

# Public Document Pack

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee

**Monday, 15 July 2024 in Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters,  
Fulwood commencing at 10.00 am.**

If you have any queries regarding the agenda papers or require any further information, please initially contact Sam Hunter on telephone number Preston (01772) 866720 and she will be pleased to assist.

## Agenda

### Part 1 (open to press and public)

#### **Chairman's Announcement – Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014**

Any persons present at the meeting may photograph, film or record the proceedings, during the public part of the agenda. Any member of the press and public who objects to being photographed, filmed or recorded should let it be known to the Chairman who will then instruct that those persons are not photographed, filmed or recorded.

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**  
  
Members are asked to consider any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests they may have to disclose to the meeting in relation to matters under consideration on the agenda.
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 1 - 20)**
4. **HMICFRS update (Pages 21 - 26)**
5. **Blue Light Collaboration update (Pages 27 - 30)**
6. **Emergency Cover Review update (Pages 31 - 34)**
7. **Annual Service Report (Pages 35 - 62)**
8. **Business Continuity Planning and Testing (Pages 63 - 66)**
9. **Urgent Business**

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

10. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee has been agreed for 10:00 hours on **18 November 2024** in the Main Conference Room, at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Further meetings are:   scheduled for 03 February 2025  
                                  proposed for 14 July 2025

**Lancashire Combined Fire Authority  
Planning Committee**

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

**Minutes**

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

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

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

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Engagement sessions had taken place with all the members of staff affected. Implementation of the changes to crewing arrangements were led by people's preferences in terms of the duty system they wished to work, subject to the skill requirements and the demands of the Service. Members of staff permanently employed on Day Crewing Plus (DCP) stations were offered a role at an alternative DCP station, or a position at their current station depending on their preference with some members of staff securing promotion opportunities. Following engagement with staff affected by the ECR, the Service had collated the preferences of staff who would be displaced and had informed them of their new postings upon implementation of the ECR changes.

A training needs analysis had been completed and training was underway to meet the needs of the Service and staff, although it was anticipated that there would be some short-term challenges around the availability of some of the Service's special skills until the training was completed. For example, training around bariatric rescues, where, in some circumstances, the next nearest resource would be mobilised and/ or detachments considered.

Property alterations at Morecambe, Fleetwood and Skelmersdale had been agreed which would support and accommodate the increase in staff at those stations.

Station engagement sessions had been held with staff at those stations to communicate the changes to them.

Implementation of the change of duty systems and establishment numbers was planned for 1 March 2024. All changes, with the exception of Penwortham, would take place at the same time as follows:

- Morecambe, Fleetwood and Skelmersdale (changing from DCP to 2-2-4 Wholetime) increasing establishment numbers from 14 to 24;
- St Annes (changing from DCP to Flexible Day Crewing) reducing establishment numbers from 14 to 13;
- Hyndburn, South Shore and Lancaster (remaining 2-2-4 Wholetime) reducing establishment numbers from 28 to 24;
- Darwen, Rawtenstall, Nelson and Bispham (remaining DCP) reducing establishment numbers from 14 to 13;
- Fulwood, Bacup, Ormskirk and Leyland (remaining Flexible Day Crewing) reducing from 14 to 13;
- Penwortham will remain as DCP whilst the Preston area review is carried out, the establishment number will reduce from 14 to 13 in line with other DCP stations.

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

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

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

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

discuss the possibility of flexible leave arrangements.

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

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

The dynamic cover software was now in use in LFRS, both within the Command Support Room at Service Headquarters and through the mobile devices of all Flexi Duty Officers. The software had been used successfully during a number of large-scale incidents and periods of high incident activity, to move resources according to the risk.

The next phase of this project was to embed the software and its use at North West Fire Control (NWFC). A standalone facility had been installed on the Lancashire pod at NWFC so that Control Room Operators could familiarise themselves with the software. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer highlighted that LFRS was currently the only Service in the North West using the software and further work would take place with NWFC to embed the software into their core business.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In response to a query raised by County Councillor Rigby in relation to training Flood Water Tactical Advisors in flood risk knowledge specific to Lancashire, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained that the Service had fully trained Swift Water Rescue Technicians across the county situated in areas of risk along with a

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

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

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

The Service's largest ever ALP was currently in build and should be delivered during quarter 1 of 2024/25. There would then be a period of familiarisation and training for operational crews prior to the appliance going on the run at Preston.

##### **Invest in two Additional Water Towers**

The new appliances were due for delivery during quarter 3 of 2024/25. Similar to the new ALP, there would be a period of familiarisation and training prior to the appliances going on the run, which were anticipated to be located at St Annes and Lancaster. Due to the current state of the motor industry globally, some delays had been encountered, particularly around vehicle parts which had caused a delay in the manufacturing of these vehicles.

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

##### **Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) Driving**

On Call staff at Hyndburn were now trained to drive the ALP to incidents and they had already successfully utilised this skill on a number of occasions by driving the ALP to incidents. On Call staff at Morecambe had completed driver training in November 2023 and were also now trained to drive the ALP to incidents which went live in December 2023.

##### **Command Support Unit (CSU)**

The CSU went live on 1 November 2023 and was crewed by On Call staff from Bolton-le-Sands and Carnforth. The CSU had attended two significant incidents since its introduction with both being large commercial building fires. The first incident was in Longridge with the second being the Supaskips incident in Lancaster where it had provided an effective command support resource over a prolonged period.

##### **On Call and Specials Review**

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

County Councillor Shedwick commented that he welcomed the development of On-Call staff in swift water rescue and to drive the ALP to incidents.

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



response.

- Invest in our training centre;
- Drill tower replacement programme; and
- Invest in our fleet and operational equipment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In response to a question from Councillor Hugo, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer

explained that in the event that an employee was suspended, they would receive written correspondence which would direct them to access support services, the EAP, and where appropriate they would be referred to Occupational Health.

Councillor Hugo enquired about the Service's response to climate mitigation. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that, through an annual planning day involving the Service Management Team, the Service identified environmental priorities alongside the work of the Safety, Health and Environment Department which would review a 25-year plan around the Carbon Reduction Management Plan. This plan would be presented to Members through a future committee.

Following a request from County Councillor Hennessy for further information regarding HFSCs and aligning with national principles and products, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained that the NFCC had a variety of products that included Staywise, which was an education prevention programme aimed at children of school age, and a dashboard which filtered HFSC needs through a series of questions which the Service could refer to. LFRS would continue to develop ways of improving HFSC referrals and visits through future work.

In response to a request from County Councillor Hennessy for an example of evaluating ways to develop the Service to take account of emerging trends, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer referenced the Strategic Assessment of Risk and the Evaluation Framework that the Service had developed. Through the Evaluation Framework, patterns could be identified with prevention work put in place which would then be evaluated for effectiveness.

County Councillor Hennessy requested further information regarding the development of a new recruitment and workforce planning tool to which the Deputy Chief Fire officer responded that work would take place with ORH Ltd (developers of the Dynamic Cover Tool), to explore the data from the Service to create a workforce planning tool for on-call. The tool could then provide an analysis for each station of the officer in charge skill, drivers, availability etc, and intelligently evaluate the best resourcing / future planning arrangement. Members noted that an update would be provided to a future committee.

**Resolved:** That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the Annual Service Plan for publication.

24/23

**Strategic Assessment of Risk**

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented a report on the Service's Strategic Assessment of Risk for 2023/24.

Risk in Lancashire would always remain dynamic: it changed over time, differed by area and demographic, and needed different interventions to reduce the likelihood of the risk occurring or to lessen its consequences. These risks were identified in the Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAoR) which was refreshed annually and was also informed by the Lancashire Resilience Forum Community Risk Register. Through its risk management framework, the Service continually assessed changing risk and prioritised its response framework.

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

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

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

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

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

Members queried and discussed the level of risk connected to Lithium-Ion batteries. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that there were inherent risks

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

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

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

County Councillor Rigby thanked officers for a fabulous report.

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

25/23

### **Consultation Strategy - Annual Review**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Preston area provision.

### **3. Community First Responder**

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

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

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

### **4. Leadership Development**

Learning and Development leads from the Blue Light partners were considering leadership development collaboration opportunities.

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

### **5. Command Units**

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

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

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

It was expected that the initial benefits to be realised would be technological advances that would further develop information sharing and situational awareness aligned to improving and embedding the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP). Further scoping and development would be overseen by the Blue Light Collaboration board to ensure opportunities for joint working were effectively co-ordinated and delivered.

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

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

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

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

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

**Resolved:** That the Planning Committee noted the report.

27/23

## HMICFRS Update

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided an update on His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) activity.

HMICFRS had commenced Round 3 inspections in early 2023. The three pillars of effectiveness, efficiency and people remained the same as Round 2 as did the 11 diagnostics under each pillar which the inspectorate graded judgements against.

Early engagement with the Service's liaison lead, Dominic Mika had taken place with Chief Fire Officer, Justin Johnston and Area Manager, Tom Powell (Service Liaison Officer). Dominic would start to be introduced into the Service over the coming months in the build up to LFRS' inspection which was anticipated would take place around late spring / early summer 2024.

HMI Michelle Skeer, recently retired Chief Constable of Cumbria Constabulary, held meetings with the Chair of the Authority, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Trade Union officials, and staff from Employee Voice Groups on the 4 December 2023. In addition, further meetings were due to take place in 2024 with the inspection estimated to take place in spring/summer.

The Organisational Assurance Team within the Service Improvement Department continued to track progress against the Service's previous inspection, monitor national themes and prepare LFRS for its Round 3 inspection. The Organisational Assurance Team were undertaking reality testing with departments and had installed station-based reality testing aligned to HMICFRS inspection framework. Fourteen station-based audits had taken place and there was growing interest from other fire and rescue services as to how the Service carried out these preparedness visits.

HMICFRS had published twelve Round 3 inspection reports on fire and rescue services (FRS), with three more due to be published in Spring. HMIC Andy Cooke's 2023 State of Fire and Rescue report would be published in Spring and would cover findings so far and wider impacts on FRSs.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer highlighted to Members that, on Page 104 of the agenda pack, only 11 FRSs inspected were included in the report in error, instead of the 12 inspected. A summary of the gradings for eleven FRSs inspected so far in Round 3 was detailed in the report.

### **Misconduct within fire and rescue services**

HMICFRS thematic inspection of the handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services was continuing at pace with seven in-depth service inspections completed and three more ongoing and due to be completed by the end of January 2024. HMICFRS were combining this detailed evidence with the data provided by all English services in the autumn data return; the staff survey they conducted in all services in November via their research partners, Crest Advisory; and the survey and interviews that Crest were conducting with people that had left fire and rescue services. HMICFRS would be combining and triangulating all the evidence to identify key findings and any recommendations to the sector, with the report to be published in June 2024.



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

Values and culture in fire and rescue services remained a focus for HMICFRS and LFRS had already been working proactively in terms of promoting its values and engendering an organisational culture where all employees could thrive. LFRS submitted its report on the progress the Service was making regarding the HMICFRS and National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) recommendations in relation to values and culture in December 2023.

### **HMICFRS Autumn Data Collection**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Sickness Absence KPIs**

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented the report. He advised that further to performance information being shared with Members at the quarterly CFA Performance Committee, Members had requested that the Service conduct a review of the Staff Absence Key Performance Indicator (KPI) suite to provide options for change given a notable shift in absence levels in the post Covid era. The aim was to ensure that Service KPIs remained fit-for-purpose, appropriate to the operating environment and continued to provide effective methods by which Service performance was reported.

Recent reports to Members had provided both local and national context which drew comparative data from within the sector and from other external data organisations to inform discussions on the matter.

The Measuring Progress report incorporated three measurements for Staff Absence KPIs:

- i) KPI 1.2.1 Staff Absence Wholetime
- ii) KPI 1.2.2 Staff Absence On-Call
- iii) KPI 1.2.3 Staff Absence Greenbook

Calculations to inform KPI 1.2.1 and 1.2.3 were based around the cumulative number of shifts lost due to sickness divided by the total average workforce strength for that staff, commonly termed the number of days lost per shift/day per full-time equivalent (FTE)/employee.

The calculation for KPI 1.2.2 differed slightly due to the nature of the On Call duty system and measured the percentage of contracted hours lost due to sickness for all on-call contracted staff.

The Wholetime and Greenbook KPIs had both been 'in exception' (beyond the standard set) every quarter since quarter 1, 2022/23, so six reported quarters thus far. Prior to quarter 1, 2022/23, the KPI combined Grey Book and Green Book absences (formerly as KPI 4.2.1), and the only time it was not in exception was during June and July 2020, which was within the Covid Period, where different reporting conditions existed. Conversely, the On-Call KPI had not been in exception at any point over the same period and there were no proposed changes to this KPI.

The current standard for both the Wholetime and Greenbook KPI was 5 days/shifts lost per Full Time Employee (FTE). Pre-Covid, the Service reported meeting the target, however, since Covid, there had been a significant rise in absence levels.

An XpertHR report published in 2022 identified that, despite many organisations had introduced and updated hybrid working policies; 50% of organisations reported an increase in total absence rates.

An XpertHR report published in May 2023, reported that whilst there was a decrease in absence rates as the effects of Covid subsided, rates remained high. The same report also identified that whilst many respondents mentioned a lesser

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reflective of the position of attendance levels across the country and the sector, it was proposed to amend the Service’s KPI to 8 shifts/days lost per employee/FTE.

This would still be top quartile across the sector and reflective of public sector performance whilst at the same time providing challenge and a driver for improvement.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

29/23	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on <b>15 July 2024</b> at 10:00 hours in the main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.</p> <p>Further meeting dates were noted for 18 November 2024 and agreed for 03 February 2025.</p>

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

**LFRS HQ**  
**Fulwood**

This page is intentionally left blank

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

### Planning Committee

Meeting to be held on 15 July 2024

### His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Update

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

#### Executive Summary

This report provides an update on His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) activity.

Additionally, it provides information regarding Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's (LFRS) ongoing preparations for HMICFRS Round 3 inspection, the inspection process, and wider HMICFRS activity including misconduct, and values and culture within Fire and Rescue Services.

#### Recommendation

Planning Committee are requested to note and endorse the update.

#### Round 3 Overview

HMICFRS commenced Round 3 inspections in early 2023, the three pillars; effectiveness, efficiency, and people remain the same as Round 2. Likewise, the 11 diagnostics under each pillar which inspectors make graded judgements against.

On the 27 March 2024 the HMICFRS announced that they were postponing LFRS inspection due to our Service Liaison Lead Dominic Mika leaving the HMICFRS. Although LFRS have not yet received confirmation of the new inspection date, it is anticipated that our inspection will now take place in early 2025. Until our new Service Liaison Lead is appointed and to assist with engagement prior to our inspection, an Inspecting Officer from HMICFRS, Viv Horton, has been named as LFRS point of contact. LFRS Service Liaison Officer – Area Manager Tom Powell has met with Viv who will be introduced into the Service over the coming months.

The Organisational Assurance Team within the Service Improvement Department continue to track progress against our previous inspection, monitor national themes and prepare LFRS for our Round 3 inspection.

HMICFRS have now published 16 Round 3 inspection reports. Due to the general election taking place on 4 July, His Majesty's Chief Inspector Andy Cooke has taken the decision to pause publications during the pre-election period which commenced on 25 May 2024.

A summary of the gradings for all 16 FRSs inspected so far in Round 3 can be found below.

	Effectiveness						Efficiency			People				
	Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies	Preventing fires and other risks	Protecting the public through fire regulation	Responding to fires and other emergencies	Responding to major and multi-agency incidents		Making best use of resources	Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future		Promoting the right values and culture	Getting the right people with the right skills	Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	Managing performance and developing leaders	
Beds. Round 3:	G	RI	RI	RI	A		RI	G		RI	A	A	A	
Beds. Round 2:	G	RI	RI	G	G		RI	G		G	G	G	G	
Cambs. Round 3:	G	G	G	A	A		O	G		G	A	G	RI	
Cambs. Round 2:	G	G	G	G	G		G	RI		G	G	G	G	
Cheshire Round 3:	A	A	G	A	A		A	G		G	G	G	G	
Cheshire Round 2:	G	G	G	G	G		G	G		G	G	G	RI	
Warwicks. Round 3:	A	RI	RI	A	A		RI	RI		A	RI	RI	RI	
Warwicks. Round 2:	RI	I	RI	RI	G		RI	RI		RI	RI	RI	RI	
Cornwall Round 3:	A	RI	A	A	RI		RI	RI		A	RI	I	RI	
Cornwall Round 2:	RI	RI	RI	RI	G		RI	RI		G	RI	RI	RI	
Surrey Round 3:	A	RI	RI	RI	RI		RI	A		G	A	RI	RI	
Surrey Round 2:	RI	G	G	RI	RI		RI	G		G	G	RI	RI	
Bucks. Round 3:	RI	RI	I	RI	A		RI	RI		RI	RI	RI	RI	
Bucks. Round 2:	RI	RI	RI	G	G		RI	RI		RI	RI	RI	RI	
Merseyside Round 3:	G	O	G	G	O		O	G		A	A	A	G	
Merseyside Round 2:	G	O	G	G	O		O	G		G	G	RI	G	
Avon Round 3:	I	I	A	I	A		RI	RI		I	RI	RI	RI	
Avon Round 2:	RI	RI	RI	G	G		RI	G		G	RI	RI	RI	
Her. & Worc. Round 3:	A	A	G	A	A		A	A		A	G	G	G	
Her. & Worc. Round 2:	RI	RI	G	RI	G		RI	RI		RI	RI	RI	RI	
Northumb. Round 3:	A	G	A	A	A		A	G		G	G	A	A	
Northumb. Round 2:	RI	RI	G	RI	G		RI	RI		RI	RI	RI	RI	
Key	Outstanding		Good	Adequate	Requires Improvement			Inadequate						



	<b>Effectiveness</b>	Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies	Preventing fires and other risks	Protecting the public through fire regulation	Responding to fires and other emergencies	Responding to major and multi-agency incidents		<b>Efficiency</b>	Making best use of resources	Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future		<b>People</b>	Promoting the right values and culture	Getting the right people with the right skills	Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	Managing performance and developing leaders
Lincs. Round 3:		A	A	RI	G	G		A	A			RI	G	RI	RI	
Lincs. Round 2:		RI	RI	RI	G	G		RI	G			G	RI	RI	RI	
Manchester Round 3:		G	G	G	G	A		G	G			G	G	G	G	
Manchester Round 2:		G	RI	RI	G	RI		RI	G			G	G	G	RI	
Norfolk Round 3:		G	RI	A	A	G		A	G			A	RI	A	RI	
Norfolk Round 2:		G	I	G	G	G		RI	RI			RI	RI	RI	RI	
Essex Round 3:		G	G	RI	RI	A		RI	G			RI	RI	RI	A	
Essex Round 2:		G	RI	RI	RI	RI		RI	RI			RI	RI	RI	RI	
Glos. Round 3:		RI	A	I	A	RI		RI	RI			I	RI	I	RI	
Glos. Round 2:		RI	RI	RI	RI	RI		RI	RI			I	RI	I	RI	

Key	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Requires Improvement</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
-----	--------------------	-------------	-----------------	-----------------------------	-------------------

### State of Fire Report:

On the 9 May 2024 the annual assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England was published. HMICFRS Andy Cooke's 2023 State of Fire and Rescue report outlines their findings so far and wider impacts on Fire and Rescue Services.

The report covers four key challenges faced by the sector:

- The fire and rescue sector has made some good progress at a national level, but the Government must press ahead with reforms.
- Values, culture and the management of misconduct need to urgently improve.
- Fire and Rescue Service leaders need to take a strategic approach to service improvements.
- HMICFRS needs additional powers to continue to make communities safer; recommending that the Government should make it a legal requirement for fire and rescue authorities to publish a response to the HMICFRS reports within 56 days.

The report also identifies that during the third round of inspections that they have seen grades fall in some services in relation to:

- Protection
- Multi-agency incidents
- Values and culture
- Getting the right people with the right skills

### **Positive Practice Masterclass:**

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

On the 29 April 2024 the HMICFRS held its first Positive Practice Masterclass for Fire and Rescue Services, which was attended by CFO Justin Johnston and AM Tom Powell. The topic for this event was centred around leadership and culture where the HMI shared positive practices they have identified as well as opportunities to learn from each other.

### **Misconduct within the Fire and Rescue Service**

HMICFRS thematic inspection of the handling of misconduct in Fire and Rescue Services has now concluded. They combined detailed evidence with the data provided by all English services in the autumn data return; the staff survey conducted in November 2023 via their research partners Crest Advisory; and the survey and interviews that Crest conducted with people that have left Fire and Rescue Services. HMICFRS will identify key findings and produce recommendations to the sector.

The findings were due to be published in June 2024, however, due to the general election publication has been paused.

### **Values and culture in Fire and Rescue Services**

Values and culture in Fire and Rescue Services remains a focus for HMICFRS, LFRS had already been working proactively in terms of promoting its values and engendering an organisational culture where all employees can thrive. LFRS submitted our report on the progress the service is making regarding the HMICFRS and NFCC recommendations in relation to values and culture in December 2023.

### **HMICFRS Spring Data Collection**

LFRS submitted the Spring data return in June 2023.

### **Business risk**

The inspection will monitor LFRS's direction of travel since 2022, it could cause reputational damage if it is perceived that we have not made reasonable progress.

**Sustainability or Environmental Impact**

None

**Equality and Diversity Implications**

None

**Data Protection (GDPR)**

None

**HR implications**

None

**Financial implications**

None

**Legal implications**

None

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

**List of background papers**

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate:

This page is intentionally left blank

## **Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee**

Meeting to be held on 15 July 2024

### **Blue Light Collaboration Board Update**

Contact for further information: DCFO Steve Healey  
Tel: 01772 866802

#### **Executive Summary**

This paper provides an update regarding Blue Light Collaboration Board progress.

#### **Recommendation**

Planning Committee to note the report.

#### **Information**

The Police, Fire & Rescue Service, and Ambulance Service have a duty to collaborate under the Policing and Crime Act 2017. The objectives are to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and deliver improved outcomes.

This paper provides an update on the progress against the key workstreams being progressed under the Blue Light Collaboration Board (BLCB). The workstreams are effectively managed through the Strategic and Tactical level meeting structures.

The Service have evaluated the benefits and outcomes of our Blue Light Collaboration Workstreams; Missing Persons, Leadership Development, Estates and Co-location, and Community First Responder. The workstreams are contributing towards improving outcomes, providing better value for money, reducing demand, and reducing inequalities within communities.

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

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) have increasing experience and can provide local or specialist advice for consideration by Lancashire Constabulary (LanCon). Searches have become streamlined allowing a more structured and effective approach to locating a high-risk missing person. The Service's drone development (aerial and sub-surface), for which LFRS has the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) lead role, has further enhanced our capabilities for Missing Person Searches. LFRS have provided significant support to LanCon

with our aerial drone assets, supported by an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Further investment in 2023/24 led to us strengthening sub-surface rescue/ recovery capability of persons, with an underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV). This asset has been deployed regionally and nationally including Carlisle, Manchester, Merseyside, Cheshire, Birmingham, and Norfolk and has delivered improved outcomes for incident resolution.

LFRS received around 200 drone requests last year from LanCon, with most requests for Missing Persons searches.

### **Estates and Co-location**

This is a long-term workstream which may deliver significant efficiencies and effectiveness where co-location sites are identified. A set of principles are being developed to identify high level areas of opportunities. Blue Light partners are currently reviewing property asset management strategies to identify potential areas for co-ordinating future development plans over the next 5-10 years.

All Blue light partners are included in the discussions in relation to future opportunities. All current locations for each organisation have been mapped, with the focus now moving to the understanding of longer-term plans for each service, consideration of site sharing opportunities at existing locations, along with a procedure to facilitate site sharing. The LFRS 'Preston Area Review' continues to be discussed and considered with Blue light partners regarding collaboration opportunities for the area.

In addition to the physical estate and site sharing, Blue light partners have identified other areas for learning, development and sharing of information in support of providing efficient and effective estate management within respective organisations.

### **Community First Responder**

A trial commenced in 2023 involving LFRS staff volunteering as Community First Responders (CFR) to support North West Ambulance Service (NWS). LFRS staff volunteers undertake an initial CFR training programme at LFRS Training Centre. Once qualified, they can shadow existing CFR practitioners to develop their clinical abilities and build confidence in their newly acquired skills.

5 LFRS staff volunteers have been responding to life threatening emergencies in their communities from the workplace and administering life-saving interventions in the initial vital minutes before NWS colleagues arrive. During 2023, LFRS responded to more than 80 CFR incidents including unresponsive/ collapsed, not breathing, cardiac arrests, seizures, strokes, and choking. This has resulted in many successful outcomes.

The Service has now expanded our support to NWS on this successful life-saving initiative. 8 LFRS Flexible-Duty Officers (FDOs) completed their 4-day CFR training in July and are now also responding to critical medical emergencies across Lancashire.

## **Leadership Development**

Blue Light partners have scoped collaboration opportunities for leadership development. Each Service will host a leadership development event for middle and senior leaders from all Blue light partner organisations, with LFRS hosting the first event in October 2024.

## **Command Units**

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

The Command Support Unit (CSU) project aimed to upgrade the vehicles and adopt technological advancements to support operational incidents. On-Call firefighters crew a CSU, and as part of the agreed capital vehicle replacement project, two new larger Command Units (CUs) are now operational and have been deployed to several incidents, with excellent feedback received from the firefighters, FDOs, and partner agencies. LFRS continue to demonstrate the unit and software to other fire and rescue services with a recent visit from Northern Ireland FRS taking place in May, and a further visit from several other FRS' in June. The Service have also hosted multi-agency familiarisations, including in June for the Blackburn-with-Darwen Emergency Planning Team.

The benefits realised include improved information sharing and situational awareness, aligned to improving and embedding the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP). This successful workstream has now transitioned to business as usual.

## **Financial Implications**

All collaboration projects within this update are included within existing agreed revenue and capital budgets.

LFRS have reviewed the policy for recharging other organisations and agencies for use of LFRS personnel and equipment at non-statutory incidents. The policy provides decision-makers with guidance on how and when charging is appropriate and is aligned to the NFCC published guidance on recharge costs.

## **Sustainability or Environmental Impact**

N/A

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

N/A

## **Data Protection (GDPR)**

N/A

## **HR Implications**

N/A

## **Business Risk**

Risk if there is limited evidence regarding the duty to collaborate.

## **Legal implications**

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduced a statutory duty to collaborate on the Police, Fire, and emergency Ambulance Services where it is in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness. The duty to collaborate is non-prescriptive and locally enabling.

## **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

Meeting to be held on 15 July 2024

### Emergency Cover Review

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

#### **Executive Summary**

This report provides an update on the Emergency Cover Review (ECR) 2022-25 implementation, outlining the work that is ongoing and has been completed to date.

#### **Recommendation**

Planning Committee are requested to note and endorse the update.

### **Background**

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

The changes identified in the ECR 2022-25 reflect the most effective and efficient use of resources for the whole of Lancashire. Lancashire's Combined Fire Authority (CFA) agreed the proposed changes on 19 December 2022. The changes will result in LFRS:

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

An ECR implementation plan was developed with five key workstreams, updates on the workstreams can be found below:

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

The changes of duty systems at some stations resulted in the re-introduction of the 2-2-4 wholetime duty system with 24 members of staff as opposed to flexible wholetime. The Service is still open to introducing flexible crewing arrangements subject to agreement with trade unions.

All members of staff affected were engaged with and changes to crewing arrangements were led by people's preferences in terms of the duty system they wished to work, subject to skill requirements and the demands of the Service.

A comprehensive training programme was delivered to meet the training needs analysis due to staff movement and the increase in establishment.

Property alterations at Morecambe, Fleetwood and Skelmersdale were completed to accommodate the increase in staff at those stations.

Implementation of all the proposed change of duty systems and establishment numbers, with the exception of Penwortham, took place on the 1 March 2024.

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

The dynamic cover software continues to be used in LFRS. Control Room Operators at North West Fire Control (NWFC) have received familiarisation on the software utilising the standalone facility on the Lancashire pod. The next phase of the project will see Control Room Operators, over a three month period, continue to use the static pre-defined standby rules whilst considering any variation in movement by utilising the software and recording any differences they would have made. This, along with modelling based on various incident and activity scenarios will provide an overview of the impact of utilising the software instead of the pre-determined standby moves. Following evaluation of these results, it is anticipated that the software will be utilised to determine cover moves based on risk rather than static pre-defined lists. Whilst full consultation with all stakeholders in relation to the dynamic cover software was carried out as part of the ECR process, the Service will undertake further engagement with TU's and staff prior to full implementation.

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

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

A £500k budget has been approved (redirected funds) with projects established and managed through the Service Delivery Change Programme Board. This budget is not additional funding, as the two climate change appliances will be replacing two standard type B appliances so there is no additional capital investment required.

Although the original scoping identified a larger Unimog type appliance, a significant cost increase along with vehicle limitations has resulted in the scope changing slightly to ensure efficiency and value for money. The larger appliance will be a B-type with 4x4 capability, and specifications are being scoped.

The second appliance will be a smaller 7 tonne vehicle with 4x4 capability. A similar model has been viewed by the LFRS project team in Leicestershire FRS.

Both vehicles will then be evaluated prior to the potential purchase of two further vehicles (one large and one small).

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

Incident action plans have now been updated to ensure that the Flood Water Incident Managers are informed of any incidents within the water or large area flooding.

One flexi duty officer has now been trained as a Flood Water Tactical Advisor and is part of the national resilience capability. A second flexi duty officer is undertaking pre-courses and will attend the nationally accredited tactical advisor course once there is availability.

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

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

Due to delays in the motor industry environment, the anticipated delivery of our new ALP is now December 2024. There will then be a period of familiarisation and training for operational crews prior to the appliance going on the run at Preston in early 2025.

### **Invest in two Additional Water Towers**

Due to the delays encountered within the motor industry the new appliances are due for delivery during quarter 3 of 2024/25. The first Water Tower is expected to be delivered around September 2024, there will be a period of familiarisation and training prior to the appliances going on the run. They are anticipated to be located at St Annes and Lancaster.

## **Broaden on-call firefighting capabilities to strengthen operational response**

### **Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) Driving**

On Call staff at both Hyndburn and Morecambe have successfully utilised this skill on several occasions by driving the ALP to incidents.

### **Command Support Unit (CSU)**

The Command Support Unit (CSU) has now attended a number of large-scale incidents and successfully supported these over a protracted period. Initially the CSU was crewed by On Call staff from Bolton-le-Sands and Carnforth, however following a trial period, the CSU will be supported by Bolton-le-Sands and Hornby stations.

### **On Call and Specials Review**

Dual contract staff at Lancaster have been provided with additional PPE for swift water rescue resulting in the On Call appliance being able to support wholetime colleagues at water rescue incidents enhancing our response. Once delivered, Lancaster and St Anne's On Call units will be trained on the two new Water Towers which will provide additional resilience. Further work on the expansion of On Call capabilities to other Special Appliances such as the Water Bowser and Foam Unit is currently being explored as part of the On Call review workstream.

### **Business risk**

Production of the ECR is a business-critical planning function. LFRS must demonstrate a timely review of response arrangements in line with National Framework guidance issued by central government.

### **Environmental impact**

A key driver of the ECR process is to align to our climate change response plan. This will drive our operational response through speed of attack and ensuring the most effective and efficient resource is deployed with the aim of reducing harm to the environment.

### **Equality and diversity implications**

A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed alongside an independent third party specialist to ensure any proposed changes do not impact negatively upon Lancashire's diverse community or LFRS' workforce.

### **HR implications**

The changes of duty systems and associated operational resource continues to have a direct effect on HR functions. HR are managing this through relevant processes including consultation and engagement.

### **Financial implications**

There are associated training and property expenditure due to the implementation of the ECR, however these are being managed within existing budgets. Any capital spends such as new appliances or dynamic cover software have allocated funds and are governed through individual projects reporting into the appropriate programme board.

### **Legal implications**

LFRS must demonstrate a timely review of response arrangements in line with National Framework guidance issued by central government.

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

### **List of background papers**

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate:

## **Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee**

Meeting to be held on 15 July 2024

### **Annual Service Report 2023-2024**

Appendix 1 refers

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

#### **Executive Summary**

The Annual Service Report is produced annually by the Service as part of our accountability to measure progress against the items that we set out to deliver as part of our Annual Service Plan. These actions are derived from our medium-term strategic goals highlighted in our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

The Annual Service Report 2023-24 seeks to provide an overview of our progress against the areas of work detailed in the Annual Service Plan 2023-24. The report highlights a number of key deliverables against our priority areas of people, prevention, protection, response, and value for money related work streams.

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

For the Planning Committee to note and endorse the Annual Service Report 2023-2024.

#### **Information**

As part of our corporate planning function, we ensure that each year we inform our staff and members of our communities about what we aim to deliver through the production of an Annual Service Plan (ASP).

We then report on progress against each ASP with an Annual Service Report. The attached report details progress against the priorities set out in the Annual Service Plan 2023-24. It also includes key performance data and details of significant incidents across the county during the year.

The report will be published internally and externally both in print and online to highlight the Service's achievements over the period.

#### **Business risk**

If not produced, we are not able to demonstrate what we have delivered against the priorities we set for the Service in our Annual Service Plan and Community Risk Management Plan.

## **Sustainability or Environmental Impact**

None.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

The final product will be designed to accessibility principles and made available online in an accessible version. There will also be an accompanying video with subtitles and audio description.

## **Data Protection (GDPR)**

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

## **HR implications**

None.

## **Financial implications**

The report is produced in-house by the corporate communications team and print costs are funded from the departmental budget.

## **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

## Welcome to our Annual Service Report for 2023-24

Supporting our people to deliver the best possible services in Lancashire is a priority in our plans every year. Health and wellbeing and training and development have been the focus of attention in 2023-24, with our staff involved in shaping new and improved initiatives.

The introduction of peer support ambassadors, 32 volunteers within the Service who support people around them through wellbeing conversations, has opened up mental health conversations and is helping to remove the stigma of talking about it.

Our new Lift and Climb mentoring programme is pairing individuals across the Service in different roles and locations, so they can benefit from the guidance and experience of colleagues. The initiative was brought from idea to reality by a member of staff and is supporting people in operational and service support roles.

Adapting to changing risks in communities and finding new ways to make Lancashire safer is a continuous endeavour, and one which we are motivated and driven to succeed in doing. I am particularly proud of the ways we have improved core services this year in addition to the new assets that signal advancements in how the whole sector operates.

The home fire safety check service is our long-established, main method of prevention designed to provide tailored interventions to people in their homes that reduce the risk of fires. Last year, we delivered well over the target number of interventions and saw a reduction in the number of fires in the home and fewer casualties.

Our business fire safety check service is a newer initiative and part of a wider programme to support employers and landlords to keep people safe in their buildings. We exceeded our target in this area too, with crews assuring compliance with fire safety laws in businesses like shops and offices, leaving specialist business safety advisors and inspectors to focus on more complex, high-risk premises.

Alongside these community focussed prevention and protection services, we continue to strengthen our emergency response capabilities through innovation and investment. We became the first service in the UK to introduce an underwater drone and sonar scanner for search and rescue operations. These not only improve how we respond to water-related incidents but also increases firefighter safety.

Dynamic cover software is changing the way we deploy resources across the county. Providing visual data on community risks and emergency cover in real-time, it enables us to position fire engines with more precision, improving emergency cover and reducing response times.

This year, our fleet has been enhanced with the addition of 13 state-of-the-art fire appliances. These vehicles are not just a testament to our commitment to modernisation but also serve as mobile ambassadors for crucial fire safety

messages and on-call recruitment information, thanks to their impactful graphics and messaging. Our brand-new incident command units were the result of extensive research and development to ensure that when they joined our fleet, they brought the best possible technology and systems for effective management of complex and large-scale emergencies. Software on board connects the command units to firefighters on the incident ground and the command support room at Service headquarters, sharing one operating picture to all.

I am proud of the dedication and expertise demonstrated by our firefighting teams in responding to over 17,000 incidents this year. The complexity and scale of these events have not only tested but also showcased the exceptional skills and commitment of our staff. At the heart of all that we achieve are people dedicated to making a difference in Lancashire's communities. In our staff survey, 94% of respondents said they felt that their work contributes to making Lancashire safer, testament to the collective approach we uphold. Together we will continue to learn, improve, and innovate so that we provide the best possible public services now and in the future.

Justin Johnston  
Chief Fire Officer



# Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire Safer

## Lift and Climb mentoring programme launched

In 2023-24 we set out to expand our approach to coaching and mentoring, and the launch of our Lift and Climb initiative has helped to achieve this.

Everyone in the Service has the opportunity to maximise their potential by pairing with a colleague for professional, personal development, parallel, or reverse mentoring. Operational and support services staff have benefitted from the guidance and support of their peers.

Digital Communications Officer Alex Daniels was mentored by Euan Withersby, Business Systems Manager, and Sophie Ryder, Senior Software Developer.

Alex saw Lift and Climb as an opportunity to reach out to colleagues in a related area of work and bridge any gap between the corporate communications and digital transformation departments.

“It was a mixture of personal and professional interest for me. We had an in-depth conversation about the nature of digital assets for the Service, how they work, and why they are important. I found it very interesting and useful to speak openly about challenges and what we find interesting in our roles.

“Lift and Climb helped me to develop relationships with my digital transformation colleagues and gave me a better understanding of our organisation. It was helpful from a professional standpoint to take a step back and look at my career trajectory as a whole.”

Alex

Euan and Sophie both felt they benefitted from the experience too.

“I have been able to pick up from Alex a better understanding of the things that corporate communications do and a different perspective on the things we do in digital transformation. It is always a two-way street when mentoring someone. The learning you get helps you to reassess your own practice and understand how we can work better together.”

Euan

“One of the key outcomes for me was widening the network of people I interact with across the Service. I would encourage anyone to sign up as a mentor on the Lift and Climb programme. Everyone has something to give, and it can really open your eyes to what other people are doing.”

Sophie

## Create an organisational culture where diversity is encouraged and valued

Our STRIVE values and the Core Code of Ethics guide the professional behaviours expected of all our staff to ensure our workplace is one where everyone feels valued, included, and able to reach their full potential.

We have also achieved:

- A programme of engagement sessions with staff to embed the Core Code of Ethics has been completed.
- In our staff survey (2023), 91% of respondents said they understood the STRIVE values and behaviours expected of them at work, and 91% said they also understood what is expected in the Core Code of Ethics.
- We have implemented good practice identified in national culture reviews, including the introduction of a confidential reporting line for employees to voice concerns about misconduct and improvements to our disciplinary investigation process.
- Equality impact assessments are now embedded in the Service to ensure we fully understand the impact of proposals, policies, and decisions on all our employees and communities. An external audit of our approach confirmed our assessments are effective.

## Introduce peer support ambassadors

A peer support ambassador is a member of staff who volunteers to raise awareness of mental health problems and challenge mental health stigma in the workplace. 32 ambassadors have been introduced to embed wellbeing conversations and support people around them in stations and departments.

A review of our bespoke MIND distress management and self-care programme has been completed, resulting in a collaboration with The Firefighters Charity to develop content about how to deal with suicide as a responder, as well as coping with self-destructive thoughts and behaviours on a personal level. A programme called Responding to Trauma and Emotions has also been developed to support personal resilience and is currently being piloted with operational and service support staff.

## Upgrade fire station facilities

Consultation on improvements to rest and welfare facilities at Blackpool Fire Station has been undertaken. The design includes new bedrooms, training room, computer room, locker room, and a quiet room. Work will begin on site in autumn 2024.

## Improve learning and development systems

A new learning management system has been successfully implemented and offers better support in identifying and meeting role-related training and development requirements. The system will continue to be developed to support e-learning, maintenance of skills, and course management for all staff.

Firefighter development handbooks have been streamlined and moved to an electronic format held within the learning management system. Crew and watch manager portfolios have been combined into a single supervisory manager handbook which features practical activities, including scenario-based exercises, carefully aligned with the national occupational standards. Closer alignment with functional aspects of the role and a wider variety of ways to provide evidence, such as videos and professional discussion, supports people who are neurodiverse and reduces the administrative burden for all. This approach will be expanded into middle and strategic leadership roles.

## Explore the future of service headquarters

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's headquarters is the oldest building within our property portfolio having been built in 1891. A review of options has highlighted relocation of headquarters to Service training centre in Chorley and redeveloping that site as providing the best value for money and the preferred option for the future.

An outline masterplan is in development to include headquarters, new and improved training props, and modernised learning and office space. Creating a central hub in one location will bring operational and support staff together from across the county and lead to collaboration, efficiency, and sustainability gains.

## Deliver firefighter pension changes

Contributions and tax data for the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act 2022 relating to the age discrimination remedy has been completed to ensure that pension administrators can issue Remediable Service Statements to immediate choice (retired) members and deferred choice (active) members by 31 March 2025.

We have continued to progress activity in relation to the special members second options exercise under which certain on-call firefighters will be able to purchase further pension entitlement. So far over 200 employees have expressed an interest.

## A celebration of our people

In November 2023, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service celebrated the achievements of over 70 members of staff at a special event.

Long Service Good Conduct Awards were presented to operational and support service staff who have given exemplary service to Lancashire for 20, 30, 35 and 40 years.

Justin Johnston, Chief Fire Officer, awarded personal commendations to individuals who displayed outstanding acts of bravery and devotion to duty. These acts not only saved the lives of Lancashire residents, but also helped people caught up in disasters across the world.

The event also recognised the people who personify our STRIVE values, the principles that guide everything we do. Nominated and chosen by their peers, our Star Award winners were honoured not just for the work they do but for how they go about it, which has a positive impact on everyone around them.

Finally, we celebrated the academic achievements of those who have demonstrated outstanding commitment to personal development.

The event was a special moment to shine a light on some of our talented and dedicated people and acknowledge their contribution to keeping the people of Lancashire safe.

# Measuring progress

Our Service performance is reported quarterly to the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority. This year's reports can be accessed at [www.lancsfirecue.org.uk/cfa](http://www.lancsfirecue.org.uk/cfa).

## Overall staff engagement (Staff Survey 2023)

- Staff engagement index score: 74%
- Survey response rate: 49%
- 94% feel that their work contributes to making Lancashire safer

## Staff absence

- Wholetime - cumulative total number of shifts lost: 8.721
- On-call - cumulative absence (as % of available hours of cover): 1.33%
- Green book - cumulative total number of shifts lost: 7.039

## Workforce diversity

- 21% female
- 4% diverse ethnicity
- 4% LGBT
- 3% class themselves as disabled

## Workforce diversity recruited

- 32% female
- 5% diverse ethnicity
- 8% LGBT
- 4% class themselves as disabled

## Recruitment

- 32 wholetime firefighters recruited
- 66 on-call firefighters recruited

# Preventing fires and other emergencies from happening

## No Moor fires!

Last year the Service joined together with partners to introduce a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for parts of Chorley, Darwen and Bolton to prevent wildfires on the moors.

The PSPO bans any activities on moorland that carry a significant risk of causing wildfires such as lighting barbecues, building or lighting campfires or camping stoves, lighting fireworks, or setting off night-sky paper lanterns. Breaching the PSPO is a criminal offence and could result in a fine of up to £1,000.

“Lancashire knows only too well the devastating effects of wildfires following a fire on Winter Hill near Bolton in summer 2018, which destroyed 18 square kilometres of moorland, and a large fire started by a disposable BBQ on Darwen Moor in 2020.

“Most wildfires in Lancashire are caused by human action including inappropriate use of disposable barbecues and campfires. They cause devastation to wildlife and our environment which can take decades or longer to recover.

“The direct impact of wildfires upon local communities can be massive and can tie up critical emergency service resources. We will continue to work with our partners to protect Lancashire’s great outdoors so everyone can enjoy it safely.”

Matt Hamer, Area Manager Prevention, Protection, and Road Safety at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.

Areas covered by the PSPO, one of the largest in England, include Winter Hill, Darwen Moor and Anglezarke Moor, all areas that have previously experienced wildfires.

The Service collaborated with Chorley Council, Bolton Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, Lancashire Police and Greater Manchester Police, to put the PSPO in place.

This work forms part of our climate change operational response plan to address the increasing threat of flooding and wildfires, lessen the impacts on communities and public services, and improve firefighter safety when dealing with these emergencies.

## Invest in digital improvements to our home fire safety check service

Bringing about positive change in behaviours within people's homes is central to improving community safety and our core offer is the home fire safety check service. To improve the service through digital solutions to ensure it is efficient, person-centred, and continues to target the highest risk households, we have:

- Undertaken a soft market exercise to identify and determine suitable software solutions to improve efficiency of our contact centre systems.
- Delivered 179 training sessions to 33 partners, including care providers, NHS, and police teams, and streamlined our online service, to improve the referral process.
- Following engagement with partner agencies we are refining our HFSC digital referral service for partners and members of the public to improve the collation of data.

## Improve evaluation of fire prevention activity

Fire prevention is delivered using a targeted approach to those most at risk through a variety of activities and interventions directly with communities, by working with partners, and through campaigns. We have evaluated over 300 local prevention initiatives along with county-wide campaigns to better understand the impact of these activities and focus our resources on the most efficient and effective methods.

## Strengthen operational risk information

We use the Provision of Operational Risk Information System (PORIS) to identify, gather, analyse, and review risk information. This system provides accurate risk information to crews responding to emergency incidents to help keep the public and firefighters safe.

PORIS has been improved to ensure crews are given quick and easy access to relevant information relating to operational incidents. A risk calculator has been introduced which includes national and local data allowing for more accurate risk scoring, how information is presented to crews has been streamlined, and a programme of training has been delivered to staff.

To further develop our knowledge of the built environment and strengthen operational preparedness and response, built environment training has been delivered to wholtime and on-call crews, officers, community safety teams, and apprentice firefighters as part of their initial training.

## Community safety initiatives receive national recognition

In November 2023, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service was delighted to be honoured at the Asian Fire Service Association awards. Nominated in four different categories, we won two awards.

Community Safety Advisor, Faz Patel, won the award for Partnership of the Year for our Safety during Hajj campaign. This initiative aims to ensure that Lancashire's residents can travel to, and around Saudi Arabia, in the safest ways possible and in doing so, enjoy the most fulfilled and rewarding pilgrimage.

Station Manager Trevor Jenkins won the Health and Inequalities category for our initiative together with public health of delivering NHS checks in East Lancashire.

Our Race and Religion Employee Voice Group and Positive Action Team were both highly commended in the Champion of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion and Positive Action categories respectively.

Prevention is by far the most effective way to make Lancashire safer and equality, diversity, and inclusion is central to this work; understanding awareness levels, practices, behaviours, and barriers that put people at risk, which vary greatly community to community, is critical to educate, encourage people to adopt safer practices, and deliver interventions to help people who need support.

## Having a positive influence on children and young adults

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, in collaboration with The Prince's Trust, proudly marked 23 years of delivering the TEAM programme. Throughout the year, we have conducted 25 comprehensive 12-week programmes, directly impacting 277 young individuals aged 16-25 across nine Lancashire locations. Our engagement has extended to a diverse group, including looked after children, offenders and ex-offenders, educational underachievers, lone parents, asylum seekers, and young people with disabilities and additional needs.

Our enduring partnerships with Nelson and Colne College Group and Preston College have been instrumental in ensuring that all participants receive a nationally recognised qualification, alongside vital community safety advice. The programme has fostered active community engagement, with three out of four participants progressing to further education, employment or volunteering.

The skills honed during the programme align with the key attributes sought by employers, significantly enhancing the employability and community involvement of the graduates. Our commitment to excellence is further evidenced by our successful attainment of external moderation assurance and the maintenance of direct claim status, underscoring our robust internal quality procedures and consistent support provided across the county.



## Measuring progress

Our Service performance is reported quarterly to the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority. This year's reports can be accessed at [www.lancsfirecue.org.uk/cfa](http://www.lancsfirecue.org.uk/cfa).

Critical fire risk map score: 31,170

Accidental dwelling fires (ADFs): 706 (down from 772)

ADFs - extent of damage: 88% prevented from spreading from room of origin

Casualties from ADFs: 30, (down from 43) including 3 people who tragically lost their lives

Home fire safety checks delivered: 23,239 (up from 22,210)

Other prevention activities delivered:

- 61,877 children and young people received prevention education
- 13 Fire Cadets programmes delivered to young people
- 25 Prince's Trust courses delivered to young people
- 30,054 people took part in road safety education

Figures compared to 2022-23 unless otherwise stated.

# Protecting people and property when fires happen

## Business fire safety check service exceeds target for making buildings safer

In 2023-24, we delivered over 3,307 business fire safety checks (BFSC) in commercial premises across Lancashire, well above the target of 2,500 for the year.

Since its introduction in 2022, the BFSC service has become one of the key ways we reduce the risk of fires in businesses. It provides interventions to lower risk premises (like schools, shops, and offices) delivered by operational crews.

The service is part of a wider fire safety intervention programme that supports businesses, employers, and landlords to meet their legal duties and keep people safe in their buildings. While operational crews check lower risk premises, fire safety inspectors focus their intervention and enforcement activity on complex, high-risk premises.

During a BFSC, crews look at various aspects of fire safety compliance, including risk assessments, fire alarms, escape routes and fire doors. If the result is unsatisfactory, advice is provided to help the business comply with fire safety requirements. If critical fire safety issues are identified, a specialist business safety advisor will conduct a follow-up intervention.

The 3,307 premises checked this year would not previously have been reached under our fire safety intervention programme. Importantly, of those checks, nearly 350 were deemed unsatisfactory, which means we have identified properties that presented a real risk to the life of the occupants and made critical interventions.

The BFSC service is helping to reduce the number of fires that occur in commercial premises and the impact on life, property, and business disruption when fires do occur. It is also helping to build better understanding of buildings and how they should behave in a fire amongst our workforce, strengthened by training on modern methods of construction delivered to all our operational staff by our Built Environment Risk Management officers (BERM team).

## Strengthen our fire safety intervention programme to meet evolving standards

We have reviewed and refined our fire safety intervention programme dataset following engagement with local and national partners to better understand Lancashire's built environment. As a result, competency and training of fire safety staff has been better aligned to the perceived risk of different premises.

Our fire safety department has been restructured to meet the needs of the changing intervention programme. This has seen the development of a built environment and operational liaison team and built environment risk managers, along with investment in protection support and area-based teams.

## Introduce a revised automatic fire alarm attendance policy

Following a review of our response arrangements for fire alarms in non-sleeping risk commercial premises, we no longer respond to automatic fire alarm activations unless the premises provides sleeping accommodation. This has resulted in a 78% reduction in false alarm attendances to premises affected by this policy during 2023-24, compared to the previous five-year average, allowing us to focus our resources more effectively and efficiently.

A new unwanted domestic smoke alarm actuations policy has been introduced to ensure we provide the right response to communities. We have developed a bespoke dataset which is used to influence locally delivered interventions aimed at reducing unwanted fire calls while addressing the root causation. This joined up working between community prevention and fire safety teams supports both occupants and building owners to reduce false alarms so that we are only called to genuine emergencies. The policy and process will be embedded throughout 2024-25.

## Transform fire protection and business safety

Significant changes to fire safety and building control standards continue to change the way fire and rescue services operate. We continue to invest in and develop our protection services, to ensure we remain well-placed to support those responsible for fire safety in their buildings.

In response to the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, we have inspected all 48 of Lancashire's tall buildings to ensure they comply with existing and new legislative requirements. We continue to work closely with the Health and Safety Executive (the new building safety regulator) to ensure tall buildings are legally compliant and new buildings are built aligned to new building standards.

A soft market exercise has been undertaken to identify and determine suitable digital solutions to streamline the working practices of our fire safety inspectors. At the same time, we have developed our in-house digital solutions, such as the document management store, for consistent information gathering and improved data collation. There has been significant investment in mobile digital technology for fire safety teams to ensure the effective and efficient use of their time and provide greater consistency in our intervention activities.

## Measuring progress

Our Service performance is reported quarterly to the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority. This year's reports can be accessed at [www.lancsfirecue.org.uk/cfa](http://www.lancsfirecue.org.uk/cfa).

Accidental building fires (ABFs) (commercial premises): 235 (down from 250)

ABF (non-commercial premises): 72 (down from 85)

Deliberate fires total – 1,812 (down from 2,263)

Deliberate fires – dwellings – 84 (up from 79)

Deliberate fires – commercial premises – 145 (up from 118)

Deliberate fires – other (rubbish, grassland etc) – 1,583 (down from 2,096)

Fire safety enforcement:

- 3,348 business fire safety checks delivered
- 2,237 fire safety inspections carried out
- 166 fire safety enforcement notices issued
- 26 businesses prohibited from operating following serious breaches of the Fire Safety Order

Building regulation consultations: 95.6% were responded to within the required 15 day period

Figures compared to 2022-23 unless otherwise stated.

# Responding to fires and other emergencies quickly and competently

## New appliances strengthen operational response capabilities

Incident command units are critical to how the Service manages complex and large-scale emergencies. We have invested £800,000 in two large incident command units and one smaller command support unit which joined our fleet in 2023-24.

Located at Fulwood and Blackburn fire stations, the incident command units have been built following extensive research and development work to provide leading technology and systems.

The units each have eight networked computers and greater resilience is provided by a satellite internet connection with backup 4G/5G connection if needed. New incident command software gives operators more visibility of data such as risk assessments and tactical plans.

This data, along with information such as cordon details and live weather conditions, can be viewed on multiple devices using the software. This means a common operating picture is shared in the command unit, on demountable mobile data terminals on fire engines, and in the command support room at Service headquarters.

A high-definition camera is on board, complemented by an in-built thermal imaging camera, which helps maintain situational awareness. There is also an external screen under a canopy and awning to assist operational briefings without the need to board the unit.

The smaller command support unit is located at Bolton-le-Sands fire station and crewed by on-call firefighters. It supports smaller protracted incidents with the same incident command software plus other technological and practical features such as networked computers, demountable mobile data terminal, trauma packs, and lighting.

During the year, 13 new fire engines were introduced into our fleet representing over £3 million investment. Each is fitted with new battery-operated cutting and spreading tools for use in road traffic collisions, giving advanced speed and control during rescue operations than the previous hydraulic equipment.

## Implement our emergency cover review

Periodically we review the locations, numbers and types of fire stations and appliances against community risks and incident levels across the county. We then propose ways to improve how we respond to emergencies and ensure that we are

well equipped to respond to future challenges. Following an emergency cover review (ECR) in 2022, several improvements were approved by the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority for implementation between 2023 and 2025.

## Review emergency cover in Preston

A review of emergency cover in and around Preston started, with a view to creating a new, modern station in the same place or another location that serves both our people and the local community well. Over 25 possible sites have been identified so far but many are either unavailable or unsuitable. Work continues to model various scenarios and engage with partners and potential land owners to identify options.

## Introduce more resilient and flexible crewing arrangements

Following extensive planning, the emergency cover review duty system and crewing changes came into effect on 1 March 2024. Replacement of the day crewing plus duty system at Skelmersdale, Morecambe and Fleetwood fire stations was successfully completed. We had hoped to introduce more flexible crewing arrangements but unfortunately agreement could not be reached. However, we continue to explore options that would provide greater resilience across the Service and more flexibility for individuals.

## Optimise emergency cover through dynamic cover software

Dynamic cover software provides operators with visual data on community risks and emergency cover in real-time to inform decision-making on how best to deploy resources. This innovative software assists us with positioning firefighters and appliances dynamically and with greater precision to improve emergency cover and response times.

The software is now firmly established within our command support room and has been used effectively during significant incidents and to monitor periods of high demand, with appliance standby moves to improve emergency cover made as a result. It has allowed us to assist North West Fire Control with standby moves and relief strategies during spate conditions and large incidents, and can also be used remotely by officers.

The final stage of this work will see the dynamic cover software fully implemented at North West Fire Control to deploy resources more effectively and efficiently.

## Strengthen our response to climate change emergencies

Research has continued into all-wheel drive appliances suitable for off-road travel to address challenges posed by flooding and wildfires. A series of site visits to other fire and rescue services and suppliers have been undertaken to assess suitability of appliances. A trial has not yet started due to the availability of appliances.

Eight flood water incident managers have been established following specialist training to support large-scale flooding incidents and one tactical adviser has successfully completed training to form part of national fire and rescue resilience arrangements. In addition, our existing Hagglund vehicles have been assessed for their flood water wading response, with simulation training provided to crews.

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

In response to the tragic Grenfell Tower fire and the increasing numbers of high-rise buildings in Lancashire, we have been working to strengthen our response to tall building risk.

We currently have four aerial ladder platforms (ALPs) with hydraulic ladders capable of extending 32 metres in height from which water can be deployed onto a fire. A new 45 metre ALP has been procured and is being built, to replace the existing appliance at Preston and provide our highest reach aerial capability to date. The vehicle is expected to join our fleet in 2024.

Two additional water towers with increased reach of 20 metres have been procured for Lancaster and St Annes. They join two existing 16 metres water towers in Skelmersdale and Blackburn, providing greater cover across the county. These appliances can penetrate slates, tiles, and other building materials at height to inject large volumes of water onto a fire within a building. They are also in build and expected in 2024.

## Broaden on-call firefighting capabilities to strengthen operational response

Lancashire has 32 fire appliances crewed by on-call firefighters, who often have another job outside Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service. They are trained to deal with a wide range of incidents and work alongside wholetime firefighters, responding to emergencies in their communities from home or work.

We have invested in training on-call crews at Morecambe and Hyndburn fire stations to drive aerial ladder platforms (previously only a skillset among wholetime firefighters), and a new incident command support unit is located and crewed by on-

call firefighters at Bolton-le-Sands, strengthening overall operational response and resilience.

A station manager post dedicated to supporting the on-call duty system has also been introduced.

## Invest in our training centre

New and improved training props at our training centre in Chorley form part of a masterplan that also includes creating modernised learning and office space and the relocation of Service headquarters at the site.

A review of training props began and staff consultation took place to inform the design of facilities incorporating new multi-functional props, dedicated props for specific competences, repurposing of retained props, and upgrades to site-wide infrastructure. The outline masterplan is subject to planning approval.

Plans to invest in improvements to our working at height rope and rescue training prop progressed following consultation with stakeholders, ahead of procurement. Training props allow firefighters to learn in a realistic and safe environment, giving them the opportunity to prepare for multiple scenarios.

## Build four new drill towers

Site investigations surveys and design works have been completed and planning permission submitted for new drill towers at Wesham, Clitheroe, Lytham, and Great Harwood as part of our service-wide replacement programme for these vital training facilities.

## Implement operational learning in response to national events

Operational learning drives improvement and our ability to adapt to emerging risks in communities. Learning from the Manchester Arena Inquiry was delivered in 2023-24 via training on Joint Operating Principles for flexi duty officers. Ten Second Triage was implemented across all operational staff and embedded in future training. The Service also trained more National Interagency Liaison Officers to ensure we have appropriately skilled officers to help advise operational activity.



## Lancashire's underwater drone is a UK first

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service became the first service in the UK to introduce an underwater drone, a remotely operated vehicle, for search and rescue operations.

The underwater drone is a highly manoeuvrable underwater machine that can search water while operated from land.

It is equipped with a high image resolution camera, lights, and an imaging sonar, which allows the pilot to see through murky water. A grabber and high strength tether allow the pilot to take hold of casualties and recover people from beneath the surface.

Particularly effective in low-energy water bodies like eddies, catchment areas, reservoirs, and quarries, the underwater drone has added leading-edge capability to water rescues. The Service has also supported search operations in other parts of the country with deployment of our equipment and the expertise of our pilots.

Another fire and rescue first is our advanced sonar underwater scanner, which uses sonar technology, as well as artificial intelligence, to help firefighters in the water to locate casualties as quickly as possible.

The underwater scanner provides a quick picture from beneath the surface, aiding our swift water rescue and boat teams to make a fast assessment of the situation.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service leads nationally on the use of drones in fire and rescue. These new assets reflect our drive to continuously improve both firefighter safety and the services we provide to the public through innovation and maximising the potential of technology in fire and rescue.

## Measuring progress

Our Service performance is reported quarterly to the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority. This year's reports can be accessed at [www.lancsfirecue.org.uk/cfa](http://www.lancsfirecue.org.uk/cfa).

### Overall activity

- 17,395 incidents attended
- 653 road traffic collisions attended (up from 621)
- 152 missing person searches (up from 94)
- 4,678 fires attended (down from 5,632)
- 1,077 gaining entry to property incidents in support of North West Ambulance Service (up from 914)

### Average attendance time

- Overall - 8 minutes 6 seconds
- Critical fire response – first fire engine attendance – 7 mins 30 seconds
- Critical special service response – first fire engine attendance – 8 minutes 30 seconds

Fire engine availability: – 88.66%

Figures compared to 2022-23 unless otherwise stated.

# Delivering value for money in how we use our resources

## Delivering training and development differently

We are committed to ensuring our people have the best training and development available to deliver quality services now and in the future.

Last year, work continued on a programme of significant, long-term investment in improvements to training provision, with a focus on becoming more efficient in how and where we deliver training to staff in multiple roles, duty systems, and locations across the Service, particularly on-call crews.

Following staff feedback, a variety of changes to key training has provided more agile arrangements that better meet the needs of people with different requirements:

- The use of technology has been successfully embedded enabling us to deliver pan-Service interactive training using virtual classrooms.
- Incident command workshops have been delivered locally to on-call crews instead of at training centre in Chorley, reducing the time and travel involved for individuals. We plan to deliver incident command courses and assessments locally in the future.
- The model for incident command training has been changed so that individuals are no longer required to complete all elements of the learning prior to attending the training course, with more time given to complete the full programme. This change is proving popular with on-call crews and has increased interest in acquiring the command skill.
- The length of time involved in obtaining breathing apparatus (BA) and BA team leader skills has been reduced for on-call firefighters where the ability to progress more quickly has been demonstrated.
- A pilot to deliver an initial recruits' course at a local station has been scoped.
- Our new learning management system offers better support in terms of e-learning, maintenance of skills, and course management for all staff.

We continue to explore new ways of working which have been considered in a review of training provision which forms part of a masterplan to create a central hub combining training and Service headquarters at our Chorley site.

## Review productivity and efficiency

Through continuous learning, review, collaboration, and innovation we seek to increase efficiency and productivity to provide the best possible services and value for money to the people of Lancashire. Last year we achieved this in several ways:

- A productivity and efficiency plan for 2023-2024 was produced setting out our direction of travel towards delivering cashable and non-cashable efficiencies, focussing on innovation and digital transformation. The plan for 2024-25 has also been produced by the statutory deadline.
- To improve the monitoring of working hours, a new policy, guidance, and recording tool within our employee self-service system have been introduced to ensure the health and wellbeing of our staff. A fatigue risk assessment was also implemented to ensure that when individuals opt to work more than 48 hours the risk is assessed and they are suitably rested. In addition, a new rota management team has been established to ensure more effective utilisation of working time and deployment of staff, and minimise the use of overtime.
- We worked with other fire and rescue services to construct mutually beneficial tender documents and award contracts that deliver savings and efficiencies to the North West region. This includes successful collaborative procurement of personal protective equipment and thermal imaging cameras. National frameworks have also been used during the year, ensuring efficient use of resources and value for money.

## Replace performance and analysis software

During the year, the Service has invested in more intuitive and modern ways of gathering and presenting data and intelligence. Our first Power Bi dashboard providing key performance data and intelligence was completed and is being embedded into performance management processes across the Service. Work is ongoing to develop further dashboards which will improve performance reporting across the Service and reduce the amount of time required of operational crews to update reports.

## Collaborate with other public services

Effective partnerships with other organisations enable the Service to identify and support people who are at higher risk from fire, safeguard the most vulnerable people in society, and deliver improved services to the public. Through our Blue Light Collaboration Board with Lancashire Constabulary and North West Ambulance Service, we identified a programme of collaboration opportunities:

- We have reviewed and evaluated how we collaborate with Lancashire Constabulary in relation to missing person searches. Together we have streamlined search operations, resulting in a more structured and effective approach to locating people. Our drone development (aerial and underwater), for which we lead nationally, has enhanced our capabilities for missing person searches. As a result of this successful collaboration, the model has been provided to other fire and rescue services and constabularies to adopt.

- We developed our relationships with partners to understand land and property across the board and identify opportunities for collaboration.
- A trial of non-operational staff supporting North West Ambulance Service's (NWAS) community first responder scheme resulted in five people volunteering. Volunteers respond to life threatening emergencies in their communities from the workplace and administer first aid in the initial vital minutes before NWAS colleagues arrive. This collaboration aims to save lives in Lancashire's communities and we now plan to extend the trial to incorporate flexi duty officers.
- Working with other blue light partners, we planned three joint leadership development events for middle managers in the police and ambulance service which are due to take place in 2024.
- The Service has evaluated the benefits and outcomes of our blue light collaborations: missing person searches, leadership development, estates and co-location, and the Community First Responder initiative. These activities are contributing towards improving public services, value for money, reducing demand, and reducing inequalities within communities.

## Install CCTV on fire engines and other service vehicles

CCTV has been installed on 28 frontline appliances and 26 other service vehicles. The purpose is to increase firefighter safety while they protect communities, and reduce costs associated with vehicle collisions. In 2023-24 there was a reduction in collisions of 28% compared to 2021-22 before we started installing CCTV.

## Measuring progress

Our Service performance is reported quarterly to the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority. This year's reports can be accessed at [www.lancsfirecue.org.uk/cfa](http://www.lancsfirecue.org.uk/cfa).

Progress against allocated budget: £0.4m over budget

Partnership collaboration:

- Received 200 drone requests from Lancashire Constabulary, mostly missing person searches.
- Property reviews underway to identify blue light collaboration opportunities over next 5-10 years.
- Five members of staff in role of community first responders working with North West Ambulance Service.
- Three joint leadership events arranged for fire, police, and ambulance middle managers.

Overall user satisfaction – 98.74%

Figures compared to 2022-23 unless otherwise stated.

# Significant incidents

## Waste fire at former A1 Supaskips site in Lancaster

At 5.31am on Sunday 3 December, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service responded to a report of a fire at the former A1 Supaskips site on Port Royal Avenue in Lancaster.

10 fire engines and multiple special appliances attended the incident initially and firefighting operations continued for three weeks.

The building contained approximately 13,000 tonnes of commercial waste and the seat of fire was beneath large quantities of compact waste. Pockets of fire continued to smoulder deep within the piles for a long time and the building was structurally unsafe, presenting several hazards to emergency responders.

The Service worked with Lancaster City Council, the Environment Agency, Lancashire Police, the UK Health Security Agency, and other partners in a multi-agency response to the incident. We worked together to minimise the impact on public health, business disruption, and the local environment.

To improve access for firefighters tackling the blaze and reduce the amount of waste that could combust, the local authority secured funding to demolish outbuildings on the site and remove all the remaining waste.

Firefighting operations involved the use of fire engines, aerial ladder platforms, water towers, high-volume pumps, and drones in conjunction with the demolition work and removal of waste. We also trialled a firefighting robot during the incident as the location was difficult for firefighters to access.

The site was subject to a criminal investigation by the Environment Agency into the activities there, including the previous operations and waste storage, and has since been cleared to eliminate the risk of another incident.

Commercial premises fire in Preston

7 April 2023

Derelict building fire on Blackpool Promenade

24 April 2023

Factory fire in Blackburn

11 September 2023

House explosion in Blackburn

17 December 2023



## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

### Planning Committee

Meeting to be held on Monday 15 July 2024

### Business Continuity Planning and Testing

Contact for further information: DCFO Steve Healey – Director of Strategy & Planning  
Telephone: 01772 866801

#### Executive Summary

This paper provides an update on the actions taken for enhancing the Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS). Key developments include the creation of an e-learning module to educate all staff on business continuity (BC) principles, advanced training for over 80 LFRS and North West Fire Control (NWFC) staff, and the completion of comprehensive Business Impact Analyses (BIAs) at the operational level. BC has been integrated into daily operations with the nomination of BC champions, and a new Business Continuity Group has been established to bridge the gap between strategic oversight and operational implementation. Additionally, the BCMS has been fully integrated with LFRS's risk management procedures, ensuring a cohesive approach to resilience.

Looking ahead, standardised BC plan templates for stations and departments have been created, and a suite of exercises with pre-made scenarios will be used to test these plans. The BC Policy and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) will be updated to reflect these changes.

#### Recommendation

Members are asked:

- (i) Endorse the detailed progress and achievements outlined in this report regarding the enhancement of the Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS).
- (ii) Support the outlined future plans for BC, including the implementation of standardised BC plan templates for stations and departments, and the development and use of a comprehensive suite of exercises to test and refine these plans.

#### Introduction

This paper provides an update on the progress of the Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS). Significant strides have been made in enhancing our BCMS, ensuring that we are prepared to maintain essential services during disruptions. This update outlines the key developments and future plans to further strengthen our business continuity capabilities.

## **Progress in Business Continuity Management**

### **1. E-Learning Module Development**

- An interactive Business Continuity (BC) e-learning module has been developed for all LFRS staff. This was done on behalf of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) BC group and has become a template for BC e-learning across the fire sector. The module is designed to increase awareness and understanding of BC principles, ensuring that every member of the team is equipped with the knowledge to contribute to our continuity efforts.

### **2. Higher-Level BC Training**

- Over 80 staff members from LFRS and the North West Fire Control (NWFC) with BC responsibilities have received higher-level BC training. This training focuses on advanced BC concepts and practical skills required to write and effectively manage continuity plans.

### **3. Operational Level Business Impact Analysis (BIA)**

- Comprehensive BIAs have been conducted at the operational level throughout the service. These BIAs identify critical functions, assess potential impacts of disruptions, and prioritise resources to ensure swift recovery.

### **4. Strategic Oversight and Operational Implementation**

- Business Continuity (BC) has been added as a standing agenda item to the Senior Management Team (SMT) Corporate Planning Board (CPB). This ensures strategic oversight of the LFRS BCMS.
- A newly established Business Continuity Group bridges the gap between strategic oversight and operational implementation. This group ensures that BC strategies are effectively translated into actionable plans at the operational level.

### **5. BC Integration and Support Structure**

- BC has been integrated into the daily operations of all stations and departments, with BC champions/reference holders nominated to support Business Continuity Plan (BCP) owners. These champions play a crucial role in the BC process, providing expertise and ensuring plans are maintained and updated.

### **6. BC Integration with Risk Management**

- The new LFRS risk management procedure has been fully integrated with BC planning. Risks identified through our risk management process feed directly into the BC plans, ensuring a cohesive approach to resilience. This integration allows us to prioritise and address risks

comprehensively, making our BC plans more robust and aligned with the overall risk landscape.

## **Future Developments**

### **1. Standardised Operational BCP Templates**

- Two standardised BCP templates have been created: one for stations and one for departments. These templates will ensure a consistent approach to business continuity across the service, simplifying the planning process and ensuring all essential elements are covered.

### **2. Exercise and Testing Suite**

- A comprehensive suite of exercises, including pre-made injects and scenarios based on the highest BC risks, has been developed. These exercises will be used to test and refine the new BCPs, ensuring they are robust and effective in real-world scenarios.

### **3. Exercising Tactical and Strategic BCPs**

- In the second half of this year, we will conduct an exercise for tactical and strategic BCPs. The scenarios for this exercise will be determined by the current risk profile of LFRS, ensuring relevance and effectiveness. These exercises will test our preparedness at both the tactical and strategic levels, providing valuable insights and opportunities for improvement.

### **4. Policy and SOP Updates**

- The Business Continuity Policy and SOPs will need to be updated to reflect these changes. This will ensure all documents are aligned with the latest BC practices and strategies, providing clear guidance to all staff.

## **Conclusion**

LFRS has continued to strengthen its BCMS. Through comprehensive training, strategic oversight, and operational implementation, we are building a resilient organisation capable of maintaining critical services during disruptions. The future developments outlined will further enhance our capabilities, ensuring we are well-prepared to face any challenges.

## **Business Risk Implications**

Maintaining a robust BCMS is essential for LFRS to meet the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requirements and sustain critical operations. An effective BCMS reduces operational, financial, human resource, and reputational risks. Continual improvement of our BC practices ensures we remain a reliable emergency service provider.

## **Sustainability or Environmental Impact**

None identified at this stage.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

None identified at this stage.

## **HR Implications**

Business continuity will be officially assigned to individuals as BC champions and reference holders, requiring them to dedicate more time to BC activities. This will enhance our resilience and preparedness culture.

## **Financial Implications**

A budget may be needed for additional training, promoting BC during international BC week, and conducting BCP exercises. These costs will be addressed as needed.

## **Legal implications**

Our BCMS updates ensure compliance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and other relevant legislation. We will monitor and manage any legal implications to maintain ongoing compliance.

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

### **List of background papers**

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate: