechanisms for you,
  - Telling you whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.
16. The LCFA may seek further information from you, and should you be required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, you will receive advice about the procedure.
17. If you make allegations in which you have reasonable belief, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. Rumours, unfounded suspicions, or uncorroborated allegations will not be sufficient. Disciplinary action may be taken against you if it subsequently comes to light that you have misused the Whistleblowing Policy.
18. If you are not satisfied with the outcome or action taken, you may take the matter outside the Service, though you should take care not to unnecessarily disclose confidential information:
19. Protect (Tel No: 020 3117 2520) is a registered charity whose services are free and strictly confidential and which will give staff advice and guidance on the action they can take. Contact can be made via a contact form on their website: <http://protect-advice.org.uk>
- The Engagement Lead – Lancashire Combined Fire Authority, Grant Thornton UK LLP, 4 Hardman Square, Spinningfields, Manchester, M3 3EB (Tel no: 0161 953 6900) (The organisations appointed independent auditors)
  - Your trade union
  - Your local Citizens Advice Bureau
  - The Police
  - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services. (Tel no 020 3513 0500)



## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

This policy aims to meet the responsibilities of the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority ("LCFA") under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 ("PIDA") which has inserted provisions into the Employment Rights Act 1996 ("ERA") and as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 ("ERRA")

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong with an organisation. However, they may feel unable to express their concerns because they think speaking up as being disloyal to their colleagues or to LFRS. They may also fail to do so if as they may fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances it may sometimes appear easier to ignore the concern rather than report malpractice.

The LCFA is committed as a public body to the highest possible standards of transparency, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the work of the LCFA or LFRS to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.

### 1.2 Policy Statement

This Whistleblowing Policy makes it clear that you can come forward and raise those concerns without fear of any detriment e.g. victimisation or discrimination. This policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and workers to raise serious concerns in which they have a reasonable belief in the public interest rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside the organisation in the first instance.

The policy applies to all employees, (including those designated as casual hours, temporary, agency workers, contractors and suppliers working for LFRS or LCFA). Whistle blowers are protected from suffering a detriment, bullying or harassment from another worker as a consequence of making a protected disclosure.

This policy has been discussed with the relevant trade unions and has their support.

### 1.3 Aims and Scope of Policy

This policy aims to:

- Encourage you to feel confident in raising concerns which are in the public interest
- Provide avenues for you to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- Ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied

- Reassure you that you will be protected from possible detriment if you have a reasonable belief that you have made a qualifying disclosure in the public interest

There are existing procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to your own employment. The Whistleblowing Policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of law (e.g. misconduct in public office)
- Disclosures related to miscarriages of justice
- Health and Safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- Damage to the environment
- The unauthorised use of public funds
- Possible fraud and corruption ( also see the anti-bribery policy)
- Other unethical conduct (e.g. serious breaches of the LFRS Code of Conduct or the LCFA Principles in Public Life)

Thus, any reasonable concerns that you have about any aspects of Service provision or the conduct of staff or members of the LCFA, LFRS or others acting on their behalf can be reported under the Whistleblowing Policy. This may be about something that:

- Makes you believe there has been a serious breach in terms of known standards or your experience or the standards you believe LFRS subscribes to; or
- is in major breach of important service orders or policies or;
- Falls well below established standards of practice; or
- Amounts to improper conduct

This policy does not replace the LFRS complaints or grievance procedures.

### Safeguards

#### Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

- Is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of employees
- Recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If you have a reasonable belief that what you are saying is true and requires to be disclosed in the public interest, you have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to your employer and those for whom you are providing a service.
- Will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in the public interest in this way.
- Gives a commitment that any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affect you.

## Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.

## Anonymous Allegations

This policy encourages you to put your name to your allegation whenever possible.

Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the LCFA.

In exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account would include:

- The seriousness of the issue raised
- The credibility of the concern: and
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

## **2. Roles And Responsibilities**

### 2.1 Heads of Departments/Workplace Managers

It is the responsibility of all Heads of Departments and Workplace Managers to be fully aware of this Service Order. A clear understanding of its content is required to be able to assist and support any whistleblowing allegations and support the staff member(s) raising the concern.

### 2.2 All Staff

All other staff should have a clear understanding of this Service Order to understand their responsibilities and process should a whistleblowing concern is raised by themselves or another colleague.

### 2.3 Responsible Officer

The Chief Fire Officer has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy. The Chief Fire Officer will maintain a record of concerns raised and the outcome (but in a form which does not endanger your confidentiality) and will report as necessary to the LCFA.

### 2.4 Service Solicitor

The role of the Service Solicitor is to support the investigation and ensure compliancy.

### 2.5 Lead Department

This Service Order is owned by the Service Solicitor, Human Resources Department.

### 3. Procedures

#### 3.1 Procedures

##### How to raise a complaint

As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with your immediate manager or their supervisor. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if you believe that the management is involved you can approach the Clerk to LCFA, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Garstang Road, Fulwood, Preston. If you don't feel able to approach your line manager you can contact the Deputy Chief Fire Officer or Director of People and Development (See end of Section 24)

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Staff who wish to make a written report are invited to use the following format:

- the background and history of the concern (giving the relevant dates)
- the reason why you are particularly concerned about the issue.
- the earlier you express the concerns the sooner it may be possible to take any necessary action.
- although you are not expected to provide proof beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, you must show that you have a reasonable belief for your concerns and that they are reasonably in the public interest.
- obtain advice/guidance on how to pursue matters of concern from:

The Clerk to the Fire Authority – 01772 866720

Deputy Chief Officer – 01772 866801

Director of People and Development – 01772 866804

The Service Solicitor – XXXXXXXXXX

If ultimately you feel you have to take the matter externally, possible contacts are listed at the end of this document.

You may wish to consider discussing your concerns with a colleague first and you may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) of you who have had the same experience or concerns.

You may invite your trade union, professional association representative or a friend to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns you have raised.

The LCFA will respond to your concerns. Do not forget that scrutinising your concerns is not the same as either accepting or rejecting them.

The Line Manager or other person who is initially told about the allegation should in the first instance make contact with the service solicitor [REDACTED] so that a decision can be made (in consultation with The Clerk to the Fire Authority; the Deputy Chief Officer; the Director of People and Development or other person as appropriate) as to how to deal with the matter raised and who should be tasked with investigating and deciding on the matter.

Where appropriate, the matters raised may

- be investigated by management, internal audit, or through the disciplinary process
- be referred to the Police (if there is a belief that a criminal offence has been committed this should be reported to the Police)
- be referred to the external auditor
- form the subject of an independent enquiry

To protect individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible malpractice, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. The overriding principle which the LCFA will have in mind is the public interest. Criminal Offences, miscarriages of justice, matters of health and safety, damage to the environment and concealment of such failures are by their very nature matters of public interest. However each matter will need to be assessed on the individual facts of each case. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.

Within ten working days of a concern being raised, you will be written to:

- acknowledging the concern has been received
- indicating who we propose to deal with the matter
- giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
- telling you whether any initial enquiries have been made
- supplying you with information on staff support mechanisms and
- telling you whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not

If it is decided to proceed with the investigation it will then be necessary at this stage to inform the person against whom the accusation has been made. Details relating to the procedure and estimated timescales for the investigation and any subsequent reports will also be provided to the accused person.

The amount of contact between the person considering the issues and you will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, the LCFA will seek further information from you.

Where any meeting is arranged, off-site if you so wish, you can be accompanied by a union or professional association representative or friend.

The LCFA will take steps to minimise any difficulties which you may experience as a result of raising a concern.

The LCFA will take steps to minimise any difficulties which you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the LCFA will arrange for you to receive advice about the procedure.

The LCFA accepts that you need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, we will inform you of the outcome of any investigation as soon as possible.

### **Untrue Allegations**

If you make allegations in which you have a reasonable belief, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. However, there must be some substantiated basis for a whistle-blower's belief: rumours, unfounded suspicions or uncorroborated allegations will not be sufficient. You may be asked to make a declaration that you have not knowingly made false allegations. If the evidence subsequently comes to light that you misused the Whistleblowing Policy disciplinary action may be taken against you.

### **How The Matter Can Be Taken Further**

This policy is intended to provide you with an avenue to raise concerns and it is hoped that you will be satisfied with any action taken. If you are not, and if you feel it is right to take the matter outside of the Service, the organisations listed below are possible contact points (they can also be contacted at a first step if you wish):

Protect (Tel No: 020 3117 2520) is a registered charity whose services are free and strictly confidential and which will give staff advice and guidance on the action they can take. Contact can be made via a contact form on their website: <http://protect-advice.org.uk>

The Engagement Lead – Lancashire Combined Fire Authority, Grant Thornton UK LLP, 4 Hardman Square, Spinningfields, Manchester, M3 3EB (Tel no: 0161 953 6900) (The organisations appointed independent auditors)

Your trade union

Your local Citizens Advice Bureau

The Police

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services. (Tel no 020 3513 0500)

If you do take the matter outside LFRS, you should ensure that you do not unnecessarily disclose confidential information. Check with the contact point about that.

### **Safecall**

Additionally, this existing policy and procedures is supplemented by the introduction of an independent service available for use when circumstances necessitate a different approach to reporting called Safecall. Safecall, provide a professional, independent, external and confidential means for those detailed in paragraph 2, to report their concerns.

Where it is not considered appropriate to report an issue to a line manager or use other internal procedures, Safecall can be contacted on 0800 915 1571 at any time – 24/7. Alternatively, Safecall can be contacted via the web [www.safecall.co.uk/report](http://www.safecall.co.uk/report).

Safecall is an independent external reporting line where concerns may be raised. All calls are treated with utmost confidentiality by independent, trained staff who will, not disclose the complainants name to the Service.

Reports from individuals will be provided to a named Key Contact within the Service. If the report is about one of the Service's named Key Contacts, then Safecall will automatically refer the report to a separate Key Contact who is has been identified as the 'if about' contact.

If Safecall receive a report out of normal working hours that they feel indicates a risk to life for instance, or other emergency – they will contact the relevant Duty Group Manager.

Safecall is an additional service and does not replace existing policies and procedures already in place.

#### 4. Document Control

##### Contact

| Department      | Name       | Email      | Telephone  |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Human Resources | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |

##### Amendment History

| Version | Date       | Reasons for Change   | Amended by                     |
|---------|------------|--|--------------------------------|
| V1.0    | 01.10.16   | Review due 01.10.19  | LFRS Solicitor                 |
| V1.1    | 01.10.19   | Amendment in the 'Aims and Scope of the Policy" section "Thus, any <i>serious</i> concerns..." amended to 'Thus, any <i>reasonable</i> concerns..."<br><br>Addition of Service Solicitor contact details in the "how to raise a concern section"<br><br>In the 'How the matter can be taken further section, details of HMICFRS added to replace the Audit Commission. | [REDACTED] –<br>LFRS Solicitor |
| V2.0    | 18.03.2021 | Inclusion of key contact details<br>Change to ten days to deal with the matter   | [REDACTED] –<br>LFRS Solicitor |
| V2.01   | 30.5.2023  | Inclusion of information about Safecall  | [REDACTED]                     |

**Next Review Date:** 01.05.2026



**Related Documents (If applicable)**

| Document Type              | Reference Number | Title | Document location |
|----------------------------|------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Equality Impact Assessment |                  |       |                   |
| Risk Assessment            |                  |       |                   |
| Policy                     |                  |       |                   |
| External Documents         |                  |       |                   |

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## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 18 December 2023

### Member Champion Activity Report

Contact for further information:

ACFO Jon Charters – Tel No: 01772 866802

#### Executive Summary

This paper provides a report on the work of the Member Champions for the period up to 17 December 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 John Singleton
- 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

LFRS had the pleasure of joining the local Hindu community in celebrating Diwali and the New Year, Annakut, at the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Preston. Members of the senior management team, prevention support and the community safety team from Preston Fire Station were warmly welcomed at the temple. Upon entering, staff were greeted with a bindi placed on their foreheads, symbolising a mark of respect and blessing. The visit commenced with a guided tour of the temple, which provided an insight into the significance of Diwali. The partnership with LFRS has had some positive outcomes for the Hindu community and this year they embraced the use of battery-operated tea lights in their celebrations.

Western community safety team have started engaging with Weeton Army Barracks as they have recently welcomed 55 families from Afghanistan to the site. These families are refugees and community safety advisers are liaising with them and the barracks, to deliver home fire safety checks and provide safety advice. They have also delivered talks around loose clothing and cooking and coordinating donations of vital things like Quran, hijabs, and prayer mats from the Muslim community.

Over the last couple of months, operational crews have helped with the logistics for the Water Safety Boards soon to be placed on the Leeds Liverpool Canal at UCLan Sandygate in Burnley, and by the River Ribble at Ribchester. They have accompanied the prevention support team staff on site visits with the landowners and other interested parties to help confirm the suitability of the location. Being involved in this consultation process helps staff gain an increased awareness of the risk sites prior to attending an incident at the location. LFRS Prevention Support staff have also arranged and chaired the Lancashire Water Safety Group, which brings representatives from many partners agencies and communities together to pre plan activities based upon identified risk.

Southern area community safety team supported the West Lancashire Community Safety Partnerships 'Welcome Week' campaign, focusing on Student Safety at Edge Hill University in Ormskirk. The team spoke to students about fire safety in their rented accommodation and used the crashed car to engage in conversations about the dangers of drink and drug driving and being over the limit the next day.

Northern area community safety team and Lancaster crews also supported student safety at Lancaster University. They talked to students about fire safety, particularly around cooking, and used the hot oil unit to demonstrate the real dangers of fire risk.

Fire Cadets have opened a new unit at Skelmersdale fire station welcoming fifteen young people onto the two-year programme. The Preesall unit has relocated to Fleetwood fire station in response to the high demand for youth diversionary activities in the area and in September, fourteen young people started their Fire Cadet journey with us. The Fire Cadet Co-ordinator is working on a new partnership with the Police Cadets to offer additional learning opportunities for the young people and add further enrichment to our existing programme.

Staff from many areas of the service have worked with partners to support the 2023 Bright Sparx campaign. Initial feedback looks very positive, and a full evaluation is now taking place to aid organisational learning and develop future prevention plans.

## **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION – COUNCILLOR ZAMIR KHAN MBE**

Further to the recent wholetime recruitment campaign, interviews have taken place during the month of November. Of the successful candidates identified and invited to the next a stage of the process, 50% are female, 17% are from minority groups, 29% are members from the LGBT+ community and 6% declared a disability. The rest of the clearance process will now progress, all applicants are measured against the same criteria and only the highest performing candidates are appointed.

During October and November, we delivered several half day leadership development sessions for all those in a leadership role utilising drama-based training. This was followed by afternoon sessions for Watch Managers, focused on setting standards and expectations in relation to behaviour and having difficult conversations.

We have had an external audit in relation to our approach to equality impact assessments which concluded substantial assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of how EIAs are conducted.

On 22 November representatives from the Service's Race and Religion Employee Voice Group attended the Asian Fire Service Association Awards, the Service was

nominated in four different awards categories with community safety advisor Faz Patel, winning the award for Partnership of the Year for the Services “Safety during Hajj campaign”. Station Manager Trevor Jenkins won the Health and Inequalities category for our initiative together with public health on delivering NHS checks in East Lancashire and the Race and Religion Employee Voice Group and the Positive Action Team, were also highly commended for their amazing work in the Champion of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion category and in the Positive Action category.

## HEALTH, WELLBEING & CLIMATE CHANGE – COUNTY COUNCILLOR JOHN SINGLETON

### Climate Change and Environment



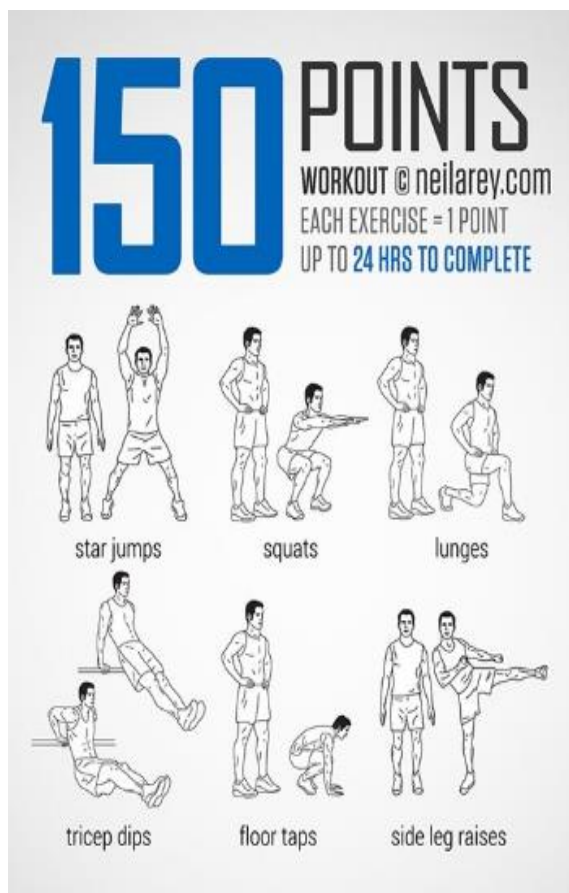
We promoted Recycle Week in October with a noticeboard display at Headquarters, Routine Bulletin item and communication with Environmental Champions. The main message for Recycle Week this year was about increasing the types of items getting recycled, focussing on some items that are often put into the general waste by mistake such as empty cleaning products, shampoo and conditioner bottles, takeaway trays, empty food tins and deodorant cans. As part of this promotional campaign, we included our poster about what types of things we can put in our recycling bins.

We ran our first ever Climate Fresk workshop on 30th November 2023, at Headquarters. The workshop objectives include:

- Having a clearer understanding of the cause and effect of the climate science
- Having a visual overview of the interconnectedness of the concepts
- Exploring how you feel about the climate crisis and what actions you might take
- Testing your own knowledge and assumptions
- A powerful shared experience your group/team can relate to.

Finally for this quarter, the first draft of our new Environmental Sustainability Plan is now complete and with the Departmental Heads for feedback. Key information for the plan includes discussions about potential costs involved and progressing with site surveys for decarbonisation roadmaps. A further update will be available once feedback has been received.

## Health and Wellbeing



We have undertaken a promotion to encourage staff to increase the amount of time they are physically active through a 'Fitness for all' challenge. The objective was to achieve 150 fitness points each day, which equates to 15 minutes of physical activity or 75 minutes a week, which is half the recommended activity time for an adult per week.

Other wellbeing promotions this quarter have included a suicide awareness drop-in session at headquarters, Fire Fighters Charity wellbeing workshops (developing resilience and Musculoskeletal injury prevention) and Peer Support Ambassador (PSA) workshops for 28 members of staff. This is a great start to increasing our peer support network and we continue to promote the role of a PSA, to achieve our goal of a minimum of one PSA per station, to further support the de-stigmatisation of mental health conversations in the workplace.

Health and wellbeing information has recently been added in to the CFA Members monthly bulletin, to share the monthly wellbeing focus and associated information with Members. Coming up in the next few months the topics will be financial wellbeing, cancer and endometriosis. If anyone has any questions relating to these articles or suggestions for topics, please contact Bekki Ford, the Safety, Health and Wellbeing Advisor.

## 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. Whilst we are only at the start of the academic year nearly 4,000 pupils have received the package, so we are on track to deliver to all schools by end of summer term. Feedback from teachers remains very positive, please see example below:

*“Claire was extremely knowledgeable and relatable to the children. She kept them engaged all afternoon and the children enjoyed the session.”*

The inclusion of a QR code post questionnaire for all the pupils continues to show very positive results. To date 4 out of the 5 questions have been answered correctly by 99%

of respondents. This is a very positive figure as it proves the key messages taught in the session are being retained by the pupils and discussed at home with parents and carers when filling this in. 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 in popularity with 4 sessions delivered since the summer break. The partnership with Bowker Motorrad is growing from strength to strength with the Biker Down Team attending the 100-year anniversary event and then Bowker hosted a large course (35 attendees) from the venue. The pre and post questionnaire maintains very positive feedback about the session. One of the questions the attendees were asked is around their confidence to create a safe scene following a road traffic collision. The scale they use is 1-5 (1 not confident – 5 very confident). Prior to the session the average rating was 2.4 but increased to 4.6 following the session. We also asked for free text feedback, please see an example below from a recent course:

*“Excellent and appreciate all the effort and passion that goes into this. Feel up to date and more confident now.”*

During Tyre Safety Month in October the results of a recent National study were released. This worryingly showed Lancashire as being in the top 2 areas for tyre treads being borderline or illegal – 64% of all those checked. This was even worse than the previous findings. With kind permission from Cllr Woollam to utilise the CFA Road Safety Champion budget, all staff and CFA Members were gifted a tyre tread depth checker and information how to check their tyres.

To support International Men's Day 'Wasted Lives' the pre driver education programme was delivered to young males aged 15 to 17 during 4 workshops at Blackpool Football Club. The crashed car was also used to accompany the delivery. Feedback from the day has been valuable and has led to the booking of further sessions.

*“I attended the International Men's Day event at Blackpool FC last Friday and one of the workshops we attended was the Wasted Lives. This was a really good opportunity for our students and extremely impactful with the hard-hitting message.”*



## **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: ACFO Jon Charters

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



## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 18th December 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 are three cases in the Judicial system at present for offences under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Of these cases one is set for trial in July 2024, one is set for sentencing at Preston Crown Court in December 2023 and one plea hearing has recently been adjourned until Jan 2024.

The case due for sentencing in December was presented to the courts in October by LFRS Protection Officers. The comprehensive evidence presented to the court resulted in the immediate submission of guilty pleas by the defence. The judge then escalated the case to Crown Courts for sentencing.

Protection teams continue to investigate and build files in relation to 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)
- Converted residential premises – joint enforcement action with a local authority and Health and Safety Executive.

## **FIRE PROTECTION & BUSINESS SUPPORT INFORMATION**

### **Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSC)**

Since April 2023 there have been 1,977 BFSC delivered and over 4,000 delivered across Lancashire since inception.

Of the 1,977 undertaken since April 1,702 (86%) have resulted in a satisfactory outcome, with 275 being deemed unsatisfactory resulting in follow up business safety advice.

Protection department follow up activities have resulted in three legal notices being issued, including the prohibition of two premises and around 100 informal letters issued to indicate fire safety improvements.

### **Legislation Changes Update**

The new Building Safety Act came into force on 1 October 2023, requiring Responsible Persons of High-Rise buildings to register their building with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR). To date LFRS have been notified that only 30% of the county's relevant buildings have been registered. LFRS operate as part of the Northwest Region to support the Building Safety Regulator (the Health and Safety Executive) and have implemented a dedicated role within our Protection team.

## **ARSON RISK REDUCTION**

### **R v Michael MCGOUGH**

Cardwell Street, Padiham

Date and Time of call – 03/01/2023, 07:56

This incident involved several separate fires set throughout a three storey end terraced house. The fires caused severe damage to the property and contents. The property also suffered structural damage as a result of exploding aerosol cans. Thankfully no people were in the property at the time of the incident but had the fires not been extinguished by the Fire Service, there was potential for fire spread throughout the house and to the neighbouring property, putting the occupant's at risk of potential harm.

Following a guilty plea to Arson with intent to endanger life, the defendant was sentenced on the 03/07/2023 at Preston Crown Court to serve 2 years and 10 months in prison.

### **R v restricted due to age**

Highfield Priory School, Fulwood Row, Preston  
Date and Time of call – 15/10/2022, 18:52

This incident involved a fire at an independent Preparatory School and Nursery. The fire caused devastating damage to the entire nursery building and contents. CCTV from the premises captured 4 youths starting a fire on composite decking in a play area adjacent to the nursery building.

Following guilty pleas, each of the 4 youths received a 12-month youth referral order at Preston Magistrates Court.

### **R v restricted due to age**

Bank Place, Preston  
Date and Time of call – 26/06/2023, 22:04

This incident involved a fire in a bedroom of a 2-storey end terrace property. At the time of the fire the property was occupied by the 13-year-old defendant and 2 support workers. The fire was contained to the bedroom causing severe damage by fire, heat and smoke.

Following a guilty plea, the defendant was given a 9-month referral order.

### **R v Male**

Edgemoor Close, Shawforth.  
Date and Time of call – 24/12/2023, 03:37hrs

Male set fire to shed adjacent to a block of flats, which spread to the building.

The individual pleaded guilty and received 5yrs imprisonment for arson & assault.

### **R v restricted due to age**

Horsebridge Rd, Blackpool  
Date & Time of call – 22/7/23 19:07hrs

A youth set fire to clothing in their bedroom and there were indicators of previous fire setting within same room. The individual admitted guilt following interview with the Police and subsequent reports provided by LFRS Incident Intelligence Officer (IIO).

The individual received a youth referral order which includes a referral for LFRS Fire Intervention Response Education Scheme (FIRES) aimed to target and educate young people who have developed a fascination with fire.

**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

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 18 December 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. This has been a very busy operational period, therefore the report details only the larger deployments or more complex incidents attended. As a result, some incidents that Members have been made aware of locally, may not form part of the report.

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

- Six fire engines attend a commercial building fire in Bamber Bridge (6/9/23)
- Three fire engines attend a car on fire with persons trapped (9/9/23)
- Ten fire engines attend a commercial building fire in Blackburn (11/9/23)
- Four fire engines attend disused waste storage building in Lancaster (21/9/23)
- Fire crews attend a fatal boat fire in Nateby (30/9/23)
- Six fire engines attend a commercial building fire in Blackburn (3/10/23)
- Four fire engines attend a fatal incident on the river Lune (8/10/23)
- Fire crews attend a fatal house fire near Ribchester ((9/10/23)
- Ten fire engines attend a commercial building fire in Longridge (6/11/23)
- LFRS attend a suspected explosive device in Burnley (13/11/23)

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|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>LFRS station area:</b> | <b>L53 Bamber Bridge</b> |
| <b>Date:</b>              | <b>6 September 2023</b>  |
| <b>Time:</b>              | <b>05:09</b>             |

Six fire engines from Bamber Bridge, Penwortham, Preston, Leyland, Chorley and Fulwood, together with an aerial ladder platform from Preston and a stinger from Blackburn, attended a commercial building fire on Station Road, Bamber Bridge. The incident involved a commercial property approximately twenty metres by ten metres in size. Firefighters used several firefighting water jets to extinguish the fire. At the height of the incident, the police evacuated several houses due to their proximity to the fire.

Fire crews were at the scene for approximately twelve hours, damping down and conducting a fire investigation. Although the cause of the fire was not determined, it is believed that it was accidental with no involvement of a third party.

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|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>LFRS station area:</b> | <b>L92 Padiham</b>      |
| <b>Date:</b>              | <b>9 September 2023</b> |
| <b>Time:</b>              | <b>10:50</b>            |

The Fire Control room received a call that a car had left the M65, flipped on its roof and burst into flames, with the driver still inside. As a result fire engines from Padiham, Burnley and Hyndburn attended. The crews were met with an established fire involving a classic car on its roof on the motorway slip road. Sadly, this was confirmed as a fatal incident. The fire was quickly extinguished and the drone team were requested to search for further casualties and gather evidence for the police investigation. Fire crews were on scene for approximately four hours.

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|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>LFRS station area:</b> | <b>L71 Blackburn</b>     |
| <b>Date:</b>              | <b>11 September 2023</b> |
| <b>Time:</b>              | <b>19:50</b>             |

Ten fire engines from fire stations across Lancashire were called to a fire at Dinner Lady Ltd, on Shadsworth Business Park, Wilkinson Way, Blackburn. The fire involved a large warehouse approximately fifty-eight metres by twenty-five metres, consisting of two floors. Firefighters used several firefighting water jets, an aerial ladder platform and a stinger water tower to bring the fire under control. Several road closures were in place due to the number of resources at the scene. The hose layer and command unit also supported this incident.

Fire crews were on scene for three days, damping down and investigating the cause. The outcome was recorded as accidental, from a defective light within the warehouse.

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|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>LFRS station area:</b> | <b>L11 Lancaster</b>     |
| <b>Date:</b>              | <b>21 September 2023</b> |
| <b>Time:</b>              | <b>13:53</b>             |

Four fire engines from Lancaster, Morecambe and Bolton-le-Sands, along with the aerial ladder platform from Morecambe and the stinger appliance from Skelmersdale, attended a derelict building fire on Lune industrial estate, New Quay Road, Lancaster.

This involved the site of the former A1 supa skips company, in which hundreds of tonnes of waste has been left within the former power station building. Firefighters extinguished the fire using five firefighting water jets and the aerial ladder platform and stinger.

LFRS had pre-empted issues at this site and led on the development of multi-agency plans should a major fire occur. Some of the planned tactics were used to extinguish the fire and prevent fire spread to the main bulk of the waste material. This incident was followed by further deliberate fires at the site, leading to strategic engagement with Lancaster City Council, a local MP and the wider partnership, combined with a debrief to extract learning and mitigate further risks.

Fire crews were on scene for over six hours, with the cause being recorded as deliberate.

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|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>LFRS station area:</b> | <b>L18 Garstang</b>      |
| <b>Date:</b>              | <b>30 September 2023</b> |
| <b>Time:</b>              | <b>12:45</b>             |

Two fire engines from Lancaster and Fulwood attended reports of a boat on fire at Bridge House Marina and Caravan Park, Nateby Crossing Lane, Nateby. The fire was out on arrival of fire crews, but sadly there was a casualty in the living quarters of the boat, who was later confirmed deceased by paramedics.

Crews assisted with the extrication of the casualty and a fire investigation was conducted. The cause was recorded as accidental.

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|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>LFRS station area:</b> | <b>L71 Blackburn</b>  |
| <b>Date:</b>              | <b>3 October 2023</b> |
| <b>Time:</b>              | <b>19:34</b>          |

Six fire engines, two aerial ladder platforms, a water bowser, command unit and the drone team attended an incident on Croft Head Road, Blackburn. The fire involved a two-storey commercial property containing a quantity of vehicles. The building was approximately fifty metres by twenty metres in size. The entire building was involved in fire by the time the first fire crews arrived.

Firefighters used four firefighting water jets and one aerial ladder platform to extinguish the fire. Fire crews were in attendance for approximately forty-eight hours, damping down the scene and conducting early fire investigation procedures. Although the building was too dangerous to conduct a thorough internal investigation, the evidence gathered suggests an accidental fire.

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|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>LFRS station area:</b> | <b>L11 Lancaster</b>  |
| <b>Date:</b>              | <b>8 October 2023</b> |
| <b>Time:</b>              | <b>07:34</b>          |

Four fire engines, along with the drone and water incident unit attended The John O'Gaunt rowing club, Halton Road, Lancaster, where it was reported that two kayakers were in difficulty at the head of a weir. The coastguard and RNLI were also on route to the incident, along with a rescue helicopter. LFRS swift water staff entered the river and rescued the first casualty successfully, passing them into a safety boat from the rowing club. Sadly, the second casualty went over the weir despite crews successfully deploying throw lines. The LFRS boat and drone were launched to try and locate the casualty but were unsuccessful.

The unconscious casualty was recovered downstream by the RNLI, approximately two hours later. The casualty was confirmed deceased by paramedics.

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|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>LFRS station area:</b> | <b>L59 Longridge</b>  |
| <b>Date:</b>              | <b>9 October 2023</b> |
| <b>Time:</b>              | <b>12:55</b>          |

Two fire engines from Blackburn were called by the police to reports of a carbon monoxide incident where a fatality had occurred. A station manager and hazardous materials officer also attended. On arrival, crews noticed that this was in fact a fire situation and entered the building wearing breathing apparatus. The fire appeared to have burnt itself out several hours earlier, with a deceased male within the property. The building was ventilated to reduce carbon monoxide levels, so paramedics could confirm the status of the casualty. An Incident Intelligence Officer attended the scene to conduct the fire investigation.

The fire was recorded as accidental and started within the kitchen, the night before. LFRS were involved at the scene for over twenty-four hours, conducting a joint investigation with police.

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|---------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>LFRS station area:</b> | <b>L59 Longridge</b> |
| <b>Date:</b>              | <b>6 November</b>    |
| <b>Time:</b>              | <b>21:33</b>         |

Ten fire engines from Longridge, Preston, Fulwood, Bamber Bridge, Penwortham, Chorley, Hyndburn, Blackburn, and Wesham, together with two aerial ladder platforms, one stinger appliance, a drone unit, a high-volume pump, and a command unit, attended a commercial building fire on Preston Road, Longridge. The incident was located at Butlers Farmhouse Cheese, within a commercial building approximately eighty metres by sixty metres in size. Firefighters used the aerial ladder platforms, three firefighting water jets, and a water bowser to extinguish the fire.

Local impacts included the closure of Longridge High School and St Cecilia's RC High School in Longridge on 7 November due to access issues arising from the use of the High Volume Pump and smoke in the local vicinity. Community messaging incorporated advice on reducing risks from smoke in the area, and advice was to stay indoors, where at all possible.

Fire crews were at the scene for four days, damping down whilst demolition took place on site. Due to the extent of the fire and the compromised structural integrity of the building, it has not been possible to determine a cause at this stage.

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|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>LFRS station area:</b> | <b>L90 Burnley</b>      |
| <b>Date:</b>              | <b>13 November 2023</b> |
| <b>Time:</b>              | <b>12:21</b>            |

The duty national interagency liaison officer (NILO) was notified of a potential improvised explosive device (IED) found on an allotment on Burleigh Street in Burnley. The NILO, 1 fire engine from Burnley and a station manager attended the rendezvous point (RVP) at the Asda car park.



The three blue light services jointly agreed to evacuate all premises within one hundred metres, which included two schools and a nursery. The police declared this a major incident and requested bomb disposal from the military. Once the evacuation had taken place using staff from all three agencies, the bomb disposal team deployed their robot to inspect the device. They decided to conduct a disruption shot from the robot, which would render the device safe. On closer inspection it was not a viable explosive device, but did have the potential to cause injury if it was ignited. LFRS were in attendance for six hours until the scene was declared safe.

### **Business Risk**

None

### **Environmental Impact**

Potential impact on local environment in relation to operational incidents. Significant incidents benefit from the attendance of specialist water towers (stingers) and the hazardous materials unit both of which have positive impacts on firefighting operations and reduce environmental impacts.

### **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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