

Public Document Pack

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Monday, 24 June 2024 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 Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager on telephone number Preston 01772 866720 and she will be pleased to assist.

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

Conservative Group - Pendle Room
Labour Group - Lancaster House 2

Agenda

Part 1 (open to press and public)

Chair'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 Chair who will then instruct that those persons are not photographed, filmed or recorded.

1. **Appointment of Chair**
2. **Appointment of Vice Chair**
3. **Chair's Welcome and Introduction**

Standing item.
4. **Composition of CFA (Pages 1 - 2)**
5. **Apologies for Absence**
6. **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.

7. **Appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs Committees (Pages 3 - 6)**
8. **Representation on Outside Bodies (Pages 7 - 10)**

9. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 11 - 18)**
10. **Minutes of meeting Monday 05 February 2024 of Planning Committee (Pages 19 - 40)**
11. **Minutes of meeting Wednesday 06 March 2024 of Performance Committee (Pages 41 - 68)**
12. **Minutes of meeting Wednesday 27 March 2024 of Resources Committee (Pages 69 - 82)**
13. **Minutes of meeting Thursday 28 March 2024 of Audit Committee (Pages 83 - 96)**
14. **Proposed changes to TOR for Resources, Performance and Planning Committees (Pages 97 - 104)**
15. **Programme of meetings 2025/26 (Pages 105 - 106)**
16. **Annual Safety Health and Environment Annual Report 2023/24 (Pages 107 - 132)**
17. **Policy on Dealing with Habitual and Vexatious Complaints - Annual Update (Pages 133 - 142)**
18. **Member Champion Activity Report (Pages 143 - 148)**
19. **Fire Protection Reports (Pages 149 - 152)**
20. **Operational Incidents of Interest (Pages 153 - 158)**
21. **Member Complaints**
22. **Date of Next Meeting**

Standing item.

The next meeting of the Authority will be held on **Monday 16 September 2024** at 10:30 hours at Washington Hall Training Centre, Euxton.

23. **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.

24. **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.

25. **Succession arrangements for Chief Fire Officer (Pages 159 - 162)**

26. **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

Meeting to be held on 24 June 2024

Composition of the Combined Fire Authority

Contact for further information:

Sam Hunter – Member Services Manager - Tel No. 01772 866720

Executive Summary

The composition of the Combined Fire Authority for 2024/25.

Recommendation(s)

The Authority is asked to note the report.

Information

The composition approved by the Constituent Authorities for the Combined Fire Authority for 2024/25 is as follows:-

25 members: (19 x County Councillors) (11 x Con / 6 x Lab / 1 x L/D/ 1 x Ind)
(3 x Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Members) (2 x Lab / 1 x 4BwD)
(3 x Blackpool Council Members) (2 x Lab / 1 x Con)

Lancashire County Council Members

- 1) U Arif (Ind)
- 2) P Britcliffe (Con)
- 3) S Clarke (Con)
- 4) M Clifford (Lab)
- 5) F De Molfetta (Lab)
- 6) N Hennessy (Lab)
- 7) D Howarth (L/D)
- 8) T Hurn (Con)
- 9) H Khan (Lab)
- 10) S Morris (Con)
- 11) D O'Toole (Con)
- 12) M Pattison (Lab)
- 13) P Rigby (Con)
- 14) M Salter (Con)
- 15) S Serridge (Lab)
- 16) J Shedwick (Con)
- 17) J Singleton JP (Con)
- 18) R Woollam (Con)
- 19) B Yates (Con)

Blackburn with Darwen Council Members

- 1) M Desai (4BwD)
- 2) Z Khan (Lab)
- 3) D Smith (Lab)

Blackpool Council Members

- 1) G Baker (Con)
- 2) J Hugo (Lab)
- 3) F Jackson (Lab)

Business Risk

None

Environmental Impact

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

None

HR Implications

None

Financial Implications

None

Legal 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 24 June 2024

Appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees

Contact for further information – Sam Hunter – Member Services Manager – Tel No 01772 866720

Executive Summary

The appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees and Working Groups of the Combined Fire Authority and the appointment of Member Champions for the year 2024/25.

Recommendation

The Authority is asked to: -

1. Confirm appointments of Chairs and Vice-Chairs to the Authority's Committees and Working Groups for 2024/25; and
2. Confirm the appointment of the four Member Champions for 2024/25.

Information

Standing Order 5.1 (b) of the Authority requires the Authority at its annual meeting to appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair for each Committee created under Standing Order 4.1(a).

The Authority is asked to consider the proposed Conservative Chair and Vice-Chair appointments for its Committees and Working Groups for 2024/25 as set out below:

Committee/Working Group	Proposed Chair	Proposed Vice-Chair
Appeals Committee	CC Matthew Salter	CC Margaret Pattison
Audit Committee	CC John Shedwick	CC Nikki Hennessy
Performance Committee	CC Terry Hurn	CC Paul Rigby
Planning Committee	CC Stephen Clarke	CC John Singleton
Resources Committee	CC Ron Woollam	CC David O'Toole
Strategy Group	CFA Chair	CFA Vice-Chair
Member Training and Development Working Group	CC Stuart Morris	Cllr Dave Smith
Resources Sub-Committee for Injury Pensions	CC Sean Serridge	

The Authority is also asked to consider the proposed Conservative appointments to Member Champion roles as set out below:

Champion Role	Proposed CFA Member
Community Safety	CC Matthew Salter
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Cllr Zamir Khan MBE
Health and Wellbeing	CC John Singleton JP
Road Safety	CC Ron Woollam

The Authority is asked to consider the proposed Labour Chair and Vice-Chair appointments for its Committees and Working Groups for 2024/25 as set out below:

Committee/Working Group	Proposed Chair	Proposed Vice-Chair
Appeals Committee	CC Margaret Pattison	CC Matthew Salter
Audit Committee	CC Mark Clifford	CC John Shedwick
Performance Committee	CC Hasina Khan	CC Frank De Molfetta
Planning Committee	Cllr Jane Hugo	CC Nikki Hennessy
Resources Committee	CC Sean Serridge	CC Margaret Pattison
Strategy Group	CFA Chair	CFA Vice-Chair
Member Training and Development Working Group	Cllr Dave Smith	CC Stuart Morris
Resources Sub-Committee for Injury Pensions	CC Frank De Molfetta	

The Authority is also asked to consider the proposed Labour appointments to Member Champion roles as set out below:

Champion Role	Proposed CFA Member
Community Safety	CC Matthew Salter
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Cllr Zamir Khan MBE
Health and Wellbeing	CC Hasina Khan
Road Safety	Cllr Fred Jackson

Business Risk

The Authority's Standing Orders require the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs for each of its committees.

Environmental Impact

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

None

HR Implications

None

Financial Implications

Payment of Allowances is in accordance with the Combined Fire Authority's Members' Allowance Scheme.

Legal Implications

None

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper: CFA Constitutional Standing Orders
Date: 22 February 2021
Contact: Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager

Paper: Members' Allowance Scheme
Date: 1 April 2023
Contact: Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager

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

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 24 June 2024

Representation on Outside Bodies 2024/25

Contact for further information – Sam Hunter – Member Services Manager –
Tel No 01772 866720

Executive Summary

The Authority is requested to determine its representation on outside bodies for the 2024/25 municipal year.

Recommendation

The Authority is asked to consider and approve the representatives as set out in the report for 2024/25.

Information

The Authority approves representation on outside bodies at its AGM each year. In addition, the Authority has delegated authority to the Chair of the Authority (resolution 9/17 refers) to authorise as an 'approved duty' any additional representation(s) to either the LGA Fire Commission or the Fire Services Management Committee.

Detailed below is the membership approved by the Authority for the 2023/24 municipal year: -

Appointment	Membership
LGA Annual General Assembly	Fire Commission representative (Chair is authorised to cast the Authority's vote)
LGA Fire Commission	Chair of the Authority Vice-Chair of the Authority
North West Fire and Rescue Forum	Chair of the Authority Vice-Chair of the Authority Leader of the Opposition
North West Fire Control Board of Directors	Chair of the Authority Vice-Chair of the Authority

The Chair has subsequently approved CC Hennessy and Cllr Hugo attend the LGA Fire Commission and Fire Services Management Committee meetings (as required) until the end of the LGA municipal year (September 2024).

Proposed representation for 2024/25

The Authority is now requested to determine its representation on outside bodies for the 2024/25 municipal year:

LGA Annual General Assembly 2024/25

The Authority is requested to appoint the Chair as its representative to cast the Authority's vote.

LGA Fire Commission representatives 2024/25

The Authority is requested to appoint the Chair and Vice-Chair to be its representatives on the Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Commission.

North West Fire & Rescue Forum

The Authority is requested to appoint representatives for 2024/25 in accordance with political balance rules as: -

- Chair of the Authority;
- Vice-Chair of the Authority;
- Main Opposition Spokesperson.

Directors of North West Fire Control Company

Political balance rules do not apply in relation to the appointment of Directors.

The Authority is requested to appoint as Directors for 2024/25: -

- Chair of the Authority;
- Vice-Chair of the Authority.

Business Risk

None

Environmental Impact

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

None

HR Implications

None

Financial Implications

Payment of relevant Allowances are in accordance with the Combined Fire Authority's Members' Allowance Scheme.

Legal Implications

None

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper: CFA Minutes
Date: 26 June 2023
Contact: Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager

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

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority
Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Monday, 22 April 2024, at 10.30 am in the Washington Hall, Service Training Centre, Euxton.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
D O'Toole (Chair)	
J Shedwick (Vice-Chair)	
L Beavers	
P Britcliffe	
S Clarke	
M Dad BEM	
N Hennessy	
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	
J Singleton	
D Smith	
R Woollam	
B Yates	

Officers
J Johnston, Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)
S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)
S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS)
B Warren, Director of People and Development (LFRS)
E Sandiford, Head of Human Resources (LFRS)
S Collinson, Head of Corporate Communications (LFRS)
M Nolan, Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority
M Hamer, Area Manager, Prevention, Protection and Road Safety (LFRS)
N Taylor, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery
T Powell, Area Manager, Head of Service Improvement (LFRS)
K McCreesh, Group Manager - Community Protection Manager (LFRS)

L Barr, Member Services Officer	
In attendance	
K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union	
71/23	Chairman's Welcome and Introduction
	<p>The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting.</p> <p>The Clerk undertook a roll call and reminded Members that the Authority was in the pre-election period (purdah).</p>
72/23	Apologies for Absence
	Apologies were received from County Councillors Graham Baker and Sean Serridge.
73/23	Disclosure of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
74/23	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	Resolved: - That the Minutes of the CFA held on 19 February 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.
75/23	Supa Skips Presentation
	<p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer introduced Group Manager Kirsty McCreesh who had been invited to provide a presentation to Members on the incident at the former Supa Skips site in Lancaster.</p> <p>GM McCreesh advised that the location of the Supa Skips site was close to Lancaster City Centre, situated on an industrial site with residential properties nearby which had presented challenges during the incident. The building had formerly been a power station with additional buildings subsequently erected on the land surrounding the main building.</p> <p>The Environmental Agency (EA) had brought the building to the attention of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) in February 2022 and shared information about the amount of waste being stored. A licence had been granted to store 500 tonnes of waste on the site, however, it was estimated that there were thousands of tonnes. Waste continued to be stored at the site even after EA prohibition and eventually, the site went into Liquidation. The Service was concerned over the impact a fire would have on the community and critical infrastructure, which was raised with partner agencies so that a multi-agency plan could be formulated.</p>

Partner agencies involved in pre-planning for a potential incident were Lancashire Constabulary, EA, United Utilities (UU), Lancaster City Council, and Lancashire County Council. LFRS led on the formulation of a tactical plan with input from all agencies and hosted a table-top exercise in October 2022. The table-top exercise facilitated discussion and planning around: The proposed hose route cutting off access to the city; Large volumes of run-off water that could enter combined drains which could overwhelm the pumping station and / or flood the water treatment works; The run-off water that entered the surface water drain could pollute the River Lune; the potential smoke plume could carry asbestos over the city and deposit on the Royal Lancaster Infirmary and the Lancaster Railway Station; Local residents, businesses, care home and schools could be impacted for several days.

Planning documents were shared on Resilience Direct so there was immediate access to partners and an Impact Statement was completed by LFRS. The Impact Statement included environmental impacts, impacts to the community, impacts on businesses, difficulties to fight a fire, and the cost to LFRS.

LFRS Actions included: -

- Agreed multi-agency plans for the occurrence of an incident.
- Increased pre-determined attendance.
- Sharing plans internally.
- Further planning which took place with UU and the EA in how best to deal with fire water run-off.
- LFRS being part of regular multi-agency meetings to monitor the risk.
- A letter of concern which had been sent to the Environment Agency and the Chief Executive of Lancaster City Council.

In September and October 2023, a number of fires occurred at the abandoned A1 Supa Skips site and a Major Incident was declared due to the risk. A Tactical Coordinating Group and Strategic Coordinating Group was assembled with multi agency representation.

On Sunday 3 December 2023, a fire started at the site and the first call to report the incident was received at 5.30am. Consequently, there was a quick 'Make Up' of Resources which comprised of 10 fire engines, 2 Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALPs), a High Volume Pump (HVP), the Hazardous Materials and Environmental Protection Unit (HMU), the Command Unit, and a Stinger. The drone unit also attended as part of the initial response to assist with situational awareness and was used on numerous occasions throughout the incident. Partner agencies were also in attendance at the incident. North West Fire Control (NWFC) ensured cover across the county by strategically moving fire engines and replacing resources.

The Service faced challenges with the significant quantity of compacted commercial waste and the small footprint of the site which made the standard firefighting tactics virtually impossible. The building had also been neglected for a number of years and the fire compromised the structure further which made accessing the fire very challenging. Additional challenges included waters supplies for the large quantity of water requires, disposal of the polluted water run off, and the smoke plume.

Solutions to the challenges included:

- The employment of demolition contractors to enable access by removing ancillary buildings, trees, and a sheet asbestos concrete wall. They also removed waste from the site for which Lancaster City Council paid nearly £1.5m (central government had reimbursed a significant six figure sum), and the EA contributed £65k.
- Regular assessment by a structural engineer aided the LFRS drone.
- The Long deployment of the High Volume Pump to supply water to the incident ground from the River Lune.
- A Waste Fire Tactical Advisor was requested through National Resilience.
- The application of a weak foam solution as a surfactant.
- Close working with the EA and UU to minimise pollution.
- The deployment of additional air monitoring equipment by Lancaster City Council in the vicinity around the site.

Drone footage at the site was useful for firefighting tactics as hotspots could be detected and the ALP directed to where water was needed. Another objective was to stop the fire spreading to other buildings.

Members were informed that large quantities of waste was removed from inside the building to allow firefighters to target pockets of fire. In March 2024, residual heat was still present within the building.

Over 50 calls to 999 were taken on the morning of 3 December 2023 and in the response phase, LFRS had a 24/7 attendance at the site until 22 December 2023 (20 days). The incident remained in the response phase, including regular inspection, until 5 April 2024 (125 days), and flare ups were dealt with throughout that time. All Wholtime fire engines in Lancashire attended the incident at some point with 52 out of Lancashire's 58 fire engines having attended.

Approximately 10,000 tonnes of waste was removed during the incident leaving approximately 1,700 tonnes on site. The remainder of the waste had been redistributed with fire breaks and the site had been secured by palisade fencing. The EA were preparing a prosecution case.

The Corporate Communications Team led on the communication throughout the incident and were praised for the regular updates. The structures for partnership working had already been in place and were positive, and the incident pre-planning had proved to be very beneficial.

Councillor Hugo noted there was one learning point and three positive points and asked GM McCreesh if there was anything that could have been done differently, to which GM McCreesh responded by saying it would have been better to have had improved conditions on site and with there being such a big risk it was frustrating, but this was reliant on other agencies. GM McCreesh added that she felt happy that the Service did a good job given the scale of what was involved.

County Councillor Mein offered congratulations and added that she understood frustrations were high given the premises had a licence for 500 tonnes of commercial waste and there was a considerably larger amount of waste on site and enquired if pressure could be placed on other agencies for regular checks to be undertaken. County Councillor Clarke added that he felt the Environment Agency

	<p>should be monitoring situations such as these more closely.</p> <p>County Councillor Singleton added that those responsible for enforcing stop orders should increase activity in the area.</p> <p>County Councillor Hennessy echoed Councillor Singleton's views and suggested that cross party support for a motion should be considered for the future. County Councillor Hennessy then asked if anybody had been injured on site, whether by smoke inhalation or by other means, to which GM McCreesh confirmed there were occupational health assessments but that there were no injuries.</p> <p>The Chief Fire Officer responded by stating that in the broader context, environmental crime caused challenges for all FRSs nationally, such as those seen with the recent example in Hyndburn and he and other leaders applied pressure nationally for other agencies to improve policing of the issue and protections.</p> <p>The Chair thanked GM Kirsty McCreesh for her presentation and also praised the excellent work and dedication of the firefighters involved in the incident. Members also expressed their gratitude.</p>
76/23	<p>Annual Statement of Assurance</p>
	<p>The Chief Fire Officer presented the report. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018) set out the Government's high-level expectations, priorities and objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in England. Included within the framework was the requirement that all FRAs must provide assurance on financial, governance and operational matters.</p> <p>The Statement of Assurance was considered by Members. It aimed to provide the required accountability and transparency to Lancashire communities and the Government that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) continued to deliver efficient, effective value for money services.</p> <p>This statement sat alongside the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), Statement of Accounts, the Annual Governance Statement, the Annual Service Plan and Annual Progress Report. It detailed what measures were in place to assure that the Combined Fire Authority's performance was efficient, economic, and effective and provided further evidence that LFRS continued to deliver under the expectations detailed within both the National Framework and its own Risk Management Plan.</p> <p>Resolved: - That the Authority approved the Annual Statement of Assurance 2022-23 as presented and approved the signing of this by the Chairman of the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer.</p>
77/23	<p>Member Champion Activity Report</p>
	<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"> • 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. <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 21 April 2024. During this period all had undertaken their respective role in accordance with the defined terms of reference.</p> <p>County Councillor Singleton provided those present at the meeting with a copy of the Environment and Sustainability Promotional Calendar 2024/25, and he advised that a further calendar would be created for wellbeing following a meeting later in the week.</p> <p>County Councillor Woollam thanked the team at LFRS for their success with the Road Safety Education Package, the Biker Down Course, and the Wasted Lives Education Package. He highlighted pertinent points in the report.</p> <p>Councillors thanked staff within the Service for their work to help them within their respective roles.</p> <p>County Councillor O’Toole echoed those thanks on behalf of members, adding that it was not always appreciated just how much work went on behind the scenes that Member Champions were involved in.</p> <p>Resolved: - That the Authority noted the report and acknowledged the work of the respective Champions.</p>
78/23	<p>Fire Protection Report</p>
	<p>The report summarised Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) prosecutions pertaining to fire safety offences under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005. There were currently three cases in the court system for offences with one set for trial in April 2024, one was set for trial starting in July 2024, and the third was set for trial starting in June 2025.</p> <p>One case had now concluded and the landlord had pleaded guilty to six breaches of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. On 19 March 2024, sentencing took place where the landlord was sentenced to three months imprisonment for failure to comply with six articles of the Fire Safety Order and ordered to pay £10,414.51 in costs to Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.</p> <p>Protection teams continued to investigate and build files in relation to eleven further cases where offences were believed to have been committed, which involved a number of types of premises as outlined in the report. It was highlighted that LFRS Protection Department was also supporting a joint enforcement case with a local authority, Health & Safety Executive and Lancashire Constabulary regarding a complex mill converted to residential accommodation.</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.

Members noted during the 23/24 performance year to end February 2024, there had been 3,112 business fire safety checks delivered. Around 428 had led to unsatisfactory outcomes and were triaged by Fire Protection teams during the period with both informal and formal enforcement taken.

LFRS continued to embed legislative changes which came into force from 1 October 2023 amendments of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which had been introduced under Section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022. These amendments required that all responsible persons must record the fire risk assessment in full (including the findings) along with the fire safety arrangements for premises in all circumstances.

The new Building Safety Act and Building Safety Regulator (BSR) continued to be developed. Following a competitive interview process, a new Northwest Regional Building Safety Manager had been appointed who would be hosted by Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS,) and would work directly with the LFRS newly appointed BSR lead.

LFRS built environment officers continued to pursue the principle accountable persons for tall buildings that had failed to meet their new legislative requirements by 28 February 2024.

To date, only 25% of Lancashire's 48 residential tall buildings had submitted all of the mandatory building information they were now legally required to provide both to the BSR and the local Fire and Rescue Service. Of the 75% that remained, a vast majority had submitted parts of the information but had failed to provide it all despite several requests. Following several engagements with responsible persons, LFRS would seek to formally request the provision of that information through proportionate use of the Fire Safety Order.

Members also noted arson risk reduction included: one case with one defendant who, following a guilty plea to 'arson with reckless' was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment; one case with one defendant who pleaded guilty to Arson with intent to endanger life and was sentenced at Preston Crown Court to 12 years imprisonment, and; two defendants that received youth cautions for an incident that involved fire in an outdoor timber play area at a Pre-School Nursery.

Resolved - That the Authority noted the report.

79/23

Operational Incidents of Interest

The Authority received a report that provided information relating to operational incidents of note since the last meeting. As the operational period had been very busy, the report detailed only the larger deployments or more complex incidents. As a result, some incidents that Members had been made aware of locally, may not

	<p>have formed part of the report. Full details of the following incidents were provided in the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firefighters attended a Road Traffic Collision (RTC) in Tarleton, in which 2 people lost their lives. • 6 fire engines attended a commercial building fire in Lytham St Annes. • Fire crews attended a suspected chemical leak with multiple casualties in Clitheroe. • 8 fire engines attended a commercial building fire in Blackburn. • 8 fire engines attended a large fire in Clayton Le Dale, Ribble Valley. • 8 fire engines attended a commercial building fire in Blackpool. • 8 fire engines attended a derelict building fire in Chorley. • 6 fire engines attended a church on fire in Padiham. <p>Resolved: That the Authority noted the report.</p>
80/23	Date of Next Meeting
	The next meeting of the Authority would be held on Monday 24 June 2024 at 10:30am at the Training Centre, Euxton.
81/23	Exclusion of Press and Public
	Resolved: That the press and members of the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there would be a likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the appropriate paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, indicated under the heading to the item.
82/23	Extension of Appointment of Independent Person
	<p>(Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3)</p> <p>Members considered a report prepared by the Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority concerning the appointment of Independent Person(s) in line with the Localism Act 2011.</p> <p>Resolved: - That the Authority noted and endorsed the extension of the appointment of one Independent Person for four years, following County Councillor Howarth's suggestion of a vote, which was taken by hands, which was a unanimous endorsement of the proposal.</p>

M Nolan
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 24 June 2024

**Proceedings of Planning Committee held 05 February 24
(Appendix 1 refers)**

Contact for further information:

Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager - Tel: 01772 866720

Executive Summary

The proceedings of Planning Committee meeting held 05 February 2024.

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 05 February 2024.

Business Risk

Nil

Environmental Impact

Nil

Equality & Diversity Implications

Nil

Financial Risk

Nil

HR Implications

Nil

Legal 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, 5 February 2024, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room,
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
S Clarke (Chair)	
J Singleton (Vice-Chair)	
G Baker	
M Dad BEM	
N Hennessy	
J Hugo	
F Jackson	
P Rigby	
J Shedwick	
B Yates	

Officers
S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) J Charters, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)
In attendance
M Hoyle, Fire Brigades Union

19/23	Apologies for Absence
	Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor David O'Toole.
20/23	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
21/23	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	Resolved: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 20 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

22/23	ECR Implementation
	<p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report.</p> <p>Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) was required to review emergency response arrangements periodically to ensure that provision remained effective and consummate 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).</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining all 39 fire stations and 58 fire appliances; • Maintaining its outstanding response standards; • Creating an increase in overall firefighter jobs by eight. <p>An ECR implementation plan was developed with five key workstreams, with updates on the workstreams detailed as follows:</p> <p>1. Introduce more resilient and flexible crewing arrangements</p> <p>The Service had hoped to introduce more flexible crewing arrangements if agreement could be reached with trade unions. However, the proposed flexible wholetime duty system was not agreed by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). 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 wholetime duty system as opposed to flexible wholetime.</p> <p>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. Following engagement with staff affected by the ECR, the Service had collated the preferences of staff who would be displaced and had informed them of their new postings upon implementation of the ECR changes.</p> <p>A training needs analysis had been completed and training was underway to meet the needs of the Service and staff, although it was anticipated that there would be some short-term challenges around the availability of some of the Service's special skills until the training was completed. For example, training around bariatric rescues, where, in some circumstances, the next nearest resource would be mobilised and/ or detachments considered.</p> <p>Property alterations at Morecambe, Fleetwood and Skelmersdale had been agreed</p>

which would support and accommodate the increase in staff at those stations. Station engagement sessions had been held with staff at those stations to communicate the changes to them.

Implementation of the change of duty systems and establishment numbers was planned for 1 March 2024. All changes, 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 Wholetime) 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 Wholetime) 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.

With the resultant changes, there would be an overall increase in wholetime members of staff by 8 with 12 additional supervisory manager positions as below:

Role	Current Total	New Total	Difference +/-
Watch Manager B (WMB)	31	28	-3
Watch Manager A (WMA)	12	24	+12
Crew Manager (CM)	89	92	+3
Fire Fighter (FF)	370	366	-4
	502	510	+8

Due to the increase in overall establishment numbers, plus a significant increase in Crew and Watch Manager opportunities arising as a result of the ECR, the Service delivered an additional supervisory talent gateway promotion process. Following this process, the Service had filled the majority of posts recognising that, at a small number of stations, there might be some interim acting up arrangements pending further development.

County Councillor Hennessy thanked the Officers and staff involved for their work on the ECR and asked if the required efficiencies had been made even though the original proposed arrangements had changed due to non-agreement by the FBU. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the FBU did not support the DCP duty system and the number of stations facilitating DCP had reduced from 11 to 7 (eventually 6), however the FBU would not agree an alternative flexible wholetime system, and consequently, the Service had reverted to the 2-2-4 Wholetime system with 24 members of staff which equated to 1 less member of staff per watch, ensuring cost efficiencies. The Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT) and overtime would

assist to effectively manage the reduction of staff, and the FBU were prepared to discuss the possibility of flexible leave arrangements.

In response to a query from County Councillor Hennessy, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that Watch Managers joined crews on appliances deployed to incidents.

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 had been installed on the Lancashire pod at NWFC so that Control Room Operators could familiarise themselves with the software. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer highlighted that LFRS was currently the only Service in the North West using the software and further work would take place with NWFC to embed the software into their core business.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Hennessy as to which officers were supporting NWFC with the establishment of the DCT, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed that Watch Manager, Chris Archer, and Group Manager, Tom Cookson, from the Response and Emergency Planning Team provided the link between LFRS and NWFC.

3. Strengthen our response to climate change emergencies

Investing in Four Fire Appliances with Off-Road Capabilities

The Service had concluded a procurement process and had awarded a contract for the first large fire appliance with off-road capabilities to Angloco. It was anticipated that this appliance would be delivered to LFRS during quarter 3 of 2024/25.

The Service would now undertake a procurement process to invest in a smaller off-road equivalent. The procurement of a smaller off-road fire appliance was anticipated to be quicker, and the ambition was for it to be in Service within the next 12 months. Both vehicles would then be evaluated prior to the potential 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.

In response to a query raised by County Councillor Rigby in relation to training Flood Water Tactical Advisors in flood risk knowledge specific to Lancashire, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained that the Service had fully trained Swift Water

Rescue Technicians across the county situated in areas of risk along with a number of Flexi-Duty Managers trained in specialist capability. In the event of a major incident, resources could be drawn from across the country through national resilience arrangements which supported resilience at national level. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer added that flood arrangements were reflected in the Service's wildfire arrangements which included expertise within the Service and individuals trained for national deployment.

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 should be delivered during quarter 1 of 2024/25. 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 new appliances were due for delivery during quarter 3 of 2024/25. 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. Due to the current state of the motor industry globally, some delays had been encountered, particularly around vehicle parts which had caused a delay in the manufacturing of these vehicles.

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 by driving the ALP to incidents. On Call staff at Morecambe had completed driver training in November 2023 and were also now trained to drive the ALP to incidents which went live in December 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 had attended two significant incidents since its introduction with both being large commercial building fires. The first incident was in Longridge with the second being the Supaskips incident in Lancaster where it had provided an effective command support resource over a prolonged period.

On Call and Specials Review

The On Call review was progressing and had identified several 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.

County Councillor Shedwick commented that he welcomed the development of On-

	<p>Call staff in swift water rescue and to drive the ALP to incidents.</p> <p>Resolved: that the report be noted and endorsed.</p>
23/23	<p>Annual Service Plan</p>
	<p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented a report on the Service's Annual Service Plan and Strategic Assessment of Risk for 2024/25.</p> <p>The Annual Service Plan continued to provide Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) with the platform to highlight the priority activities and projects the Service intended to deliver over the coming year; leading improvements and innovation in the sector with some of the best firefighting equipment and training facilities in the country and a highly skilled and motivated workforce.</p> <p>The Annual Service Plan was built around the Service's 5 corporate priorities as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan. As in previous years, detailed under each corporate priority was a series of priority activities and projects with a brief description of each item to give further clarity and context as now considered by Members, these were: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an organisational culture where diversity is encouraged and valued; • Deliver tailored learning and development opportunities; • Encourage and listen to employee voice; • Invest in training and technology to improve health and safety; • Service headquarters and training centre masterplan; and • Upgrade fire station facilities. 2. Preventing fire and other emergencies from happening; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in improvements to our home fire safety check service; and • Deliver targeted fire prevention activity. 3. Protecting people and property when fires happen; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen our fire safety inspection programme to meet evolving standards; and • Transform fire protection and business safety. 4. Responding to fire and other emergencies quickly and competently; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement our emergency cover review which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduce more resilient crewing arrangements; ○ Review emergency cover in Preston; ○ Optimise emergency cover through dynamic cover software; ○ Strengthen our response to climate change emergencies; ○ Strengthen firefighting and rescue capabilities in high-rise and commercial buildings; and

- Broaden on-call firefighting capabilities to strengthen operational response.
- Invest in our training centre;
- Drill tower replacement programme; and
- Invest in our fleet and operational equipment.

5. Delivering value for money in how we use our resources;

- Create a new rota management team;
- Review productivity and efficiency;
- Drive efficiencies through digitisation;
- Introduce Microsoft Power BI dashboards; and
- Collaborate with other public services.

In response to a comment from Councillor Hugo regarding counselling services offered by LFRS for staff, and a query in relation to EDI, as to whether there was a system available for staff to report bullying and mental health, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer stated that culture and values within Fire and Rescue Services was a priority for the HMI, and as recommended in the national culture and values report, the Service had introduced an anonymous reporting line. The Service had introduced 'Safe Call' which enabled staff to call and anonymously report a complaint, however, it was difficult to further investigate some complaints without contact details, but multiple complaints or patterns could be recognised and acted upon. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) process had been reviewed to ensure it was fit for purpose and the Service made sure that all processes offered, continually evolved in relation to mental health. The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provided staff with counselling and support for a variety of issues which could also be used in conjunction with the Occupational Health Unit and an individual's medical practitioner.

Councillor Hugo queried whether managers were proactive and would encourage or guide staff towards support services if they became aware of any personal problems or issues with mental health. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that, in those circumstances, a manager would have exploratory conversations with staff and actively direct them towards accessing support. Additionally, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed that managers were trained, through the Leadership and Development Programme, to effectively handle such scenarios.

In response to a query from County Councillor Hennessy in relation to including employee support services in the Annual Service Plan, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that existing services and procedures were not included in the ASP as the report provided information regarding forward planning for the Service which identified requirements for continual progress.

County Councillor Shedwick expressed confidence in the Service and that the Watch Managers and Station Managers knew their crews well. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the last item on the agenda would mention good practice in policies and procedures, and the early identification of personal employee issues.

	<p>In response to a question from Councillor Hugo, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that in the event that an employee was suspended, they would receive written correspondence which would direct them to access support services, the EAP, and where appropriate they would be referred to Occupational Health.</p> <p>Councillor Hugo enquired about the Service’s response to climate mitigation. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that, through an annual planning day involving the Service Management Team, the Service identified environmental priorities alongside the work of the Safety, Health and Environment Department which would review a 25-year plan around the Carbon Reduction Management Plan. This plan would be presented to Members through a future committee.</p> <p>Following a request from County Councillor Hennessy for further information regarding HFSCs and aligning with national principles and products, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained that the NFCC had a variety of products that included Staywise, which was an education prevention programme aimed at children of school age, and a dashboard which filtered HFSC needs through a series of questions which the Service could refer to. LFRS would continue to develop ways of improving HFSC referrals and visits through future work.</p> <p>In response to a request from County Councillor Hennessy for an example of evaluating ways to develop the Service to take account of emerging trends, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer referenced the Strategic Assessment of Risk and the Evaluation Framework that the Service had developed. Through the Evaluation Framework, patterns could be identified with prevention work put in place which would then be evaluated for effectiveness.</p> <p>County Councillor Hennessy requested further information regarding the development of a new recruitment and workforce planning tool to which the Deputy Chief Fire officer responded that work would take place with ORH Ltd (developers of the Dynamic Cover Tool), to explore the data from the Service to create a workforce planning tool for on-call. The tool could then provide an analysis for each station of the officer in charge skill, drivers, availability etc, and intelligently evaluate the best resourcing / future planning arrangement. Members noted that an update would be provided to a future committee.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the Annual Service Plan for publication.</p>
24/23	<p>Strategic Assessment of Risk</p>
	<p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented a report on the Service's Strategic Assessment of Risk for 2023/24.</p> <p>Risk in Lancashire would always remain dynamic: it changed over time, differed by area and demographic, and needed different interventions to reduce the likelihood of the risk occurring or to lessen its consequences. These risks were identified in the Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAoR) which was refreshed annually and was also informed by the Lancashire Resilience Forum Community Risk Register. Through its risk management framework, the Service continually assessed changing risk and prioritised its response framework.</p>

The Strategic Assessment of Risk reflected the knowledge and experience of a variety of specialist departments and utilised Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) Incident Recording System (IRS) data to derive a data driven methodology that highlighted the incident types that posed the greatest risk to the county of Lancashire and the individuals who lived and worked within it. The SAoR drove both Service and district level response to risk and enabled LFRS to tailor the Service's prevention, protection and response activities to the identified risks.

This year's document built on previous iterations as LFRS sought to continually improve its risk management processes. Revisions had been made to the Service's local Risk Assessment, resulting in some movement in the ranking of its highest risk incident types. The Service had also sought to identify more clearly how it responded to the strategic risks identified, e.g., the Service's response to the emerging threat of climate change and advances in technology.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained to Members that the report was split into the demographics of Lancashire, the high-level summary of emerging risks, and the individual risk assessment process for each of the incident categories. The Risk Methodology was used to help NFCC develop a product for national Community Risk Management Plans. He drew Members attention to Page 47 Built Environment and the emergence of composite fencing where lessons taken from local incidents had been shared with NFCC to inform national learning. The report also detailed risks relating to: Emerging Technology (including electric vehicles and energy storage systems), and Hydrogen as an alternative fuel; and Climate Change (wildfires, flooding, and health). It was noted that the health section would be moved to follow the demographics section. Pages 53 – 55 of the agenda pack presented data analysis that fed into the risk methodology used and how the Service resourced to risk. From page 57 – 59 the report covered local and national risks that informed the National Risk Register (NRR), with regional identified risks delivered through the Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF) of which the Deputy Chief Fire Officer was temporary Chair. Page 62 of the report onwards detailed the risk assessment methodology used and the risk associated against the 32 incident types calculated against likelihood and consequence. Members noted that in the trend column of the table on Page 66, the arrows were pointing in the wrong direction which could be amended in the final version of the report.

In response to a comment from County Councillor Hennessy regarding the risk of volcanic eruption on page 60 of the agenda pack, the deputy Chief Fire Officer explained that the risks identified were national risks to the UK.

Councillor Baker queried problems with hydrogen as an alternative fuel as the issues with using lithium-ion batteries had recently emerged. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer responded that the information received from the NFCC lead officer, was that the government energy preference was lithium-ion electric vehicle technology with the need for investment in infrastructure to support it. Whilst globally, many bus operators were shifting towards hydrogen-fuel cell technology, there were potential hazards and LFRS would monitor local and national developments in this regard.

Members queried and discussed the level of risk connected to Lithium-Ion

batteries. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that there were inherent risks associated with Lithium-Ion batteries, through the lifecycle but particularly at disposal. Members were informed that Lithium-Ion batteries which were damaged through careless disposal or Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) could cause fires. A large amount of work had taken place nationally and locally to educate the public about the safe disposal of the batteries and the linkage between inappropriate disposal and subsequent waste fires. Regarding the issue of vehicle fires which involved Lithium-Ion batteries, the Service ensured operational crews that dealt with those incidents had the correct equipment, training, PPE, and procedures to manage them. Ongoing national research would further inform the mitigation of vehicle fires through a range of methods, including the adaptation of operational procedures and equipment.

County Councillor Singleton commented that the process of waste collection was due to change in the near future and asked if LFRS were involved the Lancashire Waste Partnership. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer stated that the Service could be indirectly linked through prevention and community safety work, however, the subject would be raised specifically with the Prevention Team.

In response to a question from County Councillor Yates concerning the Service's input into a planning application for a Hydrogen Plant in Salmesbury, the Deputy Chief Fire Office confirmed that LFRS was a statutory partner for planning, and Fire Protection Teams would be involved with any substantive application. Although he was unable to comment on the Service's involvement with that particular application, he could check for that information.

County Councillor Rigby thanked officers for a fabulous report.

Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the Strategic Assessment of Risk for publication.

25/23

Consultation Strategy - Annual Review

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the Consultation Strategy report. The Authority had a consultation strategy which provided a framework through which it could seek public opinion on major change issues.

Each year the Planning Committee reviewed the strategy, as now considered by Members, to assure continued compliance with guidance or legislation and to incorporate learning from any public consultation exercises undertaken.

The review concluded that the strategy continued to be legally compliant and in line with good practice.

The strategy was also implemented to good effect during the public consultation on the Community Risk Management Plan in 2021 and the Emergency Cover Review proposals in 2022.

It was noted that the alterations had been made to legal implications in the report which amended the wording on pages 97-98 of the agenda pack to avoid confusion post Brexit.

	<p>In response to a query from County Councillor Hennessy regarding online involvement in consultations, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer believed that social media and online engagement had made a big impact with a marked increase in the number of responses received and quality of feedback.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the consultation strategy.</p>
26/23	<p>Blue Light Collaboration Update</p>
	<p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the report updated on progress of the Blue Light Collaboration Board (BLCB). He attended the Strategic Board and Area Manager, John Rossen who attended was involved at tactical level.</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the progress against the five key workstreams, which were effectively managed through the Strategic and Tactical Collaboration Boards, as follows: -</p> <p>1. Missing Persons (missing from home)</p> <p>Significant support had been provided to Lancashire Constabulary (LanCon) with the Service's aerial drone assets, supported by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Furthermore, the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) had supported other organisations, including the Environment Agency (EA).</p> <p>On average, per year, the Service received around 200 drone requests from LanCon which were mostly for Missing Person searches. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer had conversed with the Assistant Chief Constable and discussions had commenced with LanCon in relation to LFRS recharging for some services, given the on-call nature of its drone team and each deployment having a budgetary impact for the Service. It was noted that LanCon did not have a 24-hour drone team in operation. Nationally, an MoU was being developed between the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and EA to better co-ordinate future drone activity.</p> <p>Additionally, the Service provided an underwater search capability with assistance recently requested by HM Coastguard. LFRS had responded and the underwater deployment immediately de-escalated the incident, which had significantly reduced the number of resources required from several agencies, for what would normally be a protracted incident.</p> <p>2. Estates and Co-location</p> <p>This was a long-term workstream which might deliver significant efficiencies and effectiveness where co-location sites were identified.</p> <p>A set of principles were being developed to identify high level areas of opportunities. Blue Light partners were currently reviewing their strategic property asset plans to identify areas for co-ordinating future development plans over the next 5-10 years.</p>

All Blue Light partners were included in the discussions and options in relation to Preston area provision.

3. Community First Responder

A trial had commenced in 2023 that involved LFRS staff volunteering as Community First Responders (CFR) to support North West Ambulance Service (NWAS). LFRS staff volunteers would undertake an initial CFR training programme at LFRS Training Centra and once qualified, they could shadow existing CFR practitioners to develop their clinical abilities and build confidence in their newly acquired skills.

Five LFRS staff volunteers were now responding to life threatening emergencies in their communities from the workplace and administering first aid in the initial vital minutes before NWAS colleagues arrived. During 2023, the Service responded to more than 80 CFR incidents including unresponsive/ collapsed, not breathing, cardiac arrests, seizures, strokes, and choking. It was noted that a member of staff from the Community Fire Safety Team, when acting as a CFR, performed first aid when he responded to a case of cardiac arrest which kept the woman alive until an ambulance arrived, saving her life.

The Service was expanding its support to NWAS on this successful, life-saving initiative and 10 Flexible-Duty Officers (FDOs) were progressing through the onboarding process with NWAS.

4. Leadership Development

Learning and Development leads from the Blue Light partners were considering 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'.

The new Command Support Unit (CSU) was listed in this years' Service Plan and sought to upgrade not only the vehicles but to take advantage in recent technological advances to support operational incidents. On-Call firefighters from Carnforth and Bolton-le-Sands crewed the CSU.

As part of the agreed capital vehicle replacement project, two new larger Command Units (CUs) would also be hosted by Fulwood and Blackburn Fire Stations. The CUs featured state of the art technology with 5G and Starlink connectivity, Tesla satellite, computer terminals, and a briefing room. Members were informed that the vehicle would be taken to a future CFA Meetings for them to peruse.

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.

In response to a question from County Councillor Hennessy regarding the difference between Police and Fire Service debriefs following incidents, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer stated that he could not comment on police debriefings. However, he assured that LFRS debriefed following every incident when Officers would make comments via an iPad app and information would be collated by the Operational Assurance Team where any trends would be noted. Where there was a more protracted incident full, structured and command debriefs took place. He would raise the subject of debriefing at the next collaboration board meeting to encourage the exchange of any beneficial practices between the Service and the Police.

Following on from the question raised by County Councillor Hennessy, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer added that, following multi-agency incidents, the Service typically debriefed through the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) alongside the Police. Furthermore, that the debrief approaches tended to differ in style with both having merits; LFRS approach was to ask questions that related to specific themes and aimed to elicit a detailed response, whereas his experience of the Police technique was more focussed on what had, and what had not, worked well, and any changes which were needed.

County Councillor Rigby felt that drones were rightly located at LFRS but did not agree with recharging for drone use as he felt that it could cause a threat to life if not used due to costs. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained that the Police had a Drone Team although they were not available 24 hours per day unlike the LFRS Drone Team, who were. LFRS had chosen to fund for drones, and although the Service supported the Police, drone response for Police incidents was their statutory responsibility and not that of LFRS. The Service would continue to support the Police, however, LFRS needed to manage its resources, budget, and statutory work. Ultimately, recharging for drone use was a Member decision. County Councillor Dad agreed that the drone service needed to be provided to the Police but also understood that the costs needed to be recovered because of their statutory responsibility. County Councillor Hennessy and County Councillor Singleton agreed with the decision to recharge for drone usage as LFRS had chosen to invest from its own resources.

County Councillor Shedwick commented that the Fire Service continued to do its fair share of the work in terms of collaboration.

The Chair thanked officers for a brilliant report and commended the advanced technology in use by the Service.

Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted the report.

27/23	HMICFRS Update
	<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>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.</p> <p>HMI Michelle Skeer, recently retired Chief Constable of Cumbria Constabulary, held meetings with the Chair of the Authority, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Trade Union officials, and staff from Employee Voice Groups on the 4 December 2023. In addition, further meetings were due to take place in 2024 with the inspection estimated to take place in spring/summer.</p> <p>The Organisational Assurance Team within the Service Improvement Department continued to track progress against the Service’s previous inspection, monitor national themes and prepare LFRS for its Round 3 inspection. The Organisational Assurance Team were undertaking reality testing with departments and had installed station-based reality testing aligned to HMICFRS inspection framework. Fourteen station-based audits had taken place and there was growing interest from other fire and rescue services as to how the Service carried out these preparedness visits.</p> <p>HMICFRS had published twelve Round 3 inspection reports on fire and rescue services (FRS), with three more due to be published in Spring. HMIC Andy Cooke’s 2023 State of Fire and Rescue report would be published in Spring and would cover findings so far and wider impacts on FRSs.</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer highlighted to Members that, on Page 104 of the agenda pack, only 11 FRSs inspected were included in the report in error, instead of the 12 inspected. A summary of the gradings for eleven FRSs inspected so far in Round 3 was detailed in the report.</p> <p>Misconduct within fire and rescue services</p> <p>HMICFRS thematic inspection of the handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services was continuing at pace with seven in-depth service inspections completed and three more ongoing and due to be completed by the end of January 2024. HMICFRS were combining this detailed evidence with the data provided by all English services in the autumn data return; the staff survey they conducted in all services in November via their research partners, Crest Advisory; and the survey and interviews that Crest were conducting with people that had left fire and rescue services. HMICFRS would be combining and triangulating all the evidence to identify key findings and any recommendations to the sector, with the report to be</p>

published 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. LFRS submitted its report on the progress the Service was making regarding the HMICFRS and National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) recommendations in relation to values and culture in December 2023.

HMICFRS Autumn Data Collection

LFRS submitted the Autumn data return in November 2023. HMICFRS requested a very in depth return in relation to the “Misconduct” and “Complaints” section in comparison to previous data returns.

Councillor Hugo referenced the sad case of the Headteacher who took her own life while waiting for a negative OFSTED report following an inspection and asked if the HMICFRS provided support to those Services that received negative results. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer stated that it was difficult, as a senior leader, not to take negative results personally. A hot debrief was delivered by inspectors at the end of each inspection which was delivered in a tactful way and there were opportunities during the inspection to challenge findings.

In response to a query raised by Councillor Hugo as to whether support was available from the NFCC for those senior officers that had received negative results, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the Chief Fire Officer, as Deputy Chair of the NFCC, had been supporting some FRSs and helped improve gradings. The NFCC would offer support where needed.

In response to a request for an update on reality testing from County Councillor Hennessy, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that reality testing had been carried out across 16 stations and was due to take place across departments. Some trends had been identified which were being addressed ahead of the next inspection. At the last inspection in 2021, the Service had received a grading of ‘good’ across all areas, however, there were 5 areas of improvement that had been identified which had been the focus of improvement. In respect of people and the ECR, the Service had continually developed its communication with individuals to keep them updated and involved with any changes that could affect them.

County Councillor Hennessy asked for an update on the request from the HMICFRS for an in-depth return to the “Misconduct” and “Complaints” section of the Autumn data return submitted by the Service in November 2023, in comparison to previous data returns. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained that the Service would carry out a standard data return but on the most recent occasion, HMICFRS had requested a more detailed return with many more questions around issues related to people. LFRS typically experienced low-level grievances as a result of Watch Managers and Station Managers, recognising concerns and addressing them with the help of Human Resources.

Resolved: that the report be noted and endorsed.

28/23	Sickness Absence KPIs
	<p>The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented the report. He advised that further to performance information being shared with Members at the quarterly CFA Performance Committee, Members had requested that the Service conduct a review of the Staff Absence Key Performance Indicator (KPI) suite to provide options for change given a notable shift in absence levels in the post Covid era. The aim was to ensure that Service KPIs remained fit-for-purpose, appropriate to the operating environment and continued to provide effective methods by which Service performance was reported.</p> <p>Recent reports to Members had provided both local and national context which drew comparative data from within the sector and from other external data organisations to inform discussions on the matter.</p> <p>The Measuring Progress report incorporated three measurements for Staff Absence KPIs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) KPI 1.2.1 Staff Absence Wholetime ii) KPI 1.2.2 Staff Absence On-Call iii) KPI 1.2.3 Staff Absence Greenbook <p>Calculations to inform KPI 1.2.1 and 1.2.3 were based around the cumulative number of shifts lost due to sickness divided by the total average workforce strength for that staff, commonly termed the number of days lost per shift/day per full-time equivalent (FTE)/employee.</p> <p>The calculation for KPI 1.2.2 differed slightly due to the nature of the On Call duty system and measured the percentage of contracted hours lost due to sickness for all on-call contracted staff.</p> <p>The Wholetime and Greenbook KPIs had both been 'in exception' (beyond the standard set) every quarter since quarter 1, 2022/23, so six reported quarters thus far. Prior to quarter 1, 2022/23, the KPI combined Grey Book and Green Book absences (formerly as KPI 4.2.1), and the only time it was not in exception was during June and July 2020, which was within the Covid Period, where different reporting conditions existed. Conversely, the On-Call KPI had not been in exception at any point over the same period and there were no proposed changes to this KPI.</p> <p>The current standard for both the Wholetime and Greenbook KPI was 5 days/shifts lost per Full Time Employee (FTE). Pre-Covid, the Service reported meeting the target, however, since Covid, there had been a significant rise in absence levels.</p> <p>An XpertHR report published in 2022 identified that, despite many organisations had introduced and updated hybrid working policies; 50% of organisations reported an increase in total absence rates.</p> <p>An XpertHR report published in May 2023, reported that whilst there was a decrease in absence rates as the effects of Covid subsided, rates remained high.</p>

The same report also identified that whilst many respondents mentioned a lesser impact from Covid on sickness rates, they also noted that the return to work seemed to have brought new challenges – from lower immunity to general sickness such as cold and flu, and an increasingly stressed workforce. Responses to the research were received from 172 organisations, with a combined workforce of 220,204 employees.

The Service had experienced similar issues with an increased number of staff being absent due to respiratory infections than was previously seen, as well as high levels of absence attributed to muscular skeletal conditions and mental health.

The 23rd Annual Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) survey – ‘Health and Wellbeing at Work’ conducted from March to April 2023 found that the average level of employee absence rose to 7.8 days per employee. This was the highest level reported for over a decade. It also marked a considerable increase (two days per employee) compared with the low levels of pre-pandemic absence reported in 2020 (5.8 days from data collected in October/November 2019).

As in previous years, average absence levels were considerably higher in the public sector (10.6 days per employee) than in other sectors, particularly private sector services (5.8 days), although the upsurge in average levels of absence was observed across all sectors.

The Service benchmarked itself against National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) data and pre-Covid, reported top quartile performance in relation to absence levels. During the year ended March 2023, the Service reported top quartile performance in relation to absence levels at an absence rate of 8.29 days lost, across a range of 6.33 to 21.06 days lost in other fire and rescue services. The current trajectory of performance across quarter 1 and quarter 2, 2023/24, indicated that whilst performance was just below top quartile, should current absence rates continued, the out-turn at March 2024 would be 8.32 days lost.

Research indicated that several measures could support attendance at working which included:

- Having an Absence Management Policy;
- Training for managers on having difficult conversations with staff in relation to absence;
- Return-to-work interviews;
- Employee assistance programmes;
- Wellbeing initiatives;
- Mental health training;
- Availability of Counselling;
- Referrals to occupational health;
- A HR Business Partnering Model.

The Service currently had all these measures in place and was exploring what other options were available to assist employees to remain in work and return to work earlier.

Reflective of the position of attendance levels across the country and the sector, it

was proposed to amend the Service's KPI to 8 shifts/days lost per employee/FTE. This would still be top quartile across the sector and reflective of public sector performance whilst at the same time providing challenge and a driver for improvement.

The Chair stated that if the KPI standard was raised to 8 days per annum, staff would believe they could take 8 days sickness absence and asked for the national average number of days taken as sickness absence. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that, as referenced on page 108 of the agenda pack, the national average for absence levels across other fire and rescue services was between 6.33 and 21.06 days lost so LFRS compared favourably with an average of 8.29 days lost.

County Councillor Dad thanked officers for a good report and stated that he concurred with the Chair that if the KPI standard was raised by 3 days, staff would take those days as sickness absence as he felt that some individuals took absence days that weren't needed. County Councillor Yates agreed with the Chair and County Councillor Dad, and added that he did not agree with the Service dropping its standards. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained that, in the case of firefighters, if they experienced a physical injury or a respiratory illness, they could not attend work, however, other roles had the opportunity to work from home. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer further explained that the KPI standard was for performance measuring purposes only and would not be reported to staff as a sickness absence allocation. The current KPI target was unachievable, and it would be reviewed periodically with a view to a gradual return to previous target levels as and when performance improved.

County Councillor Shedwick commented that he was confident that the Service adhered to the measures to support attendance as outlined on Page 109 of the agenda pack.

County Councillor Hennessy thanked the HR team for their work gathering the evidence. She commented that she understood the national position following Covid-19 and agreed with the uplift of the KPI standard to a more realistic target which could be reviewed in future.

County Councillor Singleton agreed to approve the proposed recommendations as outlined, as the revised target would be realistic and achievable. This was supported by Councillor Hugo who recognised the complexities involved with the physical injuries of firefighters.

Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted the content of the report in relation to the three KPIs and approved the proposed changes to two, those being:

- i) Staff Absence Wholetime (KPI 1.2.1) be uplifted from a standard of no more than 5 shifts lost per annum, to a new standard of no more than 8 shifts per annum.
- ii) Staff Absence Greenbook (KPI 1.2.3) be uplifted from a standard of no more than 5 shifts lost per annum, to a new standard of no more than 8 shifts per annum.

29/23	Date of Next Meeting
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on 15 July 2024 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 18 November 2024 and agreed for 03 February 2025.</p>

M Nolan
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 24 June 2024

Proceedings of Performance Committee held 06 March 24 (Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information:

Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager - Tel: 01772 866720

Executive Summary

The proceedings of Performance Committee meeting held 06 March 2024.

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 06 March 2024.

Business Risk

Nil

Environmental Impact

Nil

Equality & Diversity Implications

Nil

Financial Risk

Nil

HR Implications

Nil

Legal 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, 6 March 2024, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room,
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
T Hurn (Chair)	
P Britcliffe	
Z Khan MBE	
J Rigby	
M Salter	
D Smith	
D O'Toole (Substitute)	
J Shedwick (Substitute)	

Officers
J Charters, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS) S Collinson, Head of Media and Communications (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS) J Rossen, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery (LFRS) N Taylor, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery (LFRS)
In attendance
K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union

20/23	Apologies For Absence
	Apologies were received from County Councillors, Lorraine Beavers, Hasina Khan, Paul Rigby and Barries Yates.
21/23	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
22/23	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	Resolved: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on the 13 December 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23/23	<p>Performance Management Information</p>			
	<p>The Assistant Chief Fire Officer introduced Stephanie Collinson (Head of Media and Communications), Steven Brown (Director of Corporate Services), John Rossen and Neil Taylor (Area Managers, Head of Service Delivery), to Members.</p> <p>The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented a comprehensive report to the Performance Committee. This was the 3rd quarterly report for 2023/24 as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-2027.</p> <p>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, 3.1 Critical Fire Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance, and 3.3 Total Fire Engine Availability.</p> <p>Members examined each indicator in turn focusing on those KPIs in exception as follows:</p> <p>KPI 1 – Valuing our people so that they can focus on making Lancashire safer</p> <p>1.1 Overall Staff Engagement</p> <p>Members received an update on how staff were engaged during the period.</p> <p>From October to December 2023, 23 station and department visits were carried out by principal officers, directors, and area managers as part of the service-wide engagement programme. Seven service delivery briefings were delivered across the Service by area managers and middle managers, and three station visits involving the property and ICT departments took place to engage with members of staff affected by duty system changes as part of the emergency cover review. Forty-six wellbeing interactions were undertaken ranging from wellbeing sessions with crews, to support dog interactions. The Service engaged with staff over several topics that related to fleet equipment which included incident command tabards, appliance tool boxes, and remote-control water rescue vessels.</p> <p>The Head of Media and Communications explained that a comprehensive staff survey was carried out periodically which gained insight from staff on a range of topics such as health and wellbeing, leadership and management, training and development, and equality, diversity, and inclusion. The survey was anonymous and only asked for an individual’s rank and role. The feedback was used to shape future activity and initiate improvements and new ideas.</p> <p>Engagement was measured because staff who were engaged with the Service felt more informed, valued, knew how to access support, and felt able to deal with difficulties at work. High engagement was associated with a lower number of accidents; sickness absence levels; conflicts; and grievances.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="277 2007 1114 2045"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="277 2007 427 2045">Year</th> <th data-bbox="427 2007 778 2045">Engagement Index</th> <th data-bbox="778 2007 1114 2045">Response Rate</th> </tr> </thead> </table>	Year	Engagement Index	Response Rate
Year	Engagement Index	Response Rate		

2023	74%	49%
2020	79%	44%
2018	70%	43%
2016	64%	31%

Data was collected from the latest survey which had been undertaken in September and October 2023 and the engagement index was calculated based on five questions that measured pride, advocacy, attachment, inspiration, and motivation; factors that were understood to be important features shared by staff who were engaged with the organisation.

For each respondent, an engagement score was calculated as the average score across the five questions, where strongly disagree was equivalent to 0, disagree was equivalent to 25, neither agree nor disagree was equivalent to 50, agree was equivalent to 75 and strongly agree was equivalent to 100. The engagement index was then calculated as the average engagement score in the organisation. This approach meant that a score of 100 was equivalent to all respondents saying strongly agree to all five engagement questions, while a score of 0 was equivalent to all respondents saying strongly disagree to all five engagement questions.

An engagement score of 74% for 2023 showed an improvement on surveys in 2016 and 2018. The engagement score of 79% in 2020 was considered an anomaly due to the Covid-19 pandemic when there were higher levels of communication and a focus on wellbeing. This corresponded with other organisations at that time. The response rate for 2023 was 49% which was equivalent to half of the workforce across all ranks and roles.

During the survey period, the corporate communications department visited wholetime and on-call crews on 51 occasions to encourage participation in the survey. Five focus groups were held with on-call units by the Service's independent researcher to obtain qualitative feedback on on-call specific matters, to complement the survey data.

It was noted that a high level of engagement during the Emergency Cover Review and the changes to the Day Crewing Plus duty system reflected the level of communication and support provided prior to its implementation.

In response to a question from County Councillor Salter regarding the comparability of the response rate of the Service to other Fire and Rescue Services, the Head of Media and Communications explained that there was no standard across Fire and Rescue Services to measure the response rate, so it was difficult to benchmark. She had liaised with other Fire and Rescue Services that measured similar things, but rates were calculated differently.

County Councillor Salter commented that the wellbeing dog visits were a positive measure as it was a good opportunity to mitigate stress compared to wellbeing interventions when at crisis point and asked for more information. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service had noted research that suggested that dogs were beneficial for many people's mental health and could lessen stress and anxiety. Several years ago, Bekki Ford, Safety, Health and Wellbeing Advisor, and Lindsay Sielski, Watch Manager and Canine Lead, worked with an external canine

training school to create a wellbeing support dog function which comprised of interested members of staff who provided their dogs for assessment and training that ensured suitability for the role. It was acknowledged that some staff would not access the function due to allergies and for cultural reasons but, overall, it had been successful and well received.

In response to a query from County Councillor O'Toole in relation to the number of surveys given to staff, changing the content of the surveys, and the provision of feedback, the Head of Media and Communication advised that, the last survey had been conducted 3 years ago. However, in addition to the survey, engagement work with staff was carried out continuously. Some of the questions in the survey remained the same to provide the opportunity to benchmark progress, although new areas were introduced as the results influenced future provision for staff. Action plans were created from the answers given and the results were provided to staff.

1.2.1 Staff Absence Wholetime

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

Annual Standard: Not more than 5 shifts lost.

Annual Shifts Lost ÷ 4 quarters: 1.25

Cumulative total number of shifts lost: 6.899

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

During quarter 3, October to December 2023, absence statistics showed whole-time personnel absence above target for the quarter.

1,633 Wholetime absence shifts lost = 2.65 against a target of 1.25 which equated to 1.4 shifts over target. During the same quarter of the previous year 2.2 shifts were lost which was an increase of 0.45 shifts lost per wholetime employee. Cases of long-term absence (over the whole quarter) had decreased by 0.17 shifts from the previous quarter.

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 remained the same at five cases in both Q2 and Q3.

As a result of the five cases of long-term absences, 261 shifts were lost during Q3 compared to 139 shifts lost during the previous quarter. These cases accounted for 0.41 shifts lost per person over the quarter.

There were 26 other cases of long-term absence also recorded within the 3 months:

- Mental health – 9 cases

- Hospital/Post Operative – 7 cases
- Musculo skeletal – 7 cases
- Other absence types (small or single returns) – 3 cases

In Q3, 302 shifts lost were related to respiratory related absences, which included Coronavirus absence and equated to 0.477 shifts lost per person, which was in comparison to 101 shifts lost in Q2.

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 went on to advise Members that Planning Committee had agreed changes to KPI's 1.2.1 and 1.2.3 as discussed at the last meeting of the Performance Committee and that these would be enacted from Quarter 4 onwards.

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, 1.32%.

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: 6.218

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

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 which equated to 1.25 shifts lost per employee per year for quarter 3. The actual shifts lost for the period for this group of staff was 2.33 which was 1.08 above target. During the same quarter of the previous year, 2.38 shifts were lost which was a reduction of 0.05 shifts lost per Greenbook staff.

During quarter 3, October to December 2023, absence statistics showed non-uniformed personnel above target for the quarter.

415 non-uniformed absence shifts lost = 2.33 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 eight cases of long-term absence which were recorded within the 3 months:

- Mental Health – 5 cases
- Other absence types (small or single returns) – 3 cases

During quarter 3, 267 shifts were lost as a result of the eight cases of long-term absences, in comparison to 322 shifts lost during the previous quarter. These cases accounted for 1.38 shifts lost per person over the quarter, which was an increase of 0.21 shifts lost from the previous quarter.

In quarter 3, 11 shifts lost were related to Respiratory related absences, this included Coronavirus absence and equated to 0.05 shifts lost per person. This showed a decrease of 0.5 shifts lost from the previous quarter.

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.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer highlighted that, at the previous Performance Committee meeting, the Assistant Director of Human Resources advised Members that there had been deteriorating attendance levels within LFRS and nationally since the Covid-19 pandemic. This benchmarking had been carried out using figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

The absence reasons were complex, and Members agreed to a review of the targets that were more realistic and achievable for the absence KPIs. Members of the Planning Committee approved the proposed adjustments which were: Staff Absence Wholetime (KPI 1.2.1) be uplifted from a standard of no more than 5 shifts lost per annum, to a new standard of no more than 8 shifts per annum, and; Staff Absence Greenbook (KPI 1.2.3) be uplifted from a standard of no more than 5 shifts lost per annum, to a new standard of no more than 8 shifts per annum.

The KPI standard was for performance measuring purposes only and would not be reported to staff as a sickness absence allocation. It would be reviewed periodically with a view to a gradual return to previous target levels as and when performance improved. Approved adjustments to the KPIs would begin from quarter 4.

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%(20%)	Male 80%(80%)	
Ethnicity:	BME 4%(3%)	White 94%(94%)	Not stated 2%(3%)
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 4%(4%)	Heterosexual 56%(51%)	Not stated 40%(45%)
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 55%	Green book 58%
	Not stated	Grey book 41%	Green book 39%
Disability:	Disability	Grey book 3%	Green book 3%
	No disability	Grey book 95%	Green book 90%
	Not stated	Grey book 2%	Green book 7%

1.3.2 Workforce Diversity Recruited

This new indicator measured workforce diversity recruited as a percentage.

Combined diversity percentage of grey book (operational) and green book (support) staff. 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 29%(26%)	Male 71%(74%)	
Ethnicity:	BME 6%(2%)	White 89%(94%)	Not Stated 6%(4%)
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 4%(11%)	Heterosexual 89%(82%)	Not stated

7%(7%)

Disability:
4%(2%)

Disability 2%(2%)

No disability 94%(96%)

Not stated

During quarter 3, there were a total of 49 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.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer stated that the recruited workforce diversity statistics had improved largely due to positive action work undertaken by the Service.

In response to a question from the Chair regarding female applicants, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that, as a modern fire and service, LFRS carried out engagement work in local communities to encourage job applications from the broadest group of candidates which included prospective female applicants.

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, 12 for quarter 3; year to date 46; previous year to date 44. Quarterly activity increased 9.09% 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.

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 Lancashire Constabulary (LanCon) and gaining entry incidents at the request of the North West Ambulance Service (NWSAS).

Incidents attended, year to date 13,716; previous year to date 14,978. Quarterly activity decreased 10.68% over the same quarter of the previous year.

In quarter 3, the Service attended 4,191 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) – 1982, 48%
- Total Primary Fire Calls (accidental dwelling / building and deliberate dwelling / commercial fires and other primary fires) – 456, 11%
- Total Secondary Fire Calls (deliberate and accidental fires) – 472, 11%
- Total Special Service Calls (critical incidents, gaining entry, RTCs, Flooding and other critical incidents) – 1264, 30%

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, 175 in quarter 3; year to date 549; previous year to date 604. Quarterly activity decreased 11.62% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.3.1 ADF – Harm to people: Casualties

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

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

Fatal,	1 in quarter 3; year to date 2; previous year to date 5
Injuries appear Serious	2 in quarter 3; year to date 9; previous year to date 10
Injuries appear Slight	7 in quarter 3; year to date 19; previous year to date 33

Quarterly activity decreased 41.18% over the same quarter of the previous year.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Salter in relation to the rise

in the number of casualties towards the end of the year, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the spike followed the pattern of the previous 3 years. Trends were difficult to identify as targeted prevention activity had led to a low number of overall incidents and casualties. Additionally, all casualties were investigated to identify emerging trends which informed future prevention activity. LFRS was rigorous in the recording of casualties which would include slight smoke inhalation potentially being recorded as a slight injury. Neil Taylor, Area Manager Head of Service Delivery, explained that a checkup by a medical technician would be recorded as a precautionary check, whereas any medical treatment (such as a painkiller or provision of oxygen therapy), would result in recording as a slight injury.

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 90% against same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 83%.

Combined quarterly percentage had therefore increased 7.01% 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), 56 in quarter 3; year to date 183; previous year to date 196. Quarterly activity increased 1.82% over the same quarter of the previous year.

It was noted that the number of accidental building fires was affected by the seasons as there were typically more nuisance fires during warmer periods.

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 79% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 71%.

Combined quarterly percentage had therefore increased 7.7% 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), 13 in quarter 3; year to date 62; previous year to date 68. Quarterly activity decreased 18.75% 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 0% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 19%.

Combined quarterly activity had therefore decreased 18.8% 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 – 363 in quarter 3; year to date 1,508; previous year to date 1,893. Quarterly activity decreased 13.98% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.6.1 Deliberate Fires – Dwellings

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

Deliberate Fires – Dwellings, 22 in quarter 3, year to date 71; previous year to date 58. Quarterly activity remained static against 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, 34 in quarter 3; year to date 106; previous year to date 89.

Quarterly activity increased 3.03% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that 15 out of the 34 incidents during the quarter occurred in prisons, and often featured electronic smoking materials as an ignition source. Managing these types of incidents fell within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice and the Crown Inspectorate whereas other commercial premises types fell within the regulatory responsibility of the Service. If prison related incidents were set aside, the Service performance against this KPI was highly positive and showed a marked reduction.

Councillor Smith queried whether prisons were classed as commercial premises or dwellings, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that, for Home Office reporting purposes, prison were classed as commercial properties.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed that the Ministry of Justice and Crown Inspectorate had long term strategies in place to tackle deliberate fires in prisons and although fires using electronic materials were a risk factor, prisons were complex environments with conflicting demands and the Service would continue with support.

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, 307 in quarter 3; year to date 1,331; previous year to date 1,746. Quarterly activity decreased 16.35% 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, 5,691 in quarter 3; year to date 17,232; previous year to date 16,349. Quarterly activity decreased 3.4% over the same quarter of the previous year.

HFSCs with high-risk outcomes, Quarter 3, 54%; previous year Quarter 3, 50%.

High risk outcomes remained static against 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,	246 sessions delivered to 7,835 attendees;
RoadSense,	177 sessions delivered to 5,459 attendees;
SENDSafe,	7 sessions delivered to 130 attendees;
Wasted Lives,	37 sessions delivered to 5,617 pupils, 34 in person sessions to 4,972 students, and 3 virtual sessions delivered to 645 students;
Biker Down,	3 sessions delivered to 75 attendees;
FIRES,	22 referrals opened prior to Q3 and carried over. 40 referrals received in Q3. 14 referrals closed in Q3. 41 referrals carried into Q4;
Partner Training,	15 sessions – 92 staff.

Specific Education packages – delivered Water Safety, BrightSparx, ASB, Deliberate Fire Setting etc (Covers key stages 2, 3 and 4). 72 BrightSparx sessions delivered in person to 10,946 attendees & 11 virtual sessions delivered to 7,515 students. 5 sessions of Choice and Consequences delivered to 602.

Arson Threat Referrals - 176.

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, 862 in quarter 3; Cumulative 2,558; YTD target, 1,875; previous YTD 806.

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being satisfactory, 2,210. Top 5 completed satisfactory premise types (Shops 880, Other workplaces 263, Factories/Warehouses 221, Offices 192, Licensed premises 182).

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being unsatisfactory, 348. Top 5 completed unsatisfactory premise types (Shops 179, Licensed premises 35, Factories/Warehouses 33, Other workplaces 28, Schools 20).

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.

Crews continued to embed built environment knowledge and understanding. The first of two Built Environment Virtual Training (BEVT) sessions were delivered in 2023 and the second phase of BEVT roll out was due to begin from April 2024.

Protection had delivered the first 5 day-built environment training on the Wholetime (WT) recruits course which prepared them to undertake BFSCs when they arrived on their watches.

Under the intervention programme for fire safety, the Service focused resources on the most vulnerable and high-risk premises with associated sleeping risk such as hospitals and care homes which were serviced by the Fire Safety Officers. Operational crews provided extra capacity and would inspect lower risk premises.

If follow-up intervention had taken place following the identification of critical fire safety issues and the responsible person would/could not comply with fire safety law, they would be moved from an advisory remit into regulatory where an enforcement notice could be issued, and possibly then prohibit or prosecute the responsible person.

County Councillor Shedwick stated that it was evident from the statistics that the operational crews were now involved as well as the Fire Safety Officers.

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 3, 452;
Formal Activity in Quarter 3, 5%, same quarter of the previous year 9%.
Quarterly activity decreased 4% 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 1,572.

In response to a question from County Councillor Salter regarding recent changes in Fire Safety Legislation, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the changes placed more responsibility on persons responsible for premises. These premises were known to the Service as they were included within the risk-based intervention programme and were recorded in a database with the level of risk calculated by a risk matrix. In the last 12 months the Service, as regulator, had conducted extensive engagement with businesses to raise awareness of the changes to the Fire Safety Order and to inform persons responsible of their duty to fire safety management.

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 3, Building Regulation Consultations received 268, of which 256 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 intervention program, consequently use of finite resources must be fully co-ordinated and balanced. To achieve this and ensure consultation timelines were achieved:

- The implementation of centralised building regulations onto the Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS) and assigning dedicated resource to consistently input new applications, continued to improve the Services efficiency at responding to the majority within statutory timescales.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer emphasised that the Service response to Building

Regulation Consultations within the statutory timescales had improved over the past year with an improvement to 95.5% completed within the timeframe of 15 days in quarter 3. A small number of consultations were out of the timeframe due to being complex in nature or awaiting further information from the relevant local authority.

County Councillor David O'Toole joined the meeting.

KPI 3 - Responding to fire and other emergencies quickly

3.1 Critical Fire Response – 1st 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 – 1st Fire Engine Attendance, Quarter 3, Very High 06:55 min; High 06:40 min, Medium 06:44 min, Low 08:31 min.

Q3 overall 07:24 min. Year to date overall 07:24 min. Previous year to date overall 07:15 min.

The negative exception report was due to the critical 1st fire engine appliance average response time to a very high response standard, being above the limit during quarter 3.

The standard within a very high risk area was 6 minutes. The average time achieved during quarter 3 exceeded that by 55 seconds.

The monthly average response times to very high risk areas were:

- October 04:47,
- November 05:50, and
- December 09:48.

- Quarter 3 06:55.

Only December exceeded the 6-minute average. The average time of 09:48 was made up of just three incidents, of which, two recorded a response longer than six minutes. This resulted in the quarter average of 6.55 falling into exception.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the overall very high-risk critical response time had been affected by the high average response time in December. During December, a major incident occurred at the SupaSkips site in Lancaster which required a large number of resources to be dispatched whilst, at the same time, there had been a number of simultaneous incidents in the east of the county. As resources from the east had been dispatched to the incident at Lancaster, the next available pumps in the east of the county had to travel further to incidents which affected the response times. Members noted that it had been an unusual occurrence that would not be expected to recur under normal business conditions.

3.2 Critical Special Service Response – 1st 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 – 1st Fire Engine Attendance, 08:34 min in quarter 3; year to date 08:34 min; previous year to date 08:15 min.

County Councillor Salter acknowledged that the response times were very impressive and queried whether the response standard of 13 minutes should be lowered. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed that the response standard of 13 minutes included the call handling time and time taken for the fire engine to attend an incident. As special service incidents often occurred in more remote areas of the county, this could result in slightly longer call handling times. It was noted that 'What 3 Words', and '999Eye' were tools used by North West Fire Control to assist in locating incidents and assessing resource needs for them.

3.3 Total Fire Engine Availability

This indicator measured the availability of the 1st fire engine at each of the 39 fire stations. It was measured as the percentage of time the 1st 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, 88.46% in quarter 3; year to date 88.59%; previous

year to date 89.32%.

Quarterly availability decreased 1.87% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The negative exception report was due to the 1st fire appliance availability percentage being below the lower control limit during quarter 3.

Overall availability across all stations for the quarter recorded 88.46%, which was 1.54% below the 90% standard.

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

Wholtime – 99.30%

Day Crewing Plus – 99.07%

Flexi Day Crewing – 99.23%

On-Call – 74.60%

Total – 88.46%

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

On-Call recruitment, development, and retention was a national challenge which had seen a downward trend in availability over several years.

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 (OCSOs) were working with station-based staff and management, together with Training Centre, to support those in development and identify opportunities for staff to acquire those skills earlier in their career.

The Breathing Apparatus (BA) skill was another factor contributing to low On-Call availability and the Service was working towards redesigning the timing of training delivery, to enable demand for the skill to be met more rapidly.

Actions being taken to improve performance:

- The Service had invested in a dedicated team to support the recruitment, development, and retention of On-Call staff. A Station Manager post responsible for On-Call & Blue Light Collaboration had been created in 2023, to lead a team of On-Call Support Officers (OCSOs) and the LFRS project workstreams for On-Call improvement. These significant workstreams would enable continuous improvement across all key elements of On-Call recruitment, development, and retention.
- The Service were developing a data-driven recruitment and skills-based strategy and a new recruitment and workforce planning tool, the first of its kind, to improve availability of On-Call fire engine 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 December 2023 was £50.5m, £0.4m less than budget. The majority was attributable to non-pay costs which included a shortfall on apprenticeship levy funding, an increase in repair and maintenance on operational vehicles, and an increase in external training.

Quarter 3 variance 0.58%.

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.

Missing Persons (MisPer)

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) had provided significant support to LanCon with its aerial drone assets, supported by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). LFRS Drone Team had also supported other organisations, including the Environment Agency (EA).

LFRS received around 200 drone requests on average per year from LanCon, with most requests for Missing Persons searches. LFRS had commenced discussions with LanCon in relation to recharging for some services, given the On-Call nature of the drone team and each deployment had a budgetary impact for LFRS. Nationally, an MoU was being developed between the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and EA to better co-ordinate future drone activity.

The Service also provided an underwater search capability, and assistance had recently been requested by HM Coastguard. LFRS had responded, and the

underwater deployment immediately de-escalated the incident, which significantly reduced the number of resources required from several agencies for what could normally be, a protracted incident.

Estates and Co-location

This project was a long-term work stream which could deliver significant efficiencies and effectiveness where co-location sites were identified.

A set of principles were being developed to identify high level areas of opportunities. Blue Light partners were currently reviewing their strategic property asset plans to identify areas for co-ordinating future development plans over the next 5-10 years.

All Blue Light partners were included in the discussions and options in relation to Preston area provision.

First Responder

A trial had commenced in 2023 that involved LFRS volunteering as Community First Responders (CFR) to support NWS. LFRS staff volunteers undertook an initial CFR training programme at LFRS Training Centre. Once qualified, they could shadow existing CFR practitioners to develop their clinical abilities and build confidence in their newly acquired skills.

Five LFRS staff volunteers were now responding to life threatening emergencies in their communities from the workplace and would administer first aid in the initial vital minutes before NWS colleagues arrived. During 2023, LFRS responded to more than 80 CFR incidents which included unresponsive/collapsed, not breathing, cardiac arrests, seizures, strokes, and choking.

The Service was expanding its support to NWS as it was a successful, lifesaving initiative and 10 LFRS Flexible-Duty Officers (FDOs) were progressing through the onboarding process with NWS.

Leadership Development

The Learning and Development leads from each of the Blue Light partners were considering 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.

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.'

The new Command Support Unit (CSU) project was listed in this years' Annual Service Plan and aimed to upgrade not only vehicles, but to take advantage of recent technological advances to support operational incidents. On-Call firefighters from Carnforth and Bolton-Le-Sands crewed the CSU.

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.

John Rossen, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery would carry out an evaluation across the projects to measure the benefits the Service delivered with partners for the people of Lancashire.

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: 98.77%

In quarter 3, 75 people had been surveyed and the number satisfied with the service was 73. The running number of people surveyed for the year was 3,492 with 3,449 of those people being satisfied with the Service; 98.77% against a standard of 97.50%; a variance of 1.30%.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Fire Officer for a positive report.

Resolved: - That the Performance Committee noted and endorsed the Quarter 3 Measuring Progress report, including one positive and four negative exceptions.

24/23

Lithium-Ion Batteries Campaign

Stephanie Collinson, Head of Media and Communications presented a report to Members which detailed the outcomes of the Lithium-Ion Batteries Campaign.

Fires in the home were a growing risk nationally, particularly with the growth in popularity of e-bikes and e-scooters. A campaign had been delivered in December 2023 to gain more insight into those most at risk and the behaviours contributing to fires, and to help people adopt safer practices to prevent fires.

Lithium-ion batteries were the rechargeable batteries found in a wide-range of electrical items, such as e-scooters and e-bikes, mobile phones, and laptops. They stored a significant amount of energy in a very small space and were much more powerful than other types of battery.

In the UK, fires caused by lithium-ion batteries in e-scooters and e-bikes had multiplied fourfold since 2020, which had resulted in deaths, hospitalisation, homelessness, and staggering financial losses. Since 2020, over 190 people had been injured, and at least 13 lives had been lost due to this concerning trend.

In Lancashire, there had been a year on year rise in lithium-ion battery related fires in the last three years, and three quarters of those involved a charger. When batteries were charged in communal areas or escape routes, a fire could quickly block the way out. On occasions, batteries could fail catastrophically; they could explode and lead to a rapidly developing fire.

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total
Number of Incidents	14	27	35	76

Insight the Service determined from the incident data included:

- 29% of incidents involved e-bikes, e-scooters, or hoverboards.
- Fires had mainly started in a bedroom or living room.
- The most fires had occurred in Preston, Blackpool, and Lancaster but all districts in Lancashire had seen these types on incidents.
- Half of incidents occurred between 3pm and 11pm.

The campaign had been implemented during December in the run up to Christmas, when people were expected to buy electrical goods, e-bikes, and e-scooters in particular, as presents.

Campaign objectives

- To raise awareness of safety risks associated with e-charging.
- To educate the public on how to safely charge e-scooters and e-bikes.
- To gain insight into those most at risk and practices that increase risk.

Target audience

- Households that had e-scooters/bikes to use as fun for teenagers.
- Students who used this as a cheaper alternative method of transport (which was an increasing trend) aged 18-30.
- Those aged between 25-45 and were most likely to have children covering a range of ages and most likely to use or purchase electric goods.

Key messages

- Always use the charger that came with the device.
- Never charge lithium batteries on escape routes. If possible, charge and store them away from living areas.
- If there was a need to buy a replacement battery or charger, always choose a branded, genuine product from a trusted supplier. There were lots of fakes out there, and it could be difficult to spot the difference.
- Never store lithium batteries together, there was a potential issue with battery short circuits if, for example, the box was contaminated with a metal item, like a paper clip. Ensure terminals had been taped up before mixing with other items.
- Always read the safety instructions that came with the device.
- Ensure there were working smoke alarms on every floor.

Competition to win an iPad.

The first part of the campaign involved a competition to win an iPad. To enter,

members of the public had to answer three short questions about charging practices. The entry process gave all participants the correct answers to the questions to highlight the safest practices.

The competition resulted in over 1,700 entries and gave valuable insight into charging habits across different age groups. It showed that 25–34-year-olds were more likely to charge devices in the hallway. This insight was used in the second part of the campaign to target 25–34-year-olds with a specific message about the risk of charging in hallways.

Campaign activity

The creative materials for the campaign featured real images of e-bike and e-scooter fires the Service had attended to demonstrate that these incidents did occur and could happen to anyone. A short, animated video was also created in the style of a text message conversation and featured an image of a e-bike fire which broke out the first time the owner charged it, aimed at attracting the attention of the younger target audience.

The animated video was played to Members.

The following channels were used to share the content and key messages:

- Social media platforms: Facebook, X, TikTok, Instagram, and Nextdoor.
- Lithium-ion battery safety page on the Service's website (www.lancsfirerescue.org.uk/batteries).
- Media release to local news outlets.
- 20,000 leaflets and posters distributed to local schools, colleges, and communities containing QR code linked to lithium-ion battery safety page on the website.

Bin wagons in Lancaster

During the campaign, the Service partnered with Lancaster City Council to create artwork to highlight the risk of e-charging, which now appeared on 43 vehicles across Lancaster.

Evaluation

In total, the campaign reached 494,850 people and generated 23,247 engagements (comments, shares, website clicks etc). Social media alone reached 301,389 people and generated 22,441 engagements. Advertising on TikTok boosted competition entries from 18–24-year-olds by 197%. Social media posts sparked a lot of debate, with some people sharing their surprise to learn about the risk of e-charging and others sharing their own experiences. Some people stated that they normally charged items in living areas and would now change this.

1,789 people entered the competition and took part in the quiz which allowed the Service to promote the key safety messages and highlight unsafe practices. 4,062 people visited the lithium-ion battery safety page on the website during the campaign and 450 visits came directly from the QR code on campaign leaflets. Five news articles appeared in the local media.

Next steps

The next steps were to build on insight gained from the campaign to develop the picture of who was most at risk and the behaviours that contributed to fires, alongside analysing incident data at the end of the year.

Nationally, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), had backed charity Electrical Safety First's calls for improved safety standards of e-bike and e-scooter batteries. A change in legislation was needed to help prevent fires and ensure that the products in people's homes were safer.

The safe disposal of lithium-ion batteries was also a key issue, as batteries thrown in household rubbish bins had been linked to an increase in waste fires. Research had shown that lithium-ion batteries were responsible for around half of all waste fires that occurred in the UK each year, which costed the UK economy some £158 million annually.

In response to a question from Councillor Smith regarding the regulation of e-bikes, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the NFCC, alongside a number of other organisations were actively involved in lobbying government.

Members discussed the possibility of lobbying the government for a Lithium-ion battery return scheme with which an additional fee would be charged when a battery was purchased and would be redeemed when returned which would ensure proper disposal of them. It was mentioned that the owners of e-bikes and e-scooters would not use the many waste sites in Lancashire that had measures in place for the safe disposal of batteries and the responsibility should be on the seller.

In response to a question from County Councillor Salter regarding the value of having a CE Safety Mark on rechargeable batteries, the Head of Media and Communications explained that one of the key messages was to use batteries supplied by the manufacturer and not to buy second-hand or from online websites. Additionally, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer stated that cost of parts was an issue, as cheap replacement products were available online. As Trading Standards were the authority on regulatory issues, the Service and sector were actively linked in with them on Lithium-ion battery matters.

County Councillor Salter raised the possibility that too many safety messages would become confusing. The Head of Media and Communications stated that a phased approach was being used for key safety messages and, when more insight had been gained, the safety messages would become more focused.

County Councillor Salter asked why Lancaster had been chosen for its bin wagons to display artwork that highlighted the risk of e-charging and whether bin wagons in other cities would be used for the campaign. The Head of Media and Communications advised that Lancaster City Council had been eager to work with Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS), but the Service would be happy to work with any of the Local Authorities. The Service had provided the artwork and Lancaster City Council had wrapped the vehicles. The campaign was in its infancy and other initiatives were being developed.

In response to a query from County Councillor Salter as to the reason that the most

	<p>fires occurred in Preston, Blackpool, and Lancaster, the Head of Media and Communications advised that from the data and national research, students and people from that age group were more likely to use e-bikes and e-scooters for affordable travel. Safety material had been distributed to schools, colleges, and universities. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer added that population density and city lifestyles could also be prevalent factors in the number of fires.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor Shedwick in relation to dealing with electric vehicle fires, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that it was very challenging as electric vehicle fires were very difficult to extinguish and there was no current solution globally. The Service had purchased a range of new products to help manage electric vehicle fires which were being trialled to discover their benefits, and as different tactical options for commanders to use at scene. Global research was underway to develop a solution. It was noted that the volume of electric cars and therefore, potentially, the number of fires, could increase in future.</p> <p>County Councillor Salter commented that the government should be lobbied for a safer infrastructure for the increase in electric cars such as sprinklers in car parks.</p> <p>County Councillor O'Toole stated that, at the next full council meeting at Lancashire County Council, he had put a question forward about Lithium-Ion batteries, waste sites and waste fires. The portfolio holder had been briefed and would answer the question which would raise awareness. He asked, and the Head of Media and Communications agreed, to be provided with leaflets to distribute to Councillors and Senior Officers at the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Head of Media and Communications for her report.</p> <p>Resolved: - That Members noted the content of the report.</p>
25/23	Date of Next Meeting
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on 26 June 2024 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 04 September 2024 and 04 December 2024 and agreed for 05 March 2025.</p>

**M Nolan
Clerk to CFA**

**LFRS HQ
Fulwood**

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 24 June 2024

Proceedings of Resources Committee held 27 March 24 (Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information:

Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager - Tel: 01772 866720

Executive Summary

The proceedings of Resources Committee meeting held 27 March 2024.

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 March 2024.

Business Risk

Nil

Environmental Impact

Nil

Equality & Diversity Implications

Nil

Financial Risk

Nil

HR Implications

Nil

Legal 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 March 2024, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room,
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
R Woollam (Chair)	
D O'Toole (Vice-Chair)	
G Baker	
T Hurn	
J Mein	
M Pattison	
B Yates	

Officers
S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS) J Charters, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) B Warren, Director of People and Development (LFRS) E Sandiford, Head of Human Resources (LFRS) M Nolan, Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)
In attendance
K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union

34/23	Apologies for Absence
	Apologies were received from County Councillors Lorraine Beavers, Peter Britcliffe, and Sean Serridge.
35/23	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
36/23	Minutes of the Previous Meeting
	Resolved: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 29 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

37/23	Procurement Strategy
	<p>The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) presented the report. The new three-year Procurement Strategy had been updated to set out the Service's approach to procurement which built on the success of the previous strategy and supported the vision within the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-2027. The future and shape of procurement would change significantly as a result of the Government's paper 'Transforming Public Procurement', which aimed to speed up and simplify the procurement process, place value for money at the heart of procurement, and unleash opportunities for small businesses, charities, and social enterprises to innovate in public service delivery.</p> <p>Effective contract and procurement management would be essential in order to become best in class in a process that involved all aspects of business operation and support. It would have a significant impact on the delivery of value for money and efficient use of resources; therefore, it was vital that all procurement activities that were managed effectively, and procurement personnel were well trained and highly professional.</p> <p>The delivery of the three-year Procurement Strategy had built on the success of the previous strategy and had provided a firm platform with robust processes and procedures to support the vision within the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), supported communities, and ensured the cost-effective use of resources with efficient and effective procurement. The Service was already building on that platform by creating a positive procurement culture founded on sound business ethics. As a key enabler to business success, the Service looked to advance and build upon its procurement activities through the new Procurement Strategy.</p> <p>The Strategy reflected national and local policies and included the Service's approach to collaboration and partnerships, suppliers' fair working practices and ethically, sustainability, climate change, corporate social responsibility, and the development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) and third sector organisations.</p> <p>The DoCS elaborated on the report by adding that with the envisaged legislation, of which the Service was already mindful, not only would there be a greater focus on contract management in the near future, but that it would be from a risk based perspective. The DoCS added that there would also be opportunities for local businesses to engage in the procurement process, the Service would be able to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and it would also focus on publicising the chain of progress with project work.</p> <p>CC O'Toole commented that it was important to get a number of quotations and that it had come to his attention recently that some major suppliers were declining to engage in procurement because the plans stretched so far into the future.</p> <p>The Chair commented that it would be encouraging to see the procurement of local talent.</p> <p>CC Mein asked for clarification as to whether this would place any uncertainty on</p>

	<p>progress or whether this would shorten the terms of procurement, to which the DoCS confirmed there had been a lot of transparency and communication with suppliers.</p> <p>Resolved: - that Members endorsed the Procurement Strategy 2024 - 2027.</p>
38/23	<p>Local Pension Board Annual Report</p>
	<p>The Director of People and Development (DoPD) presented the report which provided an update on the Lancashire Fire Local Pension Board for the period 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024.</p> <p>Members noted that the Public Service Pensions Act (PSPA) 2013 introduced the requirement to have a Local Pension Board to assist in the governance of the Scheme. The Board had no remit as a decision-making body but was established to assist the Scheme Manager to fulfil its functions which covered all aspects of governance and administration of the Firefighters’ Pension Scheme (FPS). The Combined Fire Authority had delegated its functions to the Director of People and Development. The Board’s Terms of Reference required that it met approximately twice a year and that the Chair of the Board could call additional meetings as required. It was noted that there were two meetings held per year during the period as planned.</p> <p>Membership</p> <p>One new employee representative was appointed to the Board during the year 2023-24. This appointment was carried out in accordance with the Board’s Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Work Programme during 2023/24</p> <p>During the period 2023/24, the hard work and commitment of everyone who had contributed to the work activities involved in fire pensions, meant that key activities continued to be delivered and projects progressed. The focus had been on the following major projects: i) the Sargeant/McCloud judgement relating to age discrimination; and ii) Matthews’ judgement affecting on-call members commonly referred to as the ‘Second Options Exercise’.</p> <p>Significant work had been undertaken during the year to provide legacy and reformed scheme pensionable pay for the seven years of remedy for almost 1,000 members affected by the Sargeant/McCloud age discrimination legislation. Work had started to compile tax and contribution data for the remedy period from which, the data would enable the Local Pensions Partnership Administration (LPPA), the Service’s pension administrators, to roll back member records. During 2024-25 immediate choice members and deferred choice members would receive information to remedy their situation. During the year, the Board had received and considered update reports at key project milestones.</p> <p>In terms of the Matthews Second Options Exercise, the Service had identified over</p>

600 individuals who were eligible to express an interest in the exercise. Calculations for exercise were complicated and, in a small number of cases, required data going back as far as the 1960s and 1970s. The Service had made efforts to contact all individuals, but for some, address data was not available or out of date, nonetheless, the Service would make all reasonable endeavours to contact members. The challenge of implementing two significant, complex pieces of pension legislation, which affected large numbers of individuals concurrently, was not to be underestimated.

In order to retain knowledge and capacity sufficient for the implementation of the two projects, the Temporary Pensions Advisor, initially appointed in March 2022, was made permanent in September 2023. The role of Temporary Pensions Coordinator was vacant, and the Service was seeking to fill this role in the near future. The postholder would work to support the pensions workload, predominantly on the Matthews Second Modified Pension Scheme exercise until its completion date on 31 March 2025. It was anticipated that almost 700 calculations could be required for the project. An area of concern was that no mechanism had been finalized to deal with aggregation (RDS employee subsequently achieving a wholetime role).

In 2020/21, the Service implemented the pensionable allowances project which retrospectively applied backdated pensionable allowances for six years. As a result, the Service had received a number of Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures (Appeals) from employees and former employees. All applications were from Members who were dissatisfied that there were not included in the pensionable allowances exercise either relating to the type, temporary nature of the allowance or that their service fell outside of the backdating period. The Board had also been informed about a number of complex cases that had been dealt with at Stage 1 and Stage 2 over this period, including through the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (Appeals). The individuals had a right to appeal to the Pensions Ombudsman, whilst it was believed a number had taken that option, the Service had only been notified of two applications.

In March 2023, the government announced that the Pensions Dashboard Programme would require additional time to deliver the connection of pension providers and schemes in accordance with the connection deadlines set out in the Pensions Dashboard Regulations 2022. The new Dashboard Programme was due to be announced in spring 2024 and it was anticipated that the fire scheme date would be summer 2025.

The Board continued to focus on key areas identified by the Pensions Regulator and maintained an oversight of the key risks to the fund. The Risk Register had continued to be reviewed at Board meetings. The Board had also received a report on how the designated Pension Scheme Manager managed the LPPA Pensions Administration contract.

Training

To support their work on the Fire Local Pension Board, members continued to maintain and develop their knowledge and skills. External training opportunities continued to be available, members of the Board had access to the regular LGA

monthly bulletins and website, and had utilized the Pension Regulators Public Service toolkit to develop their knowledge. It was anticipated that the Local Government Association would provide remote training to Board members nationally over the next year.

Looking forward to 2025/25

The Work Plan of the Board would focus on the principal activities of the Scheme as currently anticipated, which included: i) Implementing the requirements of the Sargeant/McCloud age discrimination legislation; ii) Implementing the requirements of the Matthews' Second Options exercise; iii) Continuing to improve pension administration arrangements for the benefit of all members and employers of the Scheme including the continual improvement programme for the quality of data held by the scheme; iv) Assessing the impact of and responding to consultations that would have an impact on the Lancashire Firefighters Pension Schemes; v) Appraising the impact of the implementation of the Pensions Dashboard; and vi) Enhancing Board knowledge and skills.

The Plan would be reviewed and amended where appropriate to ensure it addressed any relevant issues which arose.

The DoPD elaborated on his report by stating that the application of complex pensions regulations as well as the retrospective application of the binding case law decisions made in the senior courts in the cases of Matthews and McCloud, including those firefighters who had left since 2000 had resulted in considerable activity for those in the Service and at the LPPA trying to resolve the situation. 600 individuals were affected, and progress had been slow but was now improving. Significant issues included aggregation and taxation of these amounts.

The DoPD also summarized the position with regard to the Pensions Regulator and the LPPA as well as the response to Consultation on the Government Pensions Dashboard.

In response to a query from CC Pattison as to whether the pensions dashboard was catching up the DoPD confirmed this was the case but that the Service could only process those outstanding matters in relation to those individuals who currently worked for the Service.

In response to a query from CC Mein as to who had responsibility for providing the information and whether it was the current employer, the DoPD confirmed that it was the responsibility of every pensions provider, given that every employee must now be offered a form of pension, even in the commercial sector.

The DoPD added that the Service was also tackling issues with the administration of pensions for Green Book staff but that he was aware that the administration of these pensions was taking too long.

CC Mein asked how the new employee member of the Local Pensions Board had been selected and the DoPD confirmed that a Fire Brigades Union member had been selected.

CC O'Toole commented that firefighters gave loyal service and they had paid into their pensions throughout their career and therefore it was not difficult to understand why firefighters got confused as to their entitlement and why there was such delay in processing the calculations and all those affected should be kept up to date with progress.

The Chair echoed CC O'Toole's comment and added that he hoped the retirement workshops would be of some assistance in providing information.

The DoPD explained that because these decisions had been challenged through the courts some firefighters believed they were not being treated fairly and it had created some scepticism. In addition, with regard to giving advice, the DoPD clarified the Service could not give independent advice.

The target date for resolution of the outstanding pensions issues was October 2025.

Resolved: - that the report be noted.

39/23

Financial Monitoring

The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) presented the report which set out the current budget position in respect of the 2023/24 revenue and capital budgets.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's (LFRS) 2023/24 revenue budget had been set at £68.493m. The forecast outturn position was £68.878m, an overspend of £0.385m that was made up of an overspend of £0.488m on non-pay activities and an underspend of (£0.103m) on pay.

The forecast positions within all department budgets were set out in the report with major forecast variances of note shown separately in the table below: -

Area	Forecast Overspend/ (Under spend)	Reason
Pay	(0.104)	<p>The overall forecast was broadly in line with budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a forecast pressure of £0.200m as a result of the Service meeting its legal responsibilities in relation to the Bear Fulton legal case regarding holiday pay; • Whilst the Emergency Cover Review (ECR) remained on target, there had been some initial timing delays compared to the budget that had resulted in an in-year pressure that was

		<p>being partially offset through improvement in the management of overtime arrangements; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other savings included some vacancies particularly at the training centre of (£0.169m).
Fleet and technical Services - Non-Pay	0.182	The forecast overspend was mainly due to inflationary pressures on the supply of parts and increase in repairs, however, savings had been achieved in quarter 3. 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 which resulted 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. This pressure has been provided for in the 2024/25 budget agreed by the CFA in February 2024.
Training Centre Courses – Non-Pay	0.163	As previously reported, due to vacancies in the Training Centre, the department had to appoint more associate trainers than budgeted to meet the training needs of the service; this included driver training and specialist training such as swift water rescue as a result of the ECR. This pressure was offset by vacancies. Note 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, due to the roll out of wildfire kit, Urban Search And Rescue (USAR) kit and kit for the new recruits.

Non – DFM – Bank Interest	(0.302)	There was a forecast saving on interest earned on cash balances invested.
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Capital Budget

The revised Capital Programme for 2023/24 was £7.6m as approved by the CFA in February 2024. Spend to date was £5.083m, which was predominantly on pumping appliances as set out in the report, and £7.6m was forecast.

Details of capital projects were outlined in the table below:

Area	Budgeted Items
Operational Vehicles Budget £4.001m Forecast £4.001m	The budget allowed for the remaining stage payments for 10 pumping appliances purchased in previous financial years. 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. In addition to the previously reported slippage of climate change vehicle (£0.15m), 2 water towers (£1.027m), 2 prime movers (£0.260m), the ALP chassis (0.251m) had also slipped to quarter 1 of 24/25.
Other vehicles Budget £0.925m 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.
Operational Equipment Budget £1.308m Forecast £1.308m	As reported in November, this budget allowed for equipment purchases including thermal imaging cameras and cutting and extrication equipment 2023/24. Approved slippage on Ballistic Vest and Helmet PPE would enable exploration and pilot of equipment.
Building Modifications Budget £0.352 Forecast £0.352m	This budget included the continuation of Drill Tower replacements and an upgrade to the Wylfa prop facility. Completion of works had now slipped into early 2024/25 as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wylfa Prop (£0.125m) tender process was expected to complete in quarter 4, and work to commence in 2024/25. W30 Blackpool Dormitory (£0.472m) design work was complete, and work would

	<p>commence in 2024/25.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drill tower replacement (£0.555m) had slipped as procurement were now seeking a new framework with experienced drill tower contractors. • Minor improvements (£0.099) to the estate had slipped to 2024/25.
<p>IT systems Budget £0.728m Forecast £0.728m</p>	<p>This budget included for the upgrade Firewalls and digitisation of fire appliances. Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The national Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP) had paused to 2025 (£0.1m); • WIFI (£0.135m) would be completed after the Firewall scheduled in quarter 4 of 2023/24; • Incident ground radios (£0.23m) had slipped in line with helmet communications and the breathing apparatus replacement program; and • RDS Alerters (£0.065m) had slipped due to a period of soft market research.

Reserves

Reserves were held for three main purposes:

- To cover unforeseen risks and expenditure that could be incurred outside of planned budgets – known as a general reserve.
- To set-aside funds for specific purposes, known or predicted pressures, or future liabilities – known as earmarked reserves.
- To hold capital receipts from the sale of assets, the use of which was restricted under legislation to the purchase of new assets, or the repayment of debt.

The forecast level at the end of the year, taking into account the forecast revenue position, capital outturn and agreed reserves is set out below:

	Forecast t £'m
General Reserve - min level £3.75m	4.8
Earmarked Reserves	25.4
Total	30.2

Resolved: - that the Committee:

- i) noted and endorsed the revenue budget forecast outturn; and
- ii) noted the Capital Budget forecast outturn.

40/23	Date and Time of Next Meeting
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday, 03 July 2024 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 25 September 2024 and agreed for 27 November 2024.</p>
41/23	Exclusion of Press and Public
	<p>Resolved: That the press and members of the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there would be a likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the appropriate paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, indicated under the heading to the item.</p>
42/23	IDRP - Stage 2
	<p>(Paragraphs 1, 4 and 5)</p> <p>Members considered a report regarding three IDRP Stage 2 applications under the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure. The report outlined the facts of the cases.</p> <p>Resolved: - that the Committee declined the applications presented based on its lawful application of the relevant Pensions Regulations.</p>
43/23	High Value Procurement Projects
	<p>(Paragraph 3)</p> <p>Members considered a report that provided an update on all contracts for one-off purchases valued in excess of £175,000 and high value procurement projects in excess of £175,000 including: new contract awards, progress of ongoing projects and details of new projects.</p> <p>Resolved: - that the Committee noted and endorsed the report.</p>
44/23	Exec Board Succession Arrangements
	<p>(Paragraph 1)</p> <p>The Director of People and Development recused himself, as a potentially interested party, and left the Committee meeting.</p> <p>No other interests were declared.</p>

Only Members and Officers relevant to decision making on this recruitment were present for this item.

Resolved: - that the Committee approved the recommendation outlined in the report.

**M Nolan
Clerk to CFA**

**LFRS HQ
Fulwood**

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 24 June 2024

Proceedings of Audit Committee held 28 March 24 (Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information:

Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager - Tel: 01772 866720

Executive Summary

The proceedings of Audit Committee meeting held 28 March 2024.

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 March 2024.

Business Risk

Nil

Environmental Impact

Nil

Equality & Diversity Implications

Nil

Financial Risk

Nil

HR Implications

Nil

Legal 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

Thursday, 28 March 2024, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room,
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
J Shedwick (Chair)	
N Hennessy (Vice-Chair)	
S Clarke	
F Jackson	
M Salter	
J Singleton	
Officers	
S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS)	
L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)	
In attendance	
G Jones, External Audit, Grant Thornton	
Y Li, External Audit, Grant Thornton	
L Rix, Internal Audit, Lancashire County Council	
E Harrison, Student	
K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union	
21/23	Apologies for Absence
	Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Munsif Dad.
22/23	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
23/23	Minutes of the Previous Meeting
	Resolved: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 28 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
24/23	Statement of Accounts 2022/23

The Chair welcomed Ellie Harrison, a student, to the meeting who was present to observe.

The Director of Corporate Services gave thanks to the External Auditors, Internal Auditors, and the Finance Team for all their work on the arduous process of the Statement of Accounts.

The Director of Corporate Services presented the report to the meeting. The report presented the Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2023 which included the Authority's 25% share of the North West Fire Control accounts. Its purpose was to give electors, local taxpayers, Fire Authority Member, employees, and other interested parties clear information about the Fire Authority's finances.

The Committee considered the Statement of Accounts as presented.

The aim was to provide information on:

- The cost of providing Fire Authority services in the financial year 2022/23.
- How these services were paid for.
- What assets the Fire Authority owned at the end of the financial year.
- What was owed, to and by, the Fire Authority at the end of the financial year.

The narrative report provided a guide to the most important matters which were included in the Statement of Accounts. The Statement of Accounts had been prepared in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as amended by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021 and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

The Statement of Accounts contained: -

Statement on Annual Governance Arrangements – Set out the Authority's responsibilities regarding the system of internal control on corporate governance.

Independent Auditor's Report to Members of Lancashire Combined Fire Authority – The Auditor's report to the CFA on the accounts for 2022/23, which were set out in the agenda pack.

Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts – Set out the responsibilities of the Authority and the Treasurer regarding the statement of accounts.

Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement – The Statement showed the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. The Fire Authority raised taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations; this could be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position was shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Movement in Reserves Statement – This statement showed the movement in year on the different reserves held by the Fire Authority analysed between usable

and other reserves. The surplus or deficit on the Provision of Services line showed the true economic cost of providing the Fire Authority's services, more details of which were shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Balance Sheet – This showed information on the financial position of the Fire Authority as at the 31 March 2023, which included the level of balances and reserves at the Fire Authority's disposal, its long-term indebtedness and the value of the assets held by the Fire Authority.

Cash Flow Statement – This showed the cash and cash equivalent movements in and out of the Fire Authority due to transactions with third parties for revenue and capital purposes.

Fire Fighters Pension Fund Account and Net Assets Statement – This presented the financial position of the fire fighters pension fund account, which showed whether the Authority owed, or was owed, money by the Government in order to balance the account, together with details of its net assets.

The Director of Corporate Services drew the Members attention to Page 17 of the agenda pack for the review of the year which included that, the Service had invested in equipment in response to climate change and operational crews had begun to deliver Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSC).

In the 2022/23 Financial Overview on Page 18 of the agenda pack, it was noted by Members that a £5 increase in Council Tax had been agreed in line with the Council Tax referendum limit which allowed for an affordable, prudent, and sustainable budget that ensured that the Authority was able to deliver against its corporate priorities. The Director of Corporate Services highlighted that the 2022/23 firefighter pay award agreed for the proceeding and subsequent year of 7% and 5% respectively, had been more than anticipated and budgeted for which added to financial pressures. The Authority had a good level of general reserves, however consequently, it had resulted in an overspend of £1.7m.

The chart on page 19 of the agenda pack illustrated that employee costs accounted for approximately 70% of the budget funding and the majority of the income came from Council Tax.

It was stated on Page 20 of the agenda pack that the Authority's general fund balance at start of the year was £6.04m and the overspend of £1.67m from the Authority's expenditure had been transferred to the reserve which reduced the balance to £4.37m. The Authority also held an additional £9.3m of earmarked revenue reserves and £22m of capital reserves and receipts. The Capital reserves and receipts were fully utilised within the medium-term financial strategy which would reduce to zero in 2027. Over half of the earmarked reserves related to the Authority's two Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes, whereby monies were set aside in the early years of the scheme to meet future costs, thus easing the impact of inflationary pressures.

Page 21 of the agenda pack explained that the Authority's Total net liabilities had reduced from £753.7m to £502.5m which reflected the Authority's compliance with International Accounting Standards and in particular, the requirement to show the

full pensions liability in the accounts. Whilst the liability on the Local Government Pension Scheme was partly funded, the Fire-fighters Pension Scheme was unfunded, i.e. there were no assets from which future liabilities would be paid, and hence the Authority's overall Fire-fighters pension liability of (£651.5m) was extremely large. If this liability was excluded, the Authority's Total Net Assets would be £149.0m. There was a significant reduction in the Firefighter Pension Scheme liability of £224.4m; a reduction of over a quarter. The change was due to several changes in actuarial assumptions, the most significant impact was a higher discount rate which was used to calculate the present value of future pension liabilities. As the discount rate increased, the pension liability decreased. The pension liability included estimated costs in relation to the McCloud judgement.

In relation to a question from County Councillor Salter, the Director of Corporate Finance explained that the overspend on premises (as listed in the table of page 20 of the agenda pack), was due to inflationary pressures and the significant increase in the cost of utilities.

County Councillor Singleton queried the meaning of intangible assets as mentioned on page 36 of the agenda pack. Adam Latham, Financial Accountant advised that intangible assets were not physical assets but consisted of the utilisation of software. The Director of Corporate Services added that where the Service spent money on implementing IT systems, it could be capitalised and depreciated over the life of the software.

In response to a question from County Councillor Clarke in relation to the sizable loss of Pensions Reserve from the previous year on page 65 of the agenda pack, the Director of Corporate Services explained that the reserve related to the unfunded firefighter pension scheme which meant that there were no assets to match the liability of £600m. The liability was reviewed every year by an Actuary relating to factors such as life expectancy, salary changes, and economic considerations. Regarding the reduction in liability, a substantial change had been the discount rate (the rate used to value the current cost of future pension obligations), which had largely been affected by inflation. Georgia Jones, Key Audit Partner, informed that the pension reserve matched the pension liability and so had reduced accordingly. It was noted by Members that it was an unusable reserve.

County Councillor Singleton queried whether the investments the Service had, were credible (page 49 of the agenda pack). The Director of Corporate Services confirmed that the investments were secure, and the Treasury Management Strategy set permitted establishments for investment. Laura Rix, Senior Auditor, advised that the Treasury Management Audit would provide more assurance and it was confirmed that the Audit concurred with the Treasury Management Audit at Lancashire County Council.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Singleton regarding council tax debt collection (page 51 of the agenda pack), and whether LFRS had any involvement of recovery of the debt, the Director of Corporate Services confirmed that recovery of the debt was the responsibility of district councils, and the Service had no involvement.

Resolved: - That the Committee approved the Statement of Accounts and

	authorised the Audit Committee Chair to sign them.
25/23	External Audit - Letter of Representation
	<p>As part of the year-end process, the Authority was required to sign a letter of representation. 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 by Members that there had been additional representation included this year in relation to Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC); that had been identified in one building which had been highlighted to the Auditor, and it was confirmed that the Service was not aware of any other property in the Authority's portfolio that was impacted by the issue.</p> <p>The Treasurer confirmed that he would sign the letter, as there were no issues which he felt required disclosure.</p> <p>Resolved: - That the Audit Committee authorised the signing of the letter by the Chair of the Committee.</p>
26/23	External Audit - Audit Findings Report
	<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 that summarised the conclusions from their audit work.</p> <p>The audit was substantially complete, and the auditors expected to issue an unqualified audit opinion following the Audit Committee meeting subject to receipt of the management letter of representation and final quality procedures. The Value For Money (VFM) work had been completed.</p> <p>Since the last report to the Audit Committee, the following areas of work had been completed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verified the responses from the pension fund auditor to gain assurances on underpinning controls and supporting data for the pension fund net liability. • Checked the International Financial Reporting Interpretation Committee (IFRIC 14) assessment from the actuary on the amount pension fund asset (surplus) in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and tested the amendments to the financial statements. • Tested the updated Government Actuary Department (GAD) report which reflected part year inflation for the valuation of the Firefighters pension fund and agreed the revised entries in the financial statements. • Completed testing on areas of land and buildings valuations, which included the examination of the assessment of the impact of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC).

- Completed testing on the fair value of financial instruments.
- Examined the Information Technology (IT) assessment on the data migration controls to the new Oracle Fusion system and completed additional work in that area.
- Checked the final set of financial statements.

Georgia Jones highlighted that the Lancashire Pension Fund auditor had provided assurances on the controls surrounding the validity and accuracy of membership data; contributions data and benefits data sent to the actuary by the pension fund and the fund assets valuation in the pension fund financial statements. The Authority obtained an IFRIC 14 assessment from its actuary which concluded the asset ceiling as £nil. The Authority had now updated the financial statements to reduce the Local Government pension fund net asset from £19.877m to £nil. Discussions were held with the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) on the level of inflationary increases within their assessment of the year end liability. GAD had not included part year inflation in their original calculations. As a result, the Authority received a revised assessment which increased the year end liability by £12,040k (from £639,496k to £651,536k). The Authority had updated the financial statements to reflect this.

Regarding the issue of incomplete or inaccurate financial information being transferred to the new general ledger, Georgia Jones informed that, to gain assurance over the completeness and accuracy of the data migration from Oracle EBS to Oracle Fusion for the preparation of the 2022/23 financial statements, Grant Thornton carried out a full substantive test on the balance transfer. It was found that they had all been correctly entered in the new Oracle Fusion system. In addition, additional work had been completed to check user access controls as part of the work on journals and no issues had arisen.

County Councillor Singleton queried whether the significant weakness identified on page 113 of the agenda pack would be classed as 'red' or 'high priority'. Georgia Jones explained that, as part of Value For Money work, a significant weakness had been identified and it would be classed as 'red' or 'high priority'. Further information was contained in the Auditors Annual Report 2022/23 in the agenda pack.

Resolved: - That the Committee:-

- Noted and endorsed the matters raised in the report;
- Noted and endorsed the Action Plan set out in Appendix 1 within the Audit Findings Report.

27/23

External Audit - Auditors Annual Report 2022/23

Georgia Jones, Key Audit Partner, presented the report.

Under the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice, the external auditors were required to consider whether the Service had in place, proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources.

As reported, the audit was substantially complete, and the auditors expected to

issue an unqualified audit opinion following the Audit Committee meeting subject to receipt of the management letter of representation and final quality procedures.

The auditors had made some improvement recommendations and had identified a significant weakness which had resulted in a key recommendation arising from their work on the Authority's value for money arrangements to secure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources. This key recommendation and management response was set out on Page 144 and 145 of the agenda pack as follows:

- Recommendation – The Authority needed to ensure it maintained a robust framework of financial governance to ensure risks to financial resilience and sustainability were adequately monitored and controlled. The Authority should: Develop a plan to address its general reserves position and its current use of reserves to balance its financial position. It needs to set out how its General Fund will be brought to a level that mitigates the risk to future financial sustainability; and Continue to take steps to contain expenditure and deliver sustainable savings.
- Management Comments – The Authority set its 2023/24 budget during a period of extreme financial uncertainty: at the time facing potential industrial action and an unsettled pay award dating back to the previous July. Having one of the highest levels of usable earmarked reserves and general reserves across all fire authorities, the Authority was in a strong financial position and the budget was set with the high expectation that the general reserve would be able to absorb the financial impact of the pay award, which it ultimately was able to. Other funding options were available such as reducing the capital programme commitments that would not have reduced reserves, but this strategy ensured there was no impact on services or the capital ambitions of the Authority. It was accepted that in setting the 2023/24 budget, a longer-term budget gap was forecast which would result in further reductions in the general reserve without additional funding or cost reductions. The Authority now had greater certainty on its capital programme costs and, at the time the report was written, expected the Authority to set its 2024/25 budget that planned to address the long-term general reserve forecast position.

Members noted that from the management comments that the external auditors were satisfied this key recommendation had been addressed in setting the budget for 2024/25. The Director of Corporate Services confirmed that the budget gap identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) had been addressed as part of setting the 2024/25 and the general reserve remained at £1m above the minimum level of reserves for the five-year period of the MTFS.

Resolved: - That the Committee noted the management comments and endorsed the report.

28/23

Internal Audit Monitoring Report

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

	<p>findings. The report for the period up to 01 March 2024 was presented by Laura Rix, Senior Auditor.</p> <p>To date, 58.50 days had been spent this financial year on completion of the 2023/24 plan, equating to 73% of the total planned audit activity of 80 days. The table in the report showed the current status of all audit work.</p> <p>Since the last Committee meeting, three audits had been completed: Equality Impact Assessments; District Planning Activity; and Human Resources/Payroll. District Planning Activity had an assurance rating of 'Limited', however, agreed actions had begun and Internal Audit were satisfied that the actions would resolve the issues identified in the report. No areas of concern had come to the attention of the auditors which needed to be brought to the attention of the Committee.</p> <p>Resolved: - That the Committee noted the report.</p>												
29/23	<p>Internal Audit Plan 2024/25</p>												
	<p>The Internal Auditors were required to produce an Annual Audit Plan, which set out areas they intended to review during the year. The plan amounted to a total resource of 70 audit days in 2024/25 which equated to an overall cost of £28,280 (the daily rate for auditors would be £380 and audit managers £450), which was consistent with previous years. The previous year had a total resource of 80 audit days due to additional work.</p> <p>A proposed plan was presented by Laura Rix, Senior Auditor.</p> <p>The internal audit plan was designed to provide the evidence necessary to support an opinion of governance, risk management and control as well as sufficient coverage over operations as a whole either on an annual or periodic basis to enable production of a robust annual audit opinion.</p> <p>Individual items were proposed for inclusion in the annual audit programme based on known changes to operational activity, systems or processes and information obtained from the annual governance review, from the review of the corporate risk register and by liaising with the Director of Corporate Services to establish his view of those areas where independent assurance would be welcomed.</p> <p>Where it was known that assurance would be provided from another body, the Internal Audit Service would not duplicate work but would take into account if it was relevant to the overall opinion on governance, risk management and control.</p> <p>The deployment of audit resources was proposed as follows: -</p> <table data-bbox="272 1787 1161 2040"> <tr> <td>Governance and business effectiveness</td> <td>3 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Service delivery and support</td> <td>30 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Business Processes</td> <td>24 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Follow up audit activity</td> <td>2 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other components of the audit plan</td> <td>11 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>70 days</td> </tr> </table>	Governance and business effectiveness	3 days	Service delivery and support	30 days	Business Processes	24 days	Follow up audit activity	2 days	Other components of the audit plan	11 days	Total	70 days
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Total	70 days												

	<p>Resolved: - That the Audit Committee agreed the Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25.</p>
30/23	<p>Risk Management</p>
	<p>The Director of Corporate Services presented the report to Members. Members were provided with a copy of the Corporate Risk Matrix as a supplement to the report.</p> <p>Improvements to Lancashire Fire and Rescue’s (LFRS) organisational risk management were identified to bolster its robustness. A proposal was presented to the Corporate Programme Board (CPB) in August 2023 which outlined a new LFRS risk management policy and procedure aligned with ISO 31000:2018 standards. This introduced a tiered approach to organisational risk and enhanced monitoring and management, as well as the adoption of a new corporate risk register, in line with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) template. Upon adoption, effective risk management practices were now integrated into quarterly CPB meeting agendas, strategic oversight was provided, legislative compliance was ensured, resource allocation was optimised, and risk reporting to the Combined Fire Authority was facilitated.</p> <p>The Audit Committee was a cornerstone of the Authority’s governance framework, tasked with providing independent assurance to governance stakeholders regarding the adequacy of LFRS’s risk management framework, annual governance processes, and internal control environment. Its primary function included evaluating the effectiveness of the Authority’s risk management arrangements. Accordingly, the report outlined recent enhancements to the LFRS risk management framework for consideration.</p> <p>The Civil Contingencies Act (CCA 2004) set out the legal framework for contingency arrangements to assess, plan and advise against LFRS organisational risks, be it departmental or corporate, however, there was no prescriptive way within the framework of doing that. Therefore, the Service had the freedom to manage risk using a method that ensured a clear governance structure that best met the needs of the business.</p> <p>This moral and statutory duty not only required LFRS to take all reasonable actions to safeguard its employees, assets, and the public, but also ensured that it was not financially or operationally disrupted. It could meet this duty by ensuring that risk management played an integral part in the governance of the Service at a strategic, tactical, and operational level.</p> <p>A comprehensive review of the corporate risk profile revealed adherence to fundamental aspects of risk management at LFRS. However, to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and bolster the robustness of the risk management framework, several proposed changes were identified. In parallel, the NFCC’s Business Continuity group broadened its scope to include risk within its Terms of Reference (ToR) and developed a corporate risk register template to be used across the fire sector.</p>

A proposal was presented to the Corporate Programme Board in August 2023, which outlined a new risk management policy, procedure, and alignment of the LFRS Corporate Risk Register with the NFCC template. This policy and procedure aligned with ISO 31000:2018, which ensured an accurate description and appropriate monitoring and management of LFRS risks. Additionally, a tiered approach to risk was introduced, which allowed for escalation or de-escalation as needed.

Effective risk management practices aligned with ISO 31000:2018 yielded numerous benefits for LFRS that included proactive risk mitigation, enhanced decision-making, clear accountability, and improved financial control. By integrating risk management into quarterly CPB meetings as a standing agenda item, LFRS aimed to provide strategic oversight of the risk management process. Overall, these measures enabled LFRS to fulfil its legislative duties and optimise resource allocation while providing a structured mechanism for reporting on risk to the Audit Committee.

A recent external audit, conducted by Grant Thornton, assessed the changes introduced to the LFRS organisational risk management framework and concluded that significant progress had been achieved. Since its establishment, the new Corporate Risk Register had undergone quarterly review and updates by all pertinent risk managers and owners.

In conclusion, recent enhancements to the LFRS risk management framework, aimed to ensure compliance with legislative requirements, bolster the robustness of risk management practices, and provide a structured mechanism for reporting to the Audit Committee, which further optimised resource allocation and strategic oversight.

Members noted that the top three risks identified in the risk register were:

- Loss of Funding (the Service had not received a long-term settlement over the last few years, however, the Service was working with the NFCC to lobby the government for a multiyear financial settlement that ensured financial sustainability);
- Cyber Security (actions were noted on page 233 of the agenda pack); and
- Retention and Recruitment of on-call Staff (actions were noted on page 239 of the agenda pack).

The Chair commented that the Service was transparent with information relating to any risks.

County Councillor Salter highlighted that on page 231 of the agenda pack, for the Risk of 'Inability to recruit or retain key staff', the current controls/mitigations were incorrect as they related to the risk of 'water' on page 233. The Director of Corporate Service confirmed that it would be amended.

In response to a question from County Councillor Singleton regarding the audit of Cyber Security, Laura Rix, Senior Auditor, explained that the Internal Auditors audited Resilience Contingences as it was administrative, however, once that was completed, it would then be decided whether external IT auditors would be required for the technical aspect of the audit.

	<p>In response to a question from County Councillor Hennessy in relation to the key recommendation of financial resilience and sustainability, the Director of Corporate Services advised that it was covered and cross referenced in the risk register under 'Loss of Funding' which impacted on the Service's financial sustainability.</p> <p>Resolved: - That the Committee: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Approved the new risk management policy, procedure, and the associated organisational risk register layout; ii) Endorsed the up-to-date Corporate Risk Register and its content.
31/23	Date of Next Meeting
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on 25 July 2024 at 10:00 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.</p> <p>Further meeting dates were noted for 26 September 2024 and agreed for 28 November 2024.</p>

M Nolan
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on Monday 24 June 2023

Proposed Amendments to Resources, Performance and Planning Committee Terms of Reference

(Appendices 1-3 refer)

Contact for further information: Mark Nolan, Clerk and Monitoring Officer
Telephone: 01772 866720

Executive Summary

The Authority last reviewed the Terms of Reference of all its committees in April 2018 (resolution 89/17 refers) and the Resources Committee in October 2022 (resolution 29/22 refers).

The Authority's constitutional provisions are regularly reviewed to ensure their efficacy and efficiency, as well as to ensure they are cosmetically up to date.

Members are asked to consider minor amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Resources, Performance and Planning Committees (highlighted) which represent minor changes to reflect certain recruitment processes being reserved to the full Authority and to reflect changes in labelling for those committees with responsibilities to the Community Risk Management Plan.

The Terms of Reference for the Audit and Appeals Committee, as well as the operating procedures for the Strategy Group will remain the same, following review, and remain appropriate and proportionate to the needs of the Authority in conducting its business.

Recommendation

The Authority is asked to approve the amendment to the revised terms of reference for the Resources Committee.

Information

Members will be aware that as busy professionals it can often be difficult to organise a recruitment sub-committee, despite requiring the appointment of three members, whereby until 2022 seven members were required. In maintaining the requirements of the Constitutional Contractual and Procedural Standing Orders, this will enable the Authority to expedite any recruitment practices, especially in the event of an emergency or if action is required quickly, to avoid any impact that additional delay may have upon the ability of the Authority and the Service to conduct business. Such change would serve to improve resilience and would be consistent with the Constitutional Contractual and Procedural Standing Orders, which also require the appointment of the Chief Fire Officer, Clerk and Treasurer to the Authority to be a matter reserved to the full Authority.

Business Risk

Governance arrangements form a key element of the control framework within which the Authority operates. The changes proposed are merely cosmetic and do not impact on the effectiveness or efficacy of either the Committee or the Authority.

Environmental Impact

None identified

Equality and Diversity Implications

None identified

HR Implications

The current recruitment processes envisaged will need to be referred to the full Authority, unless otherwise stated.

Financial Implications

None identified

Legal Implications

None identified

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper: Report to CFA and subsequent minute 29/22
Date: 3 October 2022
Contact: Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority
Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate: N/A

Paper: Report to CFA and subsequent minute 89/17
Date: April 2018
Contact: Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority
Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate: N/A

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Resources Committee Outline Terms of Reference

The Resources Committee meets four times each year. Political balance rules and regulations apply.

The Resources Committee remit specifically including Financial, Human Resources, Health and Safety, Property and Equipment related issues.

Core functions are:

- Monitor and review financial strategies including capital and revenue plans and treasury management (with the Audit Committee approving financial accounts);
- Consider, approve and adopt any new or significant revision to existing human resources strategies and policies, including Equality and Diversity;
- Other relevant issues outside the scope of the Scheme of Delegation including:
 - Budget monitoring (but not setting);
 - Implementation of Capital Programmes;
 - Consideration of financial implications of proposals involving increase in expenditure or reductions in income which have not been provided for within the Authority's budget;
 - Review and implementation of Health and Safety strategies to ensure compliance with Health and Safety legislation and best practice;
 - Acquisition or leasing of interests in land or property;
 - Public/Private partnership initiatives;
 - Information technology;
 - Equipment and vehicles;
 - Insurance.
- Appointments to the Executive Board posts via a politically balanced panel of 3 Resources Committee Members (appointed by the Resources Committee) together with the Chief Fire Officer (as direct line manager for the post) **save and except for the posts of Chief Fire Officer, Clerk to the Authority and Treasurer, appointments for which are reserved to the full Authority.**
- ~~Appointment of Clerk via a politically balanced panel of 3 Resources Committee Members (appointed by the Resources Committee);~~

- Review assimilation and response to appropriate Government Consultation documents on behalf of the Authority affecting fire and rescue authorities generally, from Central Government, LGA (Local Government Association), NFCC (National Fire Chiefs Council) or any other source.

The Committee will have decision making powers in relation to the above areas. In exceptional circumstances the Committee may refer issues to the Authority for a decision.

- Any items referred to the Committee by the Authority or Strategy Group who will indicate if a decision or recommendation is required, including any transitional matter referred to it for a decision.

It is also recommended that members of the Committee attend appropriate training where possible.

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Performance Committee Outline Terms of Reference

The Performance Committee meets four times each year. Political balance rules and regulations apply.

The Performance Committee's key responsibility is for all aspects of monitoring performance against established targets set by the Planning Committee, annually, to ensure that performance standards are maintained by reference to key performance indicators. The Committee's remit includes;

- All aspects of performance monitoring;
- Monitoring of implementation of the Authority's Corporate Plan;
- Monitoring of implementation of the ~~Integrated~~ **Community** Risk Management Plan;
- Review assimilation and response to appropriate Government Consultation documents on behalf of the Authority affecting fire and rescue authorities generally, from Central Government, LGA (Local Government Association), NFCC (National Fire Chiefs Council) or any other source.

The Committee will have decision making powers in relation to the above areas. In exceptional circumstances the Committee may refer issues to the Authority for a decision.

- Any items referred to the Committee by the Authority or Strategy Group who will indicate if a decision or recommendation is required, including any transitional matter referred to it for a decision.

It is also recommended that members of the Committee attend appropriate training where possible.

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Planning Committee Outline Terms of Reference

The Planning Committee meets three times each year. Political balance rules and regulations apply.

The Planning Committee's key responsibility is to consider and review ~~Integrated~~ Community Risk Management Plans and other specific plans/strategies. The Committee's remit includes:

- The Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service ('LFRS') ~~Integrated~~ Community Risk Management Plan;
- The LFRS Annual Service Plan;
- The LFRS Emergency Cover Review;
- Other strategic plans required of the Service by commissioning authorities or central government, as required from time to time;
- Policies and methodologies for public consultation and commissions public consultation, including:
 - Reporting on the outcome of consultation exercises;
 - Reviewing and implementing the Authority's communication strategies;
 - Reviewing the Authority's approach to consultation.
- Contingency Planning Arrangements;
- Review assimilation and response to appropriate Government Consultation documents on behalf of the Authority affecting fire and rescue authorities generally, from Central Government, LGA (Local Government Association), NFCC (National Fire Chiefs Council) or any other source.

The Committee will have decision making powers in relation to the above areas. In exceptional circumstances the Committee may refer issues to the Authority for a decision.

- Any items referred to the Committee by the Authority or Strategy Group who will indicate if a decision or recommendation is required, including any transitional matter referred to it for a decision.

It is also recommended that members of the Committee attend appropriate training where possible.

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 24 June 2024

Programme of Meetings for 2025/26

Contact for further information – Sam Hunter – Member Services Manager – Tel No 01772 866720

Executive Summary

A programme of meetings for the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) for 2025/26.

Recommendation

The Authority is asked to agree the programme of meetings for 2025/26 as set out in the report now presented.

Information

At the meeting of the Combined Fire Authority held 26 June 2023, the CFA agreed a programme of Meetings for 2024/25. It is now necessary to agree a programme of dates for 2025/26.

In considering suitable dates, the following points have been taken into consideration: -

- i. A preference previously expressed that meetings of the CFA be held on Mondays commencing at 1030 hours at the Training Centre, Euxton.
- ii. Standing Order No 2.2 of the CFA which states that the Authority must hold an Annual Meeting between 1st April and the 30th June each year.
- iii. Standing Order 2.3a of the CFA, which states that a programme of meetings for the Authority should be determined annually by the Authority and additional meetings of the Authority held as determined by the Authority or at the discretion of the Chair.
- iv. Approval to undertake consultation on the budget was delegated to the Chair in consultation with the Treasurer and Chief Fire Officer (resolution 10/18 refers) enabling one budget meeting to be held in February, at which Members will consider and agree a final budget and the resultant council tax implications.

For information, the following dates have previously been agreed for 2024/25: -

22 April 2024
24 June 2024 (Annual Meeting of the CFA)
16 September 2024
16 December 2024

17 February 2025 (Budget Meeting)

Proposed dates for 2025/26 are: -

23 April 2025
18 June 2025 (Annual Meeting of the CFA)
10 September 2025
10 December 2025

23 February 2026 (Budget Meeting)

Business Risk

None

Environmental Impact

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

None

HR Implications

None

Financial Implications

None

Legal Implications

None

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper: CFA Constitutional Standing Orders
Date: 22 February 2021
Contact: Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager

Paper: CFA Minutes
Date: 26 June 2023
Contact: Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager

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

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on Monday 24 June 2024

Annual Safety, Health and Environment Report 2023/24

Appendix 1 refers

Contact for further information – Bob Warren, Director of People and Development
Tel: 01772 866(804)

Executive Summary

Attached in full at Appendix 1 is the Annual Safety, Health and Environment Report for Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service (LFRS) covering the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

As the body with ultimate responsibility for staff safety, health and environmental compliance it is important that all CFA Members are aware of performance of the Service in this respect. The report therefore provides a summary of overall progress and performance in respect of accidents and near misses, carbon emissions and environmental performance, health and wellbeing initiatives, together with a look forward to planned improvement areas for 2024/25.

Recommendation(s)

The Authority is asked to note the report and associated safety, health, environment and wellbeing performance outcomes.

Information

This report includes performance information for safety, health, environment and wellbeing within LFRS.

Business risk

From a legal, economic and moral standpoint, several health and safety and environmental compliance obligations are imposed on the Authority.

The Health and Safety Executive and Environment Agency will readily take enforcement action where significant or recurring failures are identified.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

LFRS continues to manage the environmental risks and issues with impact directly on the Service through the externally accredited ISO14001 Environmental Management System which details our environmental aspects and impacts together with the measures taken to control and mitigate risks.

The changing climate continues to impact on the Service response activities, particularly in relation to increasing attendance at flooding and wildfire incidents. Carbon management within the LFRS estate and vehicle fleet is a growing issue, with

the impact on utility and energy use which the Service is seeking to mitigate through the Carbon Management Plan and our aspirations to move to a wider sustainability plan for LFRS.

Equality and Diversity Implications

No specific implications from this report.

Data Protection (GDPR)

Will the proposal(s) involve the processing of personal data? Y/N

If the answer is yes, please contact a member of the Democratic Services Team to assist with the appropriate exemption clause for confidential consideration under part 2 of the agenda.

HR implications

The Authority is committed to providing a safe and healthy workforce which is particularly important in the context of emergency service operations, and which requires ongoing and effective health and safety management arrangements.

Financial implications

None directly.

Legal implications

There is a range of legislative impacts imposed on LFRS relating to safety, health and environmental aspects. These are identified and tracked by the LFRS SHE Department who maintain legal registers and assessments of compliance which is a key part of the ISO certification held by the Service.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper	Date	Contact
Annual Safety, Health and Environment Report 2019/20	14 th September 2020	Director of People and Development Bob Warren Telephone 01772 866804
Annual Safety, Health and Environment Report 2020/21	28 th June 2021	
Annual Safety, Health and Environment Report 2021/22	27 th June 2022	
Annual Safety, Health and Environment Report 2022/23	26 th June 2023	



Annual Safety, Health and Environment Report 2023-2024

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Introduction

This report summarises the arrangements in place to deliver the Service's Safety, Health and Environment Policy and provides a summary of safety, health and environment performance data.

It includes the reporting on occupational safety, health, wellbeing and environmental issues that have arisen during the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) Safety, Health, Environment and Wellbeing Management Arrangements

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority (CFA) has overall responsibility for the effective governance of safety, health and environment (SHE). The CFA is responsible for agreeing the safety, health and environment policy and for ensuring adequate resources are available for SHE purposes.

The CFA will provide a clear direction for the Executive Board and Service Management Team to establish policies and procedures and manage safety, health and environment performance effectively.

Whilst individual members of staff, supervisors and managers all have responsibility for safety, health and environment, the Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) Department provides competent professional advice and oversees the day-to-day management of health, safety, wellbeing and environmental activities.

The LFRS Safety, Health, Environmental and Wellbeing Management System is based on:

- Health and Safety Executive guidance HSG 65 – Successful Health and Safety Management
- International Standard for a Health and Safety Management System ISO 45001:2018.
- International Standard for Environment Management Systems ISO 14001:2015.
- International Standard for Psychological health and safety at work ISO 45003:2021



LFRS Health, Safety and Wellbeing Plan

The Service continues to work towards the aims and aspirations detailed within the LFRS Health, Safety and Wellbeing Plan. The plan sets out a 5-year vision for all aspects of Health, Safety and Wellbeing, covering 2022-2027.

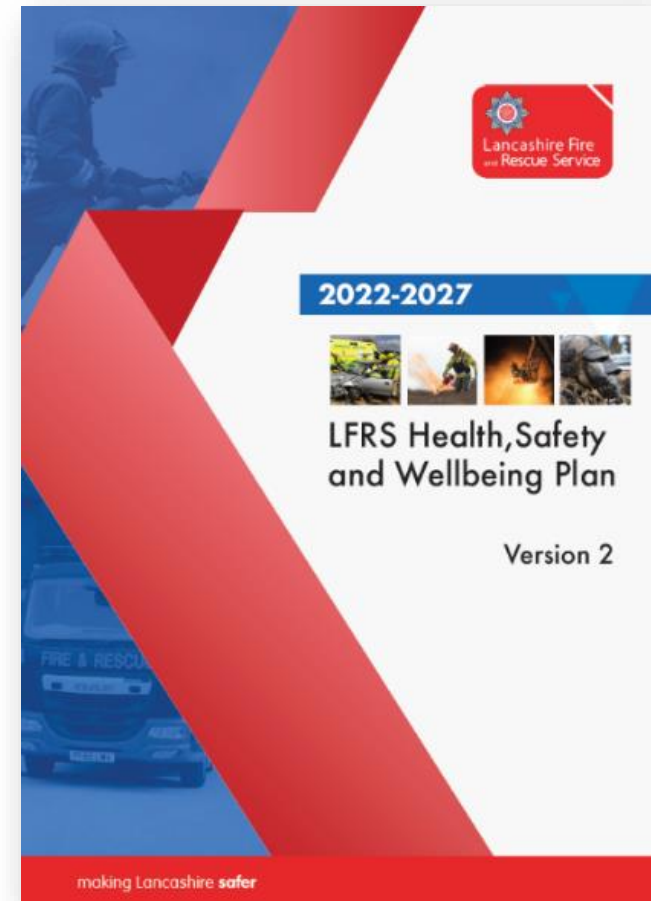
Building on the 1st version published in 2021, we adopted a new approach with the launch of revised version in November 2022, which sets out our approach to dealing with our existing risk profile and looks forward to emerging challenges that could impact on safety and wellbeing of staff.

This document is part of the suite of delivery plans, which support the LFRS People Strategy and the aims and objectives within the LFRS SHE Policy.

The plan sets out what our drivers and influences are, how we control risks and what are our aspirations for continual improvement, particularly in relation to the key developing areas of risk within the Sector.

The scope of our arrangements now extends beyond traditional workplace health and safety. We also now continue to ensure that the Service considers the best practice requirements which are outlined in the ISO 45003 document, Psychological health and safety at work — Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks.

The Service's Health, Safety & Environment Advisory Group (HSEAG) is responsible for developing specific objectives and targets relating to LFRS SHE Performance, and outcomes of the annual SHE Management Review striving for continual SHE improvements over the course of each year.



Controlling Risk within LFRS

The varied nature of the Service's work activities and working environments means that there is a broad range of risks to manage, sometimes in challenging high hazard environments. The level of risk to both employees and service users can be identified from several of the Service's performance measures including the:

- Total number of accidents reported by employees and non-LFRS staff.
- Number of safety events reported to the Health and Safety Executive under the RIDDOR regulations.
- Number of near miss events reported.
- Number of absence days lost following an accident at work.
- Type of events that are being reported.
- Carbon emissions from LFRS premises and vehicles.

The SHE Policy and the wider SHE Management System are devised to promote safe systems of work and minimise the risk of injury to employees and visitors and reduce the impact to the environment. The SHE Department develops bespoke and proportionate procedures for LFRS, minimising 'red tape' and focusing on controlling the real risks in LFRS workplaces. Managers, through devolved safety, health and environment responsibilities, ensure that recognised safe systems of work are being applied 'as far as is reasonably practicable'.

To ensure that the Service continues to meet its legal obligations in respect of safety, health, and environment we ensure that all policies, procedures, instructions and guidance are regularly reviewed and updated. We ensure that we are aware of any developments relating to legislation and guidance which impacts on workplace health and safety. SHE training is refreshed, a minimum every three years together with any specific training required by role.

SHE performance is reviewed on a regular basis, through high level scrutiny via the CFA Performance Committee and at Director Level through the HSEAG meeting chaired by the Director of People and Development together with the Health and Safety Consultation Committee chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.



External Audit of the Health and Safety and Environment Management Systems 2024

LFRS utilises a UKAS accredited external audit process to provide assurance of the effectiveness of safety, health and environment management systems to the internationally recognised ISO standards. Since initial certification in November 2011, surveillance visits have been conducted annually and re-certification every three years to maintain the external certification.

In February and March 2023, the auditor from British Assessment Bureau (BAB) carried out an audit against the International Standards for health and safety ISO 45001:2018 and environment ISO 14001:2015.

The audit scope for both standards was '**The Provision of Fire, Rescue and Supporting Services across Lancashire**'. This broad scope encompasses all LFRS activities with audit visits to the Service Headquarters (SHQ) site, Service Training Centre (STC), four fire stations operating different duty systems together with several supporting departments including Safety, Health and Environment, Fleet and Engineering Services, Human Resources, Training and Operational Review, and Property.

Both ISO standards have a range of clause requirements, which identify how an organisation should manage different aspects of safety, health and environmental issues within the workplace.

LFRS is required to provide a range of evidence to demonstrate that we meet the requirement of the Standards and have robust arrangements in place within the Service.

Continued certification has been granted for ISO 45001:2018 and ISO14001:2015. LFRS received no non-conformances (minor or major) for this audit. One opportunity for improvement was identified related to how we manage redundant items such as expired items from first aid kits which are used for training and make sure these do not become confused with in use items.

The report from BAB highlighted aspects of our arrangements:

Based on the results of this audit and the system's demonstrated state of development and maturity, continued management system certification is recommended. This recommendation will be independently verified by the British Assessment Bureau Head Office.

An interview took place with Bob Warren (Director of People and Development (DoPD)) who showed a good understanding of the processes connected with OH and S and plays an active part developing a proactive learning culture within the organisation. It was clear that his role was to guide, oversee and challenge. This is demonstrated by his role as Chair of the Health Safety and Environment Advisory Group (HSEAG).

Top Management commitment to ensuring the policies and objectives remain compatible with the strategic direction of the business, that the OH and S and operational process remain integrated and effective, that the relevant resources are available for effectively maintaining the OH and S, that they regularly communicate the importance of adhering to the OH and S and that they are promoting its continual improvement. Top Management are invested in the successful maintenance of the OH and S.

Fire Fighters gave a detailed explanation of the methods of communication in relation to health, safety and the environment. This included Posters, notices the HSA03 Station audit program, operational Assurance briefing notes, SHE department briefing notes, Quarterly SHE reports and REC1 notes which are distributed and acknowledged on the Learn Pro System, as well as briefings.

Management engagement with recognised Trade Unions is undertaken to facilitate open dialogue around Health, Safety and the Environment. This was noted for the Health and Safety Consultation Meeting Dated 29/01/2024 which included representation from the Fire Brigades Union, UNISON and the Fire Officers Association. There is also a LFRS Health, Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2022-27 which was reviewed during the audit noting plans and improvements planned and intended for the next 3 years.

Risk Assessment and hazard identification in relation to fire fighting activities is in place and is integral to fire fighter training, appliance selection and management and response to individual incidents.

The Chief Fire Officer and the Chair of the Combined Fire Authority recognise health, safety and wellbeing as a high priority and an integral part of an effective Fire and Rescue Service (FRS).

As part of the audit, additional areas for improvement were also identified by LFRS staff and these have been taken forward through the Service's HSEAG meeting. LFRS remains committed to the use of the ISO standards and is one of the few fire services in the UK who undergo this level of external scrutiny.

Working with Representative Bodies

During the year we have continued to enjoy a positive working relationship with the Representative Bodies on health and safety issues. The Service consults formally on a quarterly basis, working together to ensure safety, health and wellbeing concerns are resolved. Safety Representatives play a vital role in improving our health and safety culture whilst reducing our impacts on the environment.

The Health and Safety Consultation Committee is chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, attended by safety representatives from the following representative bodies:

- Fire Brigades Union (FBU).
- UNISON
- Fire Officers Association (FOA).
- Fire and Rescue Services Association (FRSA).

The consultation committee meeting allows each organisation to raise issues relating to health, safety and wellbeing with senior management in the Service.

During 2024, we welcomed two new Brigade Health and Safety Representatives from the FBU who have undergone an induction to role. The Service ensures that we have arrangements in place to meet all aspects of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977.



The Fire Officers' Association



Health and Safety Performance

Active Monitoring of our health and safety performance is integrated into day-to-day work within the Service. This includes a Service wide approach to workplace inspections at all of our workplace locations for both health and safety and environmental hazards and risks.

In addition to day-to-day monitoring of health and safety by our managers, active monitoring features extensively during operational incidents and forms an essential part of the Incident Command System at all levels. Operational incidents are monitored, debriefed and outcome reviews are carried out to ensure that continuous learning from incidents is achieved through our Operational Assurance function.

The Service has implemented a system of robust reactive monitoring of safety events through the accident reporting and accident investigation procedures. The SHE department co-ordinates and controls this system, with line managers being responsible for implementation across the Service.

During 2023/2024 there were:

- **97 accidents** (74 to LFRS staff and 23 to non-LFRS staff) each event being investigated and recorded in line with service policy.
- **85 near misses** (72 near misses and 13 near miss attacks on staff) that were investigated, and when appropriate learning was fed back into the service policy, procedure, or risk assessment.
- There were **11 RIDDOR** events that were reported to the Health and Safety Executive; 1 major specified injury; 9 resulting from over 7 day's absence and 1 event involving a member of the public.

Following a challenging early-year period in Q1, this year has overall seen an increase in the number of accidents to staff members by 21% when compared to 2022/23. While considering the level of RIDDOR reports, we remain consistent with last year and overall, the nature of our accidents remains low severity. Strain and sprain type injuries are the most prevalent within LFRS which is the consistent position the Service has seen for some time now.

A summary of the total accident and accident-related absence statistics for 2023/24 are detailed below in Table 1.

Category	Number
RIDDOR reportable – major specified injuries / diseases	1
RIDDOR > 7-day absence	9
RIDDOR – Member of the Public	1
Other injuries – Lost Time	17
Minor – no time lost (also includes Non-LFRS staff)	69
Near Miss + (Near Miss Attacks on Staff)	72 (13)

Table 1 – Breakdown of LFRS safety event categories.

The figures in Table 2 relate to working days lost due to work related injury or illness. The overall trend is downward from absence following work related injury/illness, however the figures reported in 2018/19, 2020/21 and 2021/22 have seen a small number of staff away from work for long term absences related to safety events which has impacted the overall performance.

Year	Days Lost
2015/16	331
2016/17	205
2017/18	245
2018/19	377
2019/20	264
2020/21	352
2021/22	511
2022/23	229
2023/24	282

Table 2 – working days lost to accidents.

Figure 1 gives a background position on the safety performance of LFRS since 2016/17:

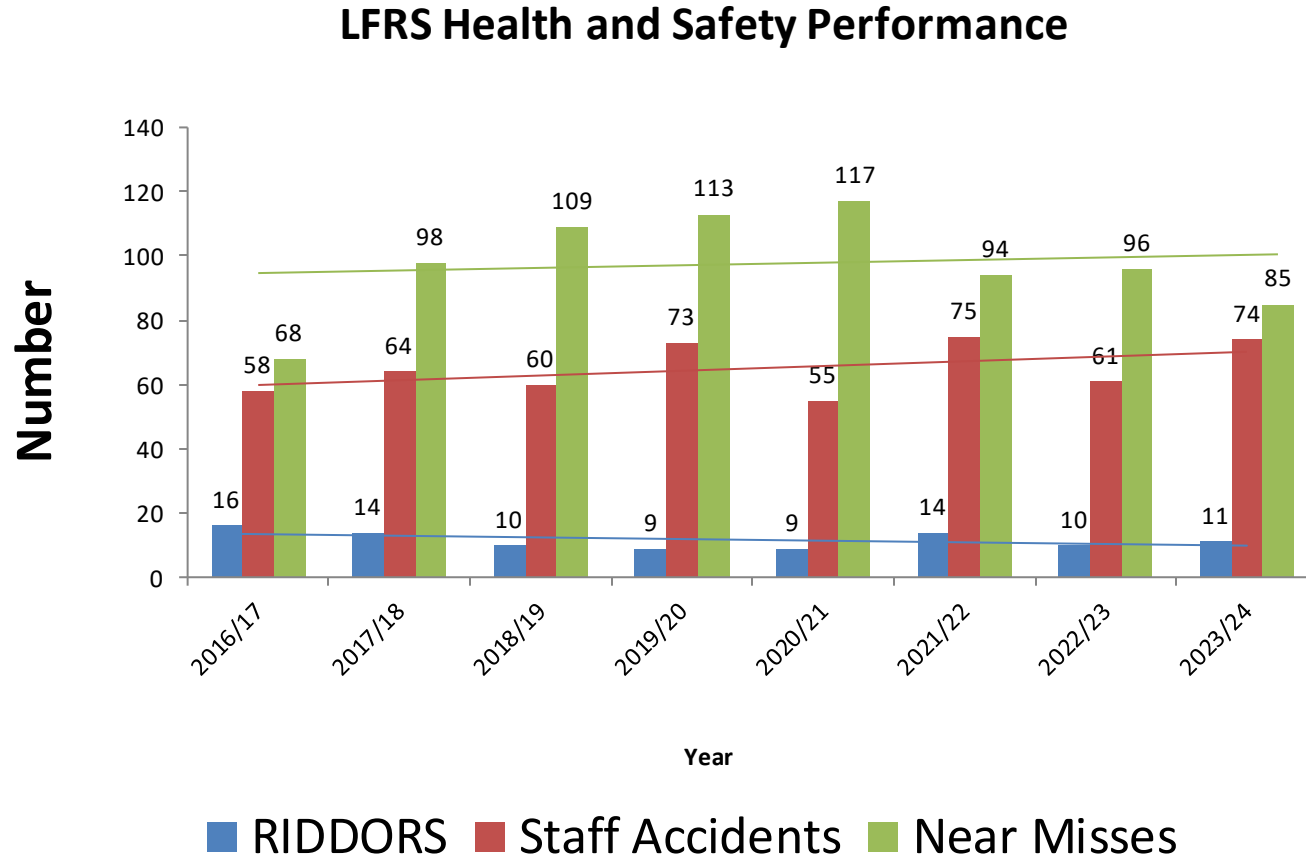


Figure 1 – LFRS Safety Performance 2016/2017 to 2023/2024

Table 3 shows the types of accidents that were reported during 2023/24 comparing the last five year's performance with the numbers for each category.

Type of Accident	LFRS Staff 2023/24	LFRS Staff 2022/23	LFRS Staff 2021/22	LFRS Staff 2020/21	LFRS Staff 2019/20	Non-LFRS staff 2023/24	Non-LFRS staff 2022/23	Non-LFRS staff 2021/22	Non-LFRS staff 2020/21	Non-LFRS staff 2019/20
Handling lifting or carrying	28	14	24	11	18	4	2	1	-	1
Hit by moving, flying or falling object	11	7	5	4	12	3	3	-	-	2
Slip trip fall	10	10	12	5	12	4	3	1	-	2
Hit something fixed or stationary	8	8	9	3	4	3	7	2	-	5
Other	4	5	15	10	15	2	3	2	-	2
Injured by an animal	1	1	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Fall from Height	-	1	2	1	1	1	1	-	-	2
Exposed to fire	4	2	2	5	1	-	-	-	-	-
Exposed to harmful substance	5	10	-	11	4	-	-	-	1	-
Exposed to an explosion	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Contact with Electricity	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Hit by a moving vehicle	2	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Contact with Moving Machinery	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	-	1	-
Drowned or Asphyxiated	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Physically assaulted by a person	1	-	3	2	2	2	-	4	-	-
Trapped by Something Collapsing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	74	61	75	55	73	23	19	10	2	15

Table 3 – Types of accidents in 2023/24 compared to past performance in 2019/20 – 2022/23.

Near Miss Reporting

A near miss event is an unplanned and unforeseeable event in which there is no injury, but the potential to cause injury should it occur again. The near miss reporting category also includes events which have resulted in attacks on LFRS staff, but did not result in any injury to them, for example operational staff being subjected to verbal abuse or a fireworks attack.

Table 3 shows sustained number of near misses being reported each year assisting in the prevention of accidents within the workplace. A wide range of learning opportunities have been captured in relation to stations/building, equipment, appliances/vehicles, operational procedures and breathing apparatus issues.

Year	Number of Near misses
2016/17	68
2017/18	98
2018/19	109
2019/20	113
2020/21	117
2021/22	94
2022/23	96
2023/24	97

Table 3 - Near Miss Reporting

Vehicle Accidents

Table 4 shows the number of accidents involving fleet vehicles from 2016/17 to 2023/24. Analysis of the type of accidents LFRS vehicles have been involved in during 2023/24 has shown that most accidents occur during vehicle manoeuvring at slow speeds.

The Road Risk Review Panel (RRRP) examines the trends and outcomes from fleet vehicle accidents and current working practices. The RRRP group members have been meeting during the year to identify learning from vehicle accidents, identify wider trends about the cause and what measures we can take to improve performance. A key enhancement in the area is the continued roll-out of vehicle CCTV systems being fitted to fleet vehicles.

Year	Number of Vehicle Accidents
2016/17	67
2017/18	58
2018/19	74
2019/20	69
2020/21	67
2021/22	90
2022/23	61
2023/24	65

Table 4 Number of Vehicle Accidents

Improvement Actions during 2023/24

LFRS ensures continuous improvement is made in safety, health, environmental and wellbeing aspects within the Service.

As part of our annual workplan, the SHE Department team undertake a programme of reviews and internal checks to ensure that we manage risk correctly and are implementing Service policies. We have reviewed the following aspects of our systems during 2023/24:

- Risk Assessment
- Lone Working
- F Gases in Refrigeration, Air Conditioning & Fire Protection Systems
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Section 2 Organisational Arrangements
- Radiation
- Hazardous Waste Registrations and Waste Permits
- Smoking at Work
- Safe Storage & Handling of Hazardous Substances
- Violence at Work
- Management Standards Compliance
- COSHH Register and Assessment Review
- Legionella
- Young People/Work Experience
- Fire and Management of Other Emergencies
- Noise

We have carried out the following during 2023/24:

- Managed the suite of risk assessments for LFRS activities, reviewing existing assessments and producing new documents to support new activities/risks, equipment and vehicles.
- Continued to maintain and develop the safety, health, environment and wellbeing management system by carrying out programmed reviews of policies and Service Order documents to ensure their currency and continued suitability.

- Reviewed and monitored our waste management arrangements, with targeted work across several sites to help these locations increase recycling.
- Ensured joint working on assurance monitoring for operational activity, sharing learning and trends from accidents and near miss events to ensure continual learning within the LFRS operational environment to ensure firefighter safety.
- Integrated the fitness function within the wider SHE Department team, strengthening cross-departmental collaboration to manage staff fitness and our fitness testing arrangements for operational staff.
- Continued to develop our approach to managing psychological risks within the workplace and improving health and wellbeing support to LFRS.

The Service has continued to deliver enhancements which have positive impacts to staff safety, including:

- Evaluating a tracked firefighting robot with remotely controlled monitor for entry into hazardous areas.
- Body Worn video cameras and enhanced personal protective equipment being evaluated for circumstances when staff members may be in situations where there is a risk of violence or attack.
- 13 new B type fire appliances and support vehicles as part of the vehicle replacement schedule.
- Started the roll-out of Holmatro battery powered cutting equipment, removing the need for hydraulic hoses and separate petrol engine driven power packs.
- New vehicles to assist command and control of incidents with a light Command Support Unit (CSU) and two main Command Unit vehicles delivered to LFRS.
- Development of command support electronic software which provides the ability to complete an electronic analytical risk assessment on the incident ground.



Health and Wellbeing



In September 2023 we launched Peer Support Ambassadors to bolster our peer support network. Colleagues who volunteer to be a Peer Support Ambassador attend a 2-hr workshop about active listening, signposting, raising awareness of mental health and reducing the stigma around mental conversations. Workshops will be held every year to increase the number of peer supporters available.

The focus of mental health awareness training across the Service is personal resilience; building and maintaining. This also supports our continued embedding of ISO 45003, with the introduction of a 12-month pilot of a co-developed programme (with the Fire Fighters Charity). The aim of the programme is to increase personal resilience of staff and includes elements of positive psychology, relaxation coping strategies and suicide awareness. There are specific operational elements that include operational shared experiences, responding to mental health related incidents and a more detailed awareness of the impact of trauma on individuals. The programme is receiving positive feedback within LFRS and interest from other Fire and Rescue Services across the UK.



Wellbeing Wednesdays continue to be received well by colleagues. Working from a different station/office on a regular basis to provide the opportunity for staff to ask questions about the wellbeing resources, receive wellbeing toolbox talks, have a visit from a Wellbeing Support Dog, have a general wellbeing chat etc. This delivery model brings the opportunity to staff is providing popular and effective, with an increase of wellbeing interactions seen as result. Each station/office will continue to receive at least one Wellbeing Wednesday visit per year.

With the success of last year’s wellbeing events planning day, members of our peer support network (TRiM, Wellbeing Support Dog handlers, Peer Support Ambassadors) came together to develop the Wellness Events calendar for 2024/25. Each month one of our peer supporters will lead a wellness event, supported by fellow peer supporters.

The Fitness function continues to be integrated into the SHE Department, with significant pieces of work including:

- Fitness Service Order review and the introduction of station-based six-monthly fitness assessments.
- Procurement of a new gym equipment servicing and maintenance contract.

‘Health and Wellbeing Look ahead’

- Moving forwards into the 2024/25 year, we will focus on the following areas:
- Continue to facilitate Fire Fighter Charity workshops, 16 wellbeing workshops are booked for 2024/25.
- Roll out functional fitness kit to all stations and provide positive fitness promotions to encourage Green Book staff to take part in fitness activities, alongside Grey Book colleagues.
- Explore options for a replacement programme of cardio fitness equipment, to be undertaken over the next 3 years.
- Expand the pilot delivery of Responding to Trauma and Emotions, to provide mental health/suicide awareness training for all staff.
- Facilitate a Trauma Support Task and Finish Group, with a focus of reviewing post trauma support resources for high-risk roles within LFRS.

Wellness Events Calendar 2024/25

2024	April	Wellbeing Resources Roadshow	Raise awareness of peer support resources available including peer support of Fire Support Ambassadors and Fire Fighter Change.
	May	Mental Health Awareness Challenge	Launch the challenge, similar to the Army's Mental Health Challenge. Aim to increase mental health awareness and reduce stigma.
	June	Post Traumatic Stress Trauma	Provide peer support of PSTD, PTSD risks and non-operational. Focus on dealing with trauma and the support that is available.
	July	Alcohol Awareness	Raise awareness of alcohol consumption, reduction, impact on officers etc. including links to road safety and the 'no one left behind'.
	August	BBQ Month	Normal to a day in August, to host BBQs across the division, including partner police stations and Fire and Rescue Scotland.
	September	Cancer Awareness	Raise awareness of Cancer, in terms of having the right resources support available, how to recognise symptoms etc.
	October	Arthritis Awareness	Raise awareness of the impact of arthritis on mental health, impact on the physical, how to cope and how to live with it.
	November	Men's Health	Provide the male members and encourage men to talk about their feelings and health needs, including support available.
	December	Fitness	Focus on improving everyone's fitness, not just operational. In the winter months competition with a focus on achievable goals.
2025	January	Sleep	Raise awareness of Sleep Hygiene. Equip staff with the 'Jumbo' First Aid pack and provide to all sleep in 2 minutes – 2025 goal.
	February	Relaxation	Delivery of relaxation and mindfulness courses which are available throughout February – in partnership.
	March	Nutrition and Hydration	Emphasis on increasing new skills on the food and beverage knowledge of other catering methods.

Firefighter PPE Contamination

Our work on PPE contamination has continued during 2023/24, progressing through our actions identified after the gap analysis of the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), Minimising firefighters' exposure to toxic fire effluents – Interim Best Practice Report.

We are also collaborating regionally with our neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services, through the National Fire Chiefs Council Health and Safety meeting structure. The North West region are contributing to the national improvement work on contaminants, developing a work package on training and competence.



At STC, we continue to use the leading facilities for the management of contamination during breathing apparatus training with the dirty to clean workflow designed into the building to allow staff to remove any harmful residues after training. At the start of 2024, we have begun to consider how we can reduce the impacts of contaminants from live fire burns at the initial design stage for new training facilities which are planned for the Training Centre site.

An additional enhancement in 2023/24 we have introduced into STC is the De-Wipe After Fire Hair & Body Wash. This product is formulated to assist removal of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) present in soot, dirt and smoke. Following some positive feedback from our firefighters on this product, we will undertake a further evaluation of this product across our fire stations.

Environmental Performance

Carbon Emissions



The current Carbon Management Plan includes a target of 40% carbon emission reduction by March 2030 from a baseline of 4352 tonnes of CO² in 2007/08.

The Service achieved an **overall reduction of 25.4% by March 2023**. This related to our measured carbon emissions for gas, electric and fleet vehicle fuel.

Separately, water is currently seeing a 30% reduction from baseline year, noting this is not as high as 2018/19, which showed a 46% reduction.

The data will be shared individually with stations involving both Environmental Champions and Station Managers, allowing comparisons to be made by station over several years.

LFRS has submitted a bid for the Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund, which if successful, will support us in progressing building audits for the majority of the estate, considering suitability for carbon reduction and energy generation measures.

Waste Management

LFRS created 105.7 tonnes of waste in 2023/24, including increases from 2022/23 of 7.7% for general waste and 5.2% for dry mixed recyclable waste. The **overall recycling rate across the service remains very good at 34%**. Waste data is shared with all stations via their Environmental Champions and Station Managers and the 'Waste Less' promotions will continue to be developed.

There were some excellent results from those stations identified last year as needing further focus. The SHE Department continue to work with Station Managers, Environmental Champions, and other staff to better understand the reasons behind these results to assist in improving waste management across LFRS.



Fire-fighters' Charity Recycling Banks

LFRS continues to support the Fire Fighters Charity with 24 Lancashire fire stations currently having a clothing/textile recycling bank. For each tonne of clothing, a donation is made to the Fire-fighter's Charity.

In 2023/24, the banks had collected over 48.5 tonnes of textiles. This has raised £10,294 for the charity.



Reducing Waste

Whilst recycling is good, we can do better. The most effective way to reduce our waste is by reducing what we buy. During 2023/24, we have begun to focus a number of promotions around our new 'Waste Less' branding. We have introduced reusable coffee cups to meeting areas, starting with SHQ. These are placed with the coffee machines along with a poster developed with the help of our Corporate Communications Department.

We also provided each station with a uniform repair kit, an idea which originally came from one of our Environmental Champions, who recognised that uniform was being thrown away for simple things such as a missing button.

The overarching 'Waste Less' message in these promotions is to prevent the waste at source.



Promotions and Wider Engagement

During the 2023-24 period, each quarter saw a key environmental promotion which was displayed at SHQ, communicated via the Engine House intranet, Routine Bulletin and by the Environmental Champions.

We now have 45 Environmental Champions across the Service. The promotions included Plastic Free July, Cycle to Work Day, Recycle Week, Energy Saving Week and Earth Hour. Focus was also given to ensuring staff know how to advise members of the public who bring hazardous waste to station.

Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA)

During 2023/24 we have increased our staff skill base on environmental aspects, using the programmes offered by IEMA. The Assistant SHE Advisor completed the Level 5 IEMA Certificate in Environmental Management, following which their application for Practitioner Membership of IEMA was successful.

The Environment and Sustainability Group members completed the IEMA 2 day Pathways to Net Zero course, this learning has been able to assist us in developing the replacement carbon management plan for LFRS with a move towards adopting a net zero vision.



Climate Fresk

20 members of staff across the organisation (including some of our Environmental Champions) have attended the Climate Fresk half day workshop trial that seeks to broaden knowledge and understanding of climate change.

Looking Ahead

The Environment and Sustainability Group (formally Carbon Management Team) have developed a new Environmental Sustainability Plan which we hope to launch during 2024/25. This plan will outline our current position and our vision for reaching net zero emissions by 2050.

Table 5 shows the carbon emission performance for 2023/24 against the 2007/08 baseline and previous year's performance with the carbon emissions for 2016/17 to 2023/24.

	Baseline 2007/08	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	% change on previous year	% change since baseline 2007/08
Buildings	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)		
Electricity	1600	1581	1592	1495	1478	1484	1457	1379	1356	1.7%	15.3%
Gas	1594	934	1025	901	988	1032	939	875	904	(3.4%)	43.3%
Total	3194	2515	2617	2396	2466	2516	2396	2254	2260	0.3%	29.2%

Transport	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)		
Fuel	1158	796	858	968	882	816	872	953	986	(3.4%)	14.9%

Service Total	4352	3311	3475	3364	3347	3332	3268	3207	3246	-1.2%	25.4%
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Shown separately in Carbon Management Plan

Water	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)	Carbon (tonnes)		
	9.1	5.8	5.4	4.9	6.4	5.7	5.3	5.9	6.3	(8.1%)	30%

Table 5 Carbon Emissions Reductions 2023/24

A Look Ahead to 2024/25

Looking to 2024/25, the key safety, health and environment priorities are to:

- Refresh the LFRS Safety, Health and Environment Policy statement.
- Maintain the LFRS certification to ISO 45001:2018 and ISO14001:2015 standards and continually improve the SHE Management System.
- Continue to implement the LFRS Health, Safety and Wellbeing 5-year plan and progress the aspirational development items within the Service.
- Remain focussed on the safety, health and environmental issues on our fire stations and other sites to enhance internal checks.
- Review reduction activities we can implement on accidents and injury related sickness absence related to strain/sprain type musculoskeletal injuries which are predominant within the Service and occur during manual handling tasks.
- Engage and support our Environmental Champions to promote the reduction of wastage in all areas, including the continued reduction of carbon emissions from energy and fuel use. With a focus also on reducing waste collected by following the waste hierarchy, starting with considering the items we purchase, right through to increasing recycling where this is a best possible option.
- Deliver our programme of wellbeing promotional and awareness activities, promoting availability of our key wellbeing resources to staff members.
- Examine our current arrangements for supporting staff in the aftermath of dealing with traumatic operational incidents to ensure they are able to access the right support and ensure they can retain their personal resilience.
- Refresh fitness equipment issued to fire station gyms through the mobilisation of a new contract for gym equipment servicing and equipment supply.
- Launch our new approach to decarbonisation of our buildings and vehicle fleet to replace the existing Carbon Management Plan, with adoption of a vision working towards the UK Government 2050 pathway for reaching net zero emissions.
- We will review our position against any further released guidance and best practice arrangements. The Service will continue to improve how we deal with the management of PPE Contaminants, raising staff awareness to challenge the behaviours which increase risks from contamination.

Overall Summary

LFRS continues to deliver continuous improvement within the SHE Management system maintaining ISO 45001:2018 and ISO 14001:2015 certification through external examination receiving no non-conformances and one opportunity for improvement.

We had a challenging year with regards to the overall number of staff accidents, with an increase in the number of accidents to staff members when compared to 2022/23. This increase is partly attributed to a number of events where multiple members of staff reported injuries, including following an appliance RTC while they were enroute to an operational incident, a training exercise involving carrying one of the service water rescue boats and swift water rescue training at an external water venue in the North East of England.

Severity of staff accident events has reduced compared to last year, the HSE were notified under RIDDOR regarding 10 events: 1 major specified injury following a fractured ankle sustained while attending a fire incident and a further 9 events which resulted in over 7-day absences after a workplace accident.

Analysis of our safety performance through the Service HSEAG meeting has shown that musculoskeletal strain and sprain type injuries have remained the most prevalent. This is consistent with our performance last year and we will continue to identify opportunities to improve in this area.

Feedback from our operational staff has shown an increase in challenging operational incidents which involve suicide and self-harm. To further support our staff wellbeing, LFRS has partnered with the Firefighters Charity to develop a new awareness programme to assist staff to build personal resilience and coping mechanisms for this type of event. Following an initial pilot programme for new members of staff we are now looking at how best to deliver the content to our existing operational staff members.

The good relationship with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), UNISON, Fire Officers Association (FOA) and the Fire and Rescue Services Association (FRSA) continues, working together to maintain a positive safety culture within LFRS through regular consultation meetings and dialogue on safety, health and wellbeing issues.

We continue to make progress on our environmental agenda and during 2023/24 we have refreshed our existing Carbon Management Plan, moving to a wider environmental sustainability plan for LFRS which is now ready for launch.

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on Monday 24 June 2024

Policy on Dealing with Habitual and Vexatious Complaints

(Appendix 1 refers)

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

Telephone: 01772 866720

Executive Summary

At its meeting held 20 June 2016 the Authority adopted a formal Policy on Dealing with Habitual and Vexatious Complaints (resolution 13/16 refers) which is fair and proportionate, yet which does not prevent genuine complaints from being properly investigated and fair and equitable outcomes promulgated (attached as appendix 1).

On an annual basis the Clerk and Chief Fire Officer review the status of complainants judged to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious and reports this to the Authority.

In addition, each year the Clerk reviews the Policy. This year's review concludes that the effectiveness of the Policy is demonstrable, accordingly the Policy remains appropriate, proportionate and effective to the needs of Members, Officers and staff.

Recommendation(s)

The Authority is asked to note and endorse the report.

Information

The Policy on Dealing with Habitual and Vexatious Complaints identifies situations where a complainant, either individually or as part of a group, or a group of complainants might be considered to be habitual or vexatious. It sets out the definitions of habitual or vexatious complainants and the process that the Authority follows.

During the previous 12 months there have been no complainants judged to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious which suggests that it is a useful means of controlling and managing resources and bullying.

However, there are currently matters under investigation which may devolve into circumstances where the application of this Policy may be deemed fair, equitable and proportionate in the circumstances and the Authority will be informed within the next 12 month cycle as to the propensity with which the Policy has been applied.

In line with the Policy, the Clerk has reviewed it to ensure that it remains appropriate, proportionate and effective to the needs of Members, Officers and staff.

Business Risk

The policy will be used to defend the Authority's position in refusing to engage with "vexatious" complainants who may pursue perceived entitlement to make applications to the Authority under, e.g.: Freedom of Information or Data Protection Act legislation, there is a risk that such complaints will be elevated outside the Authority's internal processes. The Authority may therefore be required to defend its position externally in processes governed by, for example; the Information Commissioner's Office ("ICO") or Local Authority Ombudsman. The exposure to risk can be minimised by virtue of the fact that in such cases the Authority will be given an opportunity by the external arbiter to provide comment with any supporting documentation and ultimately to review or even change its decision. At this point there should be a further assessment of the business and financial risk to the Authority of maintaining its position regarding a decision to declare the relevant complaint as vexatious. Such an assessment should also involve a review of the evidence which has given rise to the conclusion that such complaints are habitual or vexatious in accordance with the criteria set out in the policy.

Environmental Impact

None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

There is a minor risk that any habitual or vexatious complaints could be driven by mental impairment, with a correspondingly low risk that such impairment amounts to a disability, for which the Authority would be culpable, only if the complainant was an existing employee. In those circumstances the existence and application of the Policy would, in all likelihood consist of a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, which would therefore be capable of rebuttal. Otherwise it is highly unlikely to conflict with the Authority's public sector Equality Duty.

HR Implications

The policy must not conflict with the Authority's obligations under its own Whistle Blowing Policy, as this may cast doubt on the Authority's compliance with a whistle blowing policy and obligations. However, given that such disclosures are to be made in good faith, not for personal gain and in the genuine public interest, there should in reality be no conflict or overlap, provided the complaints have been properly evaluated under the criteria outlined in the Habitual and Vexatious Complaints Policy.

Financial Implications

The index example above involving the ICO could, in theory, give rise to a situation where the ICO makes a determination holding the Authority culpable. It has the power to impose fines, should the ICO apply to a court for certification that the Authority has failed to comply with a decision notice, an information notice or an enforcement notice. The matter would be dealt with thereafter as a civil contempt. It is highly unlikely that given the provision for review and conciliation that the Authority would be placed in such a situation and that any risk of such an outcome would occur in no more than 2-5% of any cases and such action could be militated whatever the circumstances if necessary.

Legal Implications

In respect of any repeated subject access requests or requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 there is a potential risk of liability if the matter is then reported to

the Information Commissioner's Office. In the event that the person(s) to whom the Policy is applied make such applications then these should be reviewed by the Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk to the Authority, notwithstanding the application of the Policy, to ensure that there is any compliance failure or in the event that there is, that one of the relevant exemptions applies or the risk has been militated and relevant explanations are recorded along with the documents relating to the decision.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Habitual and Vexatious Complaints

1. Introduction

This policy identifies situations where a complainant, either individually or as part of a group, or a group of complainants, might be considered to be habitual or vexatious. The Lancashire Combined Fire Authority ("CFA") policy for dealing with and responding to these situations is set out herein below.

- 1.1 The term habitual means 'done repeatedly or as a habit.'
- 1.2 The term vexatious is recognised in law and means 'denoting an action or the bringer of an action that is brought without sufficient grounds for winning, purely to cause annoyance to the defendant.'
- 1.3 This policy intends to assist in identifying and managing persons who seek to be disruptive to the CFA or the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) by pursuing an unreasonable course of conduct.
- 1.4 The term complaint in this policy includes requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998 and reference to the Complaints Procedure is, where relevant, to be interpreted as meaning a request under those acts.
- 1.5 Habitual or vexatious complaints can be a problem for CFA staff and Members. The difficulty in handling such complainants and their complaints is that they are time consuming and wasteful of resources in terms of Officer and Member time. While the CFA endeavours to respond with patience and sympathy to the needs of all complainants, there are occasions when there is nothing further which can be reasonably done to assist or to rectify a real or perceived problem.
- 1.6 Raising legitimate queries or criticisms of a complaints procedure as it progresses, for example if agreed timescales are not met, should not in itself lead to someone being regarded as a vexatious or an unreasonable persistent complainant. Similarly, the fact that a complainant is unhappy with the outcome of a complaint and seeks to challenge it once, or more than once, should not necessarily cause him or her to be labelled vexatious or unreasonably persistent.
- 1.7 The aim of the policy is to contribute to the overall aim of dealing with all complainants in ways which are demonstrably consistent, fair and reasonable.

2. Habitual or Vexatious Complainants

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions of habitual or vexatious complainants will be used. The repeated and/or obsessive pursuit of:

- (a.) Unreasonable complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes and/or
- (b.) Reasonable complaints in an unreasonable manner.

Prior to considering its implementation the CFA will warn an individual and will send a summary of this policy to the complainant to give them prior notification of its possible implementation.

Where complaints continue and have been identified as habitual or vexatious in accordance with the criteria set out in section 3, the Clerk, in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer will seek agreement to treat the complainant as a habitual or vexatious complainant for the appropriate course of action to be taken. Section 4 details the options available for dealing with habitual or vexatious complaints.

The Clerk, on behalf of the CFA, will notify complainants in writing of the reasons why their complaint has been treated as habitual or vexatious and the action that will be taken.

The status of the complaint will be kept under review. If a complainant subsequently demonstrates a more reasonable approach, then their status will be reviewed.

The CFA will be advised that a person or their supporter or co-complainant involved in any joint complaint or joint enterprise has been declared vexatious.

3. Definitions

The CFA defines unreasonably persistent and vexatious complainants as those complainants who, because of their or other peoples' complaints interfere with or impede the operation of LFRS. The description 'unreasonably persistent' and 'vexatious' may apply jointly or separately to a particular complainant.

Examples include the way in which, or frequency with which, complainants raise their complaints with staff or how complainants respond when informed of the CFA decision about the complaint.

Features of an unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious complainant include but are not limited to the following (the list is not exhaustive, nor does one single feature on its own necessarily imply that the person will be considered as being in this category.) An unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious complainant may:

- Have insufficient or no grounds for their complaint and be making the complaint only to annoy (or for the reasons that he or she does not admit or make obvious);
- Refuse to specify the grounds of a complaint despite offers of assistance;
- Refuse to co-operate with the complaint's investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- Refuse to accept that issues are not within the remit of the complaints policy and procedure despite having been provided with information about the scope of the policy and procedure;
- Refuse to accept that issues are not within the powers of the CFA to investigate, change or influence;

- Insist on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice (e.g. insisting that there must not be any written record of this complaint);
- Make what appear to be groundless complaints about the staff dealing with the complaints, and seek to have them dismissed or replaced;
- Make an unreasonable number of contacts with LFRS by any means in relation to a specific complaint or complaints;
- Make persistent and unreasonable demands or expectations of staff and/or the complaints process after the unreasonableness has been explained to the complainant (an example of this could be a complainant who insists on an immediate response to questions, frequent and/or complex letters, faxes, telephone calls or emails);
- Harass or verbally abuse or otherwise seek to intimidate staff dealing with their complaint by use of foul or inappropriate language or by the use of offensive and racist language or publish their complaints in other forms of media;
- Raise subsidiary or new issues whilst a complaint is being addressed that were not part of the original complaint at the start of the process;
- Introduce trivial or irrelevant information whilst the complaint is being investigated and expect this to be taken in to account and commented on;
- Change the substance or basis of the complaint without reasonable justification whilst the complaint is being addressed;
- Deny a statement he or she made at an earlier stage in the complaint process;
- Are known to have covertly electronically recorded meetings and conversations without the knowledge or consent of the other party or parties involved;
- Adopts a 'scattergun' approach, for example by pursuing a complaint or complaints not only with the CFA with, for example, a Member of Parliament, other Authorities, elected Members of this and other Authorities, CFA Independent Auditor, the Police, other public bodies or solicitors' firms.
- Refuse to accept the outcome of the complaint process after its conclusion, repeatedly arguing the point, complaining about the outcome, and/or denying that an adequate response has been given;
- Make the complaint repeatedly, perhaps with minor differences, after the complaints procedure has been concluded and insist that any minor differences make these 'new complaints' which should be put through the full complaints procedure;

- Persistently approach the CFA through different routes or other persons about the same issue;
- Persist in seeking an outcome which the CFA has explained is unrealistic for legal, policy or other valid reasons;
- Refuse to accept documented evidence as factual;
- Complain about or challenge an issue based on an historic and/or irreversible decision or incident;
- Combine some or all of these features.

4. Imposing Restrictions

The CFA will ensure that the complaint is being or has been investigated properly according to the adopted complaints procedure.

In the first instance the Clerk, in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer will, prior to issuing a warning to the complainant, contact the complainant in writing, or by email, to explain why this behaviour is causing concern and ask them to change this behaviour and outline the actions that the CFA may take if they do not comply.

If the disruptive behaviour continues, the Clerk will issue a CFA letter to the complainant advising them that the way in which they will be allowed to contact the CFA in future will be restricted. The Clerk will then make this decision in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer and inform the complainant in writing of what procedures have been put in place and for what period.

Any restriction that is imposed on the complainant's contact with the CFA will be appropriate and proportionate and the complainant will be advised of the period of time over which the restriction will be put in place. The restrictions would be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Restrictions will be tailored to deal with the individual circumstances of the complaint and may include:

- Banning the complainant from attending or approaching all CFA or LFRS premises, in circumstances where Members' or Officers' safety may be at risk;
- Banning the complainant from making contact by telephone except through a third party, e.g.: a solicitor, a spouse or family member, or a friend acting on their behalf;
- Banning the complainant from sending emails to individuals and/or all CFA Officers and insisting they only correspond by post;
- Requiring contact to take place with one named member of staff only;
- Restricting telephone calls to specified days and or times or duration, requiring any personal contact to take place in the presence of an appropriate witness;

- Letting the complainant know that Lancashire Combined Fire Authority will not respond to or acknowledge any further contact from them on the specified topic of that complaint (in this case, a designated person will be identified to read future correspondence).

When the decision has been taken to apply this policy to a complainant, the Clerk will contact the complainant in writing to explain:

- Why the decision has been taken;
- What action has been taken.

The Clerk will enclose a copy of this policy in the letter to the complainant.

Where a complainant continues to behave in a way that is unacceptable, the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and/or Chief Fire Officer may decide to refuse all contact with the complainant and stop any investigation into his or her complaint.

Where the behaviour is so extreme or it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff, other options will be considered, e.g. the reporting of the matter to the Police or taking legal action; in such cases the complainant may not be given prior warning of that action.

5. New Complaints from Complainants treated as Abusive, Vexatious or Persistent

New complaints from people to whom this policy has already been applied will be treated on their own merits. The Clerk in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer will decide whether any restrictions that have been applied before are still appropriate and necessary in relation to the new complaint. A blanket policy is not supported, nor is ignoring genuine service requests or complaints where they are founded.

The fact that a complaint is judged to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious and any restrictions imposed on Lancashire Combined Fire Authority's contact with him or her, will be recorded and notified to those who need to know within the CFA.

6. Review

The status of the complainant who is judged to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious will be reviewed by the Clerk and the Chief Fire Officer after twelve months and at the end of every subsequently twelve months within the period during which the policy is to apply and reported annually to the CFA.

The complainant will be informed of the result of this review if the decision to apply this policy has been changed.

7. Record Keeping

The responsibility for maintaining any time tabling records to trigger reviews will be that of the Clerk. The Clerk will retain adequate records of the details of the case and the action that has been taken. Records will be kept of:

- The name and address of each member of the public who is treated as abusive, vexatious or persistent, or any other person who so aids the complainant;
- When the restriction came into force ends;
- What the restrictions are;
- When the person and the CFA were advised.

The CFA will be provided with an annual report giving information about members of the public who have been treated vexatious/persistent as per this policy, and advised of individuals when those individuals have been declared vexatious.

8. Application and Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all staff to comply with this policy as directed by the Chief Fire Officer and guided by the Clerk.

9. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Clerk to ensure that it is appropriate, proportionate and effective to the needs of the Members, Officers and staff of the CFA.

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 24 June 2024

Member Champion Activity Report

Contact for further information – Assistant Chief Fire Officer Jon Charters

Tel: 01772 866802

Executive Summary

This paper provides a report on the work of the Member Champions for the period up to 23 June 2024.

Recommendation(s)

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 – Member Champion role vacated by Cllr Jean Rigby (new Member Champion required).
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion – Councillor Zamir Khan.
- Health and Wellbeing – County Councillor John Singleton JP.
- 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

The Water Safety Campaign was launched at the beginning of April. Part of the campaign activity was to deliver Water Safety education sessions in high schools which fell into high-risk localities and invite all other schools across the Lancashire footprint to take part in several virtual education sessions. During the week commencing 13 May 2024, the Prevention Support Team delivered virtual sessions to almost 8,200 KS3 and KS4 learners. Area activity will continue throughout the summer with Corporate Communications sharing key messages over various media platforms, particularly when weather and circumstances dictate, and during national campaigns led by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). For example, Be Water Aware, Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) Drowning Prevention Week and World Drowning Prevention Day.

The beginning of May saw the launch of the first Partner Newsletter 'Prevention Matters.' This has evolved from listening to feedback from the many agencies we work with and aims to keep our partners informed of our services, campaigns, and initiatives, along with sharing useful information to help keep the people they work with safe and well. This issue focused on the Home Fire Safety Check service and introduced the Prevention Support team and their areas of work. The 'hot topic' for this issue was "Emollient Creams – a hidden fire hazard." The newsletter, which will be produced bi-monthly, was initially circulated to over four hundred partner agencies and this has since been shared to wider teams with many individuals signing up to receive this. Initial feedback from partners has been incredibly positive and many found the 'hot topic' particularly useful and informative.

For Boat Safety week in May, Ormskirk staff promoted fire and water safety to people who moor their boats in Scarisbrick Marina. They put up safety posters in the public houses that line the towpaths and completed a training exercise in the water, which created an opportunity to engage with the local boating community and issue safety information and key messages.

Over the easter holidays, staff at Leyland fire station hosted a charity Extravaganza and Easter Egg Hunt for families and young people in their community. Over 224 children received an easter egg along with water and home fire safety information. The event ran in a carousel format so that groups of young people could take part in a variety of activities including first aid, rope rescue, the smoke tent, road safety and a look around the fire appliance. The event was a huge success for all and raised over £1200 for The Fire Fighters Charity and Teenage Cancer Trust.

Prevention Support and Community Safety staff from Western area took part in a professional development afternoon for the Occupational Therapy (OT) team at Blackpool Teaching Hospital. The session was attended by over 30 members of the OT department and the training covered recognising vulnerability factors and how this links to increased fire risk in the home. Also included was information on the home fire safety check service and how staff can make a secure referral for this through the partner portal on the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) website.

Prevention staff from across the service have worked collaboratively with Lancashire Fire Operations Group (LFOG) partners over Easter and other high-risk periods to prevent wildfires. Supported by a number of partners and volunteer groups, this education and enforcement activity will continue over the coming months.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion – Councillor Zamir Khan MBE

Over the last quarter, representatives from the Service have been actively engaging with employees and communities in various ways.

The Employee Diversity Inclusion Steering Group which oversees the work of the Service in relation to EDI has expanded its remit to include culture, to reflect the broader role of the Equality, Diversity Inclusion and Culture Board more accurately, as it will now be known.

The Member Champion and ACFO Jon Charters joined Community Safety Adviser Faz Patel on Awaz Radio to speak to listeners across the UK on Ramadan Safety and

introducing the 2024 'Safety During Hajj' package. This was followed up with a launch event led by Lancashire Council of Mosques combining the spiritual and safety messages for persons travelling to Saudi Arabia to conduct their pilgrimage, supported by a brief video hosted by the ACFO and Firefighter Riaz Patel.

Further live radio interviews have since been conducted on Awaz Radio by Faz Patel and the ACFO, engaging with listeners from across the UK, and live debate with persons in West Midlands, London and from the Saudi Ministry of Health, demonstrating the extensive reach of this valuable community safety programme.

The NFCC have developed a tool kit which services can use in terms of assisting with engagement and in recruiting a diverse workforce, these have been made available on the Engine House, to inform the development of events and activities at a local level.

Representatives from the service will be attending Pride events across Lancashire over the summer, these are excellent opportunities to communicate safety messages and promote employment opportunities to join the On Call, Wholetime and the Fire Service more broadly.

Our Campaigns Calendar for 2024-2025 has been developed and published, which targets different communities who may be at more risk in relation to cooking, drowning, candle safety and electrical safety.

In partnership with the Firefighters Charity, we have promoted several health and wellbeing programmes and workshops, in terms of maintaining fitness, building personal resilience, living with the menopause, and maintaining health and wellbeing.

The service celebrated Global Accessibility Awareness Day, according to the latest estimate from the Department of Work and Pensions' 24% of the population is disabled, the aim of Global Accessibility Awareness Day is to focus attention on digital access and inclusion for all. Staff within the service are working hard to develop knowledge and expertise in terms of developing policies and information which is accessible.

On 13 May 2024, we marked Mental Health Awareness Week with the theme of "movement: moving more for our mental health" and a workshop on the importance of diet and proper hydration was delivered over teams.

Health, Wellbeing & Climate Change – County Councillor John Singleton JP

Health and Wellbeing

Utilisation of the free and confidential independent support from the Employee Assistance Programme has decreased from 14.3% to 11.7% as a direct comparison to 2022/23 reporting period. The top 3 categories remain consistent and include Mental Health, Relationships and Legal advice enquiries (e.g. divorce and separation, childcare, motoring etc.).

In November 2023 we held the first of 12 pilot health and wellbeing programmes for all new starters. This has been co-developed and is being co-delivered by the Safety Health and Wellbeing (SHW) Advisor and the Fire Fighters Charity. The aim of the programme is to increase personal resilience of all staff and includes elements of positive psychology, relaxation coping strategies and suicide awareness. The

programme is receiving positive feedback within LFRS and interest from other Fire and Rescue Services across the UK.

This reporting period we have undertaken 25 TRiM (trauma support) interventions, including 8 Traumatic Incident Briefings (TIBs); evidencing the introduction of TIBs in August 2022 is still being effective and utilised well.

31 Wellbeing Support Dog requests have been completed, over this year through which we have interacted with 217 staff and 850 members of the public. Work will get underway in Q3 2024/25 to recruit to the wellbeing dog resource following a number of changes to the team.

Wellbeing Wednesdays continue to be received well by colleagues, with the delivery model of bringing the opportunity to have a wellbeing conversation on station providing popular. Each station will continue to receive at least one Wellbeing Wednesday visit per year.

In September 2023 we launched Peer Support Ambassadors to bolster our peer support network. Colleagues who volunteer to be a Peer Support Ambassador attend a 2-hour workshop about active listening, signposting, raising awareness of mental health and reducing the stigma around mental health conversations. Workshops will be held every year to increase the number of peer supporters available.

Climate Change and Environment

Our measured carbon emissions (for gas, electric and vehicle fuel) have seen a 25% reduction from the baseline. This does represent a small increase from last year of 1%.

Water has increased by 8.1%, Gas has increased 3.4%, Electric has decreased by 1.7% and Vehicle fuel (from fleet) has increased by 3.4% compared to last year. The data has been shared individually with stations involving both Environmental Champions and Station Managers, allowing comparisons to be made by station over several years.

General waste had increased by 7.7% compared to the previous year and dry mixed recyclable waste has also increased by 5.2%. The overall recycling rate across the service remains very good at 34% (a small decrease of 1% in direct comparison with last year). Glass recycling has decreased by 46.3%, whilst confidential wastepaper recycling has increased by 6%. There are many stations that stand out with excellent waste management and others where there may be opportunities for improvement. Some stations highlighted for further investigation into the data last year, have seen fantastic results; for example, both South Shore and Colne have increased their recycling to almost 40%. Several stations have been highlighted for further support over the next reporting period to improve waste management; these will be monitored, and outcomes reported through the appropriate meeting structures.

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. 13,300 pupils have received the package, so we are on track to deliver to all schools by end of the summer term. Feedback from teachers remains very positive, please see example below:

“Very informative and knowledgeable delivery and information was relevant to our children and setting. Our children always respond better when information comes from experts with experience rather than usual teacher.”

The Biker Down team had a very busy month delivering courses and creating content for social media. The team created several short videos with the assistance of a firefighter from Leyland Fire Station who also restores classic motorcycles. All the videos shared a safety message about getting your bike prepared for the riding season. These have been hugely successful with over 8,500 plays on Facebook. In total, these posts throughout the month have made over 10,000 impressions. They have also proven popular on ‘X’ (formerly Twitter) with 2253 impressions on this platform. The course feedback continues to be positive. An example from May’s course below:

“I am first aid trained and teach first aid at cadets. Biker first aid is different with different challenges and as a rider who has come off, I feel this course has proven invaluable. Thank you.”

Wasted Lives and the use of the crashed car has been focused on the celebration of Eid in May. For the first time, in collaboration with local mosques situated within St Matthews Ward and on the outskirts of the Preston City centre, the community safety team held a meeting with mosque management to discuss displaying a crashed car during peak hours on Friday. This decision was made so that both the elderly and young individuals attending the mosques would see the crashed car as they entered and exited.

Approximately 1000 worshippers encountered the crashed car during Eid and were shocked to witness a real vehicle that had been involved in an accident resulting in a fatality. Parents took note of this, and young people were also startled by the sight of the crashed car, gaining a better understanding of the consequences. Furthermore, the community safety team within Preston visited various centres across the area, delivering key messages to local community centres, youth groups and car hire firms. Social media platforms were also used to disseminate road safety messages. This road safety initiative lasted for one week.

A similar initiative took place outside Nelson Fire Station. Pennine Community Safety Team, Prevention Support and the Neighbourhood Policing Team joined forces with the crashed car to create a visual presence and highlight the dangers of speeding to passing motorists and pedestrians.

Both events proved to be a huge success and the plan moving forward is to continue forging links with members of the community and highlight the dangers around hiring high powered vehicles and driving them in an antisocial manner.



Business risk

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

Sustainability or 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.

Data Protection (GDPR)

Will the proposal(s) involve the processing of personal data? N

If the answer is yes, please contact a member of the Democratic Services Team to assist with the appropriate exemption clause for confidential consideration under part 2 of the agenda.

HR implications

Some Member and Officer time commitments.

Financial implications

Activities are within budget.

Legal implications

None identified.

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 24 June 2024.

Fire Protection Report

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

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

Three cases currently sit within the court system. Of these, one is set for sentencing on the 01 July 2024 in Crown Court with the other two set for plea and case management hearings on the 11 July 2024. One of these cases has a trial start date set for 30 June 2025 for 10 days.

A fourth case is currently awaiting a Magistrates Court date following summons.

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

- Care and nursing home x 1
- House in multiple occupation x 2
- Residential flats x 2
- Mixed commercial and residential x 2
- Commercial car repair garage x 1
- Nightclub x 1
- Healthcare setting x 1
- Hotel x 1

Fire Protection & Business Support Information

Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSC)

The BFSC continues to offer greater business support with 3,372 checks undertaken in total during the 23/24 performance year.

87% (2,920) have been deemed satisfactory, with 452 deemed unsatisfactory and triaged by protection teams with both informal and formal enforcement taken.

BFSCs Q4

Total: 790

Satisfactory: 687 (87%)

Unsatisfactory: 103

Legislation Changes Update

No recent changes to legislation have taken place.

Risk Based Intervention Programme

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service are continuing to carry out inspections using the Risk Based Intervention Programme.

Circa 2,300 audits have been undertaken in total during the 23/24 performance year, resulting in 164 formal enforcement notices and 24 prohibitions.

Arson Risk Reduction

R v Christopher MONK

Alexandra Close, Clayton le Moors, Accrington.

Date and Time of Call – 29/11/2022, 04:02.

This incident involved the deliberate ignition of paper which had been placed in the letterbox of a first floor flat. No persons were in the property at the time of the incident and the fire was extinguished by a neighbour prior to the arrival of the fire service. The fire caused severe damage to the UPVC front door and moderate smoke damage throughout the flat.

Following a guilty plea to arson with recklessness as to whether life was endangered, the defendant was sentenced to 2 years imprisonment, suspended for 21 months and ordered to attend 30 hours rehabilitation activity.

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.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

None

Data Protection (GDPR)

Will the proposal(s) involve the processing of personal data?

No

HR implications

None

Financial implications

None

Legal implications

None

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate: Insert Exemption Clause

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 24 June 2024

Operational Incidents of Interest

Contact for further information – Assistant Chief Fire Officer Jon Charters
Tel: 01772 866802

Executive Summary

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

Recommendation(s)

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 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:

- Eight fire engines attend a commercial building fire in Blackburn (6/4/2024)
- Fatal building fire in Thornton Cleveleys (19/4/2024)
- Six fire engines tackle a commercial building fire in Poulton (23/4/2024)
- Person struck by Train in Parbold (25/4/2024)
- Firefighters respond to wildfire in Bacup (30/4/2024)
- Firefighters respond to fatal RTC on the M58 (17/5/2024)
- Firefighters respond to fatal RTC in Whitewell Bottom, Rossendale (19/5/2024)
- Firefighters respond to reports of a person trapped in a cave in Leck (20/5/2024)

LFRS station area:	E71 Blackburn
Date:	6 April 2024
Time:	19:36

Eight fire engines from Blackburn, Hyndburn, Darwen, Bamber Bridge, Burnley, Fulwood, Penwortham, and Preston, together with two Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALP's) from Preston and Hyndburn, a Command Unit from Fulwood, and a Water Tower from Blackburn, attended a commercial building fire at Witton Business Park off Preston Old Road, Blackburn.

The incident involved a commercial property approximately 70m x 50m in size that was well alight when the crews arrived. Firefighters used six hose reel jets, two ALP's, and a Water Tower to extinguish the fire.

Roads in the surrounding area were closed by the Police. The cause of the fire was recorded as deliberate, spreading from a fire in a nearby derelict building.

Firefighters were on scene damping down and conducting the fire investigation for 9 days. This included a search of the area with the LFRS victim recovery dog, as it could not be confirmed that there were no persons in the building at the time of the fire.

LFRS station area:	N32 Fleetwood
Date:	19 April 2024
Time:	12:57

Four fire engines from Blackpool, Bispham and Fleetwood were mobilised to Oxendale Road in Thornton Cleveleys to reports of a gas leak. On conducting investigations of the property, firefighters discovered that this was in fact a building fire and people could be trapped inside.

Fire crews forced access to the property and found a casualty lying behind the door. The casualty was brought out into the open air and given CPR and first aid by fire crews. They were handed over to the air ambulance and land paramedics when they arrived, who continued giving lifesaving treatment on the Ambulance.

Firefighters wearing breathing apparatus and firefighting jets dealt with the incident. Unfortunately, the incident proved to be fatal. Fire crews were at the scene for over four hours, whilst the investigation was completed. The cause of the fire was recorded as accidental and attributed to a faulty gas fire.

LFRS station area:	W30 Blackpool
Date:	23 April 2024
Time:	19:11

Six fire engines from Blackpool, Bispham, South Shore, Fleetwood, Wesham, and the Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) from Blackpool, responded to a commercial building fire on Aldon Road, Poulton Industrial Estate in Poulton-le-Fylde. They were supported by the Drone, Water Bowser and Command Unit.

The fire involved a building of two floors, approximately 20m x 20m in size. The fire was tackled by firefighters wearing breathing apparatus using firefighting water jets. The ALP was used to tackle the fire from outside.

Crews were at the scene fighting the fire and conducting the fire investigation for approximately thirty-six hours. The fire started in an office area on the 1st floor, with the entire building being damaged by fire, heat and/or smoke. The cause of the fire has been recorded as unknown pending further investigations by the police.

LFRS station area:	S56 Skelmersdale
Date:	25 April 2024
Time:	19:40

Fire crews from Ormskirk and Skelmersdale were called to reports that a person had been hit by a train near to Parbold railway station. On arrival it was confirmed that a female dog walker had been struck by a train and the incident was fatal.

Fire crews worked with Police and Ambulance to make the scene safe and assisted with the removal of the casualty from the hazardous area to the awaiting undertaker. Crews were on scene for just over two hours.

LFRS station area:	P73 Bacup
Date:	30 April 2024
Time:	18:06

The wildfire team from Bacup and Rawtenstall attended a fire near to Lee Mill Quarry in Bacup. The incident involved approximately eight acres of moorland. The team used two Hagglund 4x4 vehicles and wildfire equipment, and were able to contain the fire within three hours, negating the requirement for the attendance of several additional fire engines.

LFRS station area:	S51 Ormskirk
Date:	17 May 2024
Time:	12:54

Fire crews were called to reports of an RTC on the M58, junction 3 eastbound. The reports were that there had been a collision between two HGV's and a car, with all three vehicles on fire with the car driver trapped.

The incident was attended by fire engines from Ormskirk, Skelmersdale, Preston, the Foam Unit from Leyland and Urban Search and Rescue from Bamber Bridge and Chorley. It was feared that one of the HGV's was carrying unknown chemicals, so a Hazardous Materials and Environmental Protection Advisor also attended, along with several other Flexible Duty Officers conducting a variety of roles.

The Police declared this a 'major incident' due to the fatality, full closure of the motorway and the potential for a large quantity of chemicals to be involved.

The fire was quickly extinguished and it was confirmed that the tanker was in fact clean of any chemicals. A multi-agency meeting took place and it was decided that the vehicle should be removed from the scene and taken away for full police investigation.

LFRS station area:	P74 Rawtenstall
Date:	19 May 2024
Time:	03:02

Fire engines from Burnley, Bacup and Rawtenstall were mobilised to reports of a serious RTC on Burnley Road East, Whitewell Bottom. Two vehicles had collided and hit parked vehicles; one of the vehicles was on its roof on top of a stationary vehicle. Three casualties were trapped in this car, with the driver being confirmed fatal. The other two casualties had significant entrapment. Fire crews used stabilisation equipment to make the scene safer, whilst paramedics worked on the seriously injured casualties.

Our crews used a large amount of hydraulic cutting equipment and saws, to release the live casualties. Once all casualties were released, the police conducted a detailed investigation due to the seriousness of the incident. Fire crews remained on scene and were responsible for releasing the deceased person. Fire crews were involved at the scene for over eight hours.

LFRS station area:	N16 Hornby
Date:	20 May 2024
Time:	19:56

Fire crews from Hornby and Morecambe, the Aerial Ladder Platform from Morecambe, Urban Search and Rescue from Chorley and Bamber Bridge, along with the Drone attended reports of a person trapped in a mine at Leck Fell Road, Leck. A Mountain Rescue Team, Cave Rescue Team, Police and Ambulance also formed the response.

A coordinated approach was established to support Cave Rescue and Mountain Rescue in searching the caves and potholes for the missing person. The drone was used to thermally scan the area for any signs of the casualty.

In total, sixteen caves were searched by specialist teams who were unable to locate any casualties. LFRS were in attendance for around five hours.

Business risk

None

Sustainability or 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

Data Protection (GDPR)

Will the proposal(s) involve the processing of personal data? No

If the answer is yes, please contact a member of the Democratic Services Team to assist with the appropriate exemption clause for confidential consideration under part 2 of the agenda.

HR implications

None

Financial implications

None

Legal implications

None

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate: Insert Exemption Clause

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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