

Public Document Pack

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Monday, 17 February 2025 in Washington Hall, Leadership and Development 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 3

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. **Chair's Welcome and Introduction**

Standing item.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

3. **Disclosure of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interests**

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

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 1 - 12)**

5. **Minutes of meeting Wednesday 27 November 2024 of Resources Committee (Pages 13 - 28)**

6. **Minutes of meeting Thursday 28 November 2024 of Audit Committee (Pages 29 - 36)**

7. **Minutes of meeting Wednesday 4 December 2024 of Performance Committee (Pages 37 - 66)**

8. **Minutes of meeting Monday 3 February 2024 of Planning Committee (Pages 67 - 82)**
9. **Report from members on Outside Bodies (Pages 83 - 86)**
10. **Annual Statement of Assurance (Pages 87 - 108)**
11. **Pay Policy Statement 2025/26 (Pages 109 - 116)**
12. **Budget Report 2025/26 (Pages 117 - 182)**
13. **Proposed amendment to Members role & Community Safety Champion role description (Pages 183 - 190)**
14. **Climate Change Operational Response Plan 2022-27 - Interim Report on Progress (Pages 191 - 234)**
15. **Member Champion Activity Report (Pages 235 - 240)**
16. **Fire Protection Report (Pages 241 - 244)**
17. **Operational Incidents of Interest (Pages 245 - 248)**
18. **Member Complaints**

Standing item.
19. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Authority will be held on **Monday 28 April 2025** at 1030 hours at Washington Hall Leadership and Development Centre, Euxton.
20. **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 Chair of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency. Wherever possible, the Clerk should be given advance warning of any Member's intention to raise a matter under this heading.

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Monday, 16 December 2024 at 10.30 am in Washington Hall, Service Training Centre, Euxton

Minutes

Present:

N Hennessy (Chair)

Councillors

S Serridge (Vice-Chair)
 F De Molfetta
 M Clifford
 G Baker
 S Clarke
 D Howarth
 J Hugo
 T Hurn
 F Jackson
 H Khan

Z Khan MBE
 S Morris
 D O'Toole
 M Pattison
 M Salter
 J Shedwick
 J Singleton
 D Smith
 R Woollam
 B Yates

45/24	<p>Chair's Welcome and Introduction</p> <p>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and wished everyone a merry Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year.</p> <p>The Chair reminded members of the next round of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspections with a focus on governance, she stated that members were already fully aware and trained but should consider attending the Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Essentials Training Course to enhance their knowledge. She reminded members that the course gave a 3-year certification so members should consider reattending if theirs had expired, due to rapid changes following the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and changes in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). The Chair confirmed that only 3 members from each authority could attend each course, but Democratic Services would ascertain if there was a reserve list.</p> <p>The Chair reminded members that two visits had been arranged to North West Fire Control (NWFC) on Tuesday 21 and Thursday 23 January 2025 and asked members to consider attending.</p> <p>The Chair announced that the new Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) Samantha Pink was due to join the service in early 2025.</p> <p>The Chair announced that the agenda order would be amended, item 16 – Operational Incidents of Interest and item 17 - Celebrating our people update would be swapped to allow more time for the dog and drone demonstration as part of item</p>
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	<p>16.</p> <p>Finally, the Chair expressed her thanks to the outgoing Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Justin Johnston for his support to her and all members. She remarked that he was an inspiration to many and wished him a healthy and happy retirement.</p>
46/24	Apologies for Absence
	Apologies were received from County Councillors P Rigby, U Arif and P Britcliffe and Councillor M Desai.
47/24	Disclosure of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
48/24	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	<p>Councillor F Jackson asked that Fire Cadet H Salisbury's presentation at the last Combined Fire Authority (CFA) meeting be shared with members.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Minutes of the CFA held on 16 September 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.</p>
49/24	Minutes of meeting Wednesday 4 September 2024 of Performance Committee
	Resolved: That the proceedings of the Performance Committee held on 4 September 2024 be noted and endorsed.
50/24	Minutes of meeting Wednesday 25 September 2024 of Resources Committee
	Resolved: That the proceedings of the Resources Committee held on 25 September 2024 be noted and endorsed.
51/24	Minutes of meeting Thursday 26 September 2024 of Audit Committee
	<p>Resolved: That the proceedings of the Audit Committee held on 26 September 2024 be noted and endorsed.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor S Clarke in relation to the minutes from Audit Committee held on 28 November 2024. The Clerk to the Authority and Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) confirmed that the minutes had not been agreed in time for publication of the agenda and would be brought to the next Combined Fire Authority (CFA) Meeting in February 2025.</p> <p>In response to a question from Councillor J Hugo in relation to a recommendation at Audit Committee for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training to be taken to the next Strategy Group meeting, the DoCS confirmed that this would be covered as part of agenda item 13.</p>

52/24	Minutes of meeting Thursday 7 November 2024 of Member Training & Development Working Group																												
	Resolved: That the proceedings of the Member Training and Development Working Group held on 7 November 2024 be noted and endorsed.																												
53/24	Minutes of meeting Monday 18 November 2024 of Planning Committee																												
	Resolved: That the proceedings of the Planning Committee held on 18 November 2024 be noted and endorsed.																												
54/24	Membership of Committees 2024/25																												
	<p>The Clerk to the Authority presented a report to confirm the membership of committees in accordance with the political balance rules set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The makeup of each committee must reflect the proportions of seats held on the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) by each political group. The composition of each committee is set out below.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Committee</th> <th>Total Membership</th> <th>Conservatives</th> <th>Labour</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Full CFA</td> <td>25</td> <td>12</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Performance</td> <td>10</td> <td>6</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Planning</td> <td>10</td> <td>5</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resources</td> <td>10</td> <td>5</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Audit</td> <td>7</td> <td>4</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Appeals</td> <td>7</td> <td>4</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Resolved: - That the Authority noted and endorsed the membership of the committees of the Combined Fire Authority for 2024/25.</p>	Committee	Total Membership	Conservatives	Labour	Full CFA	25	12	10	Performance	10	6	4	Planning	10	5	5	Resources	10	5	5	Audit	7	4	3	Appeals	7	4	3
Committee	Total Membership	Conservatives	Labour																										
Full CFA	25	12	10																										
Performance	10	6	4																										
Planning	10	5	5																										
Resources	10	5	5																										
Audit	7	4	3																										
Appeals	7	4	3																										
55/24	Proposed amendment to Resources Committee Terms of Reference																												
	<p>The Clerk to the Authority presented a report for Members to consider amendments to the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Resources Committee which represented minor changes, which allowed the Resources Committee to appoint a recruitment panel of 3 Members together with the Chief Fire Officer (as direct line manager for the post) which enabled flexibility to select appropriate members to support the needs of each recruitment panel. The proposal would not apply to the appointment of the Chief Fire Officer, Clerk, and Treasurer to the Authority which was a matter reserved to the full Authority.</p> <p>Resolved: - That the Authority approved the amendments to the Terms of Reference for Resources Committee.</p>																												
56/24	Grenfell Tower Inquiry Recommendations																												
	The Chair remarked that it was pleasing to receive a letter of thanks from the Minister of State for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention in relation to Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) addressing all of the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry																												

Phase 1 recommendations.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) presented the report to members summarising the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 and 2 reports including the progress that the Service had made in relation to Phase 1 recommendations and a forward look to the recommendations made under Phase 2.

The DCFO introduced Area Manager (AM) Tom Powell who gave a presentation to members on the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry.

On June 14 2017, Grenfell Tower, a high-rise residential building in London, was engulfed by fire, tragically resulting in the loss of 72 lives. The Grenfell Tower Inquiry, led by Sir Martin Moore-Bick, released the Phase 1 report on October 30, 2019. The report, comprised of six parts and primarily examined the events on the night of the fire. Despite the scope of Phase 1 being limited to that night's events, it highlighted the necessity for significant improvements in fire safety measures, particularly in the London Fire Brigade's and other Fire and Rescue Services' (FRSs) responses to major disasters, including high-rise fires.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's (LFRS's) reaction to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 involved receiving and reviewing the recommendations to implement necessary enhancements. LFRS identified 75 actions and categorised these within various themes which included; training, equipment, vehicles, systems, and resourcing. All actions were placed on the services Assurance Monitoring System (AMS) with relevant owners assigned, who provided updates and attached evidence to support progress. The LFRS Organisational Assurance Group, which was made up of stakeholders from across the Service provided oversight and scrutiny on each actions progress and collectively agreed the sign off of each recommendation once satisfied.

All 75 actions relating to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 had been implemented.

There had been a number of legislative changes, the Fire Safety Act 2021 mandated that building owners took responsibility for conducting fire assessments and ensured the safety of residents. LFRS had developed its website to make it easier for building owners to provide critical information such as floor plans and external wall information and made it easier for members of the public to report fire safety complaints, defects or to submit valuable information to assist LFRS during operational incidents.

The service had introduced a Built Environment and Ops Liaison Team which had overseen the implementation of the new legislation and collation and processing of high-rise premises details. LFRS had also introduced the Secure Information Box (SIB) at all high-rise properties including contact details of the responsible person, building layout, residents' information, current fire safety issues and current evacuation plans.

On 1 October 2022, LFRS adopted a red, amber, green (RAG) risk system to ensure risk was consistently triaged and a proportionate resource response applied.

LFRS had enhanced its training approach and worked with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) to train using their high-rise prop.

Operational policy had been updated in line with national guidance, including Immediate Building Evacuation (IBE), an evacuation strategy which enabled a controlled, safe and effective evacuation of any type of building. IBE was an LFRS response to the need to change the pre-determined evacuation strategy to a simultaneous evacuation. For example, if a Tall Building with a 'stay put' strategy started to show unusual fire behaviour such as fire spread up the exterior of the building, the Incident Commander may choose to evacuate the whole building to reduce the risk to life.

LFRS had implemented an electronic system to record Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) information in the control room which displays simultaneously at the bridgehead and in LFRS command units. This improved situational awareness and sharing of information. The evacuation guidance for the building, and the advice provided to specific flats was recorded. Occupants could be re-contacted by North West Fire Control (NWFC) with relevant information and/or if the evacuation strategy had changed.

One recommendation was for Fire and Rescue Services to introduce escape hoods for use by casualties in situations where they were unable to escape due to smoke or its effects. Escape hoods provide a barrier to the inhalation of toxic smoke and gases, which could significantly impair the ability to breathe and see, increasing the risk of harm or death. They typically worked for 15 minutes by providing a clean air supply or by filtering out harmful smoke particles, ensuring that the wearer could breathe more easily and continue to evacuate safely. Every LFRS appliance carried a number of smoke hoods.

LFRS had introduced smoke curtains, a passive fire protection system designed to contain and direct smoke to designated areas preventing it from spreading throughout a building. LFRS had also introduced a male-to-male adaptor to address potential issues with defective riser inlets at high-rise properties. It served as a crucial piece of equipment by enabling the conversion of an available outlet into an inlet, ensuring the functionality and continued use of a dry riser system for firefighting.

The Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) assets within Lancashire had been reviewed and the service had procured its highest ALP, a 45-metre ladder to enhance LFRS's response capabilities in line with built environment risks. The cage was adjustable, enabling it to be flush with the building where a rescue may be required. The ALP had wheelchair access and a five-person cage. The ALP could also be operated remotely.

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 was published on the 4 September 2024. The report comprised of fourteen parts, and covered the course of events leading up to the fire; it had 58 recommendations. Although there were fewer recommendations than anticipated, many of the recommendations were broad with significant implications for a number of stakeholders with some requiring legislative change. These stakeholders included: Central Government, Royal Borough of Kensington

and Chelsea Council, Tenant Management Organisations (TMO), private companies involved in the design and refurbishment, product manufacturers and those involved in testing materials, and the London Fire Brigade (LFB) in relation to its planning and preparedness.

The recommendations would have significant implications across Lancashire in the short, medium and long term. Although many of the recommendations were not directed at Fire and Rescue Services, they would still have an impact on LFRS such as changes to Building Control processes or how Local Authorities prepare and respond to an incident similar to the fire at Grenfell.

LFRS would review their previous actions under Phase 1 within the context of the Phase 2 recommendations made to LFB and Fire and Rescue Services, to provide additional assurance and identify where further work would be required. The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) were also reviewing the recommendations and LFRS would monitor their updates closely. As with Phase 1, all relevant recommendations would be added to, and tracked on the AMS, with the Organisational Assurance Group providing internal scrutiny and oversight.

County Councillor F De Molfetta remarked that it was pleasing that LFRS had completed all the phase 1 recommendation actions. He felt that the inquiry had dragged on for too long and was disappointed that there were still tower blocks with unsafe cladding. He expressed his thanks to all officers for safeguarding Lancashire.

In response to a question from County Councillor B Yates in relation to the number of high-rise buildings in Lancashire that had unsafe cladding and the equipment available to tackle any potential fires, AM Powell confirmed that a tall building was defined as a building over 18 metres tall. There were over 70 buildings over 18 metres tall in Lancashire and of those, 6 or 7 were in the red RAG risk category which also included non-residential buildings. Resources would be dispatched in line with the RAG risk category, if the building was within the red category more appliances would automatically be sent.

In response to a question from the Chair in relation to escape hoods being carried by firefighters, AM Powell confirmed that escape hoods were attached permanently to breathing apparatus sets and there were more on each appliance.

In response to a further question from the Chair in relation to the timeline for phase 2 actions, AM Powell confirmed that some actions would take a number of years to complete as they may require government to enact changes in legislation. The NFCC were reviewing recommendations and wanted a joined up approach across all FRSs. There was no definite timeline but once established a timeline would be attached to each individual action and tracked through the AMS.

In response to a question from County Councillor M Clifford in relation to where the new ALP would be stationed and if it was where the highest buildings in the county are, AM Powell confirmed that the new ALP would be based at Preston Fire Station. The landscape of Lancashire was changing but Preston had the biggest residential high-rise risk, however there were other areas around the county with risk increasing.

	<p>Resolved: - That the Authority noted the report and the contents of the associated slide presentation.</p>
57/24	<p>HMICFRS thematic inspection into the handling of misconduct in Fire and Rescue Services update</p>
	<p>The Director of People and Development (DoPD) presented the report to members. In July 2023, the Home Secretary commissioned His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to conduct an inspection of the handling of misconduct in Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) in England. The report was published on the 1 August 2024 and identified a number of issues across the Services inspected and a set of recommendations. The services progress against the HMICFRS recommendations was included as Appendix A within the agenda report pack.</p> <p>Reporting areas of concern</p> <p>In terms of supporting individuals to highlight areas of concern, the Service had launched its anonymous reporting helpline, Safecall, and undertaken a communication campaign advising members of staff of the various ways in which matters of concern could be raised.</p> <p>Where individuals wished to raise complaints about their own employment, the Grievance Procedure and Bullying and Harassment Policy could be utilised.</p> <p>Grievances</p> <p>All members of staff had the right to raise a grievance. Within Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) seven grievances had been raised within the financial year which related to twenty eight members of staff. This compared to nine grievances last year and eight the year before.</p> <p>Disciplinary</p> <p>The Disciplinary Procedure was applied in cases of misconduct, the initial stages could be an informal fact finding or a formal investigative process. The findings from those processes would determine the next stage. On occasion an informal fact finding and investigation could result in no further action.</p> <p>Since this financial year fifteen disciplinary investigations had begun and from those six cases had been concluded which resulted in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One 6-month warning. • One 12-month warning. • One dismissal. • Two resignations, where the investigation was concluded and would have resulted in dismissal. • One resignation linked to a failure to respond. <p>Nine cases remained under investigation.</p> <p>Bullying and Harassment</p> <p>This year the Service had received no complaints of bullying and harassment and</p>

last year two complaints were received.

Whistleblowing and Safecall

Issues of concern could also come in via numerous routes utilising Safecall, the Grievance Procedure or Whistleblowing Policy.

The Whistleblowing Policy was intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures.

Where a matter was reported using Safecall it could then be investigated as a Safecall under the Disciplinary or Grievance Procedure depending on the nature of the case.

Since 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, six matters of concern were raised utilising Safecall, all of the cases related to behaviour.

Further to the matters being raised the following action occurred:

- Mediation between two individuals and no further action.
- Recruitment and Selection Investigation – no further action.
- Formal investigation resulting in a management letter, additional training.
- Formal investigation resulting in a management letter, additional training.
- Matter investigated under the Grievance Procedure.
- Matter investigated under the Whistleblowing Procedure.

Since 1 April 2024, there had been two complaints utilising Safecall, one matter was under investigation, the other anonymous complaint had been challenging to deal with as no place of work or person was identifiable but the concerns raised would be the subject of training.

Complaints

Members of the public could make complaints against members of staff and these were initially investigated by the line manager. If misconduct was found to have occurred the matter was passed to Human Resources (HR) where the matter was investigated under the relevant procedure. In this financial year there had been eighteen complaints.

In response to a question from County Councillor D O'Toole in relation to the timeline for the services HMICFRS inspection, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) confirmed that the inspection would commence on 17 February 2025. Prior to this date the self-assessment would be completed and submitted before commencement of the inspection including an update since the last inspection and the services current position against previous findings. The first three weeks of the inspection would be conducted remotely and the physical inspection within the service would commence on 10 March 2025. The inspection was expected to conclude in April 2025.

The ACFO advised that a familiarisation meeting would be taking place on 18 December 2024 with the services HMICFRS lead Phil Innis, although he would not take part in this inspection due to previous commitments.

	<p>The DoPD asked members to consider their training needs and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) advised that there would be some input on training at the next Strategy Group Meeting in February.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the DoPD for a comprehensive report.</p> <p>Resolved: - That the Authority noted the report.</p>
58/24	<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 – County Councillor Matthew Salter • Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Councillor Zamir Khan • Health and Wellbeing – County Councillor Hasina Khan • Road Safety – Councillor Fred Jackson <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 15 September 2024. During this period all had undertaken their respective role in accordance with the defined terms of reference.</p> <p>County Councillor M Salter acknowledged the fantastic work of the Community Safety and Prevention Team and thanked all involved. He drew attention to the work that the Community Fire Safety (CFS) Team had done with the Hindu and Sikh communities raising awareness of fire safety in relation to the dangers of traditional tea lights and the benefits of switching to battery-operated candles. During the recent Diwali celebrations, the CFS team visited supermarkets across Preston distributing fire safety literature due to an increase in the number of international students living in university halls of residence.</p> <p>County Councillor D O’Toole commended the report and the work of the member champions.</p> <p>The Chair thanked member champions and remarked that she had attended a great road safety event at Burnley College.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Authority noted and endorsed the report and acknowledged the work of the respective Champions.</p>
59/24	<p>Fire Protection Report</p>
	<p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) presented the report which summarised Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) prosecutions pertaining to fire safety offences under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005.</p>

	<p>On Thursday 21 November 2024, sentencing had taken place at Preston Crown Court, where the landlord of 120 Corporation Street, Preston was sentenced to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine months to be served concurrently, suspended for eighteen months. • One hundred and twenty hours Community Service. • Ordered to pay £2,400 in costs to LFRS. <p>Four cases sat within the court system, two cases related to the same premises; one case was set for sentencing on 29 January 2025 at the Magistrates Court. The second case had a dismissal hearing on the 24 March 2025 at Crown Court along with a trial date set for the 28 July 2025. Two other legal cases were set to be heard in the Crown Court, one for sentencing on the 9 December 2024 relating to supported living, and the second which related to student accommodation, had a trial date of 14 July 2025.</p> <p>The Protection team were currently engaged with two appeals against the issuing of Enforcement Notices with the courts able to determine the success of the appeal.</p> <p>Members noted that there had been six arson convictions during the quarter.</p> <p>At 11:28 Councillor's Z Khan and D Smith left the meeting.</p> <p>County Councillor M Pattison expressed her thanks to the firefighters who attended the tragic incident in Kirby Lonsdale and stated her thoughts were with the families involved.</p> <p>County Councillor J Shedwick remarked that there were a number of severe sentences included within the report and commended the Fire Protection Team on their work.</p> <p>County Councillor M Clifford expressed his thanks for the work done in relation to the arson fire at The Barn, Bamber Bridge. He stated that the fire was at Cuerden Valley Park Visitor Centre of which he was a Director and the visitors centre was crucial for the charity.</p> <p>The DCFO stated that the fire at Kirby Lonsdale was attended by LFRS dogs and drones. With LFRS regularly working in partnership with other services.</p> <p>Resolved: That the report be noted.</p>
60/24	<p>Celebrating our people update</p>
	<p>The Assistant Director of Communication and Engagement (ADoCE) presented the report. Following the Service's annual staff celebration event on 21 November 2024, the report set out staff recognition activity and individuals celebrated for a variety of achievements in 2024. As part of the Service's staff recognition activity, more than 70 people were honoured with Long Service Good Conduct Awards, Star Awards, Chief Fire Officer's Commendations, Bravery Awards and Academic Achievements. Details of all award recipients were included within the report within the agenda pack.</p>

	<p>Throughout the year, staff were recognised for their efforts through formal activity such as letters of appreciation and nominations for external awards, in addition to informal activity carried out by local leaders.</p> <p>The Service’s intranet contained a ‘compliments board’ where compliments from colleagues and the public were shared. This year to-date there had been 55 compliments published for staff across the Service.</p> <p>In autumn, a programme of on-call station appreciation events began. They were designed to thank on-call staff, their families, and employers who were all invited to join a senior officer at the station for refreshments. Six events had taken place in Pennine area, with staff on the units recognised for teamwork, professionalism, and supporting their local communities. These events were currently being evaluated before wider rollout.</p> <p>The Chair remarked that she and the Vice-Chair had attended the celebration event and enjoyed hearing many officers’ stories and talking to the award winners. She remarked that there were a number of firefighters who had completed further education whilst working fulltime to develop both themselves and the service. The Chair added that the report would be brought to the authority annually.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Authority noted and endorsed the report and acknowledged the achievements of award recipients.</p>
61/24	<p>Operational Incidents of Interest</p>
	<p>The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) presented the report which provided Members with information relating to operational incidents of note. 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 have formed part of the report. Full details of the following incidents were provided in the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Traffic Collision in Lancaster (2/9/24) • Hazardous Materials Incident in Chorley (6/9/24) • Explosion in Burnley (14/9/24) • Commercial Building Fire in Fleetwood (17/9/24) • Heavy Goods Vehicle Fire in Lancaster (19/9/24) • Major Entrapment of Person in Preston (23/9/24) • Animal Rescue in Rawtenstall (28/10/24) • Commercial Building Fire in Preston (31/10/24) • Gas explosion in Preston (2/11/24) • Major Incident Road Traffic Collision in Lancaster (6/11/24) <p>Resolved: That the Authority noted and endorsed the report.</p> <p>The ACFO introduced Watch Manager (WM) Lindsay Sielski who gave a presentation and demonstration to members on dogs and drone use within the service. He stated that WM Sielski was nationally recognised and was leading</p>

	<p>innovation in training dogs to work in conjunction with drones and lasers</p> <p>WM Sielski gave a demonstration with Maverick, a 12-month-old Springer Spaniel who was being trained to work with drones and lasers. She stated that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) was the only fire service in the world working collaboratively with dogs, drones and lasers.</p> <p>WM Sielski explained that Maverick was training to access restricted areas and avoid hazards by following a laser before conducting a search.</p> <p>WM Sielski then delivered a presentation to members, she explained that the picture of searching had changed with more homelessness and modern slavery and the use of drones and dogs allowed the incident commander to obtain a full picture of an incident. The presentation included a number of videos showing the dogs in training with drones and lasers.</p> <p>WM Sielski remarked that some searches could be done more safely with the search dog being directed from a distance using lasers and drones and radio commands through a radio attached to the dogs collar, allowing firefighters to keep a safe distance.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor D O'Toole in relation to the preferred dog breed, WM Sielski stated that there was no preference on male or female dogs. Maverick's father was a good agile search dog, able to think cognitively and outside the box, so chose those genetics to breed from. She stated that any dog from a working line with a longer nose was preferred but blood hounds were not used for searching as they were not good at moving around rubble. WM Sielski stated that there was some personal choice involved and the latest fire dog was a Belgian Malinois which had failed as a police dog but could be used as a search dog.</p> <p>The Chair thanked WM Sielski for her demonstration and presentation.</p>
62/24	<p>Member Complaints</p>
	<p>The Monitoring Officer confirmed that there had been no complaints since the last meeting.</p> <p>Resolved: That the current position be noted.</p>
63/24	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p>
	<p>The next meeting of the Authority would be held on Monday 17 February 2025 at 10:30am at the Training Centre, Euxton.</p>

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 17 February 2025

Proceedings of Resources Committee held 27 November 2024

(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 November 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 November 2024.

Business Risk

None.

Environmental Impact

None.

Equality & Diversity Implications

None.

Financial Risk

None.

HR 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 Resources Committee

Wednesday, 27 November 2024, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
G Baker	
F De Molfetta	
T Hurn	
Z Khan MBE	
D O'Toole	
M Pattison (Vice-Chair)	
S Serridge (Chair)	
D Smith	
R Woollam	
B Yates	

Officers
<p>S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS) E Sandiford, Director of People and Development (LFRS) B Warren, HR Lead - Pensions and North West Fire Control (LFRS) J Meadows, Head of Finance (LFRS) P Jones, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery (LFRS) M Nolan, Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)</p>

In attendance

25/24	Apologies for Absence
	None received.
26/24	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
27/24	Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved: That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 25 September 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

28/24 **Financial Monitoring 2024/25**

The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) advised that this report set out the current budget position in respect of the 2024/25 revenue and capital budgets.

Revenue Budget

In February 2024 the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) agreed the Service's 2024/25 revenue budget at £75.155m. This Financial Monitoring report was for the six-month period to the end of September 2024. The forecast outturn was £75.051m, which was a small underspend of (£0.103m). Of the forecast underspend, (£0.135m) related to non-pay costs, and £0.032m to pay costs.

The year-to-date and forecast positions within all departmental budgets were set out in Appendix 1, with the major variances of note shown separately in the table below.

Area	Year to Date Variance £m	Reason	Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Reason
Service Delivery - Pay	0.181	The grey book pay award of 4% had been agreed and was effective from July 2024. This was 1% higher than the services budgeted assumptions and accounted for majority of the overspend.	0.653	The effect of higher than budgeted pay award resulted in a forecast cost pressure of £0.400m. Additional overtime costs had been incurred over the summer which had increased the forecast by £0.194m.
Prevention and Protection - Pay	(0.248)	The year-to-date underspend was due to vacancies within the department.	(0.415)	Several vacant posts existed in the current staffing establishment for which recruitment and reorganisation was planned. It was anticipated that three posts would be recruited to in year, with a number of vacancies to persist for the duration of the financial year.

Bank Interest	(0.100)	More interest had been earned on balances invested because of higher balances invested, due to slippage on the capital programme, and higher than budgeted interest rates. Interest earned on the Home Office pension grant received ahead of Matthews two and McCloud remedy had been assumed to be transferred to a reserve if required to be repaid.	(0.200)	The forecast reflects the full year effect of higher than budgeted interest rates and higher balances invested due to slippage in the capital programme.
Fleet	(0.086)	Vehicle Repair and Maintenance (R&M) costs in the year to date were lower than budget to date.	0.107	There was a small overspend forecast on R&M costs based on historic spending patterns.
Occupational Health – Medical fees	0.043	Staff medical fees were higher than budgeted due to the requirement for mandatory three-year screenings, recruitment screenings and referrals. The cost of providers remained high with few options between providers.	0.114	Costs were anticipated to increase in the latter part of the year due to both On Call and Wholetime recruitment courses planned.
Property	(0.428)	Programmed revenue maintenance costs had been delayed and was expected to fall in the latter half of the financial year. Utilities expenditure had also been less than budgeted in the year to date.	(0.331)	The current outturn forecast currently assumed that property works would be undertaken as planned later in the year. Utility costs were currently forecast to underspend by (£0.400m) due to lower than budgeted usage and rates.

Future Pressures

Green book pay award negotiations concluded in late October. The national employers and trade unions agreed a pay award of £1,290 per annum (pro-rata for part-timers) on pay points 2 to 43, and an increase of 2.5% on locally determined pay points above 43. This would be paid in November and backdated to 1 April 2024. Current pay projections used the 3% budgeted rate. The revised forecast to include the new pay rate was not expected to change significantly.

The employer's contribution rate to the 2015 Firefighters' pension scheme as determined by the scheme actuary had been increased from 28.8% to 37.6%. Additional £2.5m grant funding had been received and added to the budget to offset this pressure, however, funding for 2025/26 was unknown at this stage.

Savings Targets

A reduction in the Contribution to Capital of £1.5m was agreed in the medium-term Financial Strategy resulting in a revenue contribution in 2024/25 of £2.5m. The budget had been reduced to this effect.

General Fund

The year end forecasted general fund position is summarised below:

	£'m
Opening balance of LFRS general fund	(4.987)
Forecast revenue underspend	(0.103)
Forecast closing balance of general fund	(5.090)

Following the final outturn and audit of the financial statements, the opening general fund balance was updated from £4.918m to £4.987m.

Capital Budget

The revised Capital Programme for 2024/25 approved by the Resources Committee was £12m. To date £1.652m had been spent predominantly on fleet and operational equipment. A summary of the programme is set out in the table below and in more detail in Appendix 2 of the report.

Area	Budgeted Items	Budget (£m)	Year to Date (£m)	Slippage 2025/26 (£m)
------	----------------	-------------	-------------------	-----------------------

Operational Vehicles	<p>The budget included costs of two water towers, two climate change vehicles, three pumping appliances, a prime mover and an aerial ladder appliance. All vehicles were on target to be delivered in 2024/25 with the exception of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pumping appliances were in the procurement process. • Aerial ladder appliance – delivery due early April 2025. • Large climate change vehicle was in the procurement process and the small one at specification stage. 	2.943	0.446	1.501
Other vehicles	<p>This budget allowed for the replacement of various operational support vehicles including several cars, vans and a beavertail lorry. A few vehicles had been delayed to 2025/26:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four Toyota Rav4 and two small vans were on order, however delivery expected early 2025/26. • Two double cab vans were in the procurement process. • Two rescue team vans had slipped due to delivery and conversion lead times. 	0.948	0.176	0.407
Operational Equipment	<p>This budget allowed for operational equipment purchases including CCTV cameras for appliances, body armour, and road traffic collision equipment. To date the following slippage included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body Armour – the trial period had been completed and procurement process underway. • Flow meters and hose reel were on trial in Blackpool. It was anticipated there would be an additional budget requirement. • Breathing apparatus compressor was on order with an early 2025/26 lead time. 	1.846	0.812	0.470

Building Modifications	<p>This budget included the continued programme of Drill Tower Replacements, Blackpool facilities upgrade and budget for the initial works to support the upgrade to Preston station. Slippage to date had been identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The enhancement of facilities at Blackpool (W30) had incurred some initial costs however would see final completion in 2025/26. • Most Drill Tower replacement works had slipped due to unsuccessful award of the contract. • Wylfra training props programme was due to start on site April 2024. • Options appraisal was underway for suitable land acquisition. • Estates improvements would continue into 2025/26. 	3.639	0.125	2.573
IT systems	<p>This budget included various projects including upgraded Firewalls, network upgrades and replacement of pooled PPE and stock management systems. Several IT system projects had been identified as likely to slip into 2025/26; the replacement systems for the management of stock, assets and pooled PPE and public switched telephone network. Existing contracts had been extended. The incident ground radios project had also slipped to next year due to other interdependencies with the breathing apparatus project.</p>	2.593	0.093	0.974

Potential Financial Risks

There were several potential scenarios that had not been reflected in this monitoring report that, if they materialised, may give rise to an increase in revenue and capital expenditure. To provide some information about potential significant financial risks these had been quantified to provide an estimated worst case scenario, these were set out in Appendix 3 of the report. Taking all these risks overall and adjusted for the remainder of the year, a potential worst-case scenario would impact the Revenue Budget and Capital Budget accordingly:

£m	Worst Case
Revenue Budget - unbudgeted costs	3.25
Capital Budget – Additional Expenditure	0.65

	<p>The potential worst-case scenario could be funded from available budgets but would reduce the general fund balance to below the minimum acceptable level agreed by the CFA.</p> <p>In response to a question from Councillor D Smith in relation to the unsuccessful drill tower tender process, the DoCS advised that the contract would be going back out to tender.</p> <p>County Councillor D O'Toole remarked that it was pleasing to see a good level of reserves and it was important to consider the increasing cost of living when reviewing the precept.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Committee;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted and endorsed the financial position; and 2. Approved slippage in the capital programme of £2.53m to 2025/26.
29/24	<p>Treasury Management Mid-Year Report</p>
	<p>The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) advised that the report set out the Authority's borrowing and lending activities during 2024/25. In accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Treasury Management Code of Practice and to strengthen Members' oversight of the Authority's treasury management activities, the Resources Committee received a treasury management mid-year report and a final outturn report. Reports on treasury activity were discussed on a quarterly basis with Lancashire County Council Treasury Management Team and the Authority's DoCS and the content of these reports were used as a basis for this report to the Committee.</p> <p>Economic Overview</p> <p>Treasury management activity was taken within the context of prevailing and forecasted economic conditions. UK headline consumer price inflation remained around the Bank of England (BoE) target later in the period, falling from an annual rate of 3.2% in March to 2.0% in May and then rebounding marginally to June to 2.2% in July and August, as was expected, due to base effects from energy prices.</p> <p>The UK economy continued to expand over the period, albeit slowing from the 0.7% gain in the first calendar quarter to 0.5% (downwardly revised from 0.6%) in the second. Of the monthly figures, the economy was estimated to have registered no growth in July.</p> <p>Over the period, the 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started at 3.94% and ended at 4.00% but hit a high of 4.41% in May and a low of 3.76% in mid-September. While the 20-year gilt started at 4.40% and ended at 4.51% but hit a high of 4.82% in May and a low of 4.27% in mid-September. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 5.12% over the period to 30th September.</p> <p>The latest BoE Monetary Policy Report, published in August, showed policymakers expected GDP growth to continue expanding during 2024 before falling back and moderating from 2025 to 2027. Unemployment was forecast to stay around 4.5% while inflation was shown picking up in the latter part of 2024 as the previous years'</p>

energy price declines fell out of the figures before slipping below the 2% target in 2025 and remaining there until early 2027.

Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, maintained its central view that Bank Rates would steadily fall from the 5.25% peak, with the first cut in August being followed by a series of further cuts, with November 2024 the likely next one, taking Bank Rate down to around 3% by the end of 2025. A table in the report showed the latest forecast for interest rates from Arlingclose.

Treasury Management position and policy

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes was measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital were the underlying resources available for investment. The treasury management activity was influenced both by the position at the beginning of the year and the plans in year. The position at the start of the financial year is summarised in the Table below:

	Balance 31/3/24
	£m
Capital Finance Requirement	12.8
Less other debt liabilities	(12.8)
Borrowing Requirement	0.000
External borrowing	2.000

The table showed that the level of loans was above the borrowing requirement. This was the result of the Authority adopting a policy of setting aside additional Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) in order to generate the cash to repay loans either on maturity or as an early repayment. This had resulted in the CFR being reduced but due to early repayment charges it had not been financially beneficial to repay three loans.

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

Borrowing

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

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

If the loans were to be repaid early there would be an early repayment (premium) charge. Previous reports on treasury management activities had reported that the premium and the potential loss of investment income had been greater than the savings made on the interest payments therefore it had not been considered financially beneficial to repay the loans especially with the potential for increased

interest rates. However, on 30 September 2023 the estimated premium charge to repay the three loans was minimal although rates and the premium changed on a daily basis. To offset the net savings on repaying the loans it was estimated that future interest on investments over the remaining period of the loans would need to be 3.91%. If it was estimated that investment interest rates would be lower than this figure, then it may be beneficial to repay the loans.

Investments

Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance required the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money was to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving low investment returns and having the value of reserves eroded by inflation.

The Authority principally invested in a call account provided by Lancashire County Council (LCC) which paid the equivalent of the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility (DMADF) overnight facility. Each working day the balance on the Authority's Current Account was invested in this to ensure that interest was received on surplus balances within an acceptable risk framework. During the period all surplus balances were placed with the County Council via this arrangement. On 30 September this balance was transferred back to the authority to be managed internally. Therefore, on the 30 September this balance was invested in the DMADF overnight facility. At 30 September there was a balance of £29.875m invested in DMADF overnight facility while the average for the period for both LCC call account and DMADF deposits was £16.421m. The current rate for these investments was 4.94% in line with the current overnight rate for DMADF.

To increase the rate earned on current balances, the Authority had placed fixed term investments with other local authorities. To attract a higher rate of interest than was available on the call account these investments would need to be fixed for a longer period of time. The report identified the investments that had been in place during the year. At 30 September there was £23.5m fixed term investment in place, therefore the total investment held at 30 September was £53.375m.

The overall rate of interest earned during this period was 5.322% which was more favourable when compared with the Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) which averaged 5.12% over the same period.

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

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

Period	Interest rate
6 months	4.85%
1 year	4.50%
2 year	4.30%
3 year	4.20%

Prudential Indicators

In order to control and monitor the Authority's treasury management functions, a number of prudential indicators were determined against which performance may be measured. The indicators for 2024/25 were approved by the Authority on 19 February 2024 which were detailed in the report alongside the current actual.

Revenue Budget Implications

The 2024/25 revenue budget for treasury management activity showed that anticipated income would exceed expenditure by £1.050m. Considering the activity for the first six months of the year and estimated cash-flow for the remainder of the year the latest forecast was as below:

	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25
	Budget	Forecast	Variance
	£m	£m	£m
MRP	0.000	0.000	0.000
Interest payable	0.090	0.090	0.000
Interest receivable	-1.050	-2.100	-1.050
Net budget	-0.960	-2.010	-1.050

The interest receivable was above budget as the balances and interest rates were higher than anticipated when setting the budget. The forecast assumed interest rates on the call account averaged 4.42% for the remainder of the financial year.

Resolved: That the Committee noted and endorsed the report.

30/24

Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024/25 - Mid-Year Update

The DoCS presented the productivity and efficiency plan 2024/25 – midyear update to members.

As part of the Spending Review 2021, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Local Government Association (LGA) agreed that between 2022/23-2024/25, fire and rescue services in England would increase wholetime firefighter productivity by 3% and create 2% of non-pay efficiency savings. Linked to these targets, the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire asked that all standalone Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) draft and publish Productivity and Efficiency Plans. A plan was produced for 2023/24, the information provided a strong evidence base for the next Spending Review and demonstrated positive leadership from the sector to engage with the productivity and efficiency agenda.

For 2024/25, the Minister had again requested that all FRAs, publish a Productivity and Efficiency Plan for 2024/25 to help the Home Office, NFCC and LGA to build a more comprehensive picture on the sector's progress against the agreed targets and savings achieved.

Guidance was provided by the Home Office setting out the information that must be contained in the statements; providing primary information about the Authority, details of efficiencies and productivity measures achieved to date and planned. The guidance provided three examples from FRAs of well written plans from 2023/24 of which Lancashire was one of the good practice examples.

	<p>The 2024/25 plan follows the same format as the previous year. It showed that compared to the Government Spending Review non-pay efficiency savings target for fire authorities of 2%, the LCFA achieved 5.6% on average over the period.</p> <p>The mid-year update of the Productivity and Efficiency Statement for 2024/25 was set out in Appendix B within the agenda pack and showed excellent progress against the agreed actions, with many of them achieved already.</p> <p>To date the service had completed 12,138 Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs), which was greater than the 11,737 completed at the end of Q2 2023/24. Built environment training had been provided to all community safety advisors for them to identify areas of non-compliance with the fire safety order. This training provided community safety staff with the knowledge to support residents living in multiple occupation homes along with when onward referral was appropriate to the services protection department. The Service had completed 1,867 Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSCs) year to date, which was greater than the 1,719 completed at the end of Q2 2023/24.</p> <p>The On-Call Improvement Programme (OCIP) was driving transformation across the service with several workstreams to improve productivity and efficiency. Incident Command trainers had reviewed the process for On-Call Incident Command Courses, which had resulted in 10 Courses and 58 staff being trained as Incident Commanders in 2024. This was a significant increase in course delivery from previous years.</p> <p>On-Call Performance Management training for Station Managers and Unit Managers was completed in Q2, which included the roll-out of sector-leading innovative software for On-Call Availability, Recruitment and Skills (OARS). The software had improved the efficiency and effectiveness of workforce planning, development, and performance. OARS is the first of its kind nationally, and the service demonstrated the project and software as best practice at the NFCC On-Call Conference in September.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Committee noted the report.</p>
31/24	Date and Time of Next Meeting
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday 26 March 2025 at 1000 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.</p> <p>Further meeting dates were noted for 2 July 2025 and 24 September 2025.</p>
32/24	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>

33/24	Update from Capital Projects Working Group
	(Paragraph 3) The DoCS presented the proceedings of the Capital Projects Working Group held on 9 September 2024. Resolved: That the proceedings of the Capital Projects Working Group be noted.
34/24	Pensions Update (Standing Item)
	(Paragraphs 4 and 5) Members considered a report that provided an update on the various issues which had arisen in respect of the changes to the pension schemes applying to the uniformed members of the Fire Sector. Resolved: That the committee: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted the ongoing situation; 2. Approved renaming the Injury Pensions Sub-Committee to the Pensions Sub-Committee, and 3. Delegated authority to the HR Lead to manage Pension cases to ensure scheme compliance.
35/24	High Value Procurement Projects
	(Paragraph 3) Members considered a report that provided an update on all contracts for one-off purchases valued in excess of £100,000 and high value procurement projects in excess of £100,000 including: new contract awards, progress of ongoing projects and details of new projects. Resolved: That the Committee noted and endorsed the report.
36/24	Executive Board Succession Arrangements
	(Paragraph 1) Members received an update from the Clerk to the Authority on the succession arrangements for the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), with a recommendation on the arrangements, in accordance with convention. Resolved: That the Committee approved the recommendation outlined in the report.
37/24	Injury Pensions Sub-Committee
	(Paragraph 1)

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer provided a verbal update on the membership of the Injury Pensions Sub-Committee and reiterated that the Sub-Committee would be renamed to the Pensions Sub-Committee.

Resolved: That the Committee noted the verbal report.

M Nolan
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 17 February 2025

Proceedings of Audit Committee held 28 November 2024

(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 November 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 November 2024.

Business Risk

None.

Environmental Impact

None.

Equality & Diversity Implications

None.

Financial Risk

None.

HR 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 Audit Committee

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

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
S Clarke	
M Clifford (Chair)	
J Hugo	
F Jackson	
M Salter	
J Shedwick (Vice-Chair)	
J Singleton	
Officers	
S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS) J Meadows, Head of Finance (LFRS) A Latham, Financial Accountant (LFRS)	
In attendance	
A Dalecki, Internal Audit, Lancashire County Council L Rix, Internal Audit, Lancashire County Council G Jones, External Audit, Grant Thornton	
21/24	Apologies for Absence
	None received.
22/24	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
23/24	Minutes of the Previous Meeting
	Resolved: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 26 September 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

24/24	External 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 Committee had received the draft Audit Findings Report which summarised the conclusions from the external auditor's work undertaken as part of the year-end audit of accounts at the September Committee meeting. The updated report confirmed that all the work had been completed and the letter of assurance from the pension fund auditor had been received. Once confirmation was received that the assurance had been completed, the opinion would be signed.</p> <p>It was noted that the only addition that had changed the account was the insertion of a contingent liability note in relation to the Matthew's legal case. It was expected that any liability that could transpire would be covered by the pension top-up grant.</p> <p>Georgia Jones gave her thanks to the Finance Team for their work on the audit and expressed her appreciation for their assistance.</p> <p>Resolved: - That the Committee noted and endorsed the updated Audit Findings Report.</p>
25/24	Internal Audit Monitoring Report
	<p>The Internal Auditors produced a summary of progress against the annual plan for each Audit Committee meeting, setting out progress to date and any significant findings. The report for the period 01 April 2024 to 07 November 2024 was presented by Laura Rix, Senior Auditor.</p> <p>To date, 26 days had been spent this financial year on completion of the 2024/25 plan, equating to 37% of the total planned audit activity of 70 days. The table in the report showed the current status of all audit work.</p> <p>It was noted that the audit of 'Implementations of Learning from National Incidents' had been positive with minor actions as per the report pack in the agenda.</p> <p>Members were informed that work had now commenced on the key financial systems and Cyber Security.</p> <p>In response to a query from County Councillor Shedwick in relation to the number of Audit days used over a 6-month period and the planned usage of the remaining 44 days, Laura Rix explained that the report had been created 6 weeks prior to the meeting and numerous days had been used in that period for work on the Key Financial Systems. No issues were anticipated with using the remaining days for the planned work.</p>

	Resolved: - That the Committee noted the report.
26/24	Risk Management
	<p>The Director of Corporate Services presented the report to Members.</p> <p>In March 2024, the Audit Committee supported the updated Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) risk management policy, procedure, and the associated organisational risk register. This aligned with ISO 31000:2018 standards, was in line with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) template and represented good practice in the sector. Effective risk management practices were integrated into quarterly Corporate Performance Board (CPB) meetings agendas, provided strategic oversight, ensured legislative compliance, optimised resource allocation, and facilitated risk reporting to the Combined Fire Authority.</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.</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>The risk management policy and procedure at LFRS ensured compliance with legislative requirements and NFCC good practice. The policy and procedure were aligned with ISO 31000:2018, to ensure an accurate description and appropriate monitoring and management of LFRS risks. Additionally, a tiered approach to risk was in place which allowed for escalation and de-escalation as needed.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Risk Management was integrated into quarterly CPB meetings, as a standing agenda item LFRS aimed to provide strategic oversight of the risk management process. Overall, the measures enabled LFRS to fulfil its legislative duties and optimise resource allocation whilst providing a structured mechanism for reporting on risk to the Audit Committee. The Corporate Risk Register was reviewed</p>

quarterly, and updates provided by all pertinent risk managers and owners.

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

- Loss of Funding (it had been confirmed that the Service would receive a 1-year settlement for 2025/26, however, a multiyear financial settlement that ensured financial sustainability was likely for 2026/27);
- Telecommunications (actions were noted on page 80 of the agenda pack - It was highlighted that a planned power outage took place at the Service's Leadership & Development Centre to test the Business Continuity Plan and testing also took place for the scenario of a Service-wide outage due to flooding); and
- Retention and Recruitment of On-Call Staff (actions were noted on page 87 of the agenda pack – On-Call availability had begun to improve with the measures in place).

In response to a question from County Councillor Singleton in relation to the measures in place to mitigate the risk for telecommunications, the Director of Corporate Services advised that he would investigate the measures and feedback his findings at a future committee meeting.

County Councillor Shedwick commented that the Service was well represented by the CFO regarding the implementation of the new mobilising system and asked how the Risk ID 11h 'Loss of NWFC Mobilising System', on Page 87 of the agenda pack, was a closed risk.

Councillor Hugo highlighted that no implications had been identified in terms of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) on Page 76 of the agenda pack and, although LFRS was nationally recognised for having outstanding culture, she suggested it would be prudent to consider adding EDI to the risk register. The impact of the EDI risk to the Service could be catastrophic, as seen in other Fire and Rescue Services. The Director of Corporate Services advised that he would find information outside of the meeting about how that risk was managed and would feed back to a future meeting.

Members discussed EDI in the Fire Service, that LFRS had outstanding culture regarding EDI, and work in that area would need to be continuous.

It was suggested that a training session be delivered to Members around EDI & Culture to explore the issues respectfully and openly and all Members agreed. The Director of Corporate Services advised that the option of training may be able to be provided at a future Strategy meeting and would discuss with the Executive Board.

Laura Rix believed that an Audit on EDI had previously taken place. She would investigate and bring any findings back to the committee.

The Chair stated that the risk map in the agenda pack was very useful for providing risk information.

Resolved: - That the Committee: -

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Endorsed LFRS's risk management arrangements: and ii) Noted the up-to-date Corporate Risk Register and its content.
27/24	Date of Next Meeting
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on 27 March 2025 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 24 July 2025 and agreed for 25 September 2025.</p>

M Nolan
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 17 February 2025

Proceedings of Performance Committee held 4 December 2024

(Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information:

Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager - Tel: 01772 866720

Executive Summary

The proceedings of Performance Committee meeting held 4 December 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 4 December 2024.

Business Risk

None.

Environmental Impact

None.

Equality & Diversity Implications

None.

Financial Risk

None.

HR 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 Performance Committee

Wednesday, 4 December 2024, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
P Britcliffe	
M Clifford	
F De Molfetta (Chair)	
N Hennessy	
T Hurn	
H Khan (Vice-Chair)	
D O'Toole	
M Salter	

Officers
J Charters, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) P Jones, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery (LFRS) M Warwick, Group Manager, Community Protection Manager, Southern (LFRS) Z Scott, Campaigns Officer, Corporate Communications (LFRS) S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)
In attendance

15/24	Apologies For Absence
	Apologies were received from County Councillors Paul Rigby and Barrie Yates.
16/24	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
17/24	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	Resolved: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on the 04 September 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

18/24

Performance Management Information

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented a comprehensive report to the Performance Committee. This was the 2nd quarterly report for 2024/25 as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-2027.

This quarter, one Key Performance Indicator (KPI), 2.9 Business Fire Safety Checks, was shown in positive exception and one Key Performance Indicator, 3.3 Total Fire Engine Availability, was shown in negative exception.

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

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

1.1 Overall Staff Engagement

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

From July to September 2024, 26 station visits were carried out by Principal Officers and Area Managers as part of the service-wide engagement programme. Fifty-three wellbeing interactions were undertaken ranging from workshops with crews to wellbeing support dog interactions.

The views of staff were sought by a survey on how useful people find the appraisal conversation in order to improve the quality of appraisals.

The Service engaged with staff over several topics that related to the Service’s fleet and equipment, which included two items designed to enhance firefighter protection from harmful particulates found in soot and smoke: particulate flash hoods and particulate filters for face masks. A wildfire team along with learning and development centre trainers were trialling devices to monitor heat stress in firefighters, and a new hose reel was also being trialled.

Improvement works at Blackpool Fire Station and plans for new training props at the Leadership and Development Centre had been the subject of staff engagement relating to property projects.

As previously reported: A comprehensive staff survey was undertaken periodically to gain insight from all staff on a range of topics which included leadership, training and development, health and wellbeing, and equality, diversity, and inclusion. The feedback was used to shape future activity and bring about improvements and new ideas. The survey included a staff engagement index which was a measure of overall staff engagement based on levels of pride, advocacy, attachment, inspiration, and motivation. The current staff engagement score index was 74% (2023).

Year	Engagement Index	Response Rate
2023	74%	49%

2020	79%	44%
2018	70%	43%
2016	64%	31%

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.

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.

In response to a question from County Councillor Hennessy regarding the periodic undertaking of the staff survey and the response rate, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that Corporate Communications would commence a new staff survey within the current year. The response rates were characteristic of those in other organisations, however, the Corporate Communications department constantly developed ways to increase responses. He cited one Fire Service that made a donation of £5 to the Firefighters Charity for every survey returned which increased the number of returns by providing an incentive.

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 8 shifts lost.

Annual Shifts Lost ÷ 4 quarters = 2

Cumulative total number of shifts lost: 3.200

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, 1.18%.

County Councillor Salter queried, in relation to the KPI, whether the standard of 2.5% should be lowered as the Service was performing particularly well. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that the Service was overperforming by a fraction of a percent although the construction of the graph made it look more severe. A review of the KPI was a Member decision.

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 8 shifts lost.

Annual Shifts Lost ÷ 4 quarters: 2

Cumulative shifts lost: 2.928

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 23%(21%)	Male 77%(79%)	
Ethnicity:	BME 4%(3%)	White 93%(94%)	Not stated 3%(3%)
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 4%(4%)	Heterosexual 59%(54%)	Not stated 37%(42%)
Disability:	Disability 3%(3%)	No disability 94%(95%)	Not stated 3%(2%)

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 11%	Green book 62%
	Male	Grey book 89%	Green book 38%
Ethnicity:	BME	Grey book 3%	Green book 5%
	White	Grey book 94%	Green book 86%
	Not stated	Grey book 3%	Green book 9%
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT	Grey book 4%	Green book 3%
	Heterosexual	Grey book 58%	Green book 63%

	Not stated	Grey book 38%	Green book 34%
Disability:	Disability	Grey book 3%	Green book 4%
	No disability	Grey book 95%	Green book 90%
	Not stated	Grey book 2%	Green book 6%

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 59%(37%)	Male 41%(63%)	
Ethnicity:	BME 6%(5%)	White 26%(85%)	Not Stated 68%(10%)
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 6%(5%)	Heterosexual 79%(85%)	Not stated 15%(10%)
Disability:	Disability 6%(2%)	No disability 91%(93%)	Not stated 3%(5%)

During quarter 2, there were a total of 24 new entrants.

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 persons recruited during the period.

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, 10 for quarter 2; year to date 30; previous year to date 34. Quarterly activity decreased 44.44% 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 30,750 and the previous year's score was 31,170 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 (NWAS).

Incidents attended, year to date 8,669; previous year to date 9,525. Quarterly activity decreased 0.54% over the same quarter of the previous year.

In quarter 2, the Service attended 4,396 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) – 2004, 46%
- Total Primary Fire Calls (accidental dwelling / building and deliberate dwelling / commercial fires and other primary fires) – 428, 10%
- Total Secondary Fire Calls (deliberate and accidental fires) – 813, 18%
- Total Special Service Calls (critical incidents, gaining entry, RTCs, Flooding and other critical incidents) – 1144, 26%

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, 161 in quarter 2; year to date 327; previous year to date 374. Quarterly activity decreased 5.85% 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	3 in quarter 2; year to date 5; previous year to date 1
Injuries appear Serious	2 in quarter 2; year to date 2; previous year to date 7
Injuries appear Slight	6 in quarter 2; year to date 23; previous year to date 20

Quarterly activity increased 22.22% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed Members that sadly, 2 fatalities in quarter 2 related to a tragic incident in Blackpool where a young couple lost their lives, and a small child was hospitalised with burns.

One male lost his life in a gas explosion in a property in the Ribble Valley.

All three fatalities were subject to Coroner proceedings.

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 85% against same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 86%.

Combined quarterly percentage had therefore decreased 1.36% 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), 60 in quarter 2; year to date 132; previous year to date 127. Quarterly activity increased 5.26% over the same quarter of the previous year.

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

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

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

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

- current quarter, combined percentage of 82% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 71%.

Combined quarterly percentage had therefore increased 10.7% 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), 21 in quarter 2; year to date 42; previous year to date 49. Quarterly activity increased 133.33% over the same quarter of the previous year.

County Councillor Salter asked the reason for the spike in activity in June of 2023/24. Area Manager, Phil Jones advised that the weather had been hot and dry over that period and those conditions often increased the number of accidental building fires which initially could be caused as a secondary fire to grass fires and burning shrubbery spreading to property.

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 10% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 11%.

Combined quarterly activity had therefore decreased 1.6% 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 – 543 in quarter 2; year to date 1,038; previous year to date 1,145. Quarterly activity increased 17.79% 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, 17 in quarter 2, year to date 42; previous year to date 49. Quarterly activity decreased 32.00% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.6.2 Deliberate Fires - Commercial Premises

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

Deliberate Fires – Commercial Premises, 21 in quarter 2; year to date 70; previous year to date 72.

Quarterly activity decreased 30.00% over the same quarter of the previous year.

A second incident activity line was shown on the graph which excluded Crown premises which fell outside of the Service's legislative jurisdiction.

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, 505 in quarter 2; year to date 926; previous year to date 1,024. Quarterly activity increased 24.38% 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, 6,308 in quarter 2; year to date 5,807; previous year to date 11,737. Quarterly activity increased 6.4% against the same quarter of the previous year.

HFSCs with high-risk outcomes, Quarter 2, 52%; previous year Quarter 2, 52%.

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, 6 sessions delivered to 170 students;
RoadSense, 25 sessions delivered to 895 students;
SENDSafe, 1 session delivered to 80 students;
Wasted Lives, 5 sessions delivered to 205 students;
Biker Down, 3 sessions delivered to 51 attendees;
FIRES, 45 referrals opened prior to Q2 and carried over. 42 referrals received in Q2. 43 referrals closed in Q2. 44 referrals carried to 2024-25, Q3;
Partner Training (including care providers), 22 sessions delivered to 4 different partners, with 231 delegates receiving training;

Specific Education packages – delivered Water Safety, BrightSparx, ASB, Deliberate Fire Setting etc (Covers key stages 2, 3 and 4). 46 in school water safety sessions, delivered to 4,755 students & 6 virtual sessions delivered to 7,600 pupils.

Arson Threat Referrals – 233.

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, 943 in quarter 2; Cumulative 1,867; YTD target, 1,250; previous YTD 1,719.

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being satisfactory, 1,606. Top 5 completed satisfactory premise types (Shops 629, Factories/Warehouses 231, Other Workplaces 198, Offices 141, Other Public Premises 124).

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being unsatisfactory, 261. Top 5 completed unsatisfactory premise types (Shops 119, Factories/Warehouses 40, Licensed Premises 23, Other Workplaces 23, Offices 18).

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.

The BFSC intervention was now well embedded into Service Delivery. 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 in 2025.

Protection grey book staff had commenced with Strengthening Operational Awareness days in Q2 which had seen them begin to quality assure the BFSC delivery and support the transition of crews starting to undertake BFSCs in more high-risk sleeping premises types.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer highlighted that, due to the intervention and engagement, the Service had vastly overperformed for the first 6 months of the year.

Referencing a TV programme he witnessed where a fire extinguisher was loosely placed in a nursery and could easily have been removed by children, County Councillor O'Toole queried whether the positioning of fire extinguishers was incorporated into Business Fire Safety Checks. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that correct fire extinguisher positioning was included, and it would be rare to see a fire extinguisher which was not correctly mounted due to the many designs available to secure them. He added that fire extinguishers were usually placed on an exit route, were appropriate for the type of risk, and should be tested annually under an individual premise's health & safety policy/fire safety policies.

Area Manager, Phil Jones advised that, due to an uplift in the training of Operational staff, they were now carrying out BFSCs on premises types that they would not usually access, and some employers/landlords had been prosecuted due to dangerous practices.

In response to a question from County Councillor Clifford regarding the placing of a fire extinguisher at a local petrol station which had been taken by youths and sprayed in the area, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that fire extinguishers needed to be securely placed but easily accessible for use in the event of a fire. He advised that he would have Protection staff follow up with business support advice to the premises if Councillor Clifford so wished and shared

details of the specific site being discussed.

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 2, 524;

Formal Activity in Quarter 2, 6%, same quarter of the previous year 6%.

Quarterly activity remained static against the same quarter of the previous year.

Members noted the cumulative number of Fire Safety inspections undertaken for 2024/25 was 1,054.

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 2, Building Regulation Consultations received 226, of which 220 were completed within the timeframe (LFRS should make comments in writing within 15 working days of receiving a BRC).

Current focus within the department:

To comply with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators, Level 4 qualified Fire Safety Inspectors must complete consultations. It was the same inspectors who were required to complete intervention work in high risk, complex premises identified 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 Service's efficiency at responding to the majority within statutory timescales.

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 2, Very High 05:55 min; High 06:35 min, Medium 06:51 min, Low 09:05 min.

Q2 overall 07:42 min. Year to date overall 07:41 min. Previous year to date overall 07:24 min.

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, 08:36 min in quarter 2; year to date 08:29 min; previous year to date 08:34 min.

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, 86.18% in quarter 2; year to date 86.54%; previous year to date 88.66%.

Quarterly availability decreased 1.66% 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 2.

Overall availability across all stations for the quarter recorded 86.18%, which was 3.82% below the 90% standard, although only the months of July and August recorded availability below the lower control limit of 86.80%

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

Wholetime – 99.20%

Day Crewing Plus – 99.00%

Flexi Day Crewing – 99.17%

On-Call – 69.41%

Total – 86.18%

Whilst all the Whole-Time (WT) 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) 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.

Actions being taken to improve performance:

- The On Call Improvement Programme (OCIP) was driving transformation across the Service with several workstreams to improve recruitment, development, and retention.
- Incident Command trainers had reviewed the process for On-Call Incident Command Courses, which had resulted in 10 courses and 58 staff being trained as OICs in 2024. This was a significant increase in course delivery from previous delivery.
- On-Call Performance Management training for Station Managers and Unit Managers was completed in Q2, which included the roll-out of sector-leading innovative software for On-Call Availability, Recruitment and Skills (OARS). The software was developed in collaboration with an On-Call academic and a software designer. The software had improved the efficiency and effectiveness of workforce planning, development, and performance. OARS was the first of its kind nationally, and the Service had demonstrated the project and software as

best practice at the NFCC On-Call Conference in September.

- On-Call recognition events would commence in Q3, to acknowledge the dedication and efforts of the Service's On-Call firefighters, their families, and their employers.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the National Joint Council (NJC) had carried out a review of On-Call pay arrangements and in response to that, the Service would evaluate current pay arrangements and revise how staff were paid to improve availability. Due to societal factors and work/life balance, the hours of cover for a typical On-Call firefighter had reduced over recent years. It was considered that having fewer On-Call firefighters providing increased availability would be more cost effective for the Service as the associated costs of training and equipment would be lower. The NJC had proposed that where an employee provided cover for less than 120 hours per week, the banding would be: up to and including 30 hours per week; from 31 hours per week and up to and including 60 hours per week; from 61 hours per week and up to and including 90 hours per week; and from 91 hours per week and up to and including 119 hours with employees being remunerated on that basis. The Service considered that those bandings were too broad and felt that 15-hour bandings would be more effective. Initial proposals would be developed and would then be put out to consultation. It was noted that the NJC proposals did not offer the opportunity for On-Call firefighter to earn more than they currently did in LFRS as the Service paid more than the national grey book pay rates.

In response to a question from County Councillor O'Toole in relation to restrictions placed on on-Call firefighters, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that there were geographical restrictions as they would typically need to live or work within 5 minutes travel time of a fire station. The Service did not stipulate how much cover a potential On-call firefighter had to provide but they would be taken through the recruitment process if their hours of availability were beneficial to that unit. The NJC proposals provided an opportunity to offer lower hours contracts which, in turn, provided the Service with the opportunity to engage differently with businesses to secure the release of staff for valuable day time cover.

County Councillor Hasina Khan joined the meeting (10.22am).

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 2024/25 was set at £75.1 million. Spend at the end of September 2024 was £34.5 million. The annual forecast was £75 million, which was a small underspend of (£0.1) million.

The revised capital budget for 2024/25 was £12 million and spend at the end of September was £1.7 million. The total annual spend forecast was £5.8 million, and £0.3 million savings had been identified predominantly in Information Technology (IT). It was also anticipated £5.9 million expenditure would slip into 2025/26.

Extended lead times and resourcing shortfalls resulted in the slippage.

Quarter 2 variance -0.13%.

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.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (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 the progress against key workstreams being progressed under the Blue Light Collaboration Board (BLCB) partnership collaboration during the period.

Leadership Development

Partners had scoped collaboration opportunities for leadership development. Each Service agreed to host a leadership development event for senior leaders from all three organisations. Lancashire Fire and Rescue (LFRS) hosted the first event in October, which focused on 'Leadership (and well-being)' and explored cross-coaching. The event was a success with over 60 people attending from across all three services and the partners met in November to develop cross-coaching opportunities.

The Service was planning the next session which would be hosted by North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) in early February 2025, where the focus for the event would be on 'Media'.

Lancashire Police in Spring 2025 would host the final session. The group were considering an interesting area round 'Generational Differences' with a view to potentially exploring that as the final topic.

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.

In October, the project objectives were reviewed and affirmed, aligned to the

Strategic Board objectives. The Estates and Co-location workstream focused on four key areas: Sharing knowledge and information, estates and asset integration, resilience and shared opportunities in support functions, and financial opportunities.

Blue Light partners were reviewing property asset management strategies to identify potential areas for co-ordinating future development plans over the next 5-10 years and discussions were continuing in relation future opportunities. All current locations for each organisation had been mapped, with the focus on understanding the of longer-term plans for each service. The LFRS 'Preston Area Review' continued to be discussed and considered with the Blue Light partners regarding collaboration opportunities.

Community First Responders

The workstream 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.

The Service now had 13 LFRS staff volunteers responding to life threatening emergencies in Lancashire from the workplace and administering life-saving interventions in the initial vital minutes before NWS colleagues arrived. Since the workstream commenced in 2023, LFRS had responded to more than 180 CFR incidents that included unresponsive/collapsed, not breathing, cardiac arrests, seizures, strokes, and choking. It had resulted in many successful outcomes.

The Service was now scoping 'Phase 3' of the workstream which would involve On-Call staff volunteers becoming CFRs within more remote parts of the county, where NWS resources and response times could be more challenges. This would further improve outcomes for medical emergencies within those communities.

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: 98.71%

In quarter 2, 77 people had been surveyed and the number satisfied with the service was 75. The running number of people surveyed for the year was 3,720 with 3,672 of those people being satisfied with the Service; 98.71% against a standard of 97.50%; a variance of 1.24%.

In response to a question from County Councillor Hennessy in relation to the potential HMI gradings pertaining to information in the Performance Measuring Progress Report, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that overall, the report was positive and the KPIs that had been in exception over recent years were areas of national challenge which were now experiencing a marked improvement. He added that Blue Light Collaboration was an area of increased incident activity

	<p>which added value to the public. It was expected that the HMI would take an interest in all areas of Performance and management of risk in Lancashire such as prevention and protection activity, and staff engagement, highlighting existing good practice. It was noted that as the Assistant Chief Fire Officer was the Lead Officer for Performance Committee and would be new to the Service at the time of the inspection, Jon Charters would take the lead or assist with any interviews by the HMI.</p> <p>County Councillor Clifford asked for clarification on a discussion at Resources Committee where the Director of Corporate Services stated that LFRS would be one of the last Services to be inspected on the old inspection system as opposed to the new system. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that the Services HMI Inspection should have taken place earlier in the year but had been postponed due to staffing challenges. It was complimentary to LFRS as they had postponed inspections on those Services which were perceived to be performing well. The outcome of the upcoming inspection would determine the timeframe for the following inspection.</p> <p>The Chair commented that LFRS had always been a top performing organisation which he was confident would continue.</p> <p>County Councillor O'Toole stated that the HMI Inspection had been postponed 3 times in his time as Chair of the Authority and he was also confident that the Service would perform well in the upcoming inspection.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Assistant Fire Officer for a positive report.</p> <p>Resolved: - That the Performance Committee noted and endorsed the Quarter 2 Measuring Progress report, including one positive and one negative exceptions.</p>
19/24	<p>Cooking Safety Campaign Overview Presentation</p>
	<p>The Chair welcomed Campaigns Officer, Zoe Scott and Group Manager, Community Protection Manager, Mark Warwick to provide the Committee with a presentation detailing the delivery of the Cooking Safety Campaign in July 2023 which aimed to reduce the number of cooking-related incidents by educating the public on safe practices and encouraging behaviour change. July was chosen as the month for the campaign due to a seasonal spike in incidents involving barbeques etc., and it aligned with the NFCC (National Fire Chiefs Council) campaign calendar.</p> <p>Cooking related incidents continued to be the largest cause of Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs) (KPI 2.3) in Lancashire, with 317 reported incidents in 2023. Of the 317 fires in 2023 the significant causes were: distraction (152 cases); using the hob as a work surface (111 cases); and accumulation of fat and oil (32 cases). Casualties from kitchen-originated fires accounted for 38% of all fire-related injuries, with Blackpool experiencing the highest number of incidents.</p> <p>There were a total number of 1058 incidents from 2021 – 2023 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2021 – 359 Incidents - 2022 – 382 Incidents

- 2023 – 317 Incidents

From the incident data, the service was able to determine insight which included:

- High-risk areas included Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen, and Lancaster.
- Ribble Valley had the highest ratio of cooking fires at 52% of total ADFs.
- Key times for cooking related incidents was between 5-7pm.

The campaign was implemented in July after yearly incident data showed a peak in cooking fires.

The campaign objectives were to:

- Reduce the number of overall cooking-related fires during the campaign period.
- Increase audience engagement with campaign materials.
- Change target audience behaviour, particularly reducing casualties from cooking-related fires.

The target audience was adults aged 18+ living in the highest risk areas – Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancaster, and busy adults with young families.

The key messages were:

- Fires won't wait for your attention.
- Stay there and cook it!
- Never use your hob as an extension of the worktop.
- Keep it clean, keep it clear – a build up of dirt or grease and items stored on top of a hob creates a significant fire risk.
- Get out, stay out and call the fire service out.

A pre-campaign telephone survey was conducted in April, contacting 60 Lancashire residents who had a cooking related fire in the last three years, The survey aimed to gather more information about each incident such as:

- Household profile – presence of children or pets.
- Individual profile – age, gender, disability.
- Use of kitchen appliances.
- Distractions at the time of the fire.
- Influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Presence of a working smoke alarm.

Data from the survey found that 58% of respondents were not in sight of the fire when it started, and 59% admitted to watching tv, bathing or doing household chores when the fire ignited.

After investigating the incident data from the past few years, a recurring cause of cooking fires was busy parents distracted with homework or chores whilst cooking a meal, causing a fire. A radio advertisement on local station Hits Lancashire (formerly Rock FM) was chosen for the campaign due to its captive audience during the school run and rush hour traffic, aiming to target those busy families whilst they were actively listening. The 30 second advert portrayed a tired, busy mum, juggling family demands whilst cooking dinner, her concentration had lapsed

for a few seconds and a fire had ignited in the kitchen. The ad ended with the sound of flames and a fire alarm sounding. The scenario played out in real time which showed that it only took 30 seconds of distraction to start a fire. The audio for the radio campaign advert would not play in the meeting and Members noted that this would be sent to them outside of the meeting.

The first part of the campaign involved a competition to win a Ninja air fryer. To enter, members of the public had to answer three short questions about cooking practices. The entry process gave the participants the correct answers to questions to highlight the safest practices. The three questions were written using the campaign's key messages, meaning the participants had to actively read and absorb the messaging to answer the questions.

The competition was well received and resulted in 5,635 entries which gave valuable insight into cooking habits and perceived acceptable behaviour across different age groups. This insight would be used in future campaigns to inform the key messages and target audiences. Members were informed that an entrant from Great Harwood won the competition and a message was sent to all those who entered the competition to notify them of the winner.

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

- Social media platforms: Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and Nextdoor.
- Cooking safety page on the Service's website (www.lancsfirerescue.org.uk/cooking)
- Media release to local news outlets.
- Radio advert.
- Paid advertising on Facebook.

In total, the campaign reached 1,178,149 people and generated 110,545 engagements (comments, shares, website clicks etc.). Social media posts about using the hob as a work surface sparked lots of engagement, with some people sharing their shock that people could "be so stupid," and others sharing their own experiences of doing so and causing a fire.

5,635 people entered the competition and took part in the quiz which allowed the Service to promote the key safety messages and highlight unsafe practices. 356 people visited the cooking safety page on the website during the campaign period. Two news articles appeared in the local media.

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

The new risk profile would decide the key messaging for the next campaign. New creative materials would be designed using the new messaging which included a new video that focused on distractions in the kitchen.

In response to a question from County Councillor Hennessy regarding the Ribble Valley having the highest ratio of cooking fires (52%) of the total ADFs, Mark Warwick explained that the percentage was high due the overall number of accidental fire incidents for that area being very low which distorted the percentage

figure. Members were informed that the Ribble Valley was included in the target audience.

County Councillor H Khan asked if the figures for the campaign included the BME community. Area Manager, Phil Jones confirmed that they were included and the insight from the campaign would inform next year's campaign with focused information around Ramadan and hot oil cooking.

County Councillor H Khan mentioned that she had been on the radio to talk about the work of the Fire Service and found that many members of the BME community were not aware of the varying role of LFRS. Regarding Ramadan cooking fire safety, she would be collaborating with Community Safety Advisor, Faz Patel, to launch the campaign throughout Lancashire.

County Councillor Clifford stated that the campaign was very interesting, and he had shared the messages through his social media account, however, they did not have much interaction and asked if the Service was disappointed with the level of engagement. Zoe Scott advised that a previous Lithium Battery campaign competition to win an iPad received 1,000 entries so 5,635 people entering the air fryer competition was a sizable increase. The number of entrants was pleasing as they had to actively read key safety messages and answer questions with wrong answers being corrected and so the number of people who had processed the information was quite high.

County Councillor Clifford questioned whether the public may have thought that the chance to win an air fryer was a scam. Zoe Scott explained that there were very few comments about the competition being a scam, and there were none on Facebook.

County Councillor Hennessy suggested including Service personnel in the photographs for future campaign competitions so the public would know it was not a scam.

In response to a question from County Councillor O'Toole as to whether the work on campaigns was outsourced or conducted internally, Zoe Scott confirmed that the work was undertaken by the Service. Additionally, adhering to GDPR, the Service would collate some personal details which would be used to inform future campaigns and to target certain demographics.

County Councillor Clifford commented that in a bid to move away from chip pans, there had been a move to deep fat fryers with newer models having open tops which he felt was a flaw. Mark Warwick stated that the modern design was most probably due to costs. However, chip pan fires were now an exception, and many safety messages had been used to inform people of the dangers of using water on an oil fire.

The Chair remarked that he felt that food delivery services would have helped to reduce the number of cooking fires.

County Councillor Hennessy asked if every Fire Service had a Campaigns Officer. Mark Warwick believed that every Service had a campaigns calendar which would

	<p>be followed, even if not a designated officer. Zoe Scott advised that, as a dedicated Campaigns Officer, she was able to focus solely on campaigns whereas some other Services may have a Communications Officer who would deal with campaigns as one aspect of their job.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Campaigns Officer, Zoe Scott and Group Manager, Community Protection Manager, Mark Warwick for their extremely helpful presentation.</p> <p>Resolved: - That the Performance Committee noted the report and presentation.</p>
20/24	<p>NWFC Q2 update</p>
	<p>The Committee was provided with a report and presentation detailing the performance of NWFC during quarter 2 (July – September 2024).</p> <p>North West Fire Control (NWFC) was the emergency control room for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS). The core functions for LFRS were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive emergency calls via the 999 system, other agencies or alarm receiving centres. • Mobilise appropriate resources to incidents in line with LFRS’s mobilising procedures. • Manage resource availability (standby manoeuvres). <p>NWFC would carry out Emergency Call Management (ECM) prompts provided by LFRS to determine whether an attendance was required for specific incidents and would signpost calls to other appropriate agencies where it determined that the Fire Service would not be attending.</p> <p>In addition, NWFC would support LFRS with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification of intruder alarms at fire services premises. • Notification of planned events. • Notification and implementation of special mobilising arrangements. • Road closures. • Passing additional risking information for specific addresses. • The passing of accident or near miss information. • Providing a supplementary media statement for specific incidents. <p>NWFC had also absorbed through its current staffing model the additional calls from North West Ambulance Service (NWAS), for gain entry requests to premises for medical emergencies. This was a tri-partite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with LFRS, NWAS and Lancashire Constabulary.</p> <p>Emergency Calls</p> <p>Incoming emergency calls for LFRS for Quarter 2 total 6,317. This was almost 1,500 less emergency calls than Quarter 2 the previous year. These figures had to be caveated with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NWFC could not assure that the year’s figure was totally accurate due to an issue with the data retrieval software. Audits of reports had highlighted missing data, which had been reported to system engineers and escalated

through their management controls. NWFC had utilised other software to extract the data and would carry out further analysis when there was confirmation that the data retrieval software was reporting accurately and would look at previous data and supply to fire and rescue services. This had been reported to each fire and rescue service and His Majesty's Inspection for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS).

- The Summer of 2024 did not see the usual spike in calls for grass and wildfires.

Admin Calls

NWFC also received administrative calls for all services including LFRS for such items as a request for support from crews at incidents or updating resource availability, e.g. training, exercise, defective.

In quarter 2, NWFC received 6196 admin calls, which was almost identical to the same period last year.

Again, the information was caveated with the issues regarding the data retrieval software.

Responses to Fires

NWFC had a target of mobilising resources to fires within 90 seconds on average. In July and August 2024, that target exceeded 95 seconds.

Analysing the reasons for this increase in call mobilisation times had highlighted the following information:

- Operating in a period of fallback in August due to loss of the main mobilising Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. During business continuity events, tried and tested fallback methods of working were implemented. These however, required a manual process when there was a loss of CAD, and mobilising resources was not as fast as normal which impacted on the mobilising times. This issue had been highlighted and reported to fire and service services and further control measures had been implemented to ensure the reason for the loss of the mobilising system on this occasion was not repeated.
- NWFC had highlighted with its Board of Directors, an issue with retention of staff. This was not just a NWFC issue, but was reflected in all fire control rooms, all emergency control rooms and, according to the CIPD, was a national trend for organisations. To replace the staff, NWFC must recruit and train new operators, which would take approximately two years to get them to a level of competency. The relatively high number of inexperienced staff impacted the call mobilisation times. NWFC had completed a capacity review of its operating model and was moving forward with a plan to help to improve retention. It was noted that the average mobilising times for September 2024 had improved to 87 seconds, which was below the target.

Response to Special Service Calls

NWFC did not have a target for mobilising to special service calls but did monitor

	<p>them to identify trends.</p> <p>Mobilisation of these calls increased in Quarter 2. Analysis of reasons for this were similar to the two reasons above for fires.</p> <p>In addition, NWFC had a new People Development and Assurance Programme (PDAP) in place, which was designed to improve the skill sets of the operators. Part of this had been adopting the newly issued NFCC Control National Operational Guidance, which often required additional call handling questions to determine whether a response was required and ensured the safety of proceeding crews and callers.</p> <p>County Councillor Nikki Hennessy suggested that North West Fire Control be invited to a future Strategy meeting to update Members on the procurement of the new mobilising system.</p> <p>County Councillor Salter expressed his concern regarding the issues with the data retrieval software on Page 93 of the agenda pack. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that the Service had been informed of the issues with data not collating on the complex IT systems through the NWFC Board of Directors and Steering Group. IT suppliers had identified the root cause, and the system had been updated. NWFC had notified the Service early into the issue as it would affect the mobilisation data requested by the HMI; however, the issue had since been resolved and the data had been sent to the HMI. An update would be provided by NWFC in the upcoming weeks to ensure that there were no further issues and once the data had been quality assured, it could be reported back to the Authority.</p> <p>County Councillor Salter highlighted that the risk of Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) leaving the collaboration with NWFC could be exacerbated by the recent system issues. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that GMFRS were committed to NWFC until 2033 when the building lease would expire, he also explained that coinciding with that timeline would be a further mobilising system replacement project, in readiness for post 2033. As such, this longer-term planning for NWFC options would commence in 2026.</p> <p>The Assistant Chief Fire Officer reminded Members to confirm their attendance for the visit to NWFC on 21 or 23 January 2025.</p> <p>Resolved: - That the Performance Committee noted the information in the report and presentation.</p>
21/24	<p>National Fire Statistics - Comparative Information</p>
	<p>The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented the meeting with a report on Comparative Fire Rescue Service Data.</p> <p>Historically, since 2000, at the final Performance Committee of each financial year, the Measuring Progress report would be accompanied by a comparative performance analysis of other Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) which was formed upon historic 'Family Groups' and enabled Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) to demonstrate to the Committee how the Service was performing against</p>

other FRSs on a small number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

As the fire sector evolved, the use of Family Groups slowly diminished as had the value of their use in effectively comparing FRS with FRS. The position had been further weakened by new FRSs joining Family Groups that they were not originally intended to be placed within.

During the Performance Committee on 16 March 2022 (resolution 24-20/21 – Review of Family Group Comparative Information), Area Manager Mark Hutton proposed that future Family Group analysis could involve data that looked beyond the Family Group, taken from other national databases that the Service now had access to, and which could offer a broader and more suitable comparison than the current arrangements.

Since that time, the Service had compiled a report comparing a selection of key LFRS activity against other Fire and Rescue Services in the country, using information published by the Home Office on National Fire Service Activity.

On a quarterly basis, the Home Office published a rolling 12-month update on National Fire Service activity, with the latest release being termed as year ending June 2024 which meant the 12-month period to the end of quarter one.

The report compared a selection of key LFRS activity against other Fire and Rescue Services in the country, along with the current LFRS position and trend.

Selected metrics:

1. Total incidents.
2. Dwelling fires.
3. Dwelling fire casualties.
4. Non-domestic building fires.
5. Assist other agencies.
6. RTCs attended.

A table was included in the report which indicated if a Service was classed as Predominantly Urban, Significantly Rural or Predominantly Rural: Lancashire was classified as Predominantly Urban. These classifications allowed for a relatable comparison with FRSs that shared the same characteristics as LFRS.

LFRS had one of the higher incident levels of the total 44 Fire Services in England, ranking 8th as the 12-month period to June 2024. LFRS also had greater activity than a number of the metropolitan Services and the highest activity of a predominantly Urban, non-metropolitan Service.

With decreasing numbers of fire incidents, and increasing non-fire incidents, the proportion of incidents recorded as non-fire incidents had surpassed the count of fire incidents for the first time. Fire false alarms continued to account for the largest proportion.

Whilst overall activity had been increasing over the last ten years, the latest 12-month period had shown a reduction within LFRS and across the majority of other FRSs.

There had been a notable decreasing in dwelling fires attended, and a smaller, if fluctuating, decrease in the resultant domestic fire casualties. It was a similar view with fires in non-domestic properties which had been in a slight overall decline.

These were offset by large increases in assist other agency incidents. A similar trend was seen nationally, with LFRS recording the largest number outside of Greater London. Road traffic collisions had been steadily trending upwards.

1. Total Incidents

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service attended 16,903 incidents during year ending June 2024, against and England FRS average of 11,016. Greater London (131,664), and Isles of Scilly (47), were both excluded from the average due to recording very high/low counts.

Over the past decade, the number of incidents attended by LFRS had been on a gradual upward trend, with activity increasing 40.7% since the 13,906 incidents in 2014 to the 19,563 recorded in 2023. However, in the latest year ending June 2024, there had been 16,903 attended incidents, a decrease of 13.6% over the previous year.

This followed a similar national trend, although the decrease within Lancashire was larger than the average 4.6% seen nationally.

The share of incidents between incident types had changed over the past decade, with an increasing share of incidents being non-fire incidents over recent years. Fire incidents had steadily been decreasing and there had been a reduction in false alarms during more recent years.

For the year ending June 2024, the share of fire incidents was 24.4%, the lowest since comparable data became available, with non-fire incidents accounting for 30.9% and fire false alarms, 44.7%. In 2014, the split was: Fire 38.0%, non-fire 17.9% and false alarms 44.1%.

Lancashire was classified as predominantly urban and had the highest total incident count within a non-metropolitan Service, predominantly urban Service (year ending June 2024).

2. Domestic Fires

LFRS attended 757 dwelling fire incidents during year ending June 2024, against and England FRS average of 490. Greater London (4,668), and Isles of Scilly (0), were both excluded from the average.

To the year ending June 2024, dwelling fires attended by LFRS had reduced from 1,601 in 2014 to 757 in the latest period, a reduction of 28.7%. This was a greater reduction than that seen across all other Fire and Rescue Services (average), which saw an 18.8% decreased over the same period.

3. Dwelling Fire Casualties

There were 55 casualties requiring hospital treatment from dwelling fire incidents during the year ending June 2024, against an England FRS average of 36. Greater London (485), and the Isles of Scilly (0), were both excluded from the average.

To the year ending June 2024, there had been 55 casualties requiring hospital treatment from dwelling fire incidents by LFRS. These had reduced by 21.4% from the 70 recorded in 2014. This was a slightly smaller reduction than that seen across all other Fire and Rescue Services (average), which saw a 25.5% decrease over the same period.

4. Non-Domestic Building Fires

LFRS attended 358 non-domestic building fire incidents during the year ending June 2024, against an England FRS average of 209. Greater London (1,504), and Isles of Scilly (0) were both excluded from the average.

Fires in non-domestic properties attended by LFRS decreased by 11.8% from the 406 recorded in 2014. This was a smaller reduction than that seen across all other Fire and Rescue Services, which saw a 15% decrease over the same period.

5. Assist Other Agencies

LFRS attended 1,724 assist other agency incidents during the year ending June 2024, against an England FRS average of 578. Approximately 50% of assist other agency incidents were to gain entry to a domestic property on behalf of the ambulance or police. Greater London (4,626), and Isles of Scilly (2) were both excluded from the average.

To the year ending June 2014, assist other agency incidents attended by LFRS had seen large increases, with 1,724 recorded in the latest period, from a low 115 in 2014, an increase of 1,399.1%. This was a significantly larger increase than that seen across all other Fire and Rescue Services, which still saw a significant 529.9% increase over the same period.

6. Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) Attended

LFRS attended 662 road traffic collision incidents during the year ending June 2024, against an England FRS average of 658. Greater London (4,626), and Isles of Scilly (2), were both excluded from the average due to recording very high/low counts.

To the year ending June 2024 Road Traffic Collision incidents attended by LFRS have seen relatively small increases, with 662 recorded in the latest period, from 512 in 2014, an increase of 29.3%. This was a larger increase than that seen across all other Fire and Rescue Services (average), which saw a 9.8% increase over the same period.

County Councillor Clifford stated that, for the last 10 years, the number of incidents that LFRS attended had gradually increased but was now beginning to decrease, and he asked if that was due to a growing population. The Assistant Chief Fire

	<p>Officer explained that there were many factors such as the establishment of new types of collaboration work and increasing demand that this had created.</p> <p>County Councillor Salter highlighted that, on Page 110 of the agenda pack, the number of 'Assist other agencies' incidents that LFRS attended was higher than that of most other FRSs and asked if that was indicative of the good relationship LFRS had with other agencies. The Assistant Chief Officer stated that it was a positive relationship and, when crews were not attending emergency incidents, they had delivered improved outcomes for the public. The Service had a statutory duty to collaborate with other Blue Light Services which led to the establishment of the Blue Light Collaboration Board (BLCB). LFRS played a strong role in operational work in terms of collaboration.</p> <p>County Councillor Hennessy felt that the positive relationship with other Blue Light Services came from good leadership which was fed down by the Chief Fire Officer and took years to develop.</p> <p>The Chair gave thanks to Jon Charters for his work in the role of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer and wished him well in his role as Chief Fire Officer in the new year.</p> <p>County Councillor Hurn thanked Jon Charters for his assistance in his time as Chair of the Committee.</p> <p>Jon Charters advised that he had enjoyed leading the Performance Committee. There had been some good conversations which he had hoped the Members had found useful. There was a lot of detail in the meeting, but he favoured transparency and assisting Members to understand the work of the Service which he hoped led to better scrutiny and governance. He would assist the new Assistant Chief Fire Officer with the Performance Committee in the early stages.</p> <p>Resolved: - That the Performance Committee noted the information provided in the Comparative Fire Service Data Report and endorsed the new format in which the Service provided comparative performance data.</p>
22/24	Date of Next Meeting
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on 05 March 2025 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 June 2025 and agreed for 03 September 2025.</p>

M Nolan
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 17 February 2025

Proceedings of Planning Committee held 3 February 2025

(Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information:

Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager - Tel: 01772 866720

Executive Summary

The proceedings of Planning Committee meeting held 3 February 2025.

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 3 February 2025.

Business Risk

None.

Environmental Impact

None.

Equality & Diversity Implications

None.

Financial Risk

None.

HR 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 Planning Committee

Monday, 3 February 2025, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room,
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
G Baker	
N Hennessy (Vice-Chair)	
J Hugo (Chair)	
F Jackson	
D O'Toole	
S Serridge	
J Shedwick	
J Singleton	

Officers
S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS) E Price, Group Manager - Planning, Performance & Assurance (LFRS) S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)
In attendance
K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union S Pilkington, Fire Brigades Union

20/24	Apologies for Absence
	The start of the meeting was delayed until 10:07. Apologies were received from County Councillors S Clarke and H Khan.
21/24	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
22/24	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	Resolved: That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 18 November 2024 be

	confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
23/24	Consultation Strategy
	<p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) 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.</p> <p>Each year the Planning Committee reviewed the strategy, to assure continued compliance with guidance or legislation and to incorporate learning from any public consultation exercises undertaken.</p> <p>The review concluded that the strategy continued to be legally compliant and in line with good practice.</p> <p>Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) would undertake public consultation on a range of issues on behalf of the Authority to ensure that the views of communities, partners, and stakeholders were used to inform decision-making.</p> <p>Any requests to consult with the public would be made to the Authority's Planning Committee. The committee would be provided with details about the issue and options being considered and permission to consult with the public sought.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor N Hennessy in relation to the terminology used within the strategy, the DCFO confirmed that the report had been reviewed by the Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement and Director of People and Development to ensure it was correct and inclusive.</p> <p>County Councillor J Shedwick remarked that the strategy had been developed over a number of years and was robust.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the consultation strategy.</p>
24/24	Annual Service Plan 2025/26
	<p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) presented a report on the Service's Annual Service Plan (ASP) 2025/26.</p> <p>The ASP 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 ASP was built around the Service's 5 corporate priorities as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). 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, these were: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer;

- Create an organisational culture where diversity is encouraged and valued;
 - Develop leaders who build and maintain trust in the Service;
 - Tailor training and development for on-call firefighters;
 - Invest in safety, health and wellbeing initiatives;
 - Encourage and listen to employee voice;
 - Service headquarters and leadership and development centre masterplan; and
 - Upgrade fire station facilities.
2. Preventing fire and other emergencies from happening;
- Deliver targeted fire prevention activity;
 - Evaluate Year 2 education package; and
 - Expand fire safety community engagement.
3. Protecting people and property when fires happen;
- Transform fire protection and business safety;
 - Deliver tailored protection advice in diverse business communities;
 - Implement operational learning in response to national events;
 - Address mid-rise premises risk across the county; and
 - Support national activity to address unsafe cladding on buildings.
4. Responding to fire and other emergencies quickly and competently;
- Review emergency cover in Preston;
 - Optimise emergency cover through dynamic cover software;
 - Strengthen our response to climate change emergencies;
 - Strengthen firefighting and rescue capabilities;
 - Adapt on-call response to increase emergency cover; and
 - Invest in our fleet and equipment.

Kev Wilkie joined the meeting at 10:17.

5. Delivering value for money in how we use our resources;
- Review how we use our resources;
 - Maximise productivity and efficiency;
 - Drive efficiencies through digitisation;
 - Improve performance management culture; and
 - Collaborate with other public services.

In response to a question from County Councillor D O'Toole in relation to tailoring training for on-call fire fighters, the DCFO explained that the service was exploring the possibility of delivering on-call training to fire fighters locally on stations, as opposed to the Leadership and Development Centre (LDC), to improve speciality training for roles and availability as less time would be spent away from stations.

County Councillor D O'Toole asked a question in relation to the smoke detectors that were provided by LFRS, the DCFO confirmed that the service carried out over 20,000 home fire safety checks (HFSCs) each year and provided smoke detectors where appropriate. These were sealed units with a battery life of 10 years and when installed, advice was given on replacement of the alarms with revisits conducted. Councillor G Baker queried the Service's choice for the model of smoke

detector to install as he had used this model in the past and the battery had not lasted 10 years. Additionally, the battery could not be changed manually and the detector had to be returned to the manufacturer. The DCFO confirmed that the smoke detectors were procured nationally but he could suggest this be reviewed.

County Councillor S Serridge joined the meeting at 10:26.

County Councillor D O'Toole asked a further question in relation to LFRS's use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the DCFO confirmed that the services ICT and Digital Lead was exploring AI use within the service. Some departments within LFRS were using Microsoft Co-pilot to assist in report writing.

Councillor G Baker and Sean Pilkington left the meeting at 10:30.

County Councillor J Shedwick remarked that the ASP set out exactly the Service's position and would be a useful tool for the upcoming HMICFRS inspection. He then asked if the service would be moving on-call training to the Leadership and Development Centre (LDC) once it had been developed. The DCFO confirmed that due to the nature of on-call and the competing demands of primary employment and personal lives, the Service was looking to take training into stations to improve accessibility and provide a work/life balance.

Councillor G Baker and Sean Pilkington rejoined the meeting at 10:32.

County Councillor J Singleton asked how progress on activities within the report would be reported back to members and in particular the mid-rise premises risk as referenced on page 33 of the agenda pack. The DCFO confirmed that work had begun on the risk based inspection programme with progress on this and other activities reported through committee meetings, the full CFA, and Strategy Group meetings.

In response to a question from Councillor F Jackson in relation to improvements at Blackpool Fire Station, the DCFO confirmed that work had started to provide individual dormitories within the station. The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) added that work was due to be completed in July 2025. The Chair remarked that both she and Councillor G Baker had attended Blackpool station recently and viewed the plans.

County Councillor N Hennessy asked a question in relation to expanding fire safety community engagement, the DCFO confirmed that this was a 12 month trial to ensure constant engagement and allow more work to be completed with mosques and different faiths. Upon completion of the trial period the role would be reviewed. County Councillor N Hennessy remarked that County Councillor H Khan was keen to engage women within her community and had done some great work in partnership with LFRS around cooking safety during Ramadan.

County Councillor Hennessy asked a further question in relation to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) exploring the use of AI, the DCFO confirmed that the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) of Bedfordshire was leading in this area. The DCFO confirmed that more information on the use of AI would be brought to a future Strategy meeting for members.

	<p>County Councillor D O’Toole remarked that it had been 7 years since the Grenfell Fire tragedy and asked if fire chiefs had a voice on ensuring changes needed were prioritised by government. The DCFO confirmed that the NFCC were ensuring that the fire sectors voice was heard. The Chair added that Grenfell was on the agenda of the Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Safety Management Committee and had been on the agenda of the LGA Safer Stronger Communities Committee.</p> <p>County Councillor N Hennessy remarked that the Service had received a letter for thanks from the Minister of State for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention for its response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry’s phase 1 recommendations.</p> <p>In response to a question from Councillor G Baker in relation to the service receiving feedback following identifying risks regarding unsafe cladding, the DCFO confirmed that the service would take appropriate action to make buildings safe when risks were identified, implement fire safety measures, and would send additional resources to buildings deemed as high risk as set out in the Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA). The DCFO confirmed that more information on prevention would be brought to a future Planning Committee or Strategy meeting for members.</p> <p>The Chair expressed her thanks for the detailed report.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the Annual Service Plan for publication.</p>
25/24	<p>Blue Light Collaboration Board update</p>
	<p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) advised that the report updated on progress of the ongoing workstreams that were being progressed under the Blue Light Collaboration Board (BLCB). The workstreams were being managed effectively through both the Strategic and Tactical Boards and were contributing towards improving outcomes, providing better value for money, reducing demand, and reducing inequalities within communities.</p> <p>Leadership Development</p> <p>Collaboration between Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS), Lancashire Police (LanCon) and North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) had continued to explore efficiencies and build professional working relationships across the Blue Light Services. The potential for a collaborative coaching and mentoring network had also been identified, leading to shared learning on a more regular basis and improved on-the-ground relationships when working together.</p> <p>It was agreed for each Service to host a Leadership Event, and through intelligence from each organisation, three common themes were identified. The first session, ‘Nourish to Flourish’, focused on well-being and self-care and was hosted by LFRS. This aimed to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of staff, which would have positive effects for each organisation. Several efficiencies were enabled for the session, by using LFRS’s Leadership and Development Centre and the cost for the guest speaker was shared between all three services.</p>

The Services were planning the next session which would be hosted by NWAS in February 2025, where the focus for this event would be on 'Media'.

The final session would be hosted by LanCon in Spring 2025. The group were considering an interesting area around 'Generational Differences'.

Missing From Home

This collaboration between LFRS and LanCon focussed on supporting high-risk missing person searches. The partnership led to the development of a Standard Operating Procedure and training for front-line personnel. LFRS assets, such as drones and search dogs, had proved effective in locating missing persons and improving public perception whilst maximising effectiveness and the potential for successful outcomes to the people of Lancashire.

Empowering trained resources from LFRS to respond to such incidents with partner agencies ensured that missing persons were located earlier, using the best available technology such as LFRS drones. Furthermore, the use of LFRS trained dogs enhanced the canine capabilities for other fire specific deployments both within the UK (through Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and other requests) and overseas (International Search and Rescue (ISAR) deployments). Real life incident exposure for the dogs was invaluable and without which, their ability to develop would become limited. Where required, LFRS recovered costs under the nationally agreed National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) / National Resilience recharge protocol and locally agreed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

LFRS received around 200 drone requests each year from LanCon, with most requests for missing persons searches.

Estates and Co-location

The co-location of estates between LFRS, NWAS, and LanCon aimed to identify opportunities for site sharing to improve collaboration and value for money. Successful site-sharing arrangements at Lancaster, St Annes, Darwen, Preston and Lytham Fire Stations had resulted in efficiencies and shared facilities. The shared working arrangements had also built positive relationships and a greater understanding of the differing roles across the Blue Light community. In an operational context this would no doubt have improved outcomes for the people of Lancashire.

The revised Blue Light Collaboration Project Initiation document had provided the Estates and co-location sub-group leads with a renewed focus for potential areas of collaboration. The quarterly Estates sub-group meetings between Heads of Estates Departments at LFRS, NWAS and LanCon had identified that the potential benefits were greater than just co-location. The project objective, principles and benefits had been redefined and in-scope works updated. Examples of areas of collaborative working, in addition to site sharing, were knowledge sharing in relation to systems, sharing of procurement specification documents, along with supplier framework procurement and opportunities.

The DCFO explained that there may be further opportunities for collaboration as part of the Preston area review.

Community First Responder

UK Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) had been providing Emergency Medical Response (EMR) services to the public in recent years. According to a cost-benefit analysis conducted by the New Economy, the benefits of EMR far outweighed the initial investment required. The analysis estimated an overall financial return on investment of £4.41 per £1 invested.

The Community First Responder (CFR) workstream involved LFRS staff volunteers responding to life threatening emergencies in their communities from the workplace and administering life-saving interventions in the initial vital minutes before NWS colleagues arrived, including patients that were unresponsive/ collapsed, not breathing, cardiac arrests, seizures, strokes, and choking. In providing additional CFRs in areas that saw extended response times from NWS, LFRS had improved outcomes for Lancashire communities. This had been achieved by ensuring a quicker response to those people requiring help with a medical emergency – and LFRS staff had delivered lifesaving interventions whilst awaiting the arrival of ambulance colleagues, with around 200 incidents attended since 2023. The DCFO confirmed that there were 5 non-operational staff and 8 officer CFR's.

Going forward, with the assistance of a heat map from NWS, which identified areas within Lancashire that were proving difficult to recruit CFRs through the current traditional model, would enable LFRS to target local On-Call Firefighters who were interested in volunteering for the scheme.

Evaluation

Through evaluation LFRS had considered the value and benefits of several workstreams and had considered how the BLCB contributes to LFRS' aim of "Making Lancashire Safer".

Two new Blue Light Collaboration Workstreams were being established – 'Wellbeing (Mental Health and Welfare)', and 'Recruitment Initiatives'.

County Councillor J Shedwick remarked that he had seen first-hand the collaboration between blue light services with a medical break in and a missing person. He then asked a question about the LFRS drone being utilised to support LanCon and recharging for this. The DCFO confirmed that the number of requests for drone usage had increased, and the MOU had been reviewed to ensure that the LFRS drone was only being utilised when needed and that recharges were sought where appropriate. The DCFO also confirmed that the MOU reflected that should LFRS cause damage in good faith the cost would lie with the appropriate blue light service rather than LFRS.

In response to a question from County Councillor N Hennessy in relation to estates and co-location, the DCFO confirmed that co-location had been successful at Lancaster, St Annes, Darwen, Preston and Lytham Fire Stations. The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) added that he was unsure when the most recent colocation agreement was implemented but he would confirm this outside of the meeting. The DCFO confirmed that under the Policing and Crime Act 2017 Police, Fire and Rescue Service (FRS), and Ambulance Service were required to collaborate, therefore co-location would be considered in the future and as part of the Preston area review.

	<p>County Councillor N Hennessy asked a further question in relation to LanCon acting as CFRs, the DCFO confirmed that some police officers were trained to act as CFR's and carried defibrillators. He advised that he would confirm how LanCon manage this and provide an update to members. The DCFO further advised that within LFRS 7% of firefighter time was spent responding to primary incidents, it was therefore important to ensure that LFRS continued to collaborate with other services and provide support whenever possible.</p> <p>County Councillor N Hennessy asked a further question in relation to consultation with trade unions in relation to CFR, the DCFO confirmed that all trade unions had been consulted, some unions fully supported CFRs and all unions saw the value. The DCFO emphasised that CFR roles were not mandated and were on a voluntary basis with LFRS working to support anyone who wished to be involved. It was agreed that County Councillor N Hennessy and the DCFO would discuss this further outside of the meeting.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted the report.</p>
26/24	<p>His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Update</p>
	<p>Group Manager (GM) Emma Price presented the report to Members regarding His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) activity and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Services (LFRS's) planning arrangements.</p> <p>Kev Wilkie left the meeting at 11:05.</p> <p>Round 3 Overview</p> <p>HMICFRS commenced Round 3 inspections in early 2023, the three pillars; effectiveness, efficiency, and people remained the same as Round 2. Likewise, the 11 diagnostics under each pillar which inspectors made graded judgements against.</p> <p>LFRS's inspection would commence on 17 February 2025. The inspection team would work remotely for the first three weeks whilst they reviewed service documentation and data. The inspection team would physically be in service for weeks 4 and 6 (w/c 10 and 24 March) and conduct interviews, reality testing and further reviews, weeks 5, 7, and 8 were all remote, inspection activity would conclude early April. The strategic brief was the opportunity for the Chief Fire Officer and executive board to brief the HMI, service liaison lead and inspection team, setting out an overview of performance and any successes or areas for improvement. The chair of the fire authority would also attend and following the brief they would be interviewed. This would take place on Friday 28 March.</p> <p>On Monday 20 January 2025, HMICFRS issued LFRS with a document request and self-assessment which would be returned by Friday 14 February 2025. HMICFRS had also issued three surveys; staff survey, human resources survey and a trade union survey.</p> <p>Area Manager (AM) Tom Powell and GM Emma Price had continued to hold</p>

weekly engagement meetings with Phil Innis, LFRS's Service Liaison Lead (SLL). Phil was unable to complete LFRS's inspection due to leading Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) inspection; a handover process had commenced with the services temporary SLL for this inspection, Vicky Lowry.

Kev Wilkie rejoined the meeting at 11:07.

Vicky was new to HMICFRS, starting on the 6th January, Vicky was currently Head of Admin, Policy, and Strategy – Prevention and Protection at London Fire Brigade. Vicky would be supported by Spencer Rowland who was an SLL and had led Cheshire, West Yorkshire and Cleveland FRS inspections during round 3. Vicky and Spencer had visited LFRS within the last week.

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.

HMICFRS had published 26 Round 3 inspection reports. A summary of the gradings for all 26 FRSs inspected so far in Round 3 were included in the report.

Positive Practice

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Positive Practice Portal provided details about interventions, which had been developed by one or more Fire and Rescue Service to address a particular need, concern or organisational change recognised by the NFCC or HMICFRS as an innovative or positive practice. These practices were in different functional areas and may include operational and non-operational responses, business practices and good ideas.

LFRS actively engaged with the positive practice process and had made two further submissions since the previous report, taking the total submissions published on the portal to 11:

- ROV/Underwater Drone
- On Call Stations Work Hubs
- Safety during Hajj Campaign
- Climate Response - Partnership Working
- Climate Response - Innovation
- Composite Fencing
- NFCC BCP E-learning package
- SSRI Info Risk Based Calculator
- Public Space Protection Order
- New – Assurance monitoring system
- New – Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP)

A further 3 submissions were in progress:

- Organisational Development – Developing current and new leaders
- Management of PPE
- Responding to trauma and emotions / wellbeing programme

LFRS would continue to monitor positive practice submissions and attend future events, benchmarking the services progress against areas identified, and exploring potential areas for improvement.

HMICFRS Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services

HMICFRS published their Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services report in August 2024. This followed the detailed inspection of 10 FRSs, as well as analysing data provided by all 44 FRSs in England about their grievance and discipline cases. The service was making progress through the reports 15 recommendations which were virtually all completed.

Values and culture in Fire and Rescue Services

Values and culture in Fire and Rescue Services remained a focus for HMICFRS, LFRS continued to work proactively in terms of promoting its values and engendering an organisational culture where all employees could thrive.

The HMICFRS had asked FRS not to provide any written updates at this point, as they were introducing their interactive monitoring portal. LFRS was due to be onboarded on to the portal prior to the services inspection, the Organisational Assurance Team had attended online briefing sessions in preparation for this change in reporting.

The role of the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group had been expanded to include culture, the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion Culture Board (EDICB) provided the governance and monitoring of the Service in relation to EDI and culture, annual reports were also submitted to the Fire Authority.

HMICFRS Chief and Chairs event

As previously reported, the latest HMICFRS Chief and Chairs event took place on 14 November 2024, with the then CFO, Justin Johnston, ACFO Jon Charters and CC Nikki Hennessy attending.

Presentations and discussions focused on the following topics:

- Fire protection and the Grenfell Tower Inquiry
- The 2025-27 inspection programme
- Staff misconduct
- Leadership and improving performance

HMICFRS Autumn Data Collection

The Autumn Data collection closed on Friday 22 November. LFRS submitted the return on time with no issues or queries received.

County Councillor D O'Toole asked for clarification of how the round 2 and 3 data was presented, GM Emma Price confirmed that the round 3 data was the most recent and the round 2 data was the prior inspection information.

County Councillor D O'Toole remarked that a number of services had seen a drop in gradings since the round 2 inspections with a number of services 'requiring improvement' in relation to ensuring fairness and promoting diversity. The DCFO

advised that any areas for improvement (AFI's) identified could move a Service from 'good' into an 'adequate' grading, and he confirmed that LFRS had 6 AFIs in their last inspection. The DCFO further commented that there had been a number of hard-hitting national reviews in relation to people and culture within FRSs but LFRS had done a vast amount of work in that area along with the areas where AFIs were previously identified.

GM Emma Price confirmed that LFRS's previous AFI's were;

1. Evaluation of prevention activity – LFRS had strengthened the evaluation process including online campaigns.
2. Collaboration evaluation – As covered in the Blue Light Collaboration Board Update report.
3. Resource risk based intervention programme – LFRS had restructured the prevention team, ensuring that the highest risk areas were reviewed by the highest qualified officers.
4. Test continuity plans – LFRS had reviewed its business continuity plan (BCP) policy, strengthened its BCPs, introduced a process for testing and exercise of the BCPs and if a BCP was implemented the effectiveness was reviewed and fed back.
5. North West Fire Control (NWFC) access to risk information – 3 out of the 4 services within the area received an AFI in this area which related to NWFC being able to see high risk detailed plans, a mobile data terminal had been provided to NWFC to allow them to access all risk information if required.
6. Turnaround time on building consultation – LFRS had improved its building consultation process and ensured that the right level of protection officer was dealing with each consultation.

In response to a question from County Councillor N Hennessy in relation to AFIs in other FRSs, the DCFO confirmed that the Organisational Assurance Team reviewed and evaluated AFIs from all FRSs to implement organisational learning as required. The DCFO remarked that LFRS was as prepared as it could be for its round 3 inspection and reminded members that the HMICFRS round 4 inspection would focus on governance.

County Councillor N Hennessy remarked that as chair to the authority she had recently attended a number of employee voice groups and asked if this area of work could be considered for submission to the positive practice portal. The DCFO confirmed that most services had employee voice groups similar to LFRS and the positive practice portal was focusing on exceptional examples of work, although the services work with employee voice groups was something to be proud of. County Councillor N Hennessy agreed that the discussion around issues and life experiences within the employee voice groups was very important.

The DCFO confirmed that LFRS should receive a hot debrief at the end of April which would provide insight into the possible outcome of the inspection with a draft report expected in June 2025.

The Chair thanked GM Emma Price and the DCFO for the report and acknowledged the hard work that had gone into it.

Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the report.

27/24	<p>Council tax precept consultation</p>
	<p>The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) presented the report to Members regarding the services Council tax precept consultation.</p> <p>A consultation plan was being implemented to consult the public on Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's (LFRS's) council tax precept for the year ahead. The consultation aimed to understand levels of support for a proposed increase in 2025-26 which equated to £5 per year (on a Band D property).</p> <p>An online consultation was launched on 7 January 2025 at www.lancsfireandrescue.org.uk/budget.</p> <p>320 stakeholders from organisations including local authorities, town and parish councils, and community groups had been invited to take part in the consultation, along with 79,752 subscribers to the Service's In The Know email newsletter. It was also publicised on social media platforms and internal communication channels within the organisation.</p> <p>The consultation closed at 5pm on Monday 3 February 2025. A full report would be provided to the Authority as an appendix to the budget report at its budget meeting on Monday 17 February 2025.</p> <p>Approval to undertake the annual budget consultation was delegated to the Chair of the CFA in consultation with the Treasurer and the Chief Fire Officer, due to the limited amount of time between the announcement of the local government financial settlement and the Authority's budget meeting.</p> <p>The DoCS advised that at 20 January 2025 there had been 548 responses with 77% of responses supporting an increase.</p> <p>County Councillor N Hennessy confirmed that Lancashire County Council had put the consultation onto the C-First Member site on the intranet and reminded members to share the consultation to increase participation.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted the report.</p>
28/24	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p>
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday 14 July 2025 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 17 November 2025 and 2 February 2026.</p>

**LFRS HQ
Fulwood**

**M Nolan
Clerk to CFA**

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 17 February 2025

Reports from Members on Outside Bodies

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

Executive Summary

The full Authority receive appropriate reports from Members who sit on outside bodies to provide feedback on key topics discussed in other forums such as Local Government Association (LGA) meetings. The Authority's Chair and other members have attended several meetings of noteworthy relevance for the Authority to consider when discharging its functions.

Recommendation

The Authority is asked to note the report for information.

Information

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

Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC)

- Friday 19 May 2023

On-call Fire Fighters presentation received from Deputy Chief Steve Healey.

Wildfires and Climate change - Given the critical importance of this issue for Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs), both operationally and financially, it was suggested that a regular update be brought to every Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC) meeting.

Culture and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICRFS) spotlight report on culture and values in the fire and rescue service. Draft Culture action plan by the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) was presented.

- Friday 7 July 2023

Culture - Feedback on the recent Culture in the Fire and Rescue Service conference held at 18 Smith Square on 27 June. Feedback from the conference had been positive with a range of suggestions for future events and training.

Spending Review and finance update - The proposed ask was for government grant increases in line with Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation (as of September 2023) and band D precept flexibility of £5 or 3%. The evidence base was currently being strengthened by a survey of Chief Fire Officers (CFOs) on non-pay inflationary pressures.

Building Safety update - The issue of recruiting and retaining building safety inspectors to support the new building safety regime was raised. An update on Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) was requested. Home Office, confirmed that the PEEP proposals, and the Fire Reform White Paper response, were both currently in the advanced stages of cross-Government clearance with a view to release either before, or shortly after recess. The information on Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) was welcomed.

- Monday 11 March 2024 Bristol Fire Conference

The Planning Process and Fire – Members were reminded that the research being presented resulted from concerns previously expressed that the voice of fire and rescue was not being sufficiently heard within the planning process, particularly considering the increased risks from impacts of climate change and recent advances in technology to try and mitigate these risks.

Fit for the Future update - The 3 partners, Local Government Association (LGA), NFCC and National Employers had agreed that a light touch review of Fit for the Future be carried out over the coming months given recent changes in the policy environment and lobbying efforts.

- Friday 19 July 2024

New Government Priorities – Officers spoke on the commitments of the Labour Government in their manifesto as well as the asks of the Fire Brigades Union of the new Government. Bills that came out of the King’s Speech, such as the Employments Rights Bill, the English Devolution Bill, the Product Safety and Metrology Bill, the Crime and Policing Bill and the Planning and Infrastructure Bill. Discussion on future priorities with reference to the King’s Speech which outlined the new Government’s priority bills. Members were asked to comment on the proposal for the priorities to remain the same for the next Board cycle, namely people and culture, professionalism (encompassing finance, inspection, fire standards and building safety,) and governance, climate change and sector-led improvement. The Chair outlined the Board’s focus so far on culture, and the drive of members to make change, however there was acknowledgement that culture takes a long time to change. There was a request for the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) manifesto to be discussed. There was disappointment that the Fire and Police Minister role remained combined. It was highlighted that alongside the NFCC, National Employers, the LGA sent a letter to the Minister regarding Fit for the Future and highlighted the LGA were involved in the new national body. The LGA would also be writing separately from the FSMC and LGA’s Safer and Stronger Communities Board on key issues for both structures. Chair of the NFCC, reiterated the support for re-establishing a national advisory body, seeking clarity on a standards body and how that will focus on emerging energy technologies.

Role of the Fire and Rescue Service in Planning - There were concerns FRAs are not being consulted regarding new technology. It was raised that there should be a reference to Section 186 regarding funding considering some of the issues will create a burden on resources. A member highlighted the need to build in protections for the proposed planning changes. There was concern over infrastructure and safety, particularly regarding storage for e-bikes and e-scooters. The fundamental importance of planning for future service delivery and community safety was emphasised, there is a

need to monitor critical changes with limited staff and resources rather than being involved with every planning application.

- Friday 11 October 2024

Priorities for the year ahead - Capital needed to be increased from central government if fire service workplaces were to be updated in line with changing workforces. A proposed new College of Fire and Rescue would need specific funding. Recommended that the guidance that international research could offer UK fire services was included more in FSMC discussions. There was agreement that sector led improvement was a key priority. A member questioned if this would include peer-to-peer support, particularly on governance. The Home Affairs Select Committee Inquiry into Culture in Fire and Rescue Services was discussed. Committee discussed what its focus on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) should be going forward. If national standards for fire were introduced, these would need to be properly funded for enforcement.

Grenfell report - Further funding would be required from the Government to achieve these recommendations. The LGA should be recognised as an organisation that had pushed PEEPs. Recruitment in fire services for inspectors and those with fire engineering skills remained a challenge. Members agreed to add a point into this paper that there should be work with the Safer, Stronger Communities Board on areas of joint interest. Members asked officers to reflect on how this could be done in an effective way.

Governance support, including IMPROVES tool - There should be more opportunities for online training for fire authority members. Inspectors looking at governance structures in fire authorities might not have experience in this area, so members needed to work alongside the inspectorate as governance professionals.

Fire Service Management Committee

Friday 9 June 2023

Topics that have come through the FSMC are discussed in the committee with the wider audience of the fire authorities and officers.

CC David O'Toole and CC John Shedwick were also in attendance.

Business risk

None.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

Involving EDI as a priority within discussions remains key, following last year's protests and disorder and concerns about misinformation on social media platforms.

Data Protection (GDPR)

N/A.

HR implications

None.

Financial implications

None.

Legal Implications

None at present. The Employments Rights Bill, the English Devolution Bill, the Product Safety and Metrology Bill, the Crime and Policing Bill and the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, whilst referred to in the King's Speech, await either full Royal assent or enacting secondary legislation, with aspects of the Employment Rights Bill not being introduced until late 2026, at the earliest. The Authority's clerk will keep a watching brief on the development of this legislation and will report back as necessary or when required.

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

Paper: papers referred to herein, above.

Date: various

Contact: n/a

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

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 17 February 2025

Annual Statement of Assurance 2023-2024

(Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information – Jon Charters – Chief Fire Officer
Tel: 01772 866800

Executive Summary

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018) sets out the Government's high level expectations, priorities and objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA's) in England. Included within the framework is the requirement that all FRA's must provide assurance on financial, governance and operational matters.

The attached Annual Statement of Assurance (appendix 1) aims to provide the required accountability and transparency to our communities and the Government that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) continues to deliver efficient, effective, value for money services.

This statement sits alongside our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), Statement of Accounts, the Annual Governance Statement, the Annual Service Plan and Annual Service Report. It details what measures are in place to assure that the Combined Fire Authority's performance is efficient, economic and effective and provides further evidence that LFRS continues to deliver under the expectations detailed within both the National Framework and our own Risk Management Plan.

Recommendation(s)

The Authority is asked to approve the Annual Statement of Assurance 2023-2024 as presented and approve the signing of this by the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer.

Information

The attached Annual Statement of Assurance 2023-2024 provides assurance in three core areas:

- Financial Assurance
- Assurance on Governance
- Operational Assurance.

"The statement sets out how we demonstrate assurance in these areas, culminating in the following declaration: -

The Chair of Lancashire Combined Fire Authority and Chief Fire Officer of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service are satisfied that the Authority's financial, governance and

operational assurance arrangements are adequate and operating effectively and meet the requirements detailed within the Fire and Rescue National Framework.”

Business risk

None arising from this report.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

None arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None arising from this report.

Data Protection (GDPR)

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

HR implications

None arising from this report.

Financial implications

None arising from this report.

Legal implications

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018) sets out a requirement for fire and rescue authorities to publish Statements of Assurance annually. The Statement of Assurance will be used as a source of information on which to base the Secretary of State’s biennial report under section 25 of the Fire and Rescue Act 2004.

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



Annual Statement of Assurance 2023-24

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Introduction

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018) provides overall strategic direction to English Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA). It sets out the Government's priorities and objectives and places a requirement on all FRA's to provide assurance to their communities and to Government on financial, governance and operational matters.

This Statement of Assurance aims to provide the necessary accountability and transparency to the people of Lancashire and evidence that their Fire and Rescue Service continues to deliver under the expectations detailed within both the National Framework and our own Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

This statement sits alongside our CRMP, Statement of Accounts, the Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Service Plan and Annual Service Report. It details what measures are in place to assure that the Combined Fire Authority's performance is efficient, economic, and effective.

The County of Lancashire

Lancashire comprises of 14 districts, 12 of which are within the Lancashire County Council area (Burnley, Chorley, Fylde, Hyndburn, Lancaster, Pendle, Preston, Ribble Valley, Rossendale, South Ribble, West Lancashire, and Wyre) and 2 unitary authorities of Blackpool and Blackburn-with-Darwen. The area is home to a resident population of circa 1.53 million people (Census 2021) and is one of the most populated and urbanised shire counties within Great Britain, with a legacy of historical, industrial heritage.

Lancashire covers just over 3,000 square kilometres including 123 kilometres of coastline stretching from Morecambe Bay in the north of the county, down to the sands of West Lancashire in the south. The County has an extensive motorway network, port facilities, nuclear installations and airports and is home to a diverse demographic, with just over 20% of our population being over retirement age and 10% representing Black Minority Ethnic (BME) communities.

The County is bordered by Cumbria to the north and North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, and Merseyside moving from east to south. The major conurbations are Lancaster, Preston, Burnley, Blackburn, Accrington, Chorley, and the seasonal town of Blackpool which receives around 18 million visitors per year.

Governance

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority (CFA) is made up of 25 elected councillors drawn from Lancashire County Council (19) and the unitary authorities of Blackburn-with-Darwen (3) and Blackpool (3). The CFA is responsible under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 for providing a Fire and Rescue Service in Lancashire. This involves the provision, training and equipping of our staff to undertake firefighting operations, fire safety work, rescue of persons from road traffic collisions and preparing for our response to other emergency situations. The CFA is the body legally responsible for enforcing the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and is a designated Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

The CFA ensures that the work of the Fire and Rescue Service is efficient, effective and provides value for money. To achieve this, they operate under a framework of five full meetings each year which are supplemented by a number of smaller committees focusing upon Planning, Performance, Resources, Audit and Appeals.

Further information on the afore-mentioned committees is accessible via our website at <https://cfa.lancsfirerescue.org.uk/>

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS)

LFRS is the service provider on behalf of the CFA. We currently operate from 39 locations (with 58 front-line fire engines and a fleet of specialist vehicles), a specialist Urban Search and Rescue unit, Service Headquarters in Fulwood and our Leadership and Development Centre in Euxton, Chorley. LFRS staff deliver an

extensive range of prevention, protection, and emergency response services throughout Lancashire.

To deliver these services, we employ circa 900 operational staff in a wide variety of roles using a variety of shift systems; Whole-time, On-Call, Flexible Day Crewed, Day Crewing Plus and Day Duty.

Our Mobilising and Control Centre moved to North West Fire Control (NWFC), Warrington in 2014. We work collaboratively with Cumbria, Greater Manchester and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Services.



Figure 1 - Service Delivery Areas and Fire Station locations

Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)

Our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) is a public facing document covering the period 2022-27. This plan is in place to provide the opportunity for

LFRS to demonstrate how, we as an organisation, identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks and challenges that could affect our communities over the 5-year period and how we plan to mitigate such risks or reduce their potential impact.

Key to the successful identification and management of risk is our ability to maintain a clear and current understanding of the present and future threats to Lancashire's communities. Risk in Lancashire remains dynamic, constantly changing and differs between districts, which requires varying preventative activities. As a result, no single activity to reduce risk is adequate in all circumstances and a mix of prevention, protection and response activities delivered by a range of organisations is needed to reduce the likelihood of the risk event occurring or to lessen its consequences. This depth of understanding underpins everything we do, driving our governance and planning arrangements; our findings are published within the [Strategic Assessment of Risk](#).

Planning and Performance

To meet the requirements of the CRMP the Service reviews its priorities and targets annually, this supports continual improvement and provides the opportunity to ensure that we undertake activities dependent on the requirements of our environment. Our corporate planning process has been developed to provide a rigorous yet flexible process that allows the Service to assess and respond to opportunities and threats as and when they emerge. Whilst the CRMP is in place to set out the strategic direction of the Service in the medium term, the Service also has in place a forward-looking [Annual Service Plan](#) which clearly sets out what we will deliver over the coming 12 months, this is complemented by the [Annual Service Report](#) which reflects our achievement against those objectives at the year end.

In addition to this on a quarterly basis, we produce a performance management report known as '[Measuring Progress](#)'. The content of this report is considered at Senior Management Team meetings and by the Performance Committee of the CFA. LFRS is open and transparent and ensures performance information is

routinely made available on its website for any stakeholders, including communities, to scrutinise.

Consultation

External and internal consultation is an essential part of the development of the CRMP and subsequent reviews, and as such we have a clearly defined [Consultation Strategy](#). We use a variety of methods for engaging with community members and for every consultation exercise completed, a summary report is provided to the relevant committee of the CFA. This process ensures that key stakeholders are consulted, involved, and informed of the proposals to ensure that their input is considered within the final plans.

Community Risk Management

Our approach to integrated risk management is supported by the use of modelling. The Office of National Statistics categorises every part of the UK into a small neighbourhood called a Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA). There are currently 941 LSOA's in Lancashire, each containing an average of 1,500 people. We use information about where fires have taken place in the past and combine this with various social deprivation data to give each area a risk grade.

The information is then used to identify geographic areas at higher risk where a combination of Prevention, Protection and Response activities can have the greatest impact.

This is utilised alongside the provision of tailored Safe and Well visits or Home Fire Safety Check service (HFSC) which is geared towards occupant risk and importantly, to those in greatest need and at greatest risk of fire.

We update the risk model on a regular basis and use the outcomes to direct and re-prioritise our activities. Risk reduction progress over the last 10 years is depicted in the table below.

	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Overall Score
Year	SOA Count	SOA Count	SOA Count	SOA Count	Risk Score Change
2014	32	95	306	508	33,648
2015	41	86	281	533	33,268
2016	32	76	314	519	32,990
2017	25	74	321	521	32,398
2018	22	74	321	524	32,114
2019	21	68	310	542	31,816
2020	23	74	324	520	32,448
2021	21	61	338	521	31,862
2022	25	47	333	536	31,576
2023	15	59	331	536	31,170
2024	11	54	340	536	30,750
-	-66%	-43%	11%	6%	-9%
Overall change	Overall reduction in very high risk SOAs	Overall reduction on high risk SOAs	Overall increase in medium SOAs	Overall increase in low risk SOAs	Overall reduction in risk score

Figure 2 - Changes in Fire Risk 2014-2024

* Previous comparisons have been made to the 2010 data which shows even larger reductions in very high risk SOAs (-82%), high risk SOAs (-54%) and the overall risk score (-16%). A slightly smaller increase in medium SOAs is also seen (10%) along with a larger increase in low risk SOAs (19%).

Assurance on Governance

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the CFA to publish an Annual Governance Statement along with the Authority's financial statements, following a review of the effectiveness of the internal controls in place. It sets out the key elements of the Authority's governance framework, how these have been evaluated, the outcome of the assessment of effectiveness and any areas for improvement.

The Audit Committee has previously approved and adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, in line with guidance produced jointly by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE). The Code defines corporate governance as the way an

authority ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest, and accountable manner.

Included within the Code are the following core principles: -

1. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
2. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
3. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits
4. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
5. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
6. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
7. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

The code also sets out the principles which support each of these core elements, as well as how the Authority will address each of these.

The Audit Committee also receives regular reports from Internal Audit, work which is undertaken by Lancashire County Council. The Internal Audit Service is an assurance function designed to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes. Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) require the Head of Internal Audit to provide an opinion on the frameworks of governance, risk management and control of Lancashire Combined Fire Authority and a written report to those charged with governance, timed to support the annual governance statement. On the basis of the programme of work for the year, the Head of Internal Audit provided substantial assurance regarding the adequacy of design and effectiveness in operation of the organisation's frameworks of governance, risk management and control.

The Authority has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The 2023/24 review was supported and informed by the work of both internal and external audit. This self-assessment formed the basis of the Authority's Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 which concluded that Lancashire Combined Fire Authority and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service has in place a satisfactory system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of its functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

Under the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice, the external auditor considers whether the Service has put in place arrangements to secure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources and specifically reports on whether the Authority has proper governance arrangements in place. On 26 September 2024 the external auditor reported to the Audit Committee that they 'found that the Authority's governance arrangements were appropriate', and that 'the Authority takes assurance from risk management processes, effectiveness of internal controls, decision making processes, arrangements to ensure appropriate standards are met and arrangements to prevent and detect fraud'. The external auditors work did not identify any evidence of significant weakness within the arrangements in place.

Financial Assurance

All local authority accounts are required to adopt 'proper accounting practice' based on either statutory requirements or the code of practice on local authority accounting. These specify the principles and practices of accounting required to prepare a Statement of Accounts that 'present a true and fair view'.

The Treasurer to the CFA provides publicly available annual accounts which are approved by the Audit Committee.

An independent audit of the accounts is undertaken by an external auditing body, Grant Thornton. The external auditor undertakes a review of the accounts and forms an overall opinion which is published each year. The audit for 2023/24 was

conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing and applicable law and provided the following opinions –

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- Give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority as at 31 March 2024 and of its expenditure and income for the year ended;
- Have been properly prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority in the United Kingdom 2023/24; and
- Have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Organisational Assurance

HMICFRS Inspection

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services' (HMICFRS) assessment examines the service's effectiveness, efficiency and how well it looks after its people. It is designed to give the public information about how their local fire and rescue service is performing in several important areas, in a way that is comparable with other services across England.

LFRS was in the first tranche of fire and rescue services to be inspected by HMICFRS in 2018. LFRS was rated as 'outstanding' for promoting its values and culture. In all other areas, the Service was rated as 'good' with no areas that 'require improvement' in any of the 11 categories that were assessed.

The 2018 inspection was followed by another in 2020, which was based around LFRS's response to the COVID pandemic. The report concluded that the service worked closely with the Lancashire Resilience Forum to help keep people in Lancashire safer from COVID-19 whilst ensuring that the service maintained its emergency response service.

Since 2018 LFRS has worked hard to reinforce those areas it was found to be good in, and in the most recent inspection, carried out in 2021/2022, LFRS was again rated 'outstanding' for culture and values, and rated as 'good' in the other 10

categories with no areas that 'require improvement.' The results mirror those of the service's first full inspection in 2018, with the newer report highlighting that the service improved in almost all areas since then.

LFRS is next due to be inspected again during 2025. A full copy of the most recent HMICFRS inspection report can be found on our [website](#).

Operational Assurance

The National Framework outlines the requirement placed upon Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) to provide assurance on operational matters which are determined locally by them in partnership with their local communities, citizens, businesses, and others.

FRA's function within a clearly defined statutory and policy framework of which the key legislative documents defining these responsibilities are:

- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007
- Localism Act 2011
- Policing and Crime Act 2017
- Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022

This section aims to provide assurance that our service is delivered in line with our statutory responsibilities and with due regard to the expectations set out in our CRMP including cross-border, multi-authority, and national incident arrangements. The key components, known as pillars, for operational assurance are as follows:

1. **Operational Preparedness Assurance** - This is the 'before' aspect of the assurance framework delivered through station-based assurance visits which focus on core work that is aligned to reducing risk and our capability to

respond effectively and efficiently when the need arises.

2. **Operational Response Assurance** - This is the 'during' aspect of the assurance framework, which is delivered through assurance monitoring during the response phase of an incident or exercise.
3. **Operational Learning** - This is the 'after' aspect of the assurance framework, which is delivered through our debrief systems and by learning from safety events in LFRS, other Fire and Rescue Services, National Operational Learning (NOL), and Joint Organisational Learning (JOL).

The data and findings from these are analysed with key learning provided for staff on a quarterly report to support improvement, and items meeting the criteria are reported to NOL and/or JOL. Additionally, themes are considered for inclusion in training programmes.

Prevention and Protection

Our Prevention and Protection strategies set out how we will continue to evolve and improve the way we educate, support and, where appropriate, enforce to stop incidents occurring and protect life. Our interventions continue to evolve in line with changing societal risk, and are shaped by data, intelligence, and equality impact assessment.

Our person-centred Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) service continues to include Safe and Well interventions including, where appropriate, falls risk assessments, alcohol, and mental health advice. LFRS remains focussed on identifying those most at risk from fire and continues to refine thematic campaigns and referral generation approaches to achieve this. In addition to delivering our role within Community Safety Partnerships our District based teams work with multi-disciplinary teams to ensure that the fire risk component of complex cases is recognised.

Education continues to be a priority and the Service has fire, water and road safety packages tailored for all Key Stages of education. The Service runs and supports a wide range of campaigns for all road users based on the National Police Chiefs Council campaign calendar whilst also taking an active role in the Lancashire Water Safety Partnership.

We continue to provide the Kings Trust Team program and have Fire Cadet Units at a range of locations across Lancashire, complemented by a range of other youth engagement activities tailored to local need.

Our Incident Intelligence Team continues to investigate fires, gathering evidence to assist arson investigations, and intelligence to drive the continual development of prevention activities which keep pace with the perpetually evolving nature of risk in our society.

The Grenfell Tragedy in 2017, and the resultant public enquiries and technical reviews, has initiated the most far reaching and fundamental changes to Building Regulations and Fire Safety legislation seen in decades. To support change LFRS has invested in a Protection Transformation Team to ensure it is well placed to meet future challenges. 2023 saw the Service become a joint regulator with the Health and Safety Executive and Building Controls at all stages of the design, construction, occupation, and operation of Higher Risk Residential Buildings.

Whilst this increased focus on the safety of residential buildings is welcome, such buildings make up only a proportion of Lancashire's built environment. The Service will continue to utilise a risk-based approach to identify the wider range of premises at risk from fire and undertake fire safety interventions to assure compliance. Support to business and commerce continues to remain a priority and we will maintain the ability to enforce and indeed prosecute where fire safety law has been ignored or flouted. Business support will continue to be provided by our Business Safety Advisors, campaign activity and website support, and we will continue to contribute to the principles of better regulation through our Primary Authority Schemes.

Whilst specialist and highly skilled Fire Safety Inspectors will undertake 'audits' we have increased our ability to 'check' compliance through our Business Fire Safety Check services which is undertaken by our Operational Crews. These visits evaluate simple measures linked to effective fire safety management and provide an opportunity to collect risk information and provide arson risk reduction advice.

Mutual Aid Agreements

The National Framework states that Fire and Rescue Authorities must make provision to respond to incidents such as fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies within their area and in other areas in line with mutual aid agreements. LFRS maintain mutual agreements for reinforcements with our five bordering Fire and Rescue Authorities - Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, North Yorkshire, and West Yorkshire. These agreements are periodically reviewed to maintain currency and provide optimal response arrangements.

National Resilience

For the purposes of this document, National Resilience (NR) is defined as the capacity and capability of Fire and Rescue Authorities to work together and with other Category 1 and 2 responders to deliver a sustained, effective response to major incidents, emergencies, and disruptive challenges, such as (but not limited to) those identified in the National Risk Register of Civil Emergencies. It refers to risks that need to be planned for on a strategic, national basis because their impacts and consequences would be of such scale and / or complexity that local resources would be insufficient, even when considering mutual aid arrangements.

LFRS is a signatory to the National Mutual Aid protocol and has deployed assets to major incidents outside the region. The costs of such mobilisations are borne by the FRA within whose area the incident occurs and are therefore re-claimed by LFRS.

We remain subject to the NR audit processes which test the various aspects of our NR capabilities. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service assumed the lead authority role for National Resilience on behalf of the Home Office in 2016. This includes taking responsibility for assurance, training, long-term capability management and Fire Control with regard to National resilience.

Business Continuity

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is an integral part of our corporate risk management process. In relation to BCM processes and procedures, all FRA's

must satisfy the requirements of both the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

We are required to 'write and maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable, that if an emergency occurs the Authority is able to continue its critical functions'. This includes periods of industrial action.

In order to ensure that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service comply with both pieces of legislation, our BCM strives to align with the Business Continuity Institutes' Good Practice Guidelines and ISO 22301. This provides a framework through which:

- Prioritised activities are identified
- Assessments of both internal and external risks which may impact on business continuity are made
- Strategic, Tactical, and Operational Plans are produced to ensure an acceptable level of service can be maintained following disruption
- Procedures are developed to invoke the BCP
- Arrangements are made to test the BCP
- All key personnel are trained to understand their role within the plan
- Responsibilities are clearly identified and assigned.

The plans are reviewed and tested yearly, at a minimum, to ensure our plans are fit for purpose. The protracted Coronavirus pandemic demonstrated the Service's ability to deal with a Major Incident, while at the same time responding to other emergencies in a timely manner and continuing with business as usual, as much as reasonably practicable.

Safety, Health, and Environment

The Combined Fire Authority meets regularly to provide strategic political leadership to the Service. The Authority has overall responsibility for the effective governance of Safety, Health, and Environment (SHE), including:

- Agreeing the SHE Policy which outlines their commitments and ensuring adequate resources are available for the establishment, ongoing

implementation and control of a Safety, Health, Environment and Wellbeing (SHE) Management System.

- Providing a clear direction for the Executive Board and Senior Management Team to establish policies and manage safety, health and environmental responsibilities effectively.
- Consideration of local and national issues which impact on Safety, Health, Environment and Wellbeing within the Service.
- Monitoring performance through receipt of the Annual SHE Report, to provide governance and assurance that an effective SHE Management System is operational within LFRS.

Our health and safety arrangements are based on the model Plan, Do, Check, Act laid down in the Health and Safety Executive publication HS(G)65 – Successful Health and Safety Management and written and implemented to the International Standard for Health and Safety Management Systems, ISO 45001:2018. The environmental aspects of the management system are written and implemented to the International Standard ISO 14001:2015.

External Certification for both standards has been in place since 2011 with re-certification taking place every 3 years followed by annual surveillance audits. The last successful audit took place in 2024, where certification was extended with no non-conformances identified by the external audit team. As part of the audit process, the auditors visit a range of stations and departments and examined the ‘Full provision of fire, rescue and supporting services across Lancashire’ delivered by the Combined Fire Authority from a health and safety and environmental perspective.

We have procedures in place to report and investigate safety events, both events which have resulted in an injury to an individual or ‘near miss’ events which had the potential to cause harm. These processes allow us to identify areas where improvements to our arrangements can be made.

Each year a performance review of Safety, Health and Environment is carried out and reported to the Combined Fire Authority in the Annual SHE Report. Part of

business-as-usual is the review of policies, procedures, support for staff wellbeing and guidance to ensure that we continue to meet our legal obligations in respect of safety, health and environment and we validate this by a system of internal and external audits.

To ensure continuous improvement is made across safety, health, environment and wellbeing, we have developed aspirational 5-year delivery plans, supported by objectives and actions each year to assist in delivering future improvements.

Leadership and Development

As defined in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, FRAs have a duty to secure the provision of training for personnel in relation to fighting fires, road traffic collisions (RTCs) and emergencies other than fires and RTCs.

To comply with the elements of fighting fires and RTCs, the Service provides training in:

- Breathing apparatus and fire behaviour
- Incident command
- Blue light driving
- RTC
- Trauma care
- Firefighter core skills.

In relation to emergencies other than fires and RTCs, our CRMP identifies emergency special services to include flooding and water rescue incidents, wildfires, animal rescue, rope rescue, hazardous materials/spills and assisting other agencies.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Training and Operational Review policy is designed to provide training and development to personnel to enable the organisation to fulfil its vision of 'Making Lancashire Safer'. Training is based on the needs of the organisation with a strong focus on ensuring that personnel are safe and competent in the delivery of the prevention, protection, and response services we provide.

The training programme considers learning identified through our own operational review processes, as well as from reports describing learning from events of national significance. The Leadership and Development Department supports continual learning and organisational development through a wide range of programmes tailored to role and responsibility, as well as managing the selection processes which identify managers for advancement. Ongoing development and maintenance of competence is a key focus, and this is facilitated through a robust maintenance of skills programme linked to an e-learning system which is continually updated.

Trainers are selected and developed across an extremely diverse variety of specialisms, ranging from the intricacies of boat handling and rope rescue, through to the complexities of mounting a successful fire safety prosecution. Where necessary, support is commissioned from specialist providers.

The Leadership and Development Department work in conjunction with other departments within the Service, such as Human Resources and the Safety, Health, and Environment Department, to provide training and development for all members of the Service. There is a particular focus on Leadership Development across the Service.

Assurance Declaration

The Chair of Lancashire Combined Fire Authority and Chief Fire Officer of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service are satisfied that the Authority's financial, governance and operational assurance arrangements are adequate and operating effectively and meet the requirements detailed within the Fire and Rescue National Framework.

Jon Charters - Chief Fire Officer

Nikki Hennessy – CFA Chair

Date:

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 17 February 2025

Pay Policy Statement for 2025-26

Contact for further information – Elizabeth Sandiford, Director of People and Development Tel: 01772 866804

Executive Summary

In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 a pay policy statement for 2025/26 has been prepared.

The pay policy publishes data on senior salaries and the structure of the workforce and demonstrates the principles of transparency.

The pay policy statement sets out the Authority's policies for the financial year relating to:

- The remuneration of its chief officers.
- The remuneration of its lowest paid employees.
- The relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and that of other employees who are not chief officers.

The statement includes:

- The level and elements of remuneration for each chief officer.
- Remuneration range for chief officers on recruitment.
- Methodology for increases and additions to remuneration for each chief officer.
- The use of performance-related pay for chief officers.
- The use of bonuses for chief officers.
- The approach to the payment of chief officers on their ceasing to hold office under, or be employed by, the authority.
- The publication of and access to information relating to the remuneration of chief officers.

It also includes the Authority's policies for the financial year relating to other terms and conditions applying to its chief officers.

Recommendation

The Authority is asked to approve the Pay Policy Statement.

Information

The approval of a pay policy statement cannot be delegated by the Authority to a Panel. The Fire Authority's pay statement must be approved by the 31 March each year. It is recognised when Executive Board pay is raised it will be tightly scrutinised by elected members, staff within the Service and members of the public.

The Authority is asked to approve the Statement hereunder.

Lancashire Fire Authority Pay Policy Statement

Introduction

In accordance with the Localism Act 2011 (Chapter 8 Sections 38 to 43) Lancashire Fire Authority is required to produce a pay policy for each financial year. These statements must articulate an authority's own policies towards a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce, particularly its senior staff (or 'chief officers') and its lowest paid employees. The pay policy statement must be prepared for each financial year, and they must be approved by members of the Fire and Rescue Authority, and published.

Any decision under powers delegated to the Authority's Constitution with regard to remuneration to be taken in 2025/26 will be bound by and must comply with the 2025/26 Statement.

The Director of People and Development (DoPD) must be consulted prior to any decision impacting on remuneration where there is any question regarding compliance with the Statement.

In general terms the Fire Authority recognises terms and conditions negotiated nationally by the National Employers with the National Employees' bodies for three distinct staff groups. These are:

- National Joint Council for Brigade Managers (referred to in Lancashire Fire Authority as Principal Officers) of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (commonly referred to as 'Gold Book');
- National Joint Council for Local Government Services (commonly referred to as 'Green Book');
- National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (commonly referred to as 'Grey Book').

Under the definitions provided for within the Act, the officers included in this pay statement are the Chief Fire Officer (CFO), Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO), Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) and Director of People & Development (DoPD).

The Treasurer responsibilities are undertaken by the DoCS.

The Monitoring Officer duties are undertaken by the Clerk to the Authority who is engaged on a contract for services basis.

The Fire Authority has delegated responsibility for any local terms and conditions, including remuneration for chief officers, to the Appointments Panel.

Changes from national negotiations generally take place each year, in January (Gold Book), April (Green Book) and July (Grey Book). The Fire Authority's policy is to implement national agreements, amended as needed to meet local needs.

A chosen natural internal benchmark for Chief Officer pay is the percentage rise in firefighters pay. This is the standard for most of the staff within the Service and has been deemed affordable and proportionate by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services. It has previously been agreed that the Chief Fire Officer's pay with the established linkages to the other Executive Board members should rise by the same amount as NJC for grey book when they receive their annual pay award.

No bonus payments are made to Executive Board members.

Information relating to chief officers pay and benefits in kind is found in the Fire Authority's Statement of Accounts and on the Authority's website.

Objectives of the Policy

The Fire Authority attracts and retains a competent, motivated and well led workforce, to meet current and future organisational needs and to be an employer of choice with improved working practices, work life balance, personal development, health and well-being and fair pay. We are committed to striving to achieve fairness in pay and reward structures across all occupational groups considering all the employment relationships that exist.

Pay increases in 2024/25 were:

- 4% for staff covered by the "grey book" (wef 1 July 2024).
- 4% for Principal Officers (wef 1 July 2024) in accordance with the agreed linkage to "grey book" staff.
- A £1,290 increase to all spinal column points for "green book staff" was agreed nationally (wef 1 April 2024). In addition, all locally agreed pay points above the maximum of the national pay spine were increased by 2.50%.

In addition to pay, the national agreements cover other terms and conditions such as annual leave and allowances for use of private vehicles on Authority business. The Authority pays car allowances in accordance with these national scales.

There are two Pension schemes in existence: the Firefighters' 2015 Pension scheme and the Local Government Pension Scheme. Some employees retain legacy scheme pension membership in the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (which became closed to new entrants in 2006) or the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme (which became closed to new entrants on establishment of the 2015 scheme). All firefighters are now members of the 2015 Firefighters Pension Scheme.

All employees may join a pension scheme which is relevant to their occupational group. The operative schemes are statutory schemes with contributions from employers and the employees.

The Local Government Pension Scheme provides for flexible retirement for which the Fire Authority has approved a Policy statement.

The Firefighters' Pension Schemes allow for re-engagement after retirement. Any utilisation of this option is subject to approval by the Authority based on a business case and demonstrated need and may involve abatement of pension benefit where appropriate.

There are currently three pay grades for Grey Book staff (trainee, in development and competent). There is a spinal column points and grading system for Green Book staff, the policy is to start any appointee on the lowest point of the pay grade, save for where an applicant brings specific skills or experience to a post, they then progress through the points until the maximum grade. In respect of Gold Book staff, they are appointed within a grade range of points and progress by incremental progression until the maximum of the range is reached on a similar basis.

The “green book” grading is determined and underpinned by the Local Government Job Evaluation Scheme. The salaries utilised are above the ‘living wage’. The Service has a Market Supplements Policy, which covers all posts, and where evidence exists of recruitment and retention issues, allows the Service to make any additional payments to reflect the market rate. This is reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and is of particular importance in times of challenging recruitment and retention.

Delegated powers for the payment of honoraria lie with the Chief Fire Officer.

Individual Chief Officers

Changes to chief officer salaries are approved by the Fire Authority.

The chief officers are conditioned to the Gold Book terms and conditions of employment.

A facility exists for the chief officers (either singularly or collectively) to present a case to the Authority (via the Chair) for a salary increase based on evidence, the overall performance of Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service and an annual appraisal.

Lancashire Fire Authority does not operate a bonus scheme or performance related pay for chief officers.

Chief Officers may claim reimbursement for expenses incurred in the course of carrying out their duties.

Chief Fire Officer (CFO) - £172,744

The post holder is a member of the 2015 Firefighters Pension Scheme and is on the minimum of the salary range.

The current remuneration for this post on recruitment is between £172,744 and £178,912 pa.

The Chief Fire Officer has a provided car to enable the duties of the post to be performed.

The provisions for redundancy are the statutory payments for redundancy.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) – £166,574

The post holder is a member of the 2015 Firefighters’ Pension Scheme and has reached the maximum of his salary range.

The current remuneration for this post on recruitment is between £160,405 - £166,574 pa.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer has a provided car to enable the duties of the post to be performed.

The provisions for redundancy are the statutory payments for redundancy.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) - £135,727

The post holder is a member of the 2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme and in on the minimum of the salary range.

The current remuneration for this post on recruitment is between £135,727 and £141,897.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer has a provided car to enable the duties of the post to be performed.

The provisions for redundancy are the statutory payments for redundancy.

Director of People and Development (DoPD) - £95,000

The post holder is a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme and is on the minimum point of the salary range.

The current remuneration for this post on recruitment is between £95,000 and £110,000 pa.

There is no provision to utilise the car leasing scheme nor is any car allowance paid. Any mileage reimbursement utilises the casual user arrangement.

The post holder is entitled to discretionary entitlements in relation to redundancy which include average weekly pay with a multiplier of 2.2 applied and in exceptional cases augmentation of pensionable service to the maximum of 3 years. These provisions apply to all staff eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Treasurer/Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) - £100,000

The post holder is a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme and has three further increments before reaching the maximum of his salary range.

The current remuneration for this post on recruitment is between £95,000 and £110,000 pa.

There is no provision to utilise the car leasing scheme nor is any car allowance paid. Any mileage reimbursement utilises the casual car user arrangements.

The post holder is entitled to discretionary entitlements in relation to redundancy which include average weekly pay with a multiplier of 2.2 applied and in exceptional cases augmentation of pensionable service to the maximum of 3 years. These provisions apply to all staff eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

The Clerk to the Authority

The monitoring officer activity is undertaken under a contract for services, the cost being £15,150 pa.

Recruitment of New Officers

The Fire Authority takes the opportunity in year to review the salaries of the senior officer grouping to determine whether the salary range should be adjusted prior to advert.

Pay Floor

The definition of the 'lowest paid employee' is that postholder receiving the lowest (FTE) annual salary (exclusive of Employer pension contributions).

The pay floor level is our Green Book Grade 2 posts (Cooks, Receptionists and Gardener/handypersons) who are on a scale of £24,790 to £25,183 pa. £24,790 equates to £13.12 per hour. The minimum a current employee is receiving is £24,790.

The Chief Fire Officer's earnings ratio is 1: 7.10 using the minima of pay grade 2.

The government statement is a recommendation that this ratio should not exceed 1:25.

As a further comparison, the ratio between a competent firefighter with CPD and the maximum salary for the Chief Fire Officer is 1: 6.97.

Business risk

If an appropriate pay statement is not approved for 2025/26 then the Authority will be in breach of the Localism Act and might subject the Authority to negative comment.

Conversely complying with the requirements could also engender negative publicity.

Sustainable linkage provides a clear and equitable framework for the future.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

Nil.

Equality and Diversity Implications

The Green Book Pay and grading is determined using an equality proofed job evaluation scheme.

Data Protection (GDPR)

Nil.

HR implications

Future appointments to the Authority's chief officer positions have to be made in compliance with the pay policy statement, which potentially reduces flexibility. Although the document has been produced in line with the requirements of the Act and accompanying guidance, the Authority's employment obligations are not superseded by the Act's requirements and have to be considered.

Financial implications

Increased costs will be restricted to the affordable limits as set by the National Joint Council for grey book staff.

Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising from the report.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 17 February 2025

2025/26 Budget

(Appendices A, B, C, D, E and F refer)

Contact for further information: Steven Brown - Director of Corporate Services

Tel: 01772 866804

Executive Summary

The purpose of this paper is to allow the members to agree the 2025/26 Council Tax Precept and Budget, and to approve the associated documents, including;

- The five-year Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- The Capital Strategy (including the ten-year capital programme).
- The Reserves Strategy.
- The Treasury Management Strategy.

Recommendation

The Authority is requested to:

- Agree the 2025/26 budget, including the net budget requirement of £77.5m (as set out in table 2 paragraph 14) which takes account of adjustments set out and detailed in Appendix A;
- Agree the proposed Council Tax increase of £5 for a Band D Council tax precept of £89.73 for 2025/26;
- Agree the levels of Council Tax precept set out in Table 3, paragraph 17;
- Approve the capital programme and associated funding for 2025/26 set out in table 5, paragraph 24;
- Approve the MTFS set out in Appendix A;
- Approve the Capital Strategy set out in Appendix B;
- Approve the Reserves Strategy set out in Appendix C;
- Approve the Treasury Management Strategy in Appendix D, this includes the Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision;
- Note the results of the Council Tax Precept Consultation set out in paragraph 19 and Appendices E and F; and
- Note the Statement of Robustness of Estimates set out in paragraph 35.

Information

1. The Authority is required to set a balanced budget and council tax precept for the next financial year by 1 March 2025. This paper presents the necessary information in a single report to ensure the Authority:
 - Considers the link between capital investment decisions and the revenue implications.
 - Considers the results of the Council Tax Precept Consultation.
 - Considers the Treasury Management implications of revenue and capital decisions.
 - Provides value for money.

- Reflects best practice.
2. The Budget and associated documents in this report form our financial strategies, they are part of our strategic planning activity and governance framework which sets out the direction of the Service and how we will achieve our aim of making Lancashire safer. These financial strategies are one of six core strategies that set out how we will provide services in line with the following priorities in our five-year Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP):
 - Valuing our people.
 - Preventing fires.
 - Protecting people and property.
 - Responding to fires and other emergencies.
 - Delivering value for money.

Financial Context

3. The outlook for the UK economy in 2025 is mixed. Modest improvements in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are expected, but still below pre pandemic levels and inflation is expected to stabilise at 2% by then end of 2025, but there could be temporary increases due to factors like rising gas prices. Interest rates are expected to continue to reduce gradually and whilst personal finances remain relatively strong, employers have raised concerns about job creation due to rises in National Insurance contributions. Overall, while there are positive signs of recovery, challenges such as geopolitical issues and global trade frictions could impact the UK's economic performance.
4. Nationally the Fire Service continues to face financial pressures from increasing legislative demands, environmental and societal changes, inflationary pressures, particularly on capital projects, above inflation pay settlements and increasingly more complex demands on resources.

Funding

5. Funding for the fire sector has changed in the last 15 years. The 2008 banking crisis was followed by a period of austerity in the sector. During this period government grants for the fire sector reduced. Changes to the funding methodology during this period also meant that changes in the economy, that impact on benefits claimant numbers or business rates, now impact on funding levels. With Council Tax and Business Rates representing 81% of our funding these changes have presented an additional risk. For context the main sources of funding in 2024/25 are set out below:

Table 1 – Sources of Funding	£m	%
Council Tax	39.4	53%
Business Rates	21.3	28%
Revenue Support Grant	13.5	18%
Other Grants	1.0	1%
Total	75.2	100%

6. Funding for capital schemes has also changed over this period, with the sector now almost exclusively funding new capital schemes from local sources of funding such as revenue contributions, reserves, capital receipts and borrowing (that is repaid from revenue budgets).
7. Prior to the Autumn Budget and finance settlement the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) asked Government to consider increased council tax precept flexibility, protect grant funding in real terms, and providing suitable capital grant funding.
8. The Autumn 2024 Budget announced the Government's intention to pursue a comprehensive set of reforms to place local government in a more sustainable position, and the Autumn Budget promised a deprivation-based approach in 2025/26, followed by broader reform through a multi-year settlement from 2026/27. On 18 December 2024, the Minister of State (Minister for Local Government and English Devolution) released the provisional local government finance settlement for 2025/26. The main headlines for the 2025/26 budget are:
 - Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA) will be able to raise council tax (for a band D property) by up to £5 (for information the threshold for Police will rise to £14).
 - The Funding Guarantee Grant received in 2023/24 will not continue (for LFRS this was £0.9m in 2023/24). For information this grant was designed to ensure that no local authority would see a reduction in their Core Spending Power compared to the previous year.
 - Standalone FRAs are not eligible for the one-off Recovery Grant; this grant is designed to support local authorities in managing financial pressures and ensuring the continuity of essential services.
 - The September Consumer Price Index (CPI) figure of 1.7% has been applied to increase business rates grants and Revenue Support grant funding; last year this was an increase of 6.7%. The 2025/26 increase is below the current CPI rate which is 2.5% at the time of writing.
 - The Autumn Budget included an increase to employer's National Insurance contributions with a commitment that additional funding will be provided for the public sector to help manage the increased costs. The provisional finance settlement provided guidance on this additional funding and for LFRS there is a funding shortfall that results in an unfunded pressure of £0.7m.
 - No capital grant funding was provided for in the provisional settlement.
9. Government measure the resources available to local authorities to fund service delivery through a mechanism called Core Spending Power (CSP), it does not exactly mirror spending but is a useful measure when considering spend across the sector. Following the settlement, and assuming all fire authorities increase council tax by £5, Government has confirmed that CSP for the fire sector has

increased by 2.8%, which is broadly in line with current CPI inflation, for LFRS the increase is 3.2%. After taking into account the shortfall in national insurance funding this results in an increase of just 2.2%, which is below inflation and creates additional financial strain for the Authority.

10. Against the NFCC and LFRS budget asks of government; for increased council tax precept flexibility, to protect grant funding in real terms, and providing suitable capital grant funding, only the precept flexibility has been delivered (assuming the £5 precept is agreed by the CFA), and ultimately this settlement represents a real term reduction in funding for LFRS.

Funding Reform

11. For almost a decade local government funding reform has been on the horizon and presented both a risk and an opportunity for authorities. The recent national election has brought about some renewed momentum in this area:
 - Alongside the Provisional Settlement Government published a consultation on funding reform. The local government funding formula has not been updated since 2013/14 and there is consensus amongst independent voices and across the political spectrum that it no longer reflects need, and reform is necessary. The aim of this reform is to allocate funding efficiently to reflect an updated assessment of local need and revenues and build on the previous government's proposed 'Fair Funding' reforms. It is expected that 2026/27 will be the first multi-year funding settlement for local government. Initial projections indicate that funding for individual fire authorities may increase or decrease by as much as 15%, although there will likely be a phasing in of these changes.
 - Whilst developing and implementing funding reforms Government also intends to implement the proposals in the English Devolution White Paper published on the 16 December 2024.
 - The business rates reset for local authorities is also scheduled to take place in the 2026/27 financial year. For those authorities that have experienced a real term growth in business rates, as part of the business rates retention system, there is a risk that the reset may result in the redistribution of the growth to those authorities that have experienced a reduction. LFRS benefits from the growth experienced across Lancashire and therefore there is a risk that business rates funding may reduce by approximately £1m per year; again, we would expect a phasing in of these changes.
12. Certainty of funding is essential for long term planning and whilst a one-year settlement was expected, progress with funding reform is beneficial for the sector.
13. Council Tax income is based on the precept approved by the Authority and the estimated taxbase; this is the number of band D equivalent properties in the area. Factors influencing the taxbase include changes to property numbers, collection rates in each local authority, local authority discounts and changes in benefit claimants. The estimated taxbase for 2025/26 increased by 1.43% compared with 1.38% in 2024/25. Table 3 paragraph 17 sets out the taxbase and proposed Council Tax precept for 2025/26.

Proposed Revenue Budget 2025/26

14. The 2025/26 budget proposals are based on the latest funding assumptions set out in this report and a maximum increase in the council tax precept allowed of £5 at Band D is assumed to give total funding of £77.5m. The net expenditure budget takes account of inflation, previous commitments, required permanent and one-off increases and decreases in resources to give a net budget requirement of £77.5m. The following table sets out the proposed 2025/26 budget and subsequent paragraphs set out the key changes underpinning the net budget requirement:

		£'m
Budget	Base Budget*	75.2
	Inflation	2.7
	Commitments	(0.7)
	Permanent increases in Resourcing	0.6
	One-off items	0.1
	Permanent decreases in Resourcing	(0.5)
	Proposed Net Budget Requirement	77.5
Funding	Council Tax	(42.3)
	Business Rates	(21.6)
	Revenue Support Grant	(13.7)
	Other Grants	0.0
	Total Funding	(77.5)

Precept (Council Tax – Band D) per annum	£89.73
Precept (Council Tax – Band D) per week	£1.73
Increase from 2024/25 Band D of £84.73	£5.00
Increase per week Band D	10p

15. As the above table shows, this proposal delivers a balanced budget as required by law. If the precept is reduced additional savings would be required, for example, a reduction of 1% would reduce funding by £0.4m which equates to a loss of £4m in funding over 10 years.
16. The main elements that make up the Proposed Budget Requirement for 2025/26 are set out below and detailed in the MTFs in Appendix A:
- Economic changes
 - Pay - An allowance of 3% for pay awards in 2025/26 has been included with 2% thereafter. If pay awards are higher than assumed they will need to be met from reserves or in year savings in 2025/26 with additional savings made in future years. Each 1% increase results in an additional £0.5m and £0.1m for Grey book and Green book staff respectively.
 - Inflation – Government Grants are updated by the September Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) CPI figures which was 1.7%. Non-pay budgets have been increased by 1.7% in line with grant increases in 2025/26 and 2% thereafter. Specific increases in price inflation for known areas has been assumed. At the time of writing the latest CPI rate (December 2024) is 2.5%.

- Interest earned – The interest earned on cash balances in the MTFs is updated to reflect the amended use of reserves and gradual reduction in interest rates. The budget in 2025/26 is expected to increase to £1.4m and then reduce over the period of the MTFs to £0.3m by 2029/30.
- Commitments – These reflect the impact of previous decisions that have a financial consequence in 2025/26 or are due to policy, legal or regulatory changes. The main adjustment in 2025/26 relates to one off funding of £0.4m was provided in 2024/25 to support pressures in support services which has been reversed in 2025/26, resulting in a (£0.4m) adjustment.
- Permanent increases in Resourcing - Several growth proposals totalling £0.7m are included in the budget for 2025/26; £0.3m relates to initiatives to continue to improve the availability and future sustainability of the retained duty system and £0.3m relate to an increase to support services to provide additional capacity.
- Permanent decreases in Resourcing – A reduction of £0.5m is required in 2025/26 to balance the budget; this will be delivered by using the Dynamic Cover Tool, for the effective deployment of resources and effective management of overtime, and delivery of changes to resources agreed as part of the previous Emergency Cover Review.

Council Tax Precept

17. Council Tax funding is based on the estimated taxbase (band D equivalents) provided by each local authority. Compared to 2024/25, the overall taxbase has increased by 1.43% (6,633 properties), last year the increase was 1.38%. The following table shows the number of Band D equivalents and proposed precept for each local authority based on the band D precept increase of £5.

Table 3 – Proposed Precepts 2025/26	Number of Band D Equivalents	Precept on Collection Fund
Burnley Borough Council	24,104	2,162,852
Chorley Borough Council	38,752	3,477,218
Fylde Borough Council	32,665	2,931,030
Hyndburn Borough Council	22,163	1,988,686
Lancaster City Council	43,702	3,921,380
Pendle Borough Council	25,118	2,253,838
Preston City Council	44,182	3,964,469
Ribble Valley Borough Council	25,649	2,301,485
Rosendale Borough Council	21,152	1,897,969
South Ribble Borough Council	38,233	3,430,669
West Lancashire District Council	39,038	3,502,840
Wyre Borough Council	39,784	3,569,834
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	37,503	3,365,133
Blackpool Council	38,856	3,486,549
Total	464,268	42,253,952

Band	Proposed 2025/26 £	Actual 2024/25 £	Change per year £	Change per week £p
A	59.82	56.49	3.33	0.06
B	69.79	65.90	3.89	0.07
C	79.76	75.32	4.44	0.09
D	89.73	84.73	5.00	0.10
E	109.67	103.56	6.11	0.12
F	129.61	122.39	7.22	0.14
G	149.55	141.22	8.33	0.16
H	179.46	169.46	10.00	0.19

18. The increase for a Band D property per year is £5; that is 10 pence per week.

Council Tax Precept Consultation

19. The legal requirements for council tax increases are primarily governed by the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011. A consultation with the public was launched on 7 January 2025 on a £5 increase in the council tax precept for the year ahead. The consultation ended at 5pm on Monday 3 February 2025 and the results are set out in Appendix E along with the response from the Fire Brigade Union to the budget in Appendix F.

20. 602 responses were received, 76% supported the increase in the precept, 6% neither supported nor opposed the increase and 17% did not support the increase.

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

21. The purpose of the MTFS is to provide the Authority, staff, the public and other stakeholders with information on the financial outlook and the estimated available funding over the next five years. It takes into account future estimates on funding and potential high level revenue and capital expenditure over the period. A summary of the MTFS Revenue budget is set out below:

Table 4 – Revenue MTFS	25/26 £m	26/27 £m	27/28 £m	28/29 £m	29/30 £m
Base Budget	75.2	77.5	79.8	82.1	84.3
Inflation	2.7	2.3	1.7	2.0	1.8
Commitments	(0.7)	1.0	0.6	0.6	(0.3)
Increases in Resourcing	0.6	0.4	1.4	1.3	0.7
One-off items	0.1	(0.4)	0.0	(0.2)	0.6
Decreases in Resourcing	(0.5)	(1.0)	(1.5)	(1.5)	(0.5)
Net Budget	77.5	79.8	82.1	84.3	86.6
Council Tax	(42.3)	(43.8)	(45.5)	(46.9)	(48.4)
Business Rates	(21.6)	(22.1)	(22.5)	(22.9)	(23.4)
Revenue Support Grant	(13.7)	(13.9)	(14.2)	(14.4)	(14.7)
Other Grants	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Funding	(77.5)	(79.8)	(82.1)	(84.3)	(86.6)

Note that Council Tax increases are assumed at 2.5% in 2026/27 reducing to 2% per annum from 2028/29.

22. Some of the key financial assumptions and estimates over the period of the MTFS are set out below:

- Inflation – The pay awards for 2025/26 are estimated at 3% then 2% thereafter. Non-pay budgets have increased by the latest Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) CPI figures; 1.7% in 2025/26 and 2% thereafter. Income earned on investments is expected to reduce as cash balances reduce and interest rates reduce from 4.25% to 3.5% over the period of the MTFS.
- Commitments – The 2026/27 budget allows for an £0.5m increase in Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) contributions and increase in revenue contribution to Capital of £0.5m which is also budgeted for in 2027/28 and 2028/29. By the end of the MTFS the revenue contribution to capital will be £4m.
- Increases in Resourcing:
 - 32 of LFRS's 58 Fire Engines are crewed by firefighters working the on-call duty system. There are national challenges in relation to on-call Fire Engine availability and LFRS is facing similar challenges. An extensive work programme is underway and there are signs of improvement in the emergency cover provided by our On-Call crews. It is anticipated that additional revenue costs will be required in order to continue to improve the availability and future sustainability of this duty system, therefore it would be prudent to assign up to £0.5m additional revenue costs across the 32 On-Call appliances.
 - Investment in support services in 2025/26 and capital financing costs from 2026/27 to meet the costs associated with borrowing to largely fund the major projects in the capital programme; by the end of the capital programme borrowing costs are forecast at £3.8m per annum.
- Decreases in resourcing are required to balance the budget and meet the costs associated with funding the borrowing costs. Over the period of the MTFS £5m of savings is required to be delivered; £0.5m in 2025/26, £1.0m in 2026/27, £1.5m in 2027/28 and 2028/29 and £0.5m in 2029/30. To deliver the savings a review of services will commence in 2025.
- Funding – Detailed assumptions are included in the MTFS, in broad terms the funding is expected to increase between 2% to 3% however, the outcome of the comprehensive spending review and review of the funding formula is likely to impact on these assumptions which is expected to be determined during late 2025.

23. The key variables within the budget are inflation assumptions, in particular pay awards, and funding levels. The MTFS in Appendix A considers a range of risks and scenarios that impact on the MTFS. The analysis shows that whilst the general reserve is sufficient to meet all the worst-case risks in 2025/26 and 2026/27, with reliance on earmarked reserves, major structural changes would be required alongside government support beyond year two of the MTFS.

Capital Strategy

24. In addition to the revenue budgets a programme of capital investment is proposed from 2025/26, this is set out in detail in the Capital Strategy in Appendix B. The purpose of the Strategy is to provide the Authority, staff, the public and other

stakeholders with information on the Capital plans. Capital plans need to be affordable, prudent and sustainable and treasury management decisions taken in accordance with good professional practice and in full understanding of the risks involved. A summary of the capital programme and funding is set out below:

Table 5 – Capital Programme	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m
Vehicles	4.5	2.8	2.0	2.5	2.9
Operational Equipment	1.6	1.2	0.1	0.6	0.6
Buildings	3.9	9.4	27.8	9.6	11.0
ICT	2.8	1.3	0.1	0.6	0.6
	12.8	14.8	30.1	13.1	15.1
Funding					
Revenue Contributions	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.0
Capital Reserve	10.3	6.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Capital Receipts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6
Grants	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Borrowing	0.0	4.2	26.6	9.1	9.5
	12.8	14.8	30.1	13.1	15.1

25. The 2024/25 five-year capital programme approved by the Authority in February 2024 included four major projects; Leadership and Development Centre Training Facilities (£10m), Headquarters and Stores relocation (£18m), Fulwood replacement station (£7m) and Preston replacement station (£10m). Together with the Member Capital Working Group officers have been reviewing the scope of the projects, costings to reflect changes in prices, timings for these three major capital projects and the Masterplan for the Leadership and Development Centre in Chorley. The key changes considered by the working group is reflected in the updated 2025/26 capital programme proposed, these include:

- Leadership and Development Centre Training Facilities – A modern and progressive service requires high quality facilities to help in the initial training and ongoing maintenance of competency requirements across a broad spectrum of operational activities. The existing facilities were reviewed alongside more modern facilities in the region. The review identified that greater investment is required to meet our requirements and an estimate of £18m is included in the programme between 2026/27 and 2027/28.
- Headquarters and Stores relocation – This project combines the Headquarters and Training Facility and relocates the Stores at the Leadership and Development Centre, replacing the current Headquarters at Fulwood and office / training / catering space in Lancaster House. This will provide modern office and training facilities that meet current environmental and design requirements. It will also ensure that our people have the best facilities to support health and wellbeing by providing a safe and positive work environment. The costings were updated during the year to reflect the latest inflation forecast and an estimate of £18m is included in the programme between 2028/29 and 2030/31.
- The relocation of Headquarters considered below necessitates the need to invest in a new station to replace Fulwood either on the existing site or at an

alternative location. This forms part of the Preston review and is included in the programme at an estimate of £7m in 2026/27 and 2027/28.

- Preston replacement station – A review of emergency cover in the Preston area has commenced. The aim of the review is to create a new, modern station for Preston and consider the impact on other stations in the area, either in the same place or another location, that serves both our staff and the local community well. The budget is £10m, which assumes any cost of new land (if the station is relocated) is offset by capital receipts from the sale of the existing site and is programmed for 2027/28.
26. Whilst we have sequenced the projects as detailed, the Authority should remain flexible, and the years that the projects are delivered may change due to opportunities of land and other matters, details of which will be discussed with the Working Group and approvals sought as required.
 27. To fund the Capital Programme table four shows that in addition to utilising the Capital Reserve and revenue contributions, £49m of new borrowing is required. The long-term revenue costs of this borrowing, based on the latest borrowing forecasts, is over £4m per annum which is included in the MTFS.
 28. Following the capital investment set out above the Authority's reserves and borrowing levels would be commensurate with similar sized fire services based on current levels across services.

Reserves Strategy

29. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 places a requirement on the Section 151 Officer to formally report on the adequacy of the reserves. The Director of Corporate Services assesses this in the context of the strategic, operational and financial risks and opportunities facing the Authority.
30. While holding reserves is a recognised and recommended financial management tool, the levels of such reserves must remain prudent, appropriate to the level of risk and opportunity and not excessive. This is set out within the Reserves Strategy attached at Appendix C, which includes details of the reserves held and their proposed usage over the next five years.
31. It is good practice for an Authority to review its reserves on a regular basis to consider each reserve. This is to ensure that the level that is both prudent and adequate for the current climate, but not excessive. A review has been undertaken based on historical analysis and the current environment and future forecasts; this review has not resulted in any material change.
32. The General Reserve exists to cover unforeseen risks and expenditure that may be incurred outside of planned budgets. The minimum level of General Reserve advised by the Treasurer for the 2024/25 budget was £3.75m. A generally accepted level is one that is equivalent to 5% of the net revenue budget but that must be considered alongside specific Authority risks; 5% of the net revenue budget is approximately £3.85m. Considering the risks facing the Authority the Treasurer recommends increasing the minimum level for 2025/26 to £3.85m. The level of the General Reserve at 1st April 2025 is estimated at £5m, this is above the minimum level of General Reserve recommended. Over the period of the MTFS the level of the General Reserve remains above this minimum level.

Treasury Management

33. Treasury Management covers the cashflow, investment and borrowing activities together with the impact of budgetary decisions on such activities. The Treasury Management Strategy is included as Appendix D to this report, it is comprised of four main elements:
- Capital Expenditure Plans and Prudential Indicators.
 - Borrowing Strategy and Prudential Limits.
 - Annual Investment Strategy.
 - Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement.
34. The Strategy reflects the revenue and capital estimates contained in the MTFS and Capital Strategy within this report. Treasury Management in the public sector is heavily regulated and transparency with the Authority on its activities is paramount. The Resources Committee oversee Treasury activities, but it is a legal requirement that the Authority approve the Strategy.

Statement of Robustness of Estimates

35. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 places a requirement on the “Chief Finance Officer” of an Authority to report on the robustness of the estimates used in preparing the budget. There is then a requirement for the Authority to have regard to the report of the Chief Finance Officer when making decisions on its budget. At Lancashire Fire Authority, the Chief Finance Officer is the Director of Corporate Services (DoCS).
36. The statutory requirement is reinforced by the Prudential Code, which requires authorities to have regard to affordability when considering recommendations about future capital programmes.
37. The Authority has a medium term planning process that takes account of service demands and the financial scenario covering a 5-year period to 2030. The aim of the Medium Term Financial Strategy is to provide a realistic and sustainable plan that reflects the Authority’s priorities and anticipates the future impact of current decisions. Alongside this, future capital programmes are planned taking into account forecast Government funding, borrowing limits and council tax.
38. For 2025/26, full consideration of these issues had led to:
- Policy and expenditure proposals that reflect the Local Government Finance
 - Settlement together with the on-going revenue impact of new capital projects, whilst recognising the outstanding issues and uncertainties.
 - A proposed capital financing budget based on the 2025/26 capital programme.
39. In assessing the robustness of the 2025/26 proposals and the estimates on which they are based, the DoCS has been assured that:
- The budget proposals are based on the advice of service managers (supported by finance staff) or are based upon or supported by information that the DoCS considers reasonable to accept.

- The budget proposals have been fully reviewed and endorsed by the Executive Board and the implications on performance, if any, have been identified and assessed.
 - The proposed budget provides for all known future developments either within the revenue budget itself or as part of the Reserves Strategy.
40. When using estimates in preparing the budget every effort is taken to ensure that they take into account the most up to-date data. There is, however, always the potential for the actual impact to vary from the estimates used in setting the budget, particularly as a result of:
- Variations in the rate of price inflation, pay awards and pension increases;
 - Service financial performance (i.e. variances on budgets);
 - Ability to deliver policy proposals and/or achieve projected savings; and
 - Unforeseen additional operational demands and activities.
41. The potential for unanticipated events to occur that may impact on the budget, reinforce the importance of prudent financial management including:
- Promoting a robust approach to financial management requiring budget holders to monitor expenditure against budget and to take early action in reporting and responding to projected variances;
 - Regular reporting of the projected budgetary outturn supplemented by exception reports to prompt remedial action if necessary; and
 - Maintaining an appropriate and proportionate contingency, as part of the General Reserve, to cushion the impact of unexpected events and emergencies.
42. Based on the advice and assurance set out above and the process by which the budget has been constructed, the DoCS is satisfied that the estimates are robust and can be relied upon for approval as part of the proposed budget.

Financial Implications

43. These are set out in the report.

Legal Implications

44. The Authority is required to approve a balanced budget and set its precept charge on the council tax by 1 March 2025.

Business Risk Implications

45. The final approved budget forms a key element of the Authority's risk management process, as it is designed to minimise any financial risks which the Authority may face.

Environmental Impact

46. This is a strategic report that does not contain detailed proposals that have any environmental implications. A particular proposal may have such implications but will be identified as each is assessed.

Equality and Diversity Implications

47. This is a strategic report that does not contain detailed proposals that have any equality and diversity implications. a particular proposal may have such implications but will be identified as each is assessed.

Human Resource Implications

48. None.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper: 2024/25 Budget

Date: 17 February 2025

Contact: Steven Brown

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

Appendix A: The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

Appendix B: The Capital Strategy

Appendix C: The Reserves Strategy

Appendix D: The Treasury Management Strategy

Appendix E: Council Tax Precept Consultation

Appendix F: Response from the Fire Brigade Union to the Council Tax Precept Consultation

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Medium Term Financial Strategy

Introduction

1. The purpose of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is to provide the Authority, staff, the public and other stakeholders with information on the financial outlook and the estimated available funding over the next five years. The MTFS takes into account future high level, potential revenue and capital expenditure over the period based upon current known information and estimates.
2. The MTFS forms part of our financial strategies, they are part of our strategic planning activity and governance framework which sets out the direction of the Service and how we will achieve our aim of making Lancashire safer. These financial strategies are one of six core strategies that set out how we will provide services in line with the following priorities in our five-year Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP):
 - Valuing our people.
 - Preventing fires.
 - Protecting people and property.
 - Responding to fires and other emergencies.
 - Delivering value for money.

The Budget Strategy

3. The purpose of the budget strategy is to provide a basis for determining:
 - The level of funding available in the future to deliver national and local priorities.
 - The future demands upon the revenue budget.
 - The impact of external factors.
 - The financial implications of collaborations, partnerships etc.
 - The amount of capital investment which is required to achieve corporate objectives.
 - The revenue consequences of such capital investment.
 - The future reserve levels.
 - The impact of additional demands on the level of council tax that is required.
 - The potential impact of the main financial risks facing the organisation.
4. The above helps to establish the anticipated level of funding and demands on finances over the MTFS period enabling strategic financial planning processes to address the challenges and outcomes. The following sets out the key principles for that planning process:

- Ensure that plans contribute to improved outcomes in support of set priorities within the CRMP.
- Set a comprehensive, timely, balanced and realistic budget.
- Take into account pay and price inflation and achievability of savings.
- Ensure compliance with the approved capital strategy.
- Ensure compliance with the approved reserves strategy.
- Ensure compliance with the approved treasury management strategy.
- Raise awareness of and communicate key financial messages both internally and externally.
- Ensure budgets set are affordable and do not jeopardise financial stability either in the short or long term.
- Demonstrate that all spending plans achieve value for money.
- Agree spending only when the necessary funding is identified and approved.
- Seek external funding wherever it can be used in a sustainable manner that does not lead to unforeseen costs.
- Publicise significant budget proposals and where appropriate consult with key stakeholders.

Financial Scenario

5. It is imperative that the MTFs takes account of the local, regional, national and global economies. This provides a basis for the estimates and assumptions used.
6. The Authority receives its main funding from three sources – Government grants, business rates and local council tax (known as a precept). Council Tax and Business Rates represents over 80% of our funding.
7. Prior to the Autumn Budget and finance settlement the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) asked Government to consider increased council tax precept flexibility, protect grant funding in real terms, and providing suitable capital grant funding.
8. The Autumn 2024 Budget announced the Government's intention to pursue a comprehensive set of reforms to place local government in a more sustainable position, and the Autumn Budget promised a deprivation-based approach in 2025/26, followed by broader reform through a multi-year settlement from 2026/27. On 18 December 2024, the Minister of State (Minister for Local Government and English Devolution) released the provisional local government finance settlement for 2025/26. The main headlines for the 2025/26 budget are:
 - Fire and Rescue Authorities will be able to raise council tax (for a band D property) by up to £5 (for information the threshold for Police will rise to £14).

- The Funding Guarantee Grant received in 2023/24 will not continue (for LFRS this was £0.9m in 2023/24). For information this grant was designed to ensure that no local authority would see a reduction in their Core Spending Power compared to the previous year.
 - Standalone FRAs are not eligible for the one-off Recovery Grant; this grant is designed to support local authorities in managing financial pressures and ensuring the continuity of essential services.
 - The September Consumer Price Index (CPI) figure of 1.7% has been applied to increase business rates grants Revenue Support grant funding; last year this was an increase of 6.7%. The increase is below the current CPI rate which is 2.5% at the time of writing.
 - The Autumn Budget included an increase to employer's National Insurance contributions with a commitment that additional funding will be provided for the public sector to help manage the increased costs. The provisional finance settlement provided guidance on this additional funding and for LFRS there is a funding shortfall that results in an unfunded pressure of £0.7m.
 - No capital grant funding was provided for in the provisional settlement.
9. Government measure the resources available to local authorities to fund service delivery through a mechanism called Core Spending Power (CSP), it doesn't exactly mirror spending but is a useful measure when considering spend across the sector. Following the settlement, and assuming all fire authorities increase council tax by £5, Government have confirmed that CSP for the fire sector has increased by 2.8%, which is broadly in line with current CPI inflation, for LFRS the increase is 3.2%. After taking into account of the shortfall in national insurance funding this results in an increase of just 2.2%, which is below inflation and creates additional financial strain for the Authority.
10. Against the NFCC and LFRS budget asks of government; for increased council tax precept flexibility, to protect grant funding in real terms, and providing suitable capital grant funding, only the precept flexibility has been delivered (assuming the £5 precept is agreed by the CFA), and ultimately this settlement represents a real term reduction in funding for LFRS.

Funding Reform

11. For almost a decade local government funding reform has been on the horizon and presented both a risk and an opportunity for authorities. The recent national election has brought about some renewed momentum in this area:
- Alongside the Provisional Settlement Government published a consultation on funding reform. The funding formula has not been updated since 2013/14 and there is consensus amongst independent voices and across the political spectrum that it no longer reflects need and reform is necessary. The aim of this reform is to allocate funding efficiently to reflect an updated assessment of local need and revenues and build on the previous government's proposed 'Fair Funding' reforms. It is expected that 2026/27 will be the first multi-year funding settlement for local government. Initial projections indicate that funding for individual fire

authorities may increase or decrease by as much as 15%, although there will likely be a phasing in of these changes.

- Whilst developing and implementing funding reforms Government also intends to implement the proposals in the English Devolution White Paper published on the 16 December 2024.
 - Also, the business rates reset for local authorities is scheduled to take place in the 2026/27 financial year. For those authorities that have experienced a real term growth in business rates, as part of the business rates retention system, there is a risk that the reset may result in the redistribution of the growth to those local authorities have experienced as a reduction. LFRS benefits from the growth experienced across Lancashire and therefore there is a risk that business rates funding may reduce by approximately £1m per year; again, we would expect a phasing in of these changes.
12. Certainty of funding is essential for long term planning and whilst a one-year settlement was expected, progress with funding reform is beneficial for the sector.
 13. Council Tax income is based on the precept approved by the Authority and the estimated taxbase; this is the number of band D equivalent properties in the area. Factors influencing the taxbase include changes to property numbers, collection rates in each local authority, local authority discounts and changes in benefit claimants. The estimated taxbase for 2025/26 increased by 1.43% compared with 1.38% in 2024/25.
 14. A precept is levied on the council tax to partly fund the authority and it is the responsibility of the Authority to set the level of precept as part of the annual budget setting process. To calculate the level of council tax funding, each local authority calculates the taxbase (the assimilated number of council tax bills issued) taking into account changes in the number of houses, council tax benefits etc. These vary each year and the MTFS includes assumptions for these changes based on discussions with and forecasts supplied by the local collection authorities.
 15. It is now standard for the Government to set a limit on the amount by which a local authority can increase its council tax each year, with any increase above this limit requiring a referendum. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement confirmed that for 2025/26 this is £5 for a Band D property.
 16. Each year the council tax income is calculated based on assumed levels of collection rates by the local authorities. This means that at the end of each year, an adjustment has to be made to reflect the actual collection rate. If more has been collected, the fund will be in surplus; if less has been collected, the fund will be in deficit. The Authority will either receive its share of any surplus or be required to pay its share of any deficit and this is taken into account as part of the overall budget setting process.

17. The same process applies to the collection of local business rates in which the Authority has a 1% stake. The details of these are published by the end of the January prior to setting the budget.

MTFS Key Financial Assumptions

18. Some of the key financial assumptions and estimates in the five year MTFS are set out below:

Key Assumptions	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30
Uniform Pay Award (Apr - Jun)	4%	2%	2%	2%	3%
Uniform Pay Award (Jul - Mar)	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Non-uniform Pay Award	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
General inflation	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Establishment start of year	636	619	622	631	634
New recruits during year	0	24	36	24	0
No of Leavers	(17)	(21)	(27)	(21)	(0)
Council Taxbase % increase	1.43%	1.20%	1.20%	1.20%	1.20%
Council tax precept % increase	5.90%	2.50%	2.50%	2.00%	2.00%

- Inflation – The pay awards for 2025/26 are estimated at 3% then 2% thereafter. Non-pay budgets have increased by the latest Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) CPI figures; 1.7% in 2025/26 and 2% thereafter. Income earned on investments is expected to reduce as cash balances reduce and interest rates reduce from 4.25% to 3.5% over the period of the MTFS.
- Commitments – The 2026/27 budget allows for an £0.5m increase in LGPS contributions and increase in revenue contribution to Capital of £0.5m which is also budgeted for in 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29.
- Increases in Resourcing:
 - 32 of LFRS’s 58 Fire Engines are crewed by firefighters working the on-call duty system. There are national challenges in relation to on-call Fire Engine availability and LFRS is facing similar challenges. An extensive work programme is underway and there are signs of improvement in the emergency cover provided by our On-Call crews. It is anticipated that additional revenue costs will be required in order to continue to improve the availability and future sustainability of this duty system, therefore it would be prudent to assign up to £0.5m additional revenue costs across the 32 On-Call appliances.
 - Investment in support services in 2025/26 and capital financing costs from 2026/27 to meet the costs associated with borrowing to largely fund the major projects in the capital programme; by the end of the capital programme borrowing costs are forecast at £3.8m per annum.
- Decreases in resourcing are required to balance the budget and meet the costs associated with funding the borrowing costs. Over the period of the MTFS £5m of savings is required to be delivered; £0.5m in 2025/26,

£1.0m in 2026/27, £1.5m in 2027/28 and 2028/29 and £0.5m in 2029/30. To deliver the savings a review of services will commence in 2025.

- Funding – Detailed assumptions are included in the MTFS, in broad terms the funding is expected to increase between 2% to 3% however, the outcome of the comprehensive spending review and review of the funding formula is likely to impact on these assumptions which is expected to be determined during late 2025.

19. The summary MTFS is set out below and in more detail in Appendix 1 and 2 of this report.

Revenue MTFS	25/26 £m	26/27 £m	27/28 £m	28/29 £m	29/30 £m
Base Budget	75.2	77.5	79.8	82.1	84.3
Inflation	2.7	2.3	1.7	2.0	1.8
Commitments	(0.7)	1.0	0.6	0.6	(0.3)
Increases in Resourcing	0.6	0.4	1.4	1.3	0.7
One-off items	0.1	(0.4)	0.0	(0.2)	0.6
Decreases in Resourcing	(0.5)	(1.0)	(1.5)	(1.5)	(0.5)
Net Budget	77.5	79.8	82.1	84.3	86.6
Council Tax	(42.3)	(43.8)	(45.5)	(46.9)	(48.4)
Business Rates	(21.6)	(22.1)	(22.5)	(22.9)	(23.4)
Revenue Support Grant	(13.7)	(13.9)	(14.2)	(14.4)	(14.7)
Other Grants	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Funding	(77.5)	(79.8)	(82.1)	(84.3)	(86.6)

20. The MTFS is aligned to our CRMP, we review all our activities alongside the CRMP to ensure our resources support deliver of the CRMP proprieties. An indicative overview of our budget alongside the CRMP priorities is set out below:

CRMP Priorities	25/26 %
Responding to fires and other emergencies	73
Preventing fires	12
Protecting people and property	9
Valuing our people	6
	100

21. We do not allocate any of our activities specifically to delivering value for money as we aim to achieve this priority in everything we do as a service.

MTFS Risks and Scenarios

22. The following significant financial risks have been identified and assessed by the Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) and he feels these are adequately covered within the budget estimates presented or within the level of reserves currently held:

- Reduction in Business Rate funding following the reset of business rates due in 2026/27.
- Adverse impact for the Fire Sector following the three-year Spending Review that is due for completion in late 2025.
- Adverse impact for LFRS following the review of the Funding Formula.
- Non delivery of savings required in the MTFS.
- Changes to the Business Rates Retention Scheme.
- Adverse changes because of the implementation of the Fair Funding Review.
- Reduction in Council Tax funding.
- Higher than anticipated inflation.
- Larger increases in pension costs.
- Significant changes to retirement profiles.
- Increase in demand led pressures.
- Higher insurance claims.
- Higher interest rates assumed for borrowing.

23. The key budget risks are quantified below in a worst case scenario:

Budget Scenarios	25/26 £m	26/27 £m	27/28 £m	28/29 £m	29/30 £m
General Reserve	5.1	4.7	4.4	4.1	4.5
Quantified major risks					
- 1% higher pay award	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6
- Loss of Business Rates Growth at Reset	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
1 year delay in delivery of savings	0.5	1.0	1.5	1.5	0.5
2% increase in borrowing rates	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.8	1.0
- 7% reduction in funding following Spending review and review of funding formula (assume phased in over 3 years)	0.0	1.9	3.8	5.7	5.7
Subtotal	1.1	4.8	7.4	9.6	8.8
Revised General Fund Balance	4.0	(1.1)	(9.0)	(18.8)	(27.3)

24. The analysis shows that whilst the general reserve is sufficient to meet all the worst-case risks in 2025/26 and 2026/27, with reliance on earmarked reserves, major structural changes would be required alongside government support beyond year two of the MTFS.

Indicative Capital Programme

25. The Authority has a ten year capital programme, from 2025/26 to 2034/35. This reflects the Authority's capital aspirations in the Fleet, Estates and ICT strategies. The first five years of the strategy are set out below. Work is ongoing to refine the later years of the programme (from years 6 to 10), in particular with detailed condition surveys across our estate.
26. The table below shows the Authority's first five years of the Capital Programme and how it is anticipated that it will be funded.

Capital Programme	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
Vehicles	4.5	2.8	2.0	2.5	2.9
Operational Equipment	1.6	1.2	0.1	0.6	0.6
Buildings	3.9	9.4	27.8	9.6	11.0
ICT	2.8	1.3	0.1	0.6	0.6
	12.8	14.8	30.1	13.1	15.1
Funding					
Revenue Contributions	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.0
Capital Reserve	10.3	6.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Capital Receipts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6
Grants	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Borrowing	0.0	4.2	26.6	9.1	9.5
Total	12.8	14.8	30.1	13.1	15.1

27. Full details of the 10 year capital programme and its associated funding are included in the Capital Strategy. In addition, given the above funding proposals includes borrowing, the impact of this is discussed in more detail within the Treasury Management Strategy.

Analysis of Budget by Service Area

	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m
Service Delivery	44.731	46.145	47.081	48.265	49.276
Prevention & Protection	3.865	3.956	4.040	4.126	4.213
Administration	0.766	0.781	0.797	0.813	0.829
Control	2.205	2.305	2.351	2.398	2.446
Corporate Communications and Democratic Services	0.503	0.513	0.465	0.474	0.484
Digital Transformation (Moved to DDAT below)	0.000	-0.080	-0.082	-0.083	-0.085
Executive	1.197	1.223	1.248	1.273	1.298
Finance	0.312	0.318	0.325	0.331	0.338
Fleet & Engineering Services	3.401	3.470	3.539	3.610	3.682
Health & Safety	0.335	0.341	0.348	0.355	0.362
Human Resources	1.011	1.031	1.052	1.073	1.094
Digital, Data and Technology (DDAT)	4.626	4.691	4.787	4.884	4.983
Occupational Health	0.372	0.380	0.387	0.395	0.403
Pensions	1.452	1.475	1.498	1.522	1.547
Procurement	0.882	0.870	0.888	0.906	0.924
Service Development	2.592	2.647	2.700	2.754	2.809
Special Projects	0.024	0.024	0.025	0.025	0.026
Leadership & Development	4.279	4.654	4.834	4.920	4.696
Property	4.196	4.280	4.365	4.453	4.542
Overheads	0.762	0.782	1.472	1.825	2.712
Grand Total	77.511	79.807	82.120	84.319	86.580

Analysis of Budget

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Base Budget	75.164	77.511	79.807	82.120	84.319
Unfunded pay award from previous year	0.485	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Uniform Pay Award (Apr - Jun)	0.361	0.376	0.259	0.265	0.271
Uniform Pay Award (Jul - Mar)	1.139	0.798	0.817	0.829	0.840
Non-uniform Pay Award	0.213	0.215	0.218	0.223	0.227
General inflation	0.911	0.449	0.253	0.504	0.335
Investment income changes	(0.385)	0.510	0.200	0.215	0.115
Vacancy Factor Adjustments	(0.057)	0.162	0.106	0.056	(0.268)
Other Commitments	(0.601)	0.332	0.015	(0.000)	0.000
Revenue Contributions to Capital adjustments	0.000	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.000
Capital Financing Costs	0.000	0.114	1.422	1.343	0.682
Other growth items	0.637	0.250	0.000	0.000	0.000
One off pressures	0.144	(0.410)	0.022	(0.236)	0.559
Savings	(0.500)	(1.000)	(1.500)	(1.500)	(0.500)
	77.511	79.807	82.120	84.319	86.580

Capital Strategy

Introduction

1. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities establishes a framework that supports local strategic planning, asset management and appropriate options appraisal.
2. The objectives of the Code are to ensure that the capital plans of an organisation are affordable, prudent and sustainable and the treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice and in full understanding of the risks involved.

Definition

3. To utilise the full extent of the Code and its framework, it is essential that there is a clear understanding of what capital expenditure is. Unless expenditure qualifies as capital it will normally fall outside the scope of the Code and its framework and be charged to revenue in the period in which the goods or services were received. If expenditure does qualify as capital, there are opportunities to finance such spend from any capital receipts held or to spread the cost over future years in line with the life of the asset(s) purchased/created.
4. In the main, expenditure must meet one or more of the following conditions for it to be classified as capital:
 - Spend results in the acquisition, construction or enhancement of an asset (tangible or intangible) in accordance with 'proper practices'.
 - Spend meets one of the definitions specified in regulations made under the 2003 Local Government Act.
 - The Secretary of State makes a direction that the expenditure can be treated as capital.

Context

5. The capital expenditure plans are largely limited to replacing and upgrading essential operational assets (e.g. Estate Facilities, Vehicles, Equipment, Communications Infrastructure).
6. This Capital Strategy forms part of our financial strategies, these are one of six core strategies that set out how we will provide services in line with the following priorities in our five-year Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP):
 - Valuing our people.
 - Preventing fires.
 - Protecting people and property.
 - Responding to fires and other emergencies.

- Delivering value for money.
7. The Authority is committed to having rolling medium term revenue and capital plans (summarised in a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)) that extends for up to five years. The plans are drawn up, reassessed and extended annually and if required re-prioritised to enable the Authority to achieve its aims and objectives established in the CRMP.
 8. In the past, general capital grant funding was received each year from the Government, which helped to fund replacement of vehicles, IT, operational equipment and capital maintenance of buildings. This general capital grant funding ended in 2014/15. As a result, all capital investment since then has been funded from the Authority's own resources unless specific funding was available. No further government capital grant funding is anticipated going forward. The level of reserves currently held will not be sufficient to fund the proposed capital works over the medium term and borrowing will therefore be required going forward to meet the capital programme. Borrowing incurs on-going costs of interest payments and the funding that is set aside to repay the loan in due course.
 9. The Authority has not utilised borrowing to fund its capital programme and thus has one of the lowest levels of borrowing of all fire services in the country. However, the necessary investment in the estate cannot be delivered without borrowing.
 10. Key focuses of the Capital Programme plans, all aligned to achieving the Authority's priorities are:
 - To ensure the property estate remains fit for purpose, identifying opportunities to streamline assets and develop the estate infrastructure, maintaining core sites and improving core training facilities.
 - The replacement of other core assets where necessary, e.g., vehicles, operational equipment and communication infrastructure.
 - Development of improved capability.
 - To ensure provision is made for ICT to maintain and develop the existing infrastructure and invest in the core technologies required to provide innovative and efficient digital services.
 - Invest to Save Schemes.
 11. The plans must consider the constrained financial position of the Authority and the need to maximise both the available financial resources and the capacity that the Service has to manage change projects.

Governance

12. The annual budget setting process is an ongoing process managed by the Authority's Executive Board. Capital projects are considered by the Executive Board, they include a business case that identifies the organisational requirement, rationale, deliverables, benefits, links to the Authority's priorities

and costs in terms of both capital investment and ongoing revenue consequences.

13. The delivery of capital projects is over overseen by the Capital Projects Programme Board (CPPB) and reported to the Service Management Team – Corporate Programme Board (CPB). Capital budget monitoring reports are presented to the Resources Committee to monitor progress.
14. A Member Capital Projects Working Group has also been established to oversee the development and delivery of our major capital projects and progress is also reported to the Resources Committee that considers any slippage, variances and accelerated spend.
15. An updated MTF5 and Capital Strategy, including a recommended Capital Programme for the next year, is then presented to the Authority, providing views on affordability, potential funding issues and options.
16. To evaluate the success and outcomes of capital projects a post project review is carried out. The depth of this review is proportionate to the scale of the project and the benefits set out in the initial Project Initiation Documentation. This review focuses on the outcomes achieved, the extent to which the benefits claimed are being realised, the actual costs, both revenue and capital, and the impact of other funding and partnership working. This information can then be used to learn lessons and make any improvements during subsequent projects. The post project report is reviewed by the CPPB and escalated to the CPB if required.

Funding Streams

17. Capital expenditure can be funded from a number of sources as set out below:
 - Government Grants – these are either general grants which can be used to fund any capital spend approved by the Authority or specific grants which can only be used to fund specific projects in line with any conditions placed with the grant. The Authority has not received an annual government capital grant allocation since 2014/15.
 - Capital Receipts – when an asset held by the Authority is sold, the proceeds are held in reserve to be used either to fund future capital expenditure or to repay debt. They cannot be used to fund revenue expenditure.
 - Reserves – funds can be set aside and held in earmarked reserves if known expenditure is to be incurred at a future date. These reserves can then be used to fund such expenditure be it capital or revenue. In terms of capital expenditure, it may be known that a specific asset may need replacing in 10 years and therefore funds are set-aside each year to build up the reserve to fund the replacement. Details of the reserves held are found within the Authority's Reserves Strategy.
 - External Contributions – these are funds or grants provided by external organisations such as collaboration partners or local authorities for specifically agreed capital expenditure.

- Borrowing – the Authority is permitted in law to take out loans or financing to fund capital expenditure. The Prudential Code sets out the requirements under which such borrowing must be undertaken including affordability, prudence and cost effectiveness. Any borrowing will incur costs for interest payable and the need to set-aside sufficient funds to repay the loan. These costs impact on the revenue budget.

Capital Programme

18. The Authority has a ten-year capital programme, from 2025/26 to 2034/35. This reflects the Authority's capital aspirations in the Fleet, Estates and ICT strategies. The first five years of the strategy are more detailed, but work is ongoing to develop a more detailed ten year strategy, in particular with detailed condition surveys across our estate.
19. The table below shows the Authority's first five years of the Capital Programme and how it is anticipated that it will be funded. The detailed ten-year capital programme is set out in Appendix 1 of this paper.

£m	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30
Vehicles	4.452	2.825	2.035	2.470	2.895
Operational Equipment	1.588	1.220	0.117	0.563	0.583
Buildings	3.948	9.446	27.816	9.565	11.001
ICT	2.774	1.305	0.110	0.550	0.600
	12.761	14.796	30.078	13.148	15.079
Funding					
Revenue Contributions	2.500	3.000	3.500	4.000	4.000
Capital Reserve	10.261	6.618	0.000	0.000	0.000
Capital Receipts	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.600
Grants	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Borrowing	0.000	4.178	26.578	9.148	9.479
Total	12.761	14.796	30.078	13.148	15.079

20. The 2024/25 five-year capital programme approved by the Authority in February 2024 included four major projects; Leadership and Development Centre Training Facilities (£10m), Headquarters and Stores relocation (£18m), Fulwood replacement station (£7m) and Preston replacement station (£10m). Together with the Member Capital Working Group officers have been reviewing the scope of the projects, costings to reflect changes in prices, timings for these three major capital projects and the Masterplan for the Leadership and Development Centre in Chorley. The key changes considered by the working group is reflected in the updated 2025/26 capital programme proposed, these include:
- Leadership and Development Centre Training Facilities – A modern and progressive service requires high quality facilities to help in the initial training and ongoing maintenance of competency requirements across a broad spectrum of operational activities. The existing facilities were

reviewed alongside more modern facilities in the region. The review identified that greater investment is required to meet our requirements and an estimate of £18m is included in the programme between 2026/27 and 2027/28.

- Headquarters and Stores relocation – This project combines the Headquarters and Training Facility and relocates the Stores at the Leadership and Development Centre, replacing the current Headquarters at Fulwood and office / training / catering space in Lancaster House. This will provide modern office and training facilities that meet current environmental and design requirements. It will also ensure that our people have the best facilities to support health and wellbeing by providing a safe and positive work environment. The costings were updated during the year to reflect the latest inflation forecast and an estimate of £18m is included in the programme between 2028/29 and 2030/31.
 - The relocation of Headquarters considered below necessitates the need to invest in a new station to replace Fulwood either on the existing site or at an alternative location. This forms part of the Preston review and is included in the programme at an estimate of £7m in 2026/27 and 2027/28.
 - Preston replacement station – A review of emergency cover in the Preston area has commenced. The aim of the review is to create a new, modern station for Preston and consider the impact on other stations in the area, either in the same place or another location, that serves both our staff and the local community well. The budget is £10m, which assumes any cost of new land (if the station is relocated) is offset by capital receipts from the sale of the existing site and is programmed for 2027/28.
21. Whilst we have sequenced the projects as detailed, the Authority should remain flexible, and the years that the projects are delivered may change due to opportunities of land and other matters, details of which will be discussed with the Working Group and approvals sought as required.
 22. To fund the Capital Programme table four shows that in addition to utilising the Capital Reserve and revenue contributions, £49m of new borrowing is required. The long-term revenue costs of this borrowing, based on the latest borrowing forecasts, is over £4m per annum which is included in the MTFS.

Affordability

23. Capital expenditure plans are a key driver of treasury management activity. The funding of such plans impacts on cash balances and borrowing requirements in the short and longer terms. The on-going consequences of these decisions have a direct impact on the annual revenue budget. As such, having regard to the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, the Authority sets and reviews a number of prudential indicators providing context for proposed capital expenditure plans: how they are to be funded, the impact on the organisation's finances; and their affordability in terms of the impact on revenue budgets.
24. Full details and commentary on the prudential indicators are found within the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26. Along with controls and

limits relating to levels of capital expenditure and resulting borrowing requirements, these prudential indicators also include a specific affordability indicator, shown below, which provides an indication of the impact of the above capital expenditure plans and their financing proposals on the overall finances

Risk Management

25. Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect the Authority's ability to achieve its desired outcomes and ability to execute its strategies successfully. Risk management is the process of identifying risks, evaluating their potential consequences, and determining the most effective methods of managing them and/or responding to them. It is both a means of minimising the costs and disruption to the organisation caused by undesired events and of ensuring that staff understand and appreciate the elements of risk in all their activities.
26. The aim is to reduce the frequency of adverse risk events occurring (where possible), minimise the severity of their consequences if they do occur, or to consider whether risk can be transferred to other parties. The corporate risk register sets out the key risks to the successful delivery of corporate aims and priorities and outlines the key controls and actions to mitigate and reduce risks, or maximise opportunities.
27. To manage risk effectively, the risks associated with each capital project need to be systematically identified, analysed, influenced, and monitored. It is important to identify the appetite for risk for each scheme and for the capital programme, especially when investing in complex business change programmes. Where greater risks are identified as necessary to achieve desired outcomes, the organisation will seek to mitigate or manage those risks to a tolerable level. All key risks identified as part of the capital planning process are considered for inclusion in the corporate risk register.
28. The Treasurer will report on the deliverability, affordability and risk associated with this Capital Strategy and the associated capital programme. Where appropriate they will have access to specialised advice to enable them to reach their conclusions.
 - Credit Risk - The risk that an organisation with which we have contracted to deliver capital projects becomes insolvent and cannot complete the agreed contract. We will ensure that robust due diligence procedures cover the appointment of partners and contractors relating to capital programme delivery. Where possible contingency plans will be identified at the outset.
 - Liquidity Risk - This is the risk that the timing of any cash inflows from a project will be delayed, for example if other organisations do not make their contributions when agreed. There is also a risk that the cash inflows will be less than expected, for example due to the effects of inflation, interest rates or exchange rates. Our exposure to this risk will be monitored via the revenue and capital budget monitoring processes and mitigating actions taken promptly where appropriate.

- Interest and Exchange Rate Risk - This is the risk that interest rates or exchange rates will move in a way that has an adverse effect on the value of capital expenditure or the expected financial returns from a project. Rates will be reviewed as part of the on-going monitoring arrangements to identify such adverse effects. As far as possible our exposure to this risk will be mitigated via robust contract terms and when necessary, contract re-negotiations.
- Inflation Risk - This is the risk that rates of inflation will move in a way that has an adverse effect on the value of capital expenditure or the expected financial returns from a project. Rates of inflation will be reviewed as part of the ongoing monitoring arrangements to identify such adverse effects. As far as possible our exposure to this risk will be mitigated via robust contract terms and when necessary, contract re-negotiations.
- Legal and Regulatory Risk - This is the risk that changes in laws or regulation make a capital project more expensive or time consuming to complete, make it no longer cost effective or make it illegal or not advisable to complete. Before making capital investments, the Authority will understand the powers under which the investment is made. Forthcoming changes to relevant laws and regulations will be kept under review and factored into any capital bidding and programme monitoring processes.
- Fraud, Error and Corruption - This is the risk that financial losses will occur due to errors or fraudulent or corrupt activities. Officers involved in any of the processes around capital expenditure or funding are required to follow the agreed Code of Corporate Governance. Cheshire Fire Authority has a strong ethical culture which is evidenced through its values, principles, and appropriate behaviour. This is supported by a Code of Ethics and detailed policies such as Anti-Fraud and Corruption and processes such as that in relation to declaration of interests.

Future Actions

29. This Capital Strategy looks ahead over the next 10 years to 2034 and will be refined considering emerging and changing issues, circumstances and priorities. Based on the current projections, for the final five years of the capital programme, from 2030 to 2035, there is a funding gap which will be considered as part of the longer term financial planning for the Service.

Capital Programme – 2025/26 – 2034/35

£'m	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	TOTAL
Vehicles											
Aerial Ladder Platform	0.251	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.725	0.725	0.725	0.000	2.426
Fire appliance	2.200	0.900	1.500	1.500	1.500	1.500	1.500	1.500	1.500	1.500	15.100
Climate change Vehicle	0.600	0.650	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.250
Water tower	0.000	0.650	0.000	0.000	0.650	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.650	1.950
All Terrain Vehicle - Polaris	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.250	0.000	0.000	0.250
Mini Incident Command Unit	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.070
Foam Pod	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.090	0.045	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.315
Car - Small	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.150	0.000	0.075	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.150	0.575
Car - Medium	0.060	0.030	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.150	0.090	0.030	0.060	0.060	0.600
Car - Large	0.000	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.140

Appendix B

£'m	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	TOTAL
Car - Small EV	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.160	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.160	0.320
Car - Flexible Duty Officer	0.200	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.200	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.200	0.240	2.280
Car - Principle Officer & Area Man	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.360
People Mover	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.120
Double Cab Van	0.140	0.000	0.000	0.035	0.070	0.000	0.140	0.000	0.000	0.035	0.420
Beavertail Collection Vehicle	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.145	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.145	0.000	0.290
Pick up	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.040	0.240	0.000	0.000	0.040	0.000	0.000	0.320
Telehandler	0.000	0.065	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.065
Rescue Team Van	0.303	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.150	0.453
Mini bus	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.060
Welfare Unit	0.250	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.250
Van - Catering Unit	0.000	0.065	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.065	0.130
Van - Dog Unit	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.160
Van - Large	0.240	0.060	0.000	0.060	0.000	0.120	0.120	0.240	0.060	0.000	0.900

£'m	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	TOTAL
Van - Small	0.033	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.055	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.088
Van - Large EV	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.065	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.065
Subtotal	4.452	2.825	2.035	2.470	2.895	2.195	3.120	3.265	2.690	3.010	28.957
Operational Equipment		0.000									
Thermal Imaging Cameras	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.011	0.270	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.011	0.270	0.560
Breathing Apparatus sets & telemetry	1.000	1.220	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.220
Breathing Apparatus compressor	0.052	0.000	0.018	0.053	0.063	0.018	0.071	0.018	0.000	0.000	0.291
Ballistic Vest & Helmet	0.230	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.230
Flow Meters & 22mm Hose Reels	0.144	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.144
High Volume Pump	0.020	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.020
Drone	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.000	0.000	0.030	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.129
Gym equipment	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.100

£'m	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	TOTAL
General	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.000	1.250
Disposable Gastight Suits	0.042	0.000	0.000	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.542
Subtotal	1.588	1.220	0.117	0.563	0.583	0.298	0.321	0.268	0.261	0.270	5.486
Buildings											
Wyfa Training Prop	0.125	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.125
Blackpool Dormitory	0.400	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.400
Drill tower replacements	1.683	0.596	0.466	0.215	0.005	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.965
Estate Improvement Provision	0.600	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	2.850
Upgrade Preston facilities	0.250	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.250
Replacement Preston Station	0.000	0.000	10.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	10.000
Headquarters relocation	0.000	0.000	0.000	9.100	9.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	18.200
Fulwood replacement	0.000	3.500	3.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	7.000

£'m	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	TOTAL
Training Centre Props	0.000	4.600	13.600	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	18.200
Wider Estate Planned Maintenance & Improvement Works	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.646	1.158	2.049	2.542	2.000	1.500	10.945
Development & Land Acquisition	0.840	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.340
Subtotal	3.948	9.446	27.816	9.565	11.001	1.408	2.299	2.792	2.250	1.750	72.275
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)											
Performance Management System	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.500
Pooled PPE (Miquest)	0.200	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.200
Stock System	0.200	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.200
Asset Management upgrade	0.074	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.074

£'m	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	TOTAL
Storage Area Network (SAN)	0.190	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.190
Geographic Information System development	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.100
Wide Area Network telecommunications	0.450	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.450
Firewall	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.100
Incident Recording System	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.050
Airwave replacement	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000
Incident ground radios	0.230	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.230
Retained Duty System Alerters	0.235	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.300	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.535
Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) System	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.060
Server replacement	0.000	0.150	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.150

£'m	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	TOTAL
Facilities Management System	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.100
Replacement Public Switched Telephone Network	0.000	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.070
Further digitisation of the appliances	0.085	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.170
NWFC Computer Aided Design Capital Contribution	0.460	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.460
ICT Indicative Future Development & Replacement Budget	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	3.000
Service desk improvement	0.030	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.030
M365 & Azure	0.040	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.040
NFCC digital & technology programmes	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.050
Cyber Security	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.200

£'m	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	TOTAL
Desktop Provision	0.160	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.160	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.320
Firefighting Robot	0.020	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.020
Subtotal	2.774	1.305	0.110	0.550	0.600	0.960	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	8.299
TOTAL CAPITAL REQUIREMENT	12.761	14.796	30.078	13.148	15.079	4.860	6.240	6.825	5.701	5.530	115.017
Funding											
Revenue Contributions	2.500	3.000	3.500	4.000	4.000	4.000	4.000	4.000	4.000	4.000	37.000
Capital Reserve	10.261	6.618	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	16.879
Capital Receipts	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.600	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.600
Grants	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000
Unfunded	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.860	2.240	2.825	1.701	1.530	9.155
Borrowing	0.000	4.178	26.578	9.148	9.479	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	49.383
Total	12.761	14.796	30.078	13.148	15.079	4.860	6.240	6.825	5.701	5.530	115.017

Note: The 2025/26 capital programme includes slippage from the 2024/25 capital programme approved by the Resources Committee during the year and the following additional slippage items due to timing delays: Foam Pod (£0.27m) and NWFC Contribution (£0.541m). These will be delivered in the first quarter of the 2025/26. The resulting revised capital programme for 2024/25 is £5.213m.

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Reserves Strategy

Background

1. The Local Government Act 1992 requires billing and precepting authorities to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.
2. In addition to the above requirement, Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 also requires the Treasurer (the Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) for the Authority) to present a report assessing the adequacy of the unallocated reserves (referred to as the General Reserve) in the context of threats and demands together with corporate and financial risks facing the organisation. The Authority needs to balance the necessity for reserves against the cost to council taxpayers and arrive at a level that is both prudent and adequate for the current climate, but not excessive.
3. The Reserves Strategy sets out the reserves held, their intended usage and the strategy for ensuring the funds are maintained at an appropriate level. Reserves are held for three main purposes:
 - To cover unforeseen risks and expenditure that may 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 sale of assets, the use of which is restricted under legislation to the purchase of new assets, or the repayment of debt.
4. In addition to holding financial reserves, there are several safeguards in place that mitigate against the risk of local authorities over-committing themselves financially:
 - There is a legal requirement to set a balanced budget.
 - In accordance with the 1988 Local Government Finance Act, the Chief Finance Officer (DoCS for the Authority) must report if there is or is likely to be unlawful expenditure or an unbalanced budget. This would include situations where reserves have become seriously depleted, and it is forecast that expenditure will exceed resources.
 - The external auditor's responsibility to review and report on financial standing.
5. While it is primarily the responsibility of Members and the DoCS to maintain a sound financial position, the external auditors have a responsibility to review the arrangements in place to ensure that financial standing is soundly based. The work undertaken by external auditors will include a review of the level of reserves and the advice given to Members by the DoCS.
6. The Fire and Rescue National Framework (May 2018) includes the requirement that fire authorities "should establish a policy on reserves and

provisions in consultation with their Chief Finance Officer”. It also requires that “fire authorities should publish their Reserves Strategy, including details of the current and future planned levels, the purpose for which each reserve is held and how each reserve supports the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Determining the level of Reserves

7. There is no statutory guidance on the “right” level of reserves. Guidance from The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) confirms that each authority should make, on the advice of the Treasurer, their own judgement based on relevant local circumstances and the potential issues/risks that may occur across the medium term.
8. In determining an appropriate level of reserves for the Authority the range of risks and issues that should be considered will include the following:
 - The possibility of additional savings being required in the future and the potential difficulty in delivering such savings. Future funding levels are unclear with only the 2025/26 funding known. If increased demands or commitments outstrip funding, savings will be required.
 - The provision of cover for extraordinary or unforeseen events occurring. Given that the purpose of the fire and rescue service is to respond to emergency situations, there is always the potential for additional, unexpected and unbudgeted expenditure to occur.
 - The level of self-insurance that is carried to minimise insurance premiums: potential insurance liabilities can vary significantly across financial years. The levels of liabilities are difficult to forecast accurately, and it would not be appropriate to budget for peak levels of expenditure on self-insured liabilities.
 - The commitments falling on future years because of capital plans and proposals to improve/develop the assets held by the Authority. Having reserves would mitigate the impact on the revenue budget of borrowing and/or the need to make further revenue contributions to capital and would support projects and programmes that will improve the assets held by the Authority.

Purpose and Use of each Reserve

9. The General Reserve and each Earmarked Reserve and its purpose is set out in Appendix 1; together these are known as the Usable Reserves. Each earmarked reserve has a set manager who is responsible for that reserve. Movement to and from reserves is in the first instance approved by the Authority as part of the annual budget.
10. Reporting of the level of reserves and forecast outturn will be provided as part of the quarterly budget updates submitted to the Resources Committee.
11. The Authority holds a Public Finance Initiative (PFI) reserve for each of its PFI accommodation schemes. Annual PFI Grants exceed the annual unitary charge in the earlier years of the contract and are set aside to part fund the

unitary charge in the later years of the contract when the unitary charge exceeds the PFI grants.

12. It is good practice for an Authority to review its reserves on a regular basis to consider each reserve. This is to ensure that the level that is both prudent and adequate for the current climate, but not excessive. A review has been undertaken based on historical analysis and the current environment and future forecasts; this review has not resulted in any material change.

Overall Position

13. The forecast balances on usable reserves are set out in Appendix 1. One of the key elements of the Reserves Strategy will be to use the earmarked Capital Reserves to support the Capital Strategy. The Capital Strategy anticipates utilising the capital reserve over the next two years.

Usable Reserves

	Forecast	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
Reserve - Purpose	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m
General Reserve - min level £3.85m	5.0	5.1	4.7	4.4	4.1	4.5
Earmarked Reserves						
Capital Reserve - to fund capital expenditure	19.7	6.7	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
PFI Reserves - PFI Grants set aside to offset future charges	5.2	4.8	4.6	4.4	4.1	3.8
Budget Holders Reserves - enables budget holders to carry forward any surplus or deficit from one financial year to the next, within prescribed limits.	1.1	0.6	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Insurance - The maximum insurance costs to the Authority are £0.7m - together with the provision this reserve will meet 1 year's maximum claims.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Princes Trust - to manage funding timing differences and mitigate the risk of loss of funding in the short term.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Innovation Fund - to meet the costs of new initiatives / developments which improve service delivery of fire fighter safety subject to approval of the Executive Board.	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0
Total	29.2	18.2	10.7	9.7	9.1	9.1

Treasury Management Strategy

Information

Treasury Management is defined as “The management of the Authority’s investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”

The Local Government Act 2003 (the Act) and supporting Regulations requires the Authority to “have regard to” The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice to set Prudential and Treasury Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the Authority’s capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable. The Code also requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. The authority also adheres to investment guidance issued by the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

The definition of investments in the codes is wide ranging and includes non-treasury investments for example loans to third parties and the holding of property to make a profit. Where these are held a separate strategy is required. However, it is not considered that the Combined Fire Authority hold any such assets, and it does not propose to engage in any such investments in 2025/26.

Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26

This Strategy Statement has been prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice. Accordingly, the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority's Treasury Management Strategy will be approved by the full Authority, and there will also be a mid-year and a year-end outturn report presented to the Resources Committee. In addition, there will be monitoring and review reports to members in the event of any changes to Treasury Management policies or practices. The aim of these reporting arrangements is to ensure that those with ultimate responsibility for the treasury management function appreciate fully the implications of treasury management policies and activities, and that those implementing policies and executing transactions have properly fulfilled their responsibilities regarding delegation and reporting.

This Authority has adopted the following reporting arrangements in accordance with the requirements of the revised Code: -

Table 1 Treasury Management Reporting Arrangements

Area of Responsibility	Committee/ Officer	Frequency
Treasury Management Policy Statement	Resources Committee/Authority	Annually
Treasury Management Strategy / Annual Investment Strategy / MRP policy – scrutiny and approval	Resources Committee/ Authority	Annually before the start of the year
Treasury Management mid-year report	Resources Committee	Mid-year

Area of Responsibility	Committee/ Officer	Frequency
Treasury Management Strategy / Annual Investment Strategy / MRP policy – updates or revisions at other times	Resources Committee	As required
Annual Treasury Management Outturn Report	Resources Committee/ Authority	Annually by 30 September after the end of the year
Treasury Management Monitoring Reports	Director of Corporate Services	Quarterly
Treasury Management Practices	Director of Corporate Services	Annually

The Treasury Management Strategy, covers the following aspects of the Treasury Management function:

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

Setting the Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26

In setting the treasury management strategy the following factors need to be considered as they may have a strong influence over the strategy adopted:

- Economic position and forecasts.
- Interest rate forecasts.
- The current structure of the investment and debt portfolio.
- Future Capital Programme and underlying cash forecasts.

Economic background:

The third quarter of 2024 (July to September) saw:

- GDP growth stagnating in July following downwardly revised Q2 figures (0.5%);
- A further easing in wage growth as the headline 3myy rate (including bonuses) fell from 4.6% in June to 4.0% in July;
- Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation hitting its target in June before edging above it to 2.2% in July and August;
- Core CPI inflation increasing from 3.3% in July to 3.6% in August;
- The Bank of England initiating its easing cycle by lowering interest rates from 5.25% to 5.0% in August and holding them steady in its September meeting;
- 10-year gilt yields falling to 4.0% in September.

The economy's stagnation in June and July pointed more to a mild slowdown in UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth than a sudden drop back into a recession. However, in the interim period, to 12 December, arguably the biggest impact on the economy's performance has been the negative market sentiment in respect of the fallout from the Chancellor's Budget on 30 October.

If we reflect on the 30 October Budget, our central case is that those policy announcements will prove to be inflationary, at least in the near-term. The Office for Budgetary Responsibility and the Bank of England concur with that view. The latter have the CPI measure of inflation hitting 2.5% y/y by the end of 2024 and staying sticky until at least 2026. The Bank forecasts CPI to be elevated at 2.7% (Q4 2025) before dropping back to sub 2% in 2027. Nonetheless, since the Budget, the October inflation print has shown the CPI measure of inflation bouncing up to 2.3% y/y with the prospect that it will be close to 3% by the end of the year before falling back slowly through 2025. The RPI measure has also increased significantly to 3.4%.

How high inflation goes will primarily be determined by several key factors. First amongst those is that the major investment in the public sector, according to the Bank of England, will lift UK real GDP to 1.7% in 2025 before growth moderates in 2026 and 2027. The debate around whether the Government's policies lead to a material uptick in growth primarily focus on the logistics of fast-tracking planning permissions, identifying sufficient skilled labour to undertake a resurgence in building, and an increase in the employee participation rate within the economy.

Interest rate Forecast

The Authority has appointed Link Group as its treasury advisor and part of their service is to assist the Authority to formulate a view on interest rates.

Current Treasury Portfolio Position

At the 31 December 2024 the debt and investments balances were: -

Table 2 Debt and Investments Balances

Debt	Principal £m	%
Fixed rate loans from the Public Works Loan Board	(2.000)	100
Variable rate loans	-	-
Total loans	(2.000)	100

Investments		
Variable rate investments with The Debt Management Office (DMO)	26.863	57
Fixed rate investments	20.000	43
Total investments	46.863	100

The level of investments represents the Authority's cumulative surplus on the General Fund, the balances on other cash-backed earmarked reserves and a cash-flow balance generated by a surplus of creditors over debtors and by grant receipts in advance of payments. There is a net investment figure of £44.863m.

Borrowing and Investment Requirement

In the medium term LCFA borrows for capital purposes only. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The table below compares the estimated CFR to the debt which currently exists, this gives an indication of the borrowing required. It also shows the estimated resources available for investment. An option is to use these balances to finance the expenditure rather than investing, often referred to as internal borrowing. The table gives an indication of the minimum borrowing or investment requirement through the period.

The CFR forecast includes the impact of the latest forecast of the funding of the Capital Programme which currently assumes that there will be no borrowing until 2026/27. A voluntary MRP was made in 2019/20 to take the future loans element of the MRP to nil.

Table 3 Borrowing/Investment Need

	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
Capital Financing Requirement	11.868	11.339	10.762	14.322	40.130
Less long-term liabilities (PFI and finance leases)	(11.868)	(11.339)	(10.762)	(10.144)	(9.458)
Less external borrowing	(2.000)	(2.000)	(2.000)	(2.000)	(2.000)
Borrowing requirement	(2.000)	(2.000)	(2.000)	2.178	28.672
Reserves and working capital	(27.213)	(24.500)	(14.239)	(7.621)	(7.621)
Borrowing/(Investment) Need	(29.213)	(26.500)	(16.239)	(5.443)	21.051

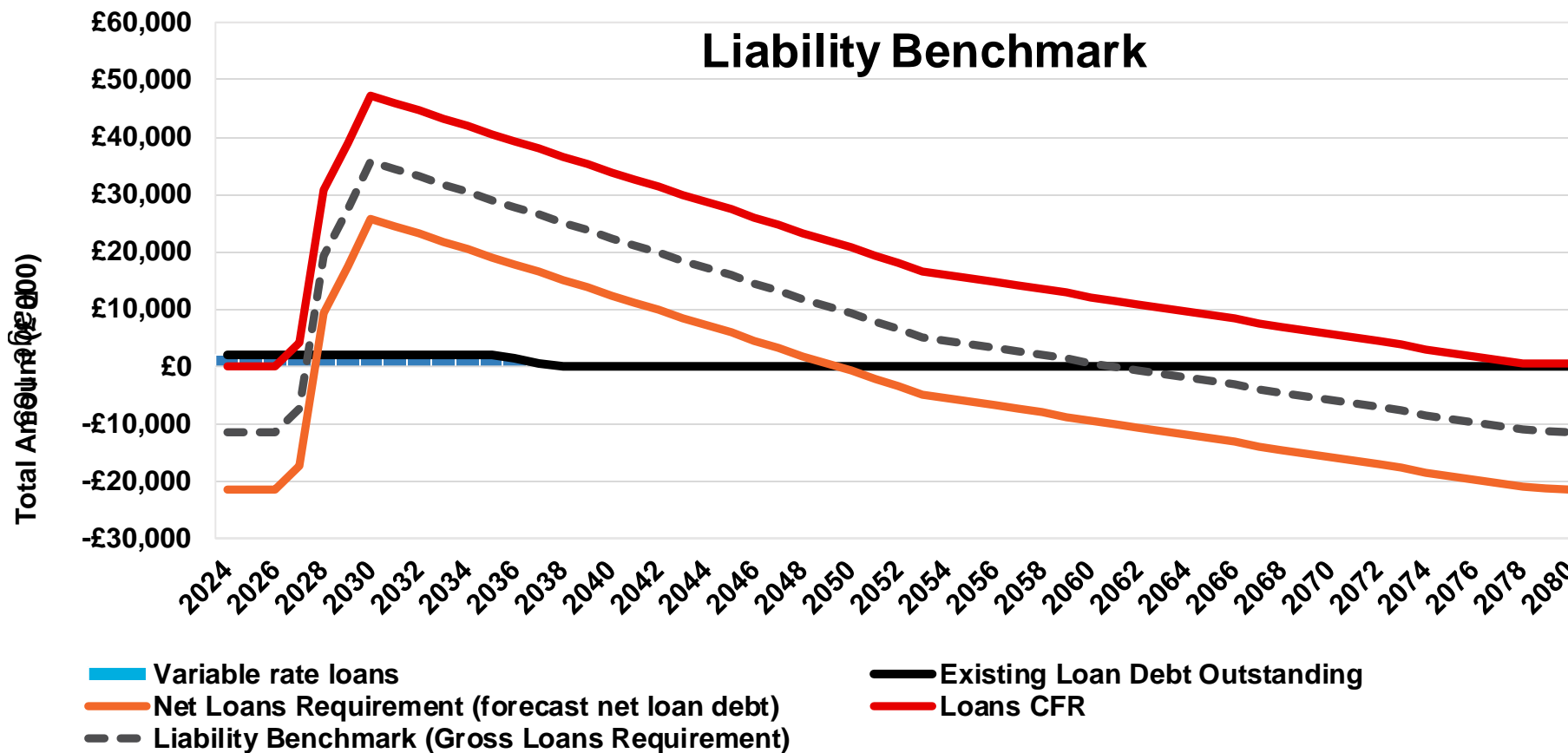
CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities recommends that the Authority's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. However, the table above shows that the level of loans was above the CFR at 31/3/24. This was the result of the Authority adopting a policy of setting aside additional Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) to generate the cash to repay loans either on maturity or as an early repayment.

The table above indicates that rather than having a need for borrowing it is estimated that the authority has an underlying need to invest until 2025/26 although the available balances are forecast to reduce. Based on the latest capital programme the authority will have a borrowing requirement in 2026/27.

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

Liability benchmark

The liability benchmark is an indicator required by the CIPFA Code. It looks to compare the Authority’s actual borrowing requirements against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark, which shows the minimum level of borrowing. This assumes the same forecasts as table 3, but that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £10m at each year-end to maintain sufficient liquidity but minimise credit risk. In addition, it reflects the latest Capital Programme information which shows a borrowing requirement from 2026/27 onwards.



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

Borrowing Strategy

The draft Capital Programme implies there may be a requirement to use borrowing to fund the capital programme in the later years. At this stage it is extremely unlikely that borrowing will be required in 2025/26. However, it is still best practice to approve a borrowing strategy and a policy on borrowing in advance of need. In considering a borrowing strategy the Authority needs to make provision to borrow short term to cover unexpected cash flow shortages or to cover any change in the financing of its Capital Programme.

In the past the Authority has raised all its long-term borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board, but if long term borrowing was required other sources of finance, such as local authority loans, and bank loans, would be investigated that may be available at more favourable rates.

Short-term borrowing if required would most likely be taken from other local authorities.

Therefore, the approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:

- Public Works Loan Board
- UK local authorities
- any institution approved for investments
- any other bank or building society authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority to operate in the UK
- UK public and private sector pension funds

Policy on Borrowing in Advance of Need

In line with the Prudential Code the Authority will not borrow purely to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. However advance borrowing may be taken if it is considered that current rates are more favourable than future rates and that this advantage outweighs the cost of carrying advance borrowing. Any decision to borrow in advance will be considered carefully to ensure value for money can be demonstrated and that the Authority can ensure the security of such funds and relationships.

In determining whether borrowing will be undertaken in advance of need the authority will:-

- Ensure that there is a clear link between the capital programme and the maturity profile of the existing debt portfolio which supports the need to take funding in advance of need.
- Ensure the on-going revenue liabilities created, and the implications for future plans and budgets have been considered.
- Evaluate the economic and market factors that might influence the manner and timing of any decision to borrow.
- Consider the merits and demerits of alternative forms of funding.
- Consider the alternative interest rate bases available, the most appropriate periods to fund and repayment profiles to use.

Debt Restructuring

The Authority's debt has arisen because of prior years' capital investment decisions. It has not taken any new borrowing out since 2007 as it has been utilising cash balances to pay off debt as it matures, or when deemed appropriate with the authority making early payment of debt. The anticipated holding of debt at 31 March 2025 is £2.0m. All the debt is from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) and is all at fixed rates of interest and is repayable on maturity. The table below shows the maturity profile and interest rate applicable on these:-

Table 4 Outstanding Loans

Loan Amount	Maturity Date	Interest rate
£650k	December 2035	4.49%
£650k	June 2036	4.49%
£700k	June 2037	4.48%

(Note, this debt was taken out in 2007 when the base rate was 5.75% and when the Authority was earning 5.84% return on its investments.)

If the loans were to be repaid early there would be an early repayment (premium) charge. Previous reports on treasury management activities have reported that the premium and the potential loss of investment income have been greater than the savings made on the interest payments therefore it has not been considered financially beneficial to repay the loans especially with the potential for increased interest rates. However, at 31 December the Authority would save £10k in interest, split over 10-years, if the loans were to be repaid early. However, with the Authority budgeting a borrowing requirement to fund the capital programme from 2026/27, the additional interest on new loans would outweigh the £10k saving achieved from early repayment.

Investment Strategy

At 31 December 2024 the Authority held £46.863m invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus existing balances and reserves. During the year the Authority's investment balance has ranged between £60m and £27m. The variation arises principally due to the timing of the receipt of government grants. It is anticipated that there will be reduced cash levels in the forthcoming year, due to a drawdown in reserves to finance capital expenditure.

Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.

Therefore, in line with the guidance the Treasury Management Strategy is developed to ensure the Fire Authority will only use very high-quality counterparties for investments.

The Authority may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparties in the table below, subject to the cash and time limits shown.

Table 5 Investment Counterparties

Counterparty	Cash Limit	Time Limit
Banks and other organisations and securities whose lowest published long-term credit rating from Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's is a minimum of AA-	£5m each	5 years
Call accounts with banks and other organisations with minimum A- credit rating	£10m	Next day
Call account with the Debt Management Office	Unlimited	Next day
UK Central Government (irrespective of credit rating)	Unlimited	50 years
UK Local Authorities (irrespective of credit rating)	£5m each	10 years
Secured bond funds AA rating and weighted average life (WAL) not more than three years	£5m each	N/A
Secured bond funds AAA rated and WAL not more than five years	£m each	N/A

Allowable bond funds are defined by credit rating and WAL. Investing in senior secured bonds backed by collateral provides a protection against bail-in. Although the average life of the securities within the fund will be either 3 or 5 years, funds can be redeemed within 2 days of request but in general these should be seen as longer-term investments.

The Authority currently has access to a call (instant access) account with the Debt Management Office, which pays slightly lower than bank base rate, this is 4.70% at 31 December. Each working day the balance on the Authority's current account is invested to ensure that the interest received on surplus balances is maximised.

Regarding the risk of investing with another local authority, only a few authorities have their own credit rating, but those that do are the same or one notch below the UK Government reflecting the fact that they are quasi-Government institutions. Overall, credit ratings are seen as unnecessary by the sector because the statutory and prudential framework within which the authorities operate is amongst the strongest in the world. In addition, any lender to a local authority has protection, under statute, by way of a first charge on the revenues of that authority. No local authority has ever defaulted to date, and this also may be an indication of security. However, when the UK credit rating by the rating agencies has been downgraded those local authorities with a rating saw a reduction in their ratings. Therefore, consideration has been given to reducing the risk associated with the investment with other local authorities.

Table 6 Investment Limits with Local Authorities

Investment Period	Maximum Individual Investment (£m)	Maximum Total Investment (£m)	Maximum Period
Up to 2 years	5	40	2 years
Over 2 years	5	25	10 years

The call account with Lancashire County Council (LCC) has been replaced by a call account with the Debt Management Office, therefore all Local Authority investments are within the above limits.

In respect of banks taxpayers will no longer bail-out failed banks instead the required funds will be paid by equity investors and depositors. Local authorities' deposits will be at risk and consequently although currently available within the policy it is unlikely that long term unsecured term deposits will be used at the present time.

Currently all the Authority's fixed investments are with other local authorities. To enhance the interest earned the following investments are already impacting 2025/26.

Table 7 Current Investments

Start Date	End Date	Principal	Rate	Interest 25/26
29/08/2024	28/08/2025	£5,000,000	4.80%	£97,973
02/10/2024	01/10/2025	£5,000,000	4.70%	£117,822

The Authority has the below future deals which impact 2025/26 which have yet to commence.

Start Date	End Date	Principal	Rate	Interest 25/26
03/02/2025	30/09/2025	£5,000,000	5.65%	£140,863
19/02/2025	18/02/2026	£5,000,000	5.50%	£243,356

Consideration is given fixing further investments if the maturity fits with estimated cash flows and the rate is attractive. This will continue to be reviewed. Suggested rates payable by other local authorities indicated:

Table 8 Indicative Interest Rates on Investments with other Local Authorities

Investment length	Interest Rates
3-month investment	5.55 – 5.75%
6-month investment	5.50 – 5.70%
12-month investment	5.30 – 5.60%
3-year investment	4.80 - 5.00%
4-year investment	4.70 - 4.90%

The overall combined amount of interest earned on fixed/call account balances as at 31 December 2024 is £1.712m on an average balance of £43.932m at an annualised rate of 5.17%. This is more than the benchmark 7-day Sterling Overnight Index Average (SONIA) rate which averages a yield of 5.01 over the same period.

In addition to the above the authority uses NatWest for its operational banking. Balances retained in NatWest are very low, usually less than £5,000. However, if required monies are retained at NatWest this would be in addition to the limits set out above.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

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

The Authority will assess their MRP for 2025/26 in accordance with guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 21(1A) of the Local Government Act 2003.

The Authority made a voluntary MRP in 2019/20 and it is anticipated that the MRP on loans will be nil in 2025/26, this will be the case until capital expenditure is financed by borrowing.

Whilst the Authority has no unsupported borrowing, nor has any plans to take out any unsupported borrowing in 2025/26 it is prudent to approve a policy relating to the MRP that would apply if circumstances change. As such in accordance with guidelines, the MRP on any future unsupported borrowing will be calculated using the Asset Life Method. This will be based on a straightforward straight line calculation to set an equal charge to revenue over the estimated life of the asset. Estimated life periods will be determined under delegated powers. To the extent that expenditure is not on the creation of an asset and is of a type that is subject to estimated life periods that are referred to in the guidance, these periods will generally be adopted by the Authority. However, the Authority reserves the right to determine useful life periods and prudent MRP in exceptional circumstances where the recommendations of the guidance would not be appropriate.

As some types of capital expenditure incurred by the Authority are not capable of being related to an individual asset, asset lives will be assessed on a basis which most reasonably reflects the anticipated period of benefit that arises from the expenditure. Also, whatever type of expenditure is involved, it will be grouped together in a manner which reflects the nature of the main component of expenditure and will only be divided up in cases where there are two or more major components with substantially different useful economic lives.

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

Revenue Budget

The capital financing budget currently shows that income received exceeds expenditure. This excludes the PFI and Finance lease payments, which are included in other budgets. Based on the Strategy outlined above then the proposed budget for capital financing are:

Table 9 Capital Financing Charges Included in Revenue Budget

	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
Interest payable	0.090	0.090	0.204	1.600
MRP	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.084
Interest receivable	(1.050)	(1.385)	(0.875)	(0.675)
Net budget	(0.960)	(1.295)	(0.671)	1.009

Prudential Indicators for 2024/25 to 2027/28 in respect of the Combined Fire Authority's Treasury Management Activities.

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

The following table sets out the debt and investment-related indicators which provide the framework for the Authority's proposed borrowing and lending activities over the coming three years. These indicators will also be approved by members as part of the Capital

Programme approval process along with other capital expenditure-related indicators but need to be reaffirmed and approved as part of this Treasury Management Strategy.

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

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
1. Adoption of the Revised CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (2011)				
		Adopted for all years		
2. Authorised limit for external debt - A prudent estimate of external debt, which includes sufficient headroom for unusual cash movements.				
Borrowing	4.000	4.000	10.000	45.000
Other long-term liabilities	30.000	30.000	30.000	30.000
Total	34.000	34.000	40.000	75.000
3. Operational boundary for external debt - A prudent estimate of debt, but no provision for unusual cash movements. It represents the estimated maximum external debt arising as a consequence of the Authority's current plans.				
Borrowing	3.000	3.000	8.000	35.000
Other long-term liabilities	16.000	15.000	15.000	14.000
Total	19.000	18.000	23.000	49.000
4. Upper limit for fixed interest rate exposure				
Upper limit of borrowing at fixed rates	100%	100%	100%	100%
Upper limit of investments at fixed rates	100%	100%	100%	100%
5. Upper limit for variable rate exposure				
Upper limit of borrowing at variable rates	50%	50%	50%	50%
Upper limit of investments at variable rates	100%	100%	100%	100%
6. Upper limit for total principal sums invested for over 364 days (per maturity date)	40.000	40.000	40.000	40.000

7. Maturity structure of Debt	Upper Limit %	Lower Limit %
Under 12 months	100	-
12 months and within 24 months	50	-
24 months and within 5 years	50	-
5 years and within 10 years	75	-
10 years and above	100	-

8. Estimated Capital Expenditure

	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Budget	2027/28 Budget
Capital Expenditure (£m)	6.034	5.859	12.761	14.796	30.078

9. Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Budget	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Budget	2027/28 Budget
Financing costs (£m)	(1.260)	(0.960)	(1.295)	(0.671)	1.009
Proportion of net revenue stream	(1.85%)	(1.28%)	(1.67%)	(0.84%)	1.23%

Treasury Management Policy Statement

The Fire Authority adopts the key recommendations of CIPFA's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the Code), as described in Section 5 of the Code.

Accordingly, the Authority will create and maintain, as the cornerstones for effective treasury management:-

- A treasury management policy statement stating the policies, objectives and approach to risk management of its treasury management activities.
- Suitable treasury management practices (TMPs), setting out the manner in which the Authority will seek to achieve those policies and objectives, and prescribing how it will manage and control those activities.

The Authority delegates responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of its treasury management policies and practices to the Resources Committee and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions to the Director of Corporate Services, who will act in accordance with the organisation's policy statement and TMPs, IMPs and CIPFA's Standard of Professional Practice on treasury management.

The Authority nominates the Resources Committee to be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies.

Definition

The Authority defines its treasury management activities as: the management of the Authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.

Risk management

The Fire Authority regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the organisation, and any financial instruments entered into to manage these risks.

Value for money

The Fire Authority acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving value for money in treasury management, and to employing suitable comprehensive performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.

Borrowing policy

The Fire Authority greatly values revenue budget stability and will therefore borrow the majority of its long-term funding needs at long-term fixed rates of interest. However, short term and variable rate loans may be borrowed to either offset short-term and variable rate investments or to produce revenue savings. The Authority will also constantly evaluate debt restructuring opportunities of the existing portfolio.

The Fire Authority will set an affordable borrowing limit each year in compliance with the Local Government Act 2003 and will have regard to the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities when setting that limit. It will also set limits on its exposure to changes in interest rates and limits on the maturity structure of its borrowing in the treasury management strategy report each year.

Investment policy

The Fire Authority's primary objectives for the investment of its surplus funds are to protect the principal sums invested from loss, and to ensure adequate liquidity so that funds are available for expenditure when needed. The generation of investment income to support the provision of local authority services is an important, but secondary, objective.

The Fire Authority will have regard to the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Guidance on Local Government Investments. It will approve an Investment Strategy each year as part of the Treasury Management Strategy. The strategy will set criteria to determine suitable organisations with which cash may be invested, limits on the maximum duration of such investments and limits on the amount of cash that may be invested with any one organisation.

Council Tax Precept Consultation

Background

The legal requirements for council tax increases are primarily governed by the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011. A consultation with the public was launched on 7 January 2025 on a £5 increase in the council tax precept for the year ahead. The consultation ended at 5pm on Monday 3 February 2025, the results are set out below.

Appendix F of this report also contains the Fire Brigade Union response to the budget.

Analysis of the budget consultation – January 2025

Total respondents: 602.

1. To what extent do you support Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service increasing its council tax precept in line with the levels set out above?

Level of support	Numbers	Percentage
Strongly support	346	57%
Support	113	19%
Neither support nor oppose	37	6%
Oppose	37	6%
Strongly oppose	69	11%
Don't know	0	0%

2. Comments

306 comments (51% of respondents).

Sentiment Analysis

- Positive Sentiment:** Many comments express strong support for the fire service, acknowledging its vital role and the importance of maintaining high standards. For example, comments like "Fully agree for the life saving they do while endangering their own", "Vitality important to support this organisation", and "Fire fighters do an immense job, putting themselves in danger to protect and save the public" highlight the appreciation and willingness to support the fire service financially.
- Negative Sentiment:** Some comments reflect concerns about the financial burden of increased taxes and the perceived inefficiency in spending. For instance, comments such as "Council tax increases are not justified", "I pay enough council tax, keeps going up but services keep getting reduced", and "The public sector is addicted to other people's money and repeatedly issues pleas for more without ever looking internally to why it is needed" indicate dissatisfaction with the proposed budget increase and the current financial management.

Percentage Breakdown

- Positive Sentiment: 45%
- Neutral Sentiment: 25%
- Negative Sentiment: 30%

Key Areas of Support

1. **Recognition of Service:** Many comments acknowledge the essential and life-saving work of the fire service. For example, "The fire Service is one of the most vital assets we have" and "A vital service that deserves as much funding as possible".
2. **Willingness to Pay More:** Several comments indicate a willingness to pay more to support the fire service. For example, "Happy to pay more to go towards resources, wages etc. necessities" and "I would much rather contribute a fiver a year more on essential public service workers than pay anything towards vanity projects or other fluff that money gets wasted on".

Key Areas of Negativity

- **Financial Concerns:** Many comments express concerns about the financial impact of the proposed budget increase. For example, "Cost of living pressures make any increase unpalatable" and "Council tax is already expensive, surely extra income could be generated by alternative means".
- **Perceived Inefficiency:** Some comments criticise the perceived inefficiency and wasteful spending within the fire service. For example, "Better management should be able to make savings without being a burden on the already cash-strapped residents" and "The public sector is addicted to other people's money and repeatedly issues pleas for more without ever looking internally to why it is needed"

Overall, while there is strong support for the fire service and recognition of its importance, there are also significant concerns about the financial impact of the proposed budget increase and the perceived inefficiency in spending. Several comments were made in response to social media posts about the consultation, which reflect the same sentiments as comments made via the direct consultation feedback.

This sentiment has been analysed by Microsoft Copilot and there has been criticism about the equality questions in the survey which increases the negative sentiment.

3. Are you answering the survey as:

Status	Number	Percentage
A Lancashire resident	546	91%
A Lancashire business owner	3	1%
An employee of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service	42	7%
A representative of a partner organisation	0	0%
Public representative such as councillor or MP.	5	1%
None of the above	3	1%

4. Which area of Lancashire is your home or business in?

District	Number	Percentage
Blackburn with Darwen	40	7%
Blackpool	43	7%
Burnley	42	7%
Chorley	47	8%
Fylde	45	8%
Hyndburn	36	6%
Lancaster	51	9%
Pendle	32	5%
Preston	55	9%
South Ribble	47	8%
Ribble Valley	46	8%
Rosendale	37	6%
West Lancashire	36	6%
Wyre	41	7%

5. What was your gender assigned at birth?

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	271	46%
Female	282	48%
Prefer not to say	35	6%

6. Which of the following best reflects how you would describe your gender identity?

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	268	45%
Female	282	48%
Non-binary	2	1%
Prefer not to say	39	6%

7. Does your gender identity align with the gender assigned to you at birth?

Answer	Number	Percentage
Yes	540	92%
No	3	1%
Prefer not to say	41	7%

8. What is your age?

Age range	Number	Percentage
16-19	1	0%
20-24	6	1%
25-29	10	2%
30-34	29	5%
35-39	36	6%
40-44	37	6%
45-49	38	7%
50-54	58	10%
55-59	53	9%
60-64	69	12%
Over 65	247	42%

9. What is your religion and belief?

Religion	Number	Percentage
Buddhist	2	0%
Christian	335	57%
Hindu	1	0%
Jewish	0	0%
Muslim	11	2%
Sikh	0	0%
No religion	167	29%
Decline	45	8%
Other	23	4%

10. What is your ethnicity, cultural or racial origin?

Ethnicity, cultural or racial origin	Number	Percentage
White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	524	91%
White – Irish	4	1%
White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller	1	0%
Any other White background – please describe below in the 'Other' section	6	1%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups – White and Black Caribbean	1	0%

Ethnicity, cultural or racial origin	Number	Percentage
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups – White and Black African	1	0%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups – White and Asian	2	0%
Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background – please describe in the 'Other' section	0	0%
Asian/Asian British – Indian	7	1%
Asian/Asian British – Pakistani	5	1%
Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0%
Asian/Asian British – Chinese	0	0%
Asian/Asian British – Any other Asian background	0	0%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – African	1	0%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – Caribbean	0	0%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – Any other Black/African/Caribbean background	0	0%
Other ethnic group – Arab	1	0%
Other	25	4%

11. What is your sexual orientation?

Sexual Orientation	Numbers	Percentage
Bi/bisexual	17	3%
Gay	6	1%
Lesbian	6	1%
Heterosexual/straight	475	82%
Other term	5	1%
Prefer not to say	70	12%

12. Do you have a disability?

Disability	Number	Percentage
Yes	121	21%
No	408	71%
Decline	49	8%

13. How did you hear about this survey

Channel	Number	Percentage
Social media	132	22%
In the Know email	403	68%
Hot Topics	4	1%

Channel	Number	Percentage
Prevention Matters	1	0%
Protection Matters	1	0%
Media	12	2%
LFRS employee	15	3%
LFRS internal channels	13	2%
LFRS website	11	2%



Executive Council Member Andrew Fox-Hewitt
Regional Secretary Ian Hibbert
Brigade Secretary Kev Wilkie
Brigade Chair Mark Hoyle

Region 5 North West
Fire Brigades Union
Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service
West Way
Euxton
Chorley
PR7 6DH

Mark Nolan
Clerk to the Authority
Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service
Garstang Road
Fulwood
Preston
PR2 3LF

5th February 2025

Mr Nolan

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY BUDGET CONSULTATION

Lancashire Fire Brigades Union (FBU) agrees with the paper over funding. Fire Services nationally have been neglected and underfunded over the past 15 years. Governments have failed to invest in Services and it shows not just in this budget, but in previous budgets.

The FBU have campaigned and lobbied government ministers for extra funding and more investment in Fire Services.

The New Westminster government have formed a new Ministerial Advisory Group. The FBU has argued for a new national advisory body to assist in the development such as standards and to advice on the major strategic challenges facing the fire service. We look forward to helping the government in carrying out elements of their pledges they made prior to the election.

The FBU stated in last years budget response:

“With the cost of living crisis some members of staff are struggling to afford to feed themselves and their families, or have the heating on at home, or even put fuel in their car to come to work”.

Even with a pay increase, staff are still struggling financially as some prices have not fallen such as petrol stations and supermarkets.

The FBU fully support the investment set out in Table 6 in the Capital Programme. The FBU will support and work with the service in delivering a service that serves the communities of Lancashire and a better service for its staff.

The FBU has concerns over the borrowing of £43M. We understand that due to lack of funding by previous governments, the service has no other option.



The FBU would support a £5 increase in Council Tax on Band D properties in Lancashire - not just to cover the pay rise for Grey Book members of staff, but to enable continued investment in the Fire Service (although the FBU feels that this should ultimately be completely funded by Central Government).

We will continue to campaign for a proper and adequate funding investment in the Service wherever and whenever the opportunity arises.

Yours Sincerely

Kev Wilkie
Fire Brigades Union
Lancashire Brigade Secretary

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on Monday 17 February 2025

Proposed Amendment to The Role Description of Members

(Appendices 1 and 2 refer)

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

Executive Summary

At the November 2024 Member Training and Development Working Group, some proposals for minor changes to the Description of the Role of Members in the agenda pack, were made, with regard to the current financial climate and uncertainties around Local Government funding.

Other cosmetic changes were also made in relation to the role of Member Champions.

Recommendation

The Authority is asked to approve the minor amendments and in effect to approve the revised Role of Members and Role Description for the Member Champions in accordance with Members' indications of support for County Councillor Salter's proposals made during the business of the Working Group, as outlined at Appendices 1 and 2.

Information

The amendments, proposed by County Councillor Salter, in respect of the change to the Description of the Role of members was as follows:

- To change the wording on Page 2 of the document from 'Deliver Affordable and Sustainable Services', to 'Deliver Realistic Future Planning'.
- To remove the bullet point 'Planning for future grant reductions'.

The proposal to change the Role Description of Member Champions attached in the Working Group agenda pack at Annex 2 was as follows:

- To change the wording of the bullet point 'Engage with other Fire Authority Members to promote awareness of older people issues and to seek their views', to 'Engage with other Fire Authority Members to promote awareness of issues effecting older people and seek their views'.

The proposals are mindful of the need to review the Authority's functions and adapt to changes within the social and economic climate, which is consistent with good governance principles.

The proposals, whilst relatively minor, do potentially engage with paragraph 3.1.d of the Authority's Constitutional Procedural and Contractual Standing Orders, and therefore it is a requirement that the proposals are ratified by the Authority.

The proposals are consistent with the Authority's Member Training and Development Strategy, which was last approved by the CFA on 22 February 2021. The Clerk would

however welcome a joint review of this strategy with the Director of People and Development, who is responsible for its delivery.

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 of the Authority's delivery of good governance, they enhance it.

Environmental Impact

None identified.

Equality and Diversity Implications

The proposed changes merely reiterate and underline the Authority's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in accordance with its legal obligations to section 149 Equality Act 2010 (also known as the general public sector equality duty.)

HR Implications

See above.

Financial Implications

None identified.

Legal implications

The proposals do potentially engage with paragraph 3.1.d of the Authority's Constitutional Procedural and Contractual Standing Orders therefore it is a requirement that the proposals are ratified by the Authority.

The proposals are consistent with the Authority's Member Training and Development Strategy, which was last approved by the CFA on 22 February 2021.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper: Report to CFA 22 February 2021, Constitutional, Procedural and Contractual Standing Orders (revised 22 February 2021.)

Date: 22 February 2021

Contact: Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority

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

Role of members of the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

(Approved at the CFA meeting held 22 February 2021)

Chair of the Fire Authority and Vice-Chair in the Chair's absence also Chairs/ Vice-Chairs of Committees and Group Meetings

You are expected to:

1. Act as the Civic Head of the Authority (Chair of the Fire Authority)
2. Effectively chair meetings and manage the performance of Committees and Working Groups to achieve objectives.
3. Engage in local regional and national networks to support the work of the Authority, promoting partnership and collaboration

Members of the Fire Authority

You are expected to:

1. Lead and support the establishment and realisation of the Authority's purpose, objectives, priorities and values:

Our Purpose

- 'Making Lancashire Safer'

Our Objectives

- Fewer emergency incidents;
- Fewer deaths and injuries from fires and other emergencies;
- Less damage to property, the business economy and our environment from fires.

Our Priorities – The most important aspects of our work:

Reduce Risk to the Community

We will reduce risk in the community by delivering an integrated approach to developing and delivering:

- Prevention activities designed to reduce the risk of fire and other emergencies, particularly among those most vulnerable or at risk of harm;
- Protection activities designed to minimise the consequences to life and property should a fire occur;
- Response arrangements to make sure that we are resilient and effective in responding to emergencies.

We will continue to work with other organisations or agencies to address shared objectives and will tailor what we do to meet the needs of local communities.

We will also continue to work closely with other emergency services including the Police and Ambulance Services to deliver initiatives designed to make Lancashire safer for its communities.

Deliver Affordable and Sustainable Services **Realistic Future Planning**

We will deliver an affordable value for money service by:

- Ensuring resources are available and used in the best way possible;
- Working collaboratively where appropriate;
- ~~Planning for future grant reductions;~~
- Striving to continually identify efficiency and cost savings;
- Effective management of staff attendance, performance and safety.

Our Values – What we expect of our employees and what the public can expect of us:

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service strives to be the best fire service in the country, operating from a set of values that guide how we achieve this success:

- Serving our diverse communities and making them safe is our priority. We seek to provide people with the very best service that meets their needs, irrespective of ethnicity or background – treating everyone with dignity and respect;
- We encourage all staff to seek continuous improvement and innovation in what we do; promoting individual responsibility for performance and use of our resources; using good project management practice and listening to feedback to learn from our experiences;
- We take seriously the health, safety and welfare needs of staff; investing in training and development and are committed to quality of opportunity. In return we expect our staff to demonstrate leadership, enthusiasm and commitment.

2. Agree the strategy and resources required for making Lancashire safer.

- Develop and agree risk management strategy for future services relating to Community safety and cohesion.
- Determine resources required to implement agreed strategy.
- Develop policies to support the delivery of the strategy.

3. Lead and support the delivery of effective services consistent with National Framework and local needs.

- Lead service strategy through effective decision making whilst delivering value for money.
- Secure resources required to deliver risk managed strategic plans.
- Assess the effectiveness of service delivery:
- Agree performance indicators, objectives and evaluation measures for Authority and Service performance.
- Review effectiveness of performance against targets.

4. Demonstrate commitment to equality and diversity in line with core values of the Authority.
5. Represent individual communities within the Authority areas in relation to fire and rescue matters and perform an ambassadorial role representing the Fire Authority at appropriate external functions.
6. Engage in local and regional networks to support the work of the Authority, promoting partnership and collaboration.
7. Be committed to continuing self-development including attendance on *an induction programme for new members*.
8. All Members are expected to have or acquire competency in the above areas and attend relevant training courses.
9. Members are expected to attend all meetings of the Authority and the Strategy Group and other committees and working groups of which they are members unless they provide an appropriate reason for their absence.

I shall endeavour to meet the expectations of the Combined Fire Authority.

Signed by:

Print name:

Date:

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Community Safety Champion – Role Description

(Approved at CFA meeting held 22 February 2021)

- Promote and take an active interest in community safety and related fire and rescue service work.
- Ensure community safety issues are taken into account in the preparation of key plans, for the organisations they have influence with.
- Ensure community safety issues are taken into account during decision making processes, in the organisations they have influence with.
- Advocate good practice within the Fire Authority on community safety issues.
- Engage with other Fire Authority Members to promote awareness of **issues affecting older people and** ~~elder people issues~~ and to seek their views.
- Engage with relevant community groups on community safety issues regarding the Fire Authority.
- Engage with relevant partners on community safety issues regarding the Fire Authority.
- Work with relevant LFRS officers to promote better understanding of community safety issues including regular briefings with the Lead Officer as appropriate.
- Provide challenge, internally and externally, on community safety issues.
- Following approval from the Chairman and in line with the Members' Allowance Scheme attend conferences, seminars and events etc to represent the Fire Authority where this is appropriate to the community safety subject area.
- Undertake awareness training, as necessary, in respect of community safety issues.
- In conjunction with the designated LFRS officer lead, allocate member champion funding to community safety subject areas.
- To be regularly made aware of safeguarding issues and risks affecting the Service and to demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding and can hold the Service to account regarding their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Compile a quarterly report on the work of the member champion for community safety and present to the full Combined Fire Authority.
- Where relevant and possible to work with other emergency services including the Police and Ambulance Services in creating, developing and delivering initiatives relevant to the designated subject area.

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 17 February 2025

Climate Change Operational Response Plan 2022-27 – Interim Report

(Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information: Chief Fire Officer Jon Charters

Tel: 01772 866802

Executive Summary

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) Climate Change Operational Response Plan (CCORP)(Appendix 1) was published in 2022 and spans 5 years to 2027 in line with our current Community Risk Management Plan.

It provides an overview of our intentions to strengthen the provision of services to our communities in response to the impacts of climate change.

This report aims to provide the Authority with a mid-point review of progress against the aspirations contained within the CCORP across the key themes.

As the extremes of foreseeable weather events become increasingly evident, our CCORP considers flooding and wildfire as two separate areas of focus, whilst recognising that several of the proposed actions we will take, will serve to mitigate elements of both risks in tandem.

In delivering against this plan, we continue to aim to:

- Reduce the threat posed to citizens of Lancashire.
- Improve firefighter safety.
- Reduce costs and impact upon our communities, partners and the Service.

Recommendation

That the Authority note the progress delivered as detailed within this report.

Background

The integration of activities across preparedness, prevention, protection and operational response forms the basis of the CCORP.

The CCORP was developed around 6 key principles:

1. Working in partnership with other agencies and/or private bodies to make our communities safer.
2. Delivering prevention activities serves to educate and inform and thereby reduce potential risks.
3. Empowering communities to play their part can increase local resilience and assist planning and response.
4. Utilising operational debriefing and learning supports continuous improvement in the delivery of our services.
5. Working to support local, regional, and national policy design through learning and sharing areas of best practice.
6. Responding effectively when required, with the right vehicles, trained staff, best equipment, and operational tactics.

The overarching aim is to strengthen our plans in relation to risks posed by both Flooding and Wildfires across the key areas of:

- Prevention, protection and education
- Emergency Planning
- Training
- Operational Response
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Welfare

Progress against the CCORP

Prevention, protection and education

Completed:

- Implementation of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's) in collaboration with local authorities and Lancashire Constabulary. This restricts the use of barbecues and open fires in high-risk areas, such as moorlands and woodlands, to prevent wildfires. PSPO's were launched with partners on 4th March 2024.
- Corporate Communications team have new leaflets with QR codes linked to the LFRS website containing specific wildfire information and prevention advice. The team used targeted social media to support the wildfire prevention campaign.
- Mainstreamed engagement with local volunteer groups, such as Darwen Moorwatch, Rivington Heritage Trust and Rooley Moor Neighbourhood Forum, to encourage use of their patrols and inspections in these areas.

- Provision of advice and guidance to landowners and visitors on fire prevention and safety. These measures have contributed towards a significant reduction in the number of wildfires and the area of land affected by them. For example, in 2023, LFRS attended 143 wildfires, compared to 256 in 2020, and the total area burned was 1,234 hectares, compared to 3,456 hectares in 2020.
- Engagement with, and education of, public and stakeholders, through campaigns, events and social media, on the risks and impacts of climate change and the actions they can take to protect themselves and their properties from climate-related incidents.
- Distribution of leaflets, posters and stickers to raise awareness and provide tips on flood-related prevention and safety. In 2023, LFRS reached over 1-million people through campaigns, events, and social media, and received positive feedback and support from public and stakeholders.
- Established a Lancashire Water Safety Partnership (LWSP) which was officially launched in April 2023. LWSP has identified high risk locations for the installation of water safety boards and is scoping the potential for use of PSPO's for two high risk water sites in Lancashire.

Ongoing:

- Strengthening data collection to improve our intelligence-led education and communication strategy for wildfire prevention and safety.
- Support of the Firewise strategy, with further work planned by the Corporate Communications team, to improve accessibility to wildfire prevention information.
- Collaboration with landowners and Natural England to contribute to the effective application of the Burn Code.
- We have established a meeting structure with major landowners including United Utilities via Lancashire Fire Operations Group (LFOG). This focuses upon land and fuel management techniques to support prevention and mitigation activities.
- Properties within urban interface areas with wildfire risk have been identified and Fire Protection and Community Fire Safety Teams will work together to deliver appropriate advice. We will deliver targeted Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) in domestic premises for known wildfire risk areas.
- Embedded representatives in several district Flood Action Groups; we will continue to support communities that wish to replicate these arrangements in areas of high flood risk.

Emergency planning

Completed:

- Collaborated and shared best practice with other fire and rescue services, local authorities, and partner organisations, through networks, forums, and working groups, such as the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Climate Change Coordination Committee, the Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF) Climate Change Group, the Northwest Fire and Rescue Services (NWFRS) Climate Change Network and NW Region Wildfire Group chaired by Group Manager (GM) Caroline Harrison.
- Participated in joint exercises and operations with other agencies to evaluate and enhance interoperability and coordination. These partnerships have improved LFRS capacity and capability to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change. For example, in 2023, LFRS contributed to the development and implementation of the NFCC Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, the LRF Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan, and the NWFRS Climate Change Charter and Toolkit.
- Reviewed our reporting and monitoring process to demonstrate the impact of weather related (wildfire) incidents.
- Created heat maps of wildfire and flooding activity for each district to guide prevention and protection activity.
- Undertaken Operational Risk Assessments, which underpin tactical plans for known high-risk locations. Produced plans for 11 high-risk locations and uploaded onto mobile data terminals (MDT's) on fire engines.
- Developed and updated operational guidance and procedures to reflect the changing nature and complexity of climate-related incidents. These initiatives have improved LFRS performance and safety in responding to wildfires and flooding.
- Our National Wildfire Tactical Advisors are signed up to the UK Danger Rating System and receive updates on forecasted impacts to the Service.

Ongoing:

- We will contribute to the development and implementation of the new UK wildfire prediction system as the project progresses.
- Delivering training and development programmes for LFRS staff and volunteers, to increase awareness and skills in dealing with climate-related incidents and hazards, such as wildfire behaviour, flood rescue, and water safety.

Training

Completed:

- Increased our cohort of level 5 trained Flood Water Incident Managers (FWIM's), from 6 to 8 to provide additional resilience across the Service.
- Trained an additional Level 4 Wildfire Tactical Advisor, enhancing our capability to respond both within Lancashire and nationally.

Ongoing:

- Consideration for further training to upskill P74 Rawtenstall, to improve resilience for the Burns Team capability.
- Develop several officers presently qualified to FWIM standard, to level 6 Flood Water Tactical Advisors, for use in county or as part of National Resilience arrangements.
- LFRS officers are involved with the NFCC Wildfire Group, led nationally by CFO Charters, and are currently working with colleagues from Northumberland FRS to develop a new wildfire training framework which will guide training standards and provide standardisation of training materials for use across the country.

Operational response

Completed:

- Two Hagglund offroad vehicles have been introduced into Service. They have undergone additional modifications for use at both flooding and wildfires.
- Developed and trained staff to provide an additional water rescue pump and swift water rescue team in Morecambe to supplement the existing team at Lancaster. This unit went live in January 2025.
- Increased the number of National Wildfire Tactical Advisors from 2 to 3 to improve local and national resilience in this function.
- Invested in rescue sleds and floatation devices for the Hagglund vehicles. These were successfully used to rescue people stranded in their vehicles during recent flooding in December 2024.
- Contributed towards the NFCC Asset register and maintained the Lancashire Fire Operations Group (LFOG) Asset register.
- The specialist wildfire Burns Team is now fully established at P73 Bacup, with additional specialist training completed for P74 Rawtenstall.

Ongoing:

- Colleagues within the NFCC Wildfire Group are linked into the project to refresh the wildfire prediction system, which gives early warning of likelihood of wildfire incidents. Once the new system is established, we aim to adopt the new information / alerting system.
- Working with neighbouring FRS, researchers and manufacturers, utilising technology and equipment to develop enhanced solutions.
- Work continues to procure two large and two smaller 4x4 fire engines with off-road capabilities. One of each size will be purchased in the coming year with the other two following in the next business year.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Completed:

- Dedicated Wildfire PPE and protective footwear rolled out to all operational staff. In addition, tactical backpacks have been issued to all operational staff to increase welfare provision at incidents.
- Reviewed national guidance regarding the use of personal flotation devices for evacuees during flooding incidents. This has led to lifejackets being made available on Hagglunds for use by members of public during flooding incidents.

Welfare

Completed:

- Enhanced our Welfare provision at incidents, improving quality and meeting the needs of a diverse workforce with vegan, vegetarian, halal, kosher options amongst others.

Ongoing:

- Procurement of a new Welfare Unit, which when purchased, will be operated by LFRS staff and will supplement existing arrangements. A project has been launched and a specification drafted and is pending approval.

Summary

The Climate Change Operational Response Plan 2022/2027 is a comprehensive and ambitious document that demonstrates LFRS's commitment and leadership in adapting to and mitigating effects of climate change both locally and nationally.

The Service has delivered extensive progress to date and continues work to deliver against the remaining activities in the plan, which underpins the ambitions within our CRMP and our aim of making Lancashire safer.

Financial Implications

Capital requirements associated with vehicle asset procurements are factored into the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Fleet Asset Management Plan.

Implications for revenue expenditure are dynamically considered against other Service priorities as and when proposals are made into the relevant internal meeting structures, or absorbed within existing budgets.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

The CCORP aims to build resilience and capabilities in responding to climate-related incidents. The enhanced equipment and training facilitates us dealing with incidents in a more efficient and effective manner, often with less resources and over shorter durations.

Equality and Diversity Implications

Any areas to be progressed under the plan are subject to Equality Impact Assessments as appropriate as part of the project / policy development.

Human Resource Implications

None identified at this time.

Business Risk Implications

It is important that LFRS reacts to changing climatic conditions in line with the findings of our Strategic Assessment of Risk. Whilst no statutory duty exists for flooding, opportunities do exist to enhance the reputation of the Service where we are able and equipped to respond effectively alongside partners to these types of incidents.

Legal Implications

None arising from this paper.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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



2022-2027

Climate Change Operational Response Plan

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Executive summary

Our Strategic Assessment of Risk identified the increasing impacts and consequences of climate change in terms of both prevalence and duration of large-scale flooding and wildfire events in the county.

In our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-27 we share our high-level ambitions in response to these emerging risks and this Climate Change Operational Response Plan (CCORP) 2022-27 aims to provide a more detailed overview of how we will strengthen the provision of services to our communities to ensure that we remain best placed to plan and respond to incidents of these types.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change¹ (IPCC) earlier in 2021, shared a view on the current ‘State of the Climate’:

“The scale of recent changes across the climate system as a whole and the present state of many aspects of the climate system are unprecedented over many centuries to many thousands of years.

“Many changes in the climate system become larger in direct relation to increasing global warming. They include increases in the frequency and intensity of hot extremes, marine heatwaves, and heavy precipitation, agricultural and ecological droughts in some regions, and proportion of intense tropical cyclones, as well as reductions in Arctic Sea ice, snow cover and permafrost”.

A key element of their observations was that:

“Continued global warming is projected to further intensify the global water cycle, including its variability, global monsoon precipitation and the severity of wet and dry events”.

Armed with this insight and to ensure our preparedness and response capabilities, this five-year plan details our ambitions in response to emerging evidence and warnings on the likely impacts of climate change.

As the extremes of foreseeable weather events are evident, this action plan will consider flooding and wildfire as two separate areas of focus, whilst recognising that some of the proposed actions we will take, will serve to mitigate aspects of both risks in tandem. In delivering against this plan, we aim to:

- Reduce the threat to the communities in Lancashire
- Improve firefighter safety
- Reduce the costs and impact upon LFRS, partners and our communities

¹ https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGI_Headline_Statements.pdf

Key principles

The integration of activities across preparedness, prevention, protection and operational response forms the basis of this action plan.

Several key principles guide our activities:

1. Working in partnership with other agencies and/or private bodies to make our communities safer
2. Delivering prevention activities serves to educate and inform and thereby reduce potential risks
3. Empowering communities to play their part can increase local resilience and assist planning and response
4. Utilising operational debriefing and learning supports continuous improvement in the delivery of our services
5. Working to support local, regional, and national policy design through learning and sharing areas of best practice
6. Responding effectively when required, with the right vehicles, trained staff, best equipment, and operational tactics

About Lancashire

The county of Lancashire sits in the Northwest region of England and is the 17th largest county, covering an area of 3,079 sq. km.

The overall population is circa 1.498 million although there is great variance in population density, from highly populated urban areas of industrialisation through to more rural areas used for agricultural crop growing and recreational activities.

Lancashire is defined by the Irish Sea to the West, into which most Lancashire rivers and their tributaries drain westwards from the West Pennine Moors. The remainder of the county is bordered by Cumbria to the North, North and West Yorkshire to the East and Manchester and Merseyside to the South.

The county has 14 districts within its boundaries, these are Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Burnley, Chorley, Fylde, Hyndburn, Lancaster, Pendle, Preston, Ribble Valley, Rossendale, South Ribble, West Lancashire and Wyre.

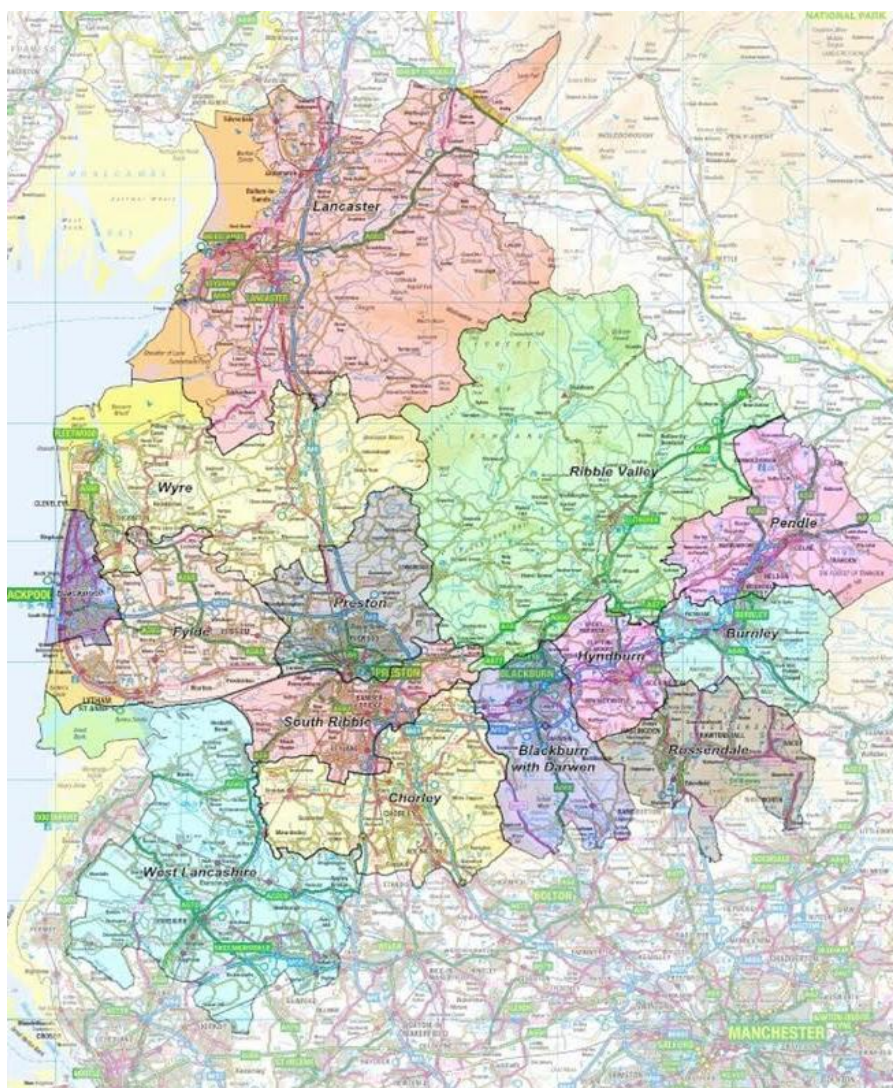


Figure 1 - Lancashire District map

We have a remarkably diverse landscape; to the west of the county are the West Lancashire and Fylde coastal plains, along with the Morecambe Bay area which receive water from the catchment areas within the Ribble Valley, Wyre Valley, and the Lune Valley.

Aside from the coastal resorts, these areas are largely rural with land devoted to agricultural purposes such as cattle farming and the growing of vegetable crops.

In the north-west corner of the county, straddling the border with Cumbria, the Lune Valley encompasses the Arncliffe and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), characterised by its limestone pavements and home to the Leighton Moss nature reserve.

To the east of the county are upland areas leading to the Pennines.

To the north of the Ribble Valley is the Beacon Fell Country Park and the Forest of Bowland, another AONB.

Much of the lowland in this area is devoted to dairy farming and cheesemaking, whereas the higher ground is more suitable for sheep grazing, and the highest ground is uncultivated moorland which provides Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) with the extensive challenges of wildfire incidents.

Legal matters

Various pieces of legislation are relevant to the role we play in managing flooding and wildfire risk.

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (FRSA) places a legal requirement on all fire and rescue services to plan, prepare and respond to a range of operational incidents.

Under the FRSA, the Fire and Rescue Authority has the power to provide its services to others and to take any actions on its own part that it considers appropriate in response to events or situations that are likely to cause death, injury or illness to people or harm to the environment.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004, along with supporting regulations and statutory guidance on 'Emergency Preparedness' establishes a clear set of roles and responsibilities for those involved in emergency preparation and response at a local level.

LFRS is defined as a Category 1 responder under the Act and are part of a multi-agency response to civil emergencies.

Our role includes:

- Assessing the risk of emergencies occurring and using this to inform contingency planning
- Putting in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintaining arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency
- Putting in place emergency plans
- Putting in place business continuity management arrangements
- Sharing information and co-operating with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency

Our activities are also directed by The Environmental Protection Act 1974 and The Heather and Grass etc. Burning (England) Regulations 2021 which also have implications regarding some of our preventative and operational undertakings.

Causation factors

It is predicted that the UK will continue to be considerably affected by the impacts of climate change.

Extreme weather events such as high temperatures and low rainfall in spring / summer, and conversely wetter winters with high rainfall are highly likely to feature.

Risk from flooding and wildfires tend to be seasonal and our strategy recognises this with a shift in operational preparedness occurring at regular points throughout the year.

Flooding

Flooding has a variety of causes including:

- **River flooding**

River flooding (also known as fluvial flooding) is very common in the UK. This is where a river's flow will breach the bank sides and cause damage or obstruction to nearby homes and businesses.

River flooding is often fast flowing due to currents from the river and poses a particular risk to those walking or driving near a flooded area. The flowing water can carry obstacles which pose a risk to life and may damage elements of infrastructure.

- **Coastal flooding**

Coastal flooding affects communities situated close to the sea and occurs because of high tides and/or stormy weather. It is a major hazard for many areas of the UK. Seawater often over-tops coastal defences causing significant building damage and disruption to communities.

The primary focus is to mitigate the impacts of coastal flooding by building appropriate flood defences.

- **Surface water flooding**

Surface water (also known as pluvial) flooding can affect anyone, irrespective of proximity to a river or the sea. Surface water flooding occurs after periods of heavy rainfall where excess water cannot drain away effectively.

Often the cause can be as simple as blocked drains or just excessively high rainfall.

Surface water flood maps are available in the UK, but as housing and commerce development continues, the flood risks change, and new areas come under threat.

- **Groundwater flooding**

Groundwater flooding can affect homes and businesses although it is not the most common cause of flooding. For groundwater flooding to occur, the water table must rise because of

increased rain.

When the water table rises sufficiently, there comes a point where it is above the ground level and the water flows over the surface as it can no longer escape to ground.

Unlike other types of flooding, groundwater flooding can be mitigated by internal measures being taken within homes and businesses such as membranes/barriers which prevent water from rising.

- **Sewer**

Sewage flooding is rare but extremely unpleasant and can be a dangerous type of flood due to the high levels of bacteria that can spread. The risk of this type of flooding is low due to proactive measures taken by water companies and local authorities.

Wildfires

Wildfire risks typically increase during warm spring and summer months due to the dry fuel loads being vulnerable to ignition, whether that be because of inappropriate land management, deliberate acts, or accidental human interactions.

Incident demand

We use the Incident Recording System (IRS) to record data on all the incidents we attend, including flooding and wildfires. The following tables detail information on types of incidents attended during the periods of:

- 1 January – 31 December 2019
- 1 January – 31 December 2020
- 1 January – 31 December 2021

Flooding

The table below details the increase over recent years in our attendance to flood incidents.

As the data from our Strategic Assessment of Risk considered, the prevalence of flood events in Lancashire is on the increase.

Table 1 - Flood related incidents attended by LFRS

Source of flooding (IRS)	2019	2020	2021	Total
Flooding – ‘making safe’*	156	156	192	504
Surface water	46	101	39	186
Burst pipe	30	25	34	89
Rising river level	9	45	3	57
High tide	1	1		2
Total	242	328	268	838

*Storm Ciara was declared a Major Incident across all areas in Lancashire in 2020.

Table 2 - Prevalence of protracted flooding incidents

Prevalence of protracted flooding incidents	2019	2020	2021	Total
Incidents of 6+ hours	5	24	4	33

Wildfires

The following table demonstrates an increasing trend in wildfires.

Historically, the temperate climate of the UK has limited these incident types, but recent climatic change and longer dryer periods has led to an increase in numbers of wildfires that we attend, many of which require vehicles and other assets to bring the fire under control.

Table 3 - Wildfire related incidents attended by LFRS

Wildfire related incidents attended	2019	2020	2021	Total
Grassland, pasture, grazing etc	91	88	82	261
Heathland or moorland	29	36	14	79
Woodland/forest – broadleaf/hardwood	1	2	0	3
Woodland/forest – conifers/softwood	1	3	3	7
Total	122	129	99	350

Recent examples of large-scale protracted Wildfire incidents in Lancashire include:

- Anglezarke Moor, March 2011
- Darwen Moor, April 2016
- Winter Hill, June & July 2018
- Stones Bank Wood (Plantation), Darwen, May 2020
- Darwen Moor, May 2020
- Longridge Fell (Plantation), May 2020

When wildfires meet the NFCC wildfire definition**, they are reported into the National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) for tracking and recording purposes.

The following table illustrates the number of those incidents over recent periods:

Table 4 - Wildfire related incidents reported to NRAT

	2019	2020	2021	Total
Total number of Wildfire incidents reported to NRAT	14	21	10	45

**NFCC wildfire definition:

- Involves a geographical area of at least one hectare (10,000 square metres)
- Has a sustained flame length of more than 1.5 metres
- Requires a committed resource of at least four fire and rescue service appliances/resources
- Requires resources to be committed for at least six hours
- Presents a serious threat to life, environment, property, and infrastructure

Impacts of flooding and wildfire incidents

The impact of climate change is increasingly being experienced in the context of local and wide area flooding events and wildfires and when they do occur, these events can lead to significant risk to life, damage to communities and infrastructure.

LFRS is part of the Lancashire Resilience Forum and works with upper and lower tier councils and a wide range of partners to ensure communities are prepared. Areas of Lancashire which are known to be particularly vulnerable have established flood action groups and community resilience plans.

The wider risks and impacts of flooding and wildfires from a societal and economic perspective is not widely known within the UK, however, it has been evidenced that there are a range of long-term impacts, not just in terms of restoration of the landscape, but also on resource demand, public health, air quality, water quality and business.

Research has confirmed that there is more carbon locked up in UK peat soils than in all the trees in Britain and France together, with a significant amount of the upland in Lancashire containing sites of “deep peat.”

Release of carbon dioxide from wildfire events is significant; peatlands represent a significant store of carbon, with close to an estimated 20 million tonnes locked up within the Active Blanket Bog (ABB) habitats of the Peak District National Park alone.

In 2018, a case study² concluded that a 61 hectare fire in an ABB habitat had the potential to release up to 11,431 tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

LFRS have experienced several wildfires involving ‘Sites of Special Scientific Interest’ (SSSI), many because of deliberate or accidental human intervention. For example, wildfires had a significant impact on Winter Hill in 2018 and Darwen Moor in 2020.

Property and infrastructure

Lancashire faces a particular threat from flooding and wildfire due to the proximity of rivers, forestry and heathland to property and major transport routes.

Large areas at risk from flooding and wildfire are directly adjacent to commercially and residentially developed areas, consequently a major event has the real potential to damage an assortment of buildings and property.

Considerable amounts of critical infrastructure in Lancashire are located on or adjacent to rivers, forestry, Ministry of Defence training sites and other rural land; all of which are susceptible to flooding and wildfires.

This infrastructure is vital to the region’s economy and societal needs and can play a critical role in our response to emergency incidents.

² MoorLIFE-2020-A-case-study-estimating-the-amount-of-carbon-released-from-The-Roaches-wildfire-in-2018.pdf (moorsforthefuture.org.uk)

Temporary closure or damage to infrastructure has occurred in recent years, as experienced during the Winter Hill wildfire which had the potential to cause serious disruption to Lancashire's telecommunications infrastructure and result in significant economic consequences.

Additionally, much of our critical infrastructure, such as power lines, transport networks and utilities run via pipelines through or over rural locations to supply vital services to the urban areas. These can easily be affected by both floodwater and wildfires.

Given the density of major highways in Lancashire, the risk and impact of flooding and wildfires can be particularly acute.

National Highways have undertaken several modelling scenarios to estimate the cost of closing a variety of roads within the UK. This work identified that closure of a single main route, such as the M6 motorway can result in economic financial impacts of up to £1m per hour.

Social

Flooding and wildfires pose a direct and indirect risk to the communities we protect. Directly there is the risk to life; indirectly large-scale events can seriously reduce our emergency resilience to respond to other incidents, especially during periods of high demand e.g., school holidays, periods of sustained rainfall or high temperatures.

Many sites that are at risk of these events are also heavily used for recreation, putting walkers, cyclists, and dog owners in danger. In the worst-case scenario, these incidents could result in serious injury and the loss of life.

The risk of wildfire can create a conflict between the interests of landowners and managers and those who wish to access our countryside.

Landowners/managers can be keen to protect their assets and to protect the biodiversity, however, access to our stunning countryside is as a key priority for promoting health and recreation objectives.

This potential for conflict could be considerably reduced through improved public understanding of the risks and impact of wildfire on these areas.

Economic

The topography of Lancashire is simply magnificent with a number of tourism hotspots which together with the areas of Arncliffe and Silverdale, the Forest of Bowland and the Forest of Pendle are Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

These areas together with circa 90 square miles of upland area of the West Pennine Moors subsequently attract large numbers of local people along with visitors from much further afield for recreational purposes.

Therefore, incidents of flooding and wildfire have the potential to impact hugely with wide-ranging economic costs:

- Loss of income from the land - a flood or wildfire can be seriously detrimental to agricultural land and livestock, eliminating income for many years
- The costs of resourcing large scale protracted incidents are high due to the amount of personnel and equipment required
- Damage to property. The costs associated with initial repairs and restoration during the recovery phase can be huge and extremely time consuming
- Disruption and closure of local businesses adjacent to or within a risk area
- Land and homeowners may be unable to obtain flood or fire insurance cover at a reasonable cost

The combined effect of these costs can severely impact the viability of commercial enterprises, threatening jobs, which in turn could damage the sustainability of local economies.

Prevention, protection and education

Flooding

LFRS has already made significant improvements in how we work with partners and use modelling information to inform our prevention activities. This includes working alongside partners such as the Environment Agency, Met Office, and utility providers in the Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF) and utilising specialist weather-based applications such as 'Hazard Manager' to support pre-planning and forecasting information.

The Environment Agency co-ordinate the national flood alerting system and send alerts direct into LFRS officers.

Following a level 1 notification LFRS representatives may consider utilising software applications to monitor water/river levels.

Upon receipt of a level 2 or 3 notification, representatives from the Environment Agency can request LFRS dial into a flood advisory service call where response arrangements may be agreed.

- **Flood alert – level 1 notification (Green alert for LFRS)**

This means that flooding is possible, be prepared. It is used two hours to two days in advance of flooding.

- **Flood warning – level 2 notification (Amber alert for LFRS)**

This means that flood is expected, and immediate action is required. It is used half an hour to one day in advance

- **Severe flood warning – level 3 notification (Red alert for LFRS)**

This means that there is severe flooding and a danger to life. It is used when flooding poses a significant risk to life or significant disruption to communities.

In some high-risk areas in Lancashire our staff are embedded within community flood action groups. This encourages positive community engagement and supports the ability to communicate our prevention strategies.

We also engage with partners such as United Utilities to install water safety notice boards fitted with a life ring and throw rope; these can be a critical resource at known risk sites.

As the risk of fire significantly increases during flooding events; our fire protection teams now utilise flood risk as part of the risk-based approach to delivering our fire safety inspection programme.

Our aspirations

Over the course of this Climate Change Operational Response Plan, we intend to reduce the number, scale, and impact of flooding events by:

- Exploring the establishment of a Lancashire water safety partnership

- Continuing to work within the Lancashire Resilience Forum framework and with other key partners to reduce the risk to life and property arising from flooding events
- Implement an effective education and communication strategy to engage and educate communities and partners regarding flooding prevention and water safety. This will consider local, national, and international best practice in relation to flooding and water safety
- Working with communities and partners to support proactive measures during times of heightened weather alerts and warnings
- Considering the role played by our business safety advisors in providing additional business continuity advice in known locations of flood risk
- Delivering targeted home fire safety checks in domestic premises in known flood risk areas
- Further embedding staff within community flood action groups

Wildfire

Although these incidents can start naturally, the majority are caused either accidentally or deliberately by people. Increasing leisure activity on open access land, in conjunction with societal trends such as careless use of disposable barbecues and campfires, has only escalated these risks.

LFRS regularly work alongside partners from the Lancashire Fire Operations Group (LFOG) to prevent wildfires from occurring and provide safety advice to representatives of our local communities in preventing the ignition of wildfires and mitigating the effects of them if they do occur.

Annual wildfire prevention campaigns are delivered to local communities and the wider public across a variety of physical and social media platforms.

LFOG members and landowners such as United Utilities along with Lancashire Constabulary have actively contributed to the production and delivery of such media material.

LFRS staff also currently deliver prevention education in secondary schools using partner resources and our own teensafe wildfires module.

LFRS works closely with LFOG members and local volunteer groups such as Darwen Moorwatch who patrol predetermined risk areas during times of high risk. These volunteers offer wildfire safety advice to members of the public.

Should an incident occur they also provide early notification to North West Fire Control (NWFC) thus enabling LFRS to deploy a rapid response thereby preventing fire spread.

Our aspirations

It is acknowledged that our staff already undertake a range of successful activities in relation to wildfire prevention.

These will be strengthened by:

- Working with Lancashire Constabulary Rural Task Force to investigate the cause of wildfires and prosecute those responsible for deliberate fire setting and illegal off-road activities
- Supporting partners to implement the use and enforcement of public space protection orders banning the use of barbecues and campfires and restricting access to areas at high risk of wildfires
- Considering the creation of wildfire toolkits enabling LFRS staff and resources to support partnership prevention through activities such as prescribed burning and flail cutting for landowners / managers as per the South Wales FRS model.
- Working with landowners and Natural England for effective application of the burn code
- Working with public and key partners to change legislation and/or influence societal trends. This could include the development of a land use framework used to inform decisions on how land is used, managed, and protected
- Raising public awareness of wildfire safety
- Supporting the development and implementation of a UK fire danger rating system
- Working with local authorities to create designated barbecue areas in country parks
- Implementing an effective intelligence led education and communication strategy to engage and educate communities regarding wildfire prevention such as the national firewise campaign
- Considering the role played by business safety advisors in providing additional business continuity advice in known locations of wildfire risk
- Delivering targeted home fire safety checks in domestic premises in known wildfire risk areas
- Working with volunteer groups to expand prevention activities such as Darwen Moorwatch into other identified risk sites

Emergency planning

Flooding

The Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF) has a specific flooding group that brings together stakeholders from across all sectors and ensures that the various agencies have effective, co-ordinated plans in place to prepare and respond to incidents of this type.

These plans are merged to form the LRF multi-agency flood plans, part 1 and 2 which are available on the shared platform, Resilience Direct.

Testing and exercising plans is key to the effectiveness of the response, with recommendations and improvements driven at all levels to ensure matters relating to planning and response arrangements are robust.

The Environment Agency has installed telemetry devices at several locations throughout Lancashire where rivers are prone to flooding and data from these is used to provide an immediate flood warning to Category 1 responders.

LFRS appliances have Mobile Data Terminals (MDT's) which record and store rapid response catchment area flood plans for these river locations. On receipt of a flood warning in a rapid response catchment area, NWFC automatically mobilise the nearest fire appliance.

The incident commander follows the instructions on the flood plan to enable a multi-agency response to be instigated. This early notification provides LFRS with valuable time to prepare prior to a flood related incident occurring.

Loss of power during severe flooding events significantly increases fire risk within a commercial environment, therefore LFRS protection staff review the flood risk as part of the risk-based inspection programme during fire safety inspections.

Our aspirations

During this plan, we will:

- Undertake operational risk assessments which will support the creation of tactical plans for known high risk locations
- Review the advice and signposting capability provided by business safety advisors when conducting protection activity in recognised flood risk areas
- Review the targeting and prioritisation of home fire safety checks in relation to the increased risk experienced by households in recognised flood risk areas

Wildfire

To support the national approach, our lead wildfire tactical advisors attend the England and Wales Wildfire Forum and the National Wildfire Conference along with supporting implementation of the Natural Hazard Partnership and Fire Severity Index (fire danger rating system).

This allows LFRS to identify the potential for significant wildfire events and prepare its wildfire units and staff for deployment.

The Daily Hazard Assessment (DHA) allows LFRS to determine the likelihood of a significant event and carry out preventative measures and increase our presence in known wildfire locations, this includes the use of volunteer groups undertaking firewatch activities between significant hours and informing people of the risk during community engagement events.

Locally our managers (supported by wildfire tactical advisors) are embedded within many groups which enable a pre-planned and co-ordinated response to incidents.

This work includes chairing the Lancashire Fire Operations Group (LFOG), supporting the South Pennine Fire Operations Group (SPFOG) and Cumbria Fire Operations Group (CFOG) whilst engaging and supporting partners from United Utilities, Mountain Rescue, volunteer groups (Darwen Moorwatch), local authorities (Emergency Planning) and the Lancashire Constabulary Rural Task Force.

LFRS always has a nominated Command Support Officer on duty who receives notification from the Met Office of potential severe weather events.

These officers liaise with partner agencies to understand the scope, potential impacts and operational requirements that may be required to effectively deal with an ongoing situation. This usually involves the standing up of our Command Support Room where activities are co-ordinated from.

LFRS continues to utilise a range of websites and application's including Natural Hazards Partnership, Met Office, Sentinel Hub, and the Fire Information for Resource Management System (FIRMS) for early warning notification and forecasting.

Through Resilience Direct (RD), LFRS has access to the National Asset Register and the LFOG asset list, from which we can draw upon vehicles and equipment from partners, landowners, and external contractors.

Our aspirations

During the term of this plan, we will:

- Review our reporting/monitoring processes to demonstrate the impact of weather-related incidents
- Undertake operational risk assessments which will support the creation of tactical plans for known high risk locations
- Continue to invest in technology to support preplanning activities

Training

LFRS seek to deliver the highest standards of operational response by continuously planning and preparing, including internal and external training exercises for emergencies, so that we are best able to respond efficiently and effectively to any flooding or wildfire incident.

Flooding

LFRS personnel are trained to the following competencies:

Level 1 – Floodsuit responder (FR)

Completed by staff at all stations except Swift Water Rescue (SRT) and boat locations. Floodsuit responder is our equivalent of the basic national standard Water and Flood Awareness qualification.

Level 2 - Swiftwater and flood first responder (SFR)

This qualification permits our high volume pump crews to work safely in and near water no deeper than their waist. They are only taught swimming techniques for the purpose of self-rescue.

Level 3 - Swiftwater and flood rescue technician (SRT)

We currently have SRT trained staff geographically distributed at strategic locations across the county.

Level 4 - Swiftwater and flood rescue boat operator (SFRBO)

Staff at strategic locations are trained to SFRBO which allows them to safely deploy and operate the rescue boats that we have in county. As a prerequisite, these staff also receive SRT training, although they are not utilised for standard SRT operations.

Level 5 – Flood water incident management (FWIM)

Operational middle managers undertake this training to support operational activity in a rescue and flooding environment.

Level 6 – Flood water incident manager tactical advisor

These subject matter advisors can be requested to support a complex incident via National Resilience.

Lancashire has recently hosted a DEFRA assurance visit that assessed our assets against the DEFRA Concept of Operations released in late 2019.

The visit confirmed that LFRS aligns firmly with the requirement of DEFRA standards.

Our aspirations

It is our intention to maintain existing skillsets and with this in mind we will:
Train a further cohort of level 5 Flood Water Incident Managers (FWIM's).

Develop several officers presently qualified to FWIM standard, to level 6 Flood Water Tactical Advisors, for use in county or as part of National Resilience arrangements.

Wildfire

The current wildfire response identifies the levels of wildfire training in LFRS from 'Wildfire awareness' to 'Wildfire Burn Supervisor'.

Level 1 - Wildfire awareness training

- Undertaken by all operational crews
- Skills maintained through local training and exercises
- Annual e-learning module

Level 2 - Wildfire teams

- An initial course for new personnel
- Skills maintained through local training and exercises
- E-learning training package

Level 3 - Wildfire manager (internal tactical advisors)

- An initial wildfire managers course
- Skills maintained through local training and exercises
- Attend a refresher course

Level 4 - Advanced wildfire manager/National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) wildfire tactical adviser

- An advanced wildfire managers course
- Maintain skills through training, exercises, and national forums
- Attend annual wildfire tactical advisor conference / course

Burn team

- An initial burn supervisor course
- Skills maintained skills through training and exercises
- Annual development requirement

- Three yearly international training

Our provision and distribution of these specialisms will be reviewed on an ongoing basis aligned to any change in risk in Lancashire.

Engagement with the NFCC Wildfire forum will ensure that there is effective liaison and exchange of information between the England and Wales Wildfire Forum (EWWF), Scottish Wildfire Forum (SWF) and other relevant organisations and agencies to maintain appropriate situational awareness.

Our aspirations

During this plan, we will:

- Review the disposition of specialist wildfire officers and tactical advisors, specialist skill sets such as burn team capability, and our off-road driving capabilities
- Consider enhancements in training which may arise because of international/global changes in wildfire firefighting techniques

Operational response

We presently utilise a range of fleet assets to deliver our operational response to flooding and wildfire incidents.

As part of our Emergency Cover Review, and this response plan, we commit to keep under constant review, the suitability, size, and distribution of such assets aligned to risk in Lancashire.

Furthermore, we will monitor technological developments to identify possible improvements in firefighting capabilities which could further strengthen our response arrangements.

Flooding

Our present flooding assets include:

- Fire engines with a pumping capability of 2000 litres per minute (lpm). All crew-members (other than SRT crews) are issued with flood suits and life jackets which permit crews to wade up to waist deep in still water (figure 2)
- Water Tower (Stinger) appliances with a pumping capability of 5000 lpm (figure 3)
- A high volume pump which is a National Resilience asset with an output of 7000 lpm (figure 4), deployed with the hose box which can deliver up to 3km hose for an incident
- Water rescue pump units located at SRT stations. These appliances carry a variety of equipment including dry suits, helmets, floating lines, and rescue sleds (figure 5).
- Rescue boats (figure 6)
- Rescue rafts (figure 7)
- Flood water incident managers
- Access to externally provided assets to support flooding response
- Specialist national support via National Resilience arrangements

Our aspirations

Over the duration of the CCORP we intend to:

- Review the suitability, number, and disposition of flood resources in line with the Emergency Cover Review and Special Appliance Review. This will include enhancing our transportation and off-road capabilities, to support improved operational response to flooding incidents in rural locations
- Purchase two Haggglund off-road vehicles for use in flooding incidents or wildfire environments (figure 8)
- Develop our incident command and Command Support Room capability through evaluating the use of new technology, body worn cameras and personal tracking devices as per mountain rescue to improve situational awareness and health and safety of staff
- Evaluate the provision of evacuation sleds

Wildfire

We presently maintain a range of fleet vehicles dedicated to wildfire response; these include:

- All front-line fire appliances are equipped with a selection of small tools, beaters, aqua leader water packs
- Hagglund tracked vehicles provided by third party organisations transported to incidents by a beavertail flatbed transporter (figure 9)
- Polaris (figure 10), a six-wheeled vehicle with 250 litre water tank and high-pressure fogging system
- Wildfire support 4x4 (figure 11) carrying various pieces of wildfire equipment including blowers, small pumps, and other ancillary equipment
- Water bowser (figure 12) with 9000 litre water capacity, which will supply vast amounts of water to remote and hard to reach areas or areas with low water flow
- Burn team comprising staff trained to undertake controlled burns as part of our suite of tactical options to deal with wildfires
- Internal wildfire tactical advisors
- National wildfire tactical advisors (WFTA)
- Access to externally provided assets to support wildfire response

Our aspirations

We aim to further develop our wildfire operational response by:

- Working with communities and partners to support joint operational response to incidents
- Considering development of our burn team capability across other areas of the county
- Reviewing the provision of LFRS assets to ensure that our 4x4 vehicles remain amongst the most versatile and reliable during wildfire conditions
- Review our existing wildfire team resources with a view to developing a flail / cutting capability. This will enable us to manage fuel loading, without the impact from controlled burning in locations where Natural England have designated SSSI and deep peat sites
- Working with neighbouring FRSs, partners, researchers and manufacturers, utilising advancements in technology and equipment to develop enhanced solutions incidents
- Taking the opportunity to learn from local, regional, and national response and best practice

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

As a Service which seeks to continually learn and improve from our experiences, we actively debrief incidents attended to identify opportunities for improvement to practices and Personal protective equipment.

Flooding

All operational staff are equipped to operate as part of an initial crew responding to floods. This includes the provision of flood suits, life jackets and throw lines for all first responders. Swift water rescue (SRT) crews have dry suits, safety footwear and helmets issued.

High volume pump crews (HVP) are issued flood suits and a selection of drysuits with integral boots and floatation devices as worn by SRT crews for use during National deployments.

Our aspirations

We will continue to utilise incident debriefing along with regional and national learning to review the provision of personal protective equipment for staff at flooding incidents.

National guidance regarding the use of personal floatation devices for evacuees during flooding is currently being updated; we intend to evaluate a suitable provision for this purpose.

Wildfire

Following feedback from previous incidents and exercises, we have recently issued all operational staff with Altberg safety boots which provide enhanced ankle support over rough terrain and can be worn at a variety of incidents.

We have also made good progress with the first phase of our PPE improvement ambitions, by providing dedicated wildfire PPE to members of our burn team along with the Hagglund operators.

Our aspirations

We aim to broaden the rollout of specialist wildfire PPE, underpinning our aspirations to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of firefighters against smoke, radiated heat and climatic heat exposure when operating at wildfire incidents.

Welfare

Welfare of our staff is of primary significance particularly when operating over protracted periods in arduous conditions.

Basic needs provided by LFRS include provisions such as water bottles, sun hats, creams, and insect repellents which are readily available for all staff attending flooding and wildfire incidents along with extended deployment bags for those deployed out of county.

For protracted incidents we can deliver welfare arrangements at scene via external contractors and volunteers from the Salvation Army.

In recent years, LFRS have made considerable advances, including the implementation of a dedicated welfare / rest unit and use of generators, powered cool boxes, individual food ration packs and shelters.

These resources allow for a forward control/welfare point to be established at an easily accessible location on the fireground.

Our aspirations

Over the course of this Climate Change Operational Response Plan, we aim to constantly review and improve these facilities based upon our operational learning from incidents and advancements locally, regionally, and nationally across the fire and rescue service sector.

Achieving our goals and reporting our progress

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service is well prepared to respond to flooding and wildfires when they occur.

However, due to climate change the risk of flooding and wildfire is ever increasing and hence, continued investment in training, equipment, education, and community resilience is required to ensure that we, partners, and our communities are not only prepared for future incidents but have also done everything possible to mitigate the impacts of flooding and wildfires should they occur.

The Combined Fire Authority (CFA) sets the Service challenging targets for a range of key performance indicators (KPI) which help us to monitor and measure our performance in achieving success and meeting our priorities.

Performance against these KPIs is scrutinised every quarter at the CFA Performance Committee.

Over the course of this Climate Change Operational Response Plan, we will use incident data to track and measure our performance throughout the year.

Delivery against the ambitions contained within this Climate Change Operational Response Plan will also be made available via our Annual Service Report.

Appendices



Figure 2 - Flood suit equipment



Figure 3 - Water Tower (Stinger) pumping appliance



Figure 4 - High volume pump





Figure 5 - Selection of equipment carried on water rescue pumps



Figure 6 - Type B rescue boat



Figure 7 - Type C rescue raft



Figure 8 - Example Hagglund vehicle



Figure 9 - Beavertail transport for Hagglund vehicle



Figure 10 - Polaris vehicle



Figure 11 - Wildfire support 4x4



Figure 12 - Water bowser

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 17 February 2025

Member Champion Activity Report

Contact for further information – Assistant Chief Fire Officer Samantha Pink
Tel: 01772 866802

Executive Summary

This paper provides a report on the work of the Member Champions for the period up to 16 February 2025.

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 – County Councillor Matthew Salter
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Councillor Zamir Khan.
- Health and Wellbeing – County Councillor Hasina Khan.
- Road Safety – Councillor Fred Jackson.

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 – County Councillor Matthew Salter

It has been another successful quarter in the delivery of prevention activities across the county, via the Community Fire Safety (CFS) Teams and Operational Crews.

In particular, during Q3 crews from Chorley supported the CFS team in the delivery of diversionary activities at West Sports Village. They played football with the children and young people who attended as well as showing them around the fire engine and provided fire safety advice to local parents and guardians.

At Edge Hill University during the January Freshers Fayre, the CFS team delivered the Road Safety Campaign ‘Wasted Lives’ to students. They also continued to deliver the initiative over the course of the month, to BAE Apprentices and pupils from Bishop Rawsthorne Academy in Croston, Up Holland High School, Lathom High School in Skelmersdale and Balshaw’s High School in Leyland.

At a multi-agency event organised by West Lancashire Borough Council, the CFS team delivered a presentation to frontline workers on the prevention of condensation and

mould in properties. Since the event, a targeted approach has been established with the Council, in which if a property during a Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) is identified as having damp or mould, the Authority will be immediately notified. This change further reflects the shared commitment to proactive measures for healthier living environments and demonstrates the importance of the Service's collaborative work across agencies.

The Southern CFS team presented an overview of prevention activities that the Service offers, at a Primary Care Network 'Away Day'. The presentation was well received and led to a roll-out of the same at Children and Family Wellbeing Services in West Lancashire and South Ribble, as well as the Community Hub at St Thomas the Martyr Parish Church in Up Holland.

Partnership working in Northern has seen operational crews working closely with the 'Guinness Partnership' housing association for 'Westfield War Memorial Village' in Lancaster. The team have been delivering talks to residents on Cooking Safety, Electrical Safety, Heating and Cost of Living, in addition to providing a free HFSC.

Also, over the course of quarter 3, the housing association 'Places for People' (PFP) requested support via the Northern CFS team in relation to carrying out HFSC's at their residential properties in Heysham, further to a serious incident involving a basement flat occupied by rough sleepers. The partnership work with PFP has been strengthened, resulting in the Service receiving a greater number of referrals for HFSC's.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) – County Councillor Zamir Khan MBE

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

A leadership and development event was delivered in January 2025, which was an opportunity to celebrate the work of our employee voice groups and for participants to contribute actions which will contribute to the new People Strategy and EDI Action Plan.

Several colleagues attended the Women in the Fire Service Regional event hosted by Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS). Workshops and development included Road Traffic Collision, Marauding Terrorism and Incident Command. Several colleagues also attended the Asian Fire Service Conference which provided opportunities for networking and development.

A new translation app has been tested and rolled out. This has more languages, is more inclusive, and has now replaced the previous, more limited app.

A capital project to upgrade welfare facilities at W30 Blackpool is in progress; a contractor has been appointed, with works commencing on site and due for completion in July 2025.

The Service are also in the process of achieving a bronze level accreditation as a Dyslexia Friendly Workplace with the British Dyslexia Association.

Health, Wellbeing & Climate Change – County Councillor Hasina Khan

Climate Change and Environment

In October we promoted 'Unblocktober'. This is a national campaign and awareness month to improve the health of our drains, sewers, watercourses and seas. Over the last few decades, people have been consistently pouring dangerous liquids and items into our drains, leading to the creation of fatbergs. Fatbergs are enormous masses of congealed fat, oil, grease, wet wipes, cotton buds, nappies, bandages and much more. These huge fatbergs block drains and sewers, causing them to work less effectively than they should.



As part of this promotion, we distributed spatulas to all stations to encourage staff to move leftovers to a container and save them in the fridge, and to make sure all food is removed to the bin before washing up or putting in the dishwasher – by using the spatula to clear out the container. A version of 'snakes and ladders' called 'pipes and drains' was created and shared across stations, to promote the potential issues from putting waste down drains.

In December, we promoted 'No Waste Christmas', as during the festive period around 30% more waste is generated. Each year this includes over 1 billion Christmas cards thrown away, as well as an estimated 50,000 trees cut down to make paper to wrap presents, and around 12 million tonnes of plastic entering our environment. That's equivalent to a bin lorry load every minute! As part of this promotion, we shared 24 ways in which people could reduce their waste over the festive period in a Routine Bulletin article.

Health and Wellbeing

In October, we promoted awareness about the impact of arthritis in support of National Arthritis Week. Around 1 in 6 people in the UK are thought to have arthritis, so raising awareness of the most common types, such as Osteoarthritis and Rheumatoid, is important for all staff – operational and non-operational. A Routine Bulletin article was written to provide basic information about the signs and symptoms of arthritis, along with simple coping strategies, like low impact exercise such as yoga, or a daily stroll to help reduce symptoms. The article also contained details to signpost to further specialist information and was accompanied by a wellness workshop from the Fire Fighters Charity about Understanding and Managing Back Pain.



In December we held our annual Christmas quiz, incorporating a 'Best Christmas Jumper' competition, judged by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer. As always, the event was well supported, with extra tables and chairs having to be brought into the room to accommodate everyone.

We will continue to host a quarterly wellbeing/fitness event at Headquarters, with the next event being a yoga session, scheduled for the end of February 2025.

Road Safety –Councillor Fred Jackson

On Friday, 13 December 2024, an impactful event took place outside of Jamia Ghausia Mosque on Abel Street, Burnley, aimed at raising awareness of the dangers of speeding and reckless driving. The event featured a crash car demonstration and was organised in partnership with key local and regional partners, including Burnley Council, the Lancashire Council of Mosques, Lancashire Partnership Against Crime (LANPAC), Lancashire County Council, Neighbourhood Policing Team along with Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) staff from Prevention Support and the Community Safety team.

The event was supported by Burnley Council Leader, Councillor Afrasiab Anwar, and Combined Fire Authority (CFA) member County Councillor Usman Arif, who both addressed the crowd, emphasising the importance of responsible driving. Councillor Anwar shared key messages about the dangers of speeding, especially amongst young drivers, and the vital role community collaboration plays in improving road safety. The Imam from the local mosque also took the opportunity to speak, highlighting the importance of driving safely and respecting road laws to protect both oneself and others.

Faz Patel and Kelly McHugh from the Central Area team, also discussed the emotional and psychological impact of speeding, not just on the drivers, but on victims, passengers, families, and the wider community. Their poignant message about the far-reaching effects of road traffic accidents resonated deeply with attendees, reinforcing the importance of safe driving.

Following the success of this event, LFRS are continuing to work with our partners to replicate the session in other identified risk areas, communicating this powerful

message to their audiences. This will ensure that the conversation about road safety continues to be spread across all communities in Lancashire.



In addition, a Christmas Road Safety Campaign also took place at Halton Barracks focussed on raising awareness of the Lancashire 'Fatal 5' (Speeding, Drugs, Alcohol, Mobile Phones and Seatbelts).

Over 70 soldiers attended the half day workshop. Kirsty McLoughlin, from the Prevention Support Team, delivered a presentation which included a video clip about a young girl who tragically died when her cousin drove under the influence and whilst on his mobile phone. The footage was very emotive and following this, the soldiers watched a clip from the Master Driver, which complemented the 'Fatal 5' and went on to focus about the dangers of driving whilst fatigued.

The workshop was extremely well received and provided another great example of our partnership work with Lancashire County Council, who kindly provided the interactive virtual headsets for the day, and our continued involvement in the Lancashire Road Safety Partnership.

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 Samantha Pink

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

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 17 February 2025

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 may also be 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

Prosecution Outcome

On the 24 January 2025, sentencing took place at Preston Crown Court regarding 284 Burnley Road, Cole where the responsible person, Potensial were sentenced to:

- A fine of £135,000.00
- Ordered to pay costs of £18,705.00 to Lancashire Fire and Rescue.

The offences to which Potensial pleaded guilty to were:

- Failure to take such general fire safety precautions so as to ensure the safety of residents and staff. Article 8(1)(b).
- Failure to make a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment. Article 9(1).

Prosecution Case Progress

LFRS currently have two cases relating to the same premises within the court system. These relate to two responsible persons at a care and nursing home. One case is set for sentencing on the 29 January 2025 at the Magistrates Court. The second case has a dismissal hearing on the 24 March 2025 at Crown Court along with a trial date set for the 28 July 2025.

One further case is set for trial on the 14 July 2025 relating to student accommodation.

Protection teams continue to investigate and build case files in relation to nineteen premises where offences are believed to have been committed under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005, which include the following:

- Care and Nursing Home x 1
- House in Multiple Occupation x 5
- Residential Flats x 1
- Mixed commercial and Residential x 6
- Commercial car repair garage x1
- Commercial restaurant x 1
- Nightclub x 1
- Health care setting x 1
- Hotel x 2

Enforcement Notice Appeals

LFRS have recently been engaged with two appeals against the issuing of Enforcement Notices.

One appeal has been withdrawn and costs paid to LFRS, with the other appeal being withdrawn following the company in question no longer having any level of control over the premises, thus no longer a responsible person. Regulatory activity continues to be in place on the premises to ensure fire safety compliance.

Arson risk reduction

There have been no arson convictions during this reporting period. There are 14 live cases ongoing through the Criminal Justice System that we continue to progress.

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

Failure of Responsible Persons to meet new legislative requirements placed upon them, may result in LFRS undertaking additional prosecution cases in future.

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 17 February 2025

Operational Incidents of Interest

Contact for further information – Assistant Chief Fire Officer Samantha Pink
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:

- Rescue of persons from flood water in Bacup (23/11/24)
- Response to persons in flood water in Colne (23/11/24)
- Commercial building fire in Preston (23/11/24)
- Fire involving hay bales in Chorley (29/11/24)
- Road Traffic Collision in Darwen (9/12/24)
- Domestic property fire in Chorley (9/12/24)
- Domestic property fire in Morecambe (13/12/24)
- Rescue of person in Blackburn (21/1/25)
- Commercial building fire in Blackburn (23/1/25)
- Derelict hotel fire in Blackpool (27/1/25)

LFRS station area:	P73 Bacup
Date:	23 November 2024
Time:	15:31

One fire engine from Burnley fire station along with special appliances from Rawtenstall fire station attended Market Street, Bacup. Firefighters used the Hagglund climate response vehicle to rescue two casualties who had become stranded due to rising flood waters. Firefighters were in attendance for three hours.

LFRS station area:	P96 Colne
Date:	23 November 2024
Time:	16:22

Two fire engines from Earby, Barnoldswick, two Swift Water Rescue Teams (SRT) from Nelson and Penwortham and the boat from Preston fire station attended Cockhill Lane, Foulridge to reports of one casualty swept away in flood water. This was sadly a fatal incident. Fire crews were on scene for approximately one hour and forty minutes.

LFRS station area:	C50 Preston
Date:	23 November 2024
Time:	09:41

Three fire engines, two from Preston and one from Fulwood attended an incident adjacent to Terrace Street, Preston. The fire involved a commercial premises.

Crews used six breathing apparatus, two positive pressure ventilation fans, two hose reels, one short extension ladder and breaking-in equipment (including heavy rescue Holmatro cutters) to gain entry and extinguish the fire. One casualty was rescued by fire service personnel but refused medical treatment. Crews were in attendance for three hours and fifty minutes.

LFRS station area:	S54 Chorley
Date:	29 November 2024
Time:	19:12

Four fire engines from Chorley, Bamber Bridge, Preston and Fulwood and the water bowser from Leyland attended Chapel Lane, Heapey. The fire involved a large quantity of hay bales. Fire crews used three jets to extinguish the fire. Crews were in attendance for approximately six hours.

LFRS station area:	E76 Darwen
Date:	9 December 2024
Time:	10:51

Fire engines from Darwen, Chorley and Blackburn attended a road traffic collision involving a heavy goods vehicle and a pedestrian on Bolton Road, Darwen. The incident proved to be fatal and one casualty was left in the care of paramedics. Fire crews were on scene for an hour.

LFRS station area:	S54 Chorley
Date:	9 December 2024
Time:	21:08

Three fire engines from Chorley and Bamber Bridge fire stations attended a fire involving a domestic property on Longfield Avenue in Coppull. On scene, crews used four breathing apparatus and two hose reels to fight the fire. One casualty was confirmed fatal at scene by North West Ambulance Service. Fire crews remained in attendance for a number of hours supporting partner agencies.

LFRS station area:	N12 Morecambe
Date:	13 December 2024
Time:	21:19

Six fire engines from Morecambe, Lancaster, Bolton-le-Sands and Preston, an Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) and the drone, attended an incident on Northumberland Street, Morecambe. The incident involved a fire in a mid-terraced property. Whilst in attendance, crews used four breathing apparatus, three hose reels, a positive pressure ventilation fan, lighting, a triple extension ladder and thermal imaging camera, to locate and extinguish the fire. Crews were in attendance for approximately seven hours.

LFRS station area:	E71 Blackburn
Date:	21 January 2025
Time:	19:20

Crews from Blackburn, Great Harwood, Hyndburn, the Rope Rescue Team and the Aerial Ladder Platform from Hyndburn attended an incident on Sunny Bank Road, Blackburn. Fire crews assisted North West Ambulance Service after a casualty slipped on a muddy slope approximately 100 metres from the roadway. Fire crews used a wheeled basket stretcher to assist the recovery of the casualty. Crews were on scene approximately one hour.

LFRS station area:	E71 Blackburn
Date:	23 January 2025
Time:	11:29

Five fire engines from Preston, Bamber Bridge, Blackburn and Longridge attended a commercial building fire on Myerscough Road, Balderstone. Firefighters used six breathing apparatus and hose reel jets to extinguish the fire. Crews were in attendance for two hours and thirty minutes.

LFRS station area:	W30 Blackpool
Date:	27 January 2025
Time:	17:38

Eight fire engines and two Aerial Ladder Platforms from Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) attended an incident on Wilton Parade, Blackpool. The fire involved a derelict hotel with all three floors on fire. Crews used three breathing apparatus, four jets, one hose reel, a ground monitor and the drone at the incident. Firefighters remained in attendance overnight and into the following day in order to bring the incident to a safe and successful conclusion.

Business risk

None arising from this report.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

Potential impact on local environment in relation to operational incidents. Significant incidents benefit from the attendance of specialist water towers 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