

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Monday, 23 June 2025 at 10.30 am in Washington Hall, Leadership and Development Centre, Euxton

Minutes

Present:

G Mirfin (Chair)

Councillors

N Alderson
A Ali OBE
U Arif (Vice-Chair)
S Asghar
J Ash
G Baker
P Buckley
M Clifford
I Duxbury
J Fox
D Howarth
J Hugo

L Hutchinson
F Jackson
Z Khan MBE
L Parker
L Parkinson
A Riggott
M Ritson
S Sidat MBE
D Smith
J Tetlow
R Walsh
E Worthington

1-25/26	Appointment of Chair
	<p>The Clerk to the Authority welcomed new and returning members to the meeting.</p> <p>The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) welcomed members to the meeting and introduced the Executive Board Team and stated that the team were looking forward to working closely with members over the coming years.</p> <p>The CFO announced that two members of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) had been recognised in the King's Birthday Honours List. Firefighter (FF) Shahbaz Shah who was based at Nelson Fire Station and had 17 years' service across the Pennine area as both a wholetime and previously on-call firefighter, had been awarded an MBE. FF Shah had been instrumental in inclusive recruitment campaigns and increasing representation from minority groups across the service.</p> <p>Bob Warren, HR Lead for Pensions and Advisor to North West Fire Control (NWFC), had been awarded an OBE for his exceptional contribution to LFRS over the last two decades as Director of People and Development (DoPD). During this time Bob had influenced both local and national practice and dealt with a number of complex HR challenges.</p> <p>The CFO expressed congratulations to both FF Shah and Bob Warren and members applauded their achievements.</p>

	<p>The Clerk invited nominations for the appointment of Chair for 2025/26. County Councillor A Ali proposed County Councillor G Mirfin which was seconded by County Councillor R Walsh. No further nominations were received and the Clerk held a recorded vote, 19 members voted in favour, 2 against and 4 abstained.</p> <p>The motion was therefore carried and it was:</p> <p>Resolved: That County Councillor G Mirfin be appointed Chair of the Combined Fire Authority for 2025/26.</p>
2-25/26	Appointment of Vice Chair
	<p>The Chair invited nominations for the appointment of Vice-Chair for 2025/26. County Councillor G Mirfin proposed County Councillor U Arif which was seconded by County Councillor A Ali. No further nominations were received and the Clerk held a recorded vote, 20 members voted in favour, 1 against and 4 abstained.</p> <p>The motion was therefore carried and it was:</p> <p>Resolved: That County Councillor U Arif be appointed Vice-Chair of the Combined Fire Authority for 2025/26.</p>
3-25/26	Chair's Welcome and Introduction
	<p>The Chair thanked Members for their support and remarked that it was an honour to be elected as Chair of the Authority. He stated that it was an important role and the first occasion across the country where Reform UK had been elected as the largest political party within a fire authority.</p> <p>The Chair remarked that this would be a unique learning journey and his intention was to run the authority in conjunction with partners in a non-political way to do the best for Lancashire. He acknowledged that there would be financial challenges ahead and that the service had recently been inspected and was hopeful of a positive result.</p> <p>The Chair took the opportunity to recognise the work of his predecessors; former Vice-Chair to the Authority former County Councillor J Shedwick and former Chair of the Authority retired County Councillor D O'Toole. He stated that he had learnt a lot from County Councillor J Shedwick who was incredibly dedicated to the authority. The Chair also remarked that his father had risen to the rank of Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) at County Durham and he would display the same dedication. The Chair stated that County Councillor D O'Toole had previously nominated him to the CFA after hearing him regale stories of his father. He remarked that he had learnt a lot from County Councillor D O'Toole who has briefed him on the challenges that the CFA faced. The Chair suggested that County Councillor J Shedwick and County Councillor D O'Toole be invited back to the CFA in the future to see the progress it had made. He also suggested the authority could consider creating a role similar to an Honorary Alderman/woman, for long standing members, in recognition of their service to the authority and the service.</p>

	<p>The Chair remarked that he hoped all members would enjoy their time on the Fire Authority.</p> <p>County Councillor M Clifford congratulated the new Chair and Vice-Chair on their roles. On behalf of the Labour Group he thanked former Chair former County Councillor N Hennessy and former Vice-Chair former County Councillor S Serridge for their hard work on the Fire Authority. He also thanked former County Councillor F De Molfetta who had been a long-standing member of the Authority and former Chair of the Authority and Committees.</p>
4-25/26	Composition of Combined Fire Authority
	Resolved: That the Composition approved by the 3 Constituent Authorities for 2025/26 for the Combined Fire Authority be noted and endorsed, and the new Members appointed for 2025/26 be welcomed.
5-25/26	Apologies for Absence
	None received.
6-25/26	Disclosure of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
7-25/26	Appointment of Chairs and Vice Chairs of Committees
	<p>The Clerk to the Authority presented the proposed Chairs and Vice Chairs for the Authority's Committees and Working Groups. An amendment to the proposal was noted with Councillor D Smith proposed as Vice-Chair of the Member Training and Development Working Group.</p> <p>It was noted that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Strategy Group were the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority.</p> <p>Councillor D Smith remarked that he was surprised that the Chair and Vice-Chair proposals had been agreed ahead of the meeting as he felt that Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool Councillors had not been consulted, and that Progressive Lancashire had been over represented on committees. The Clerk confirmed that each party spokesperson had been asked to provide proposals for Chair and Vice-Chair of each committee but some spokespersons had felt that they did not have sufficient members to put forward a proposal. He confirmed that the political balance was accurate and that chairs and vice-chairs could be amended going forward. County Councillor A Riggott stated that he did not believe party spokespersons had been contacted as he had not been contacted. County Councillor D Howarth added that he also had not been contacted. The Clerk confirmed that party spokespersons had been contacted via email and County Councillor D Howarth had not been contacted as he was a single member of the Authority. County Councillor A Ali confirmed that he had been contacted as spokesperson for Progressive Lancashire, he also noted that the paper was presented as a proposal and amendments could be made. The Chair added that</p>

	<p>the proposal was far more diverse than he remembered from previous years when the Authority was dominated by one party, he started that he had had conversations with the spokespersons for Progressive Lancashire and Labour who were in agreement with the proposals when put forward. He further stated that he had done his best to share responsibilities.</p> <p>County Councillor D Howarth requested that the proposals be voted on. The Clerk held a recorded vote,19 members voted in favour, 3 against and 3 abstained.</p> <p>Resolved: That in accordance with Standing Order 5.1(b) of the Authority, the following Members be appointed as Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees and Working Groups of the CFA for 2025/26:</p> <table><tr><td>Appeals Committee</td><td>Chair Vice-Chair</td><td>Councillor Z Khan County Councillor M Ritson</td></tr><tr><td>Audit Committee</td><td>Chair Vice-Chair</td><td>County Councillor M Clifford Councillor J Hugo</td></tr><tr><td>Performance Committee</td><td>Chair Vice-Chair</td><td>County Councillor E Worthington County Councillor J Tetlow</td></tr><tr><td>Planning Committee</td><td>Chair Vice-Chair</td><td>County Councillor I Duxbury County Councillor S Asghar</td></tr><tr><td>Resources Committee</td><td>Chair Vice-Chair</td><td>County Councillor A Ali County Councillor N Alderson</td></tr><tr><td>Member Training & Development Working Group</td><td>Chair Vice-Chair</td><td>County Councillor G Mirfin Councillor D Smith</td></tr><tr><td>Resources Sub-Committee for Injury Pensions</td><td>Chair</td><td>County Councillor A Ali</td></tr></table> <p>ii) That the Authority confirmed appointment of the following four Member Champions for 2025/26 as:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Safety – County Councillor L Parkinson;• Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Councillor S Sidat;• Health & Wellbeing - County Councillor S Asghar;• Road Safety – County Councillor J Fox	Appeals Committee	Chair Vice-Chair	Councillor Z Khan County Councillor M Ritson	Audit Committee	Chair Vice-Chair	County Councillor M Clifford Councillor J Hugo	Performance Committee	Chair Vice-Chair	County Councillor E Worthington County Councillor J Tetlow	Planning Committee	Chair Vice-Chair	County Councillor I Duxbury County Councillor S Asghar	Resources Committee	Chair Vice-Chair	County Councillor A Ali County Councillor N Alderson	Member Training & Development Working Group	Chair Vice-Chair	County Councillor G Mirfin Councillor D Smith	Resources Sub-Committee for Injury Pensions	Chair	County Councillor A Ali
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8-25/26	Representation on Outside Bodies																					
	<p>The Authority was requested to determine its representation on outside bodies for the 2025/26 municipal year.</p> <p>It was noted that the North West Fire and Rescue Forum listed in the agenda pack was now obsolete and representation was therefore no longer required.</p>																					

	<p>Resolved:</p> <p>i) That County Councillor G Mirfin, Chair of the Authority be authorised to cast the Authority's vote at the LGA Annual General Assembly;</p> <p>ii) That County Councillors G Mirfin and U Arif (as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority) be appointed to the Local Government Association Fire Commission;</p> <p>iii) That County Councillor G Mirfin, Chair of the Authority can authorise additional representation(s) to either the LGA Fire Commission or the Fire Services Management Committee as appropriate;</p> <p>iv) That County Councillors G Mirfin and U Arif (as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority) be appointed as North West Fire Control Directors for 2025/26.</p>
9-25/26	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	Resolved: That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 28 April 2025 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.
10-25/26	Minutes of the meeting Thursday 24 April 2025 of Member Training & Development Working Group
	Resolved: That the proceedings of the Member Training & Development Working Group held on Thursday 24 April 2025 be noted and endorsed.
11-25/26	Programme of meetings 2026/27
	<p>In response to a question from the Chair, the Clerk to the Authority confirmed that proposed meeting dates were checked against home authority meeting dates.</p> <p>Resolved: That the proposed programme of meetings for the Combined Fire Authority for 2026/27 be agreed as: -</p> <p>27 April 2026 15 June 2026 (Annual Meeting of the CFA) 21 September 2026 14 December 2026</p> <p>22 February 2027 (Budget Meeting)</p>
12-25/26	Safety Health and Environment Annual Report 2024/25
	<p>The Authority considered the Annual Safety, Health and Environment Report for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) covering the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.</p> <p>As the body with ultimate responsibility for staff health, safety and environmental compliance it was important that all CFA Members were aware of performance in this respect. The report therefore provided a summary of overall progress and performance in respect of accidents and near misses, environmental performance, health and wellbeing initiatives, together with a look forward to planned improvement areas for 2025/26.</p>

The report summarised the arrangements in place to deliver the Service's Safety, Health and Environment Policy and provided a summary of safety, health and environment performance data. It included the reporting on occupational safety, health and environmental issues that had arisen during the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

External Audit of Health Safety and Environment Management Systems 2025

Since initial certification in November 2011 surveillance visits had been conducted annually with re-certification every 3 years to maintain external certification of the Health and Safety and Environment Management Systems. In February 2025, the auditor from British Assessment Bureau (BAB) carried out an audit against the International Standards for health and safety ISO 45001:2018 and environment ISO 14001:2015. The audit scope for both standards was 'The Provision of Fire, Rescue and Supporting Services across Lancashire'. This broad scope encompasses all LFRS activities with audit visits to the Service Headquarters (SHQ) site, Leadership and Development Centre (LDC), four fire stations operating different duty systems together with several supporting departments. Continued certification was granted with 1 minor non-conformity and 2 opportunities for improvement identified.

Health and Safety Performance

During 2024/25 there were 84 accidents, 123 near misses and 8 RIDDOR events. The report provided a summary of the total accident and ill-health statistics for 2024/25.

In response to a question from the Chair, the DCFO confirmed that a near miss was an event with potential to cause harm.

Vehicle Accidents

During 2024/25 there were 72 accidents involving fleet vehicles. Analysis of the type of accidents LFRS vehicles had been involved in had shown that most accidents occurred during vehicle manoeuvring at slow speeds.

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

The Chair asked if on street parking and lack of access had been identified as an issue in any specific areas, the DCFO confirmed that no specific areas had been identified but when incidents did occur the Corporate Communications team were proactive in communicating this to members of the public.

Health and Wellbeing

The focus of mental health awareness training across the Service was personal resilience; building and maintaining. The aim of the Service's programmes was to increase personal resilience of staff and includes elements of positive psychology,

relaxation, coping strategies and suicide awareness.

'Wellbeing Wednesdays' continued to be received well by colleagues. Staff from the SHE Department arranged to work from a different station/office on a regular basis to provide the opportunity for staff to ask questions about the wellbeing resources, receive wellbeing toolbox talks, have a visit from a Wellbeing Support Dog and have a general wellbeing chat.

All LFRS staff continued to have access to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) delivered by external specialist provider, Health Assured. The EAP was a confidential & independent support service for employees and immediate dependants to help deal with personal problems that might adversely impact on daily life, health and wellbeing.

Due to the traumatic nature of some operational incidents, LFRS operated a Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) team. TRiM was not a medical intervention, but a peer-led support process designed to help staff deal with traumatic events they may encounter during their everyday work.

Fitness

In December/January 2025 the Service rolled out new functional fitness kit (dumbbells, adjustable benches, resistance bands) to LFRS gyms and completed the first phase of a cardio fitness equipment replacement programme, for those pieces of fitness equipment that were over 10 years old/no longer financially viable to repair.

Environmental Performance

The current Carbon Management Plan included a target of 40% carbon emission reduction by March 2030 from a baseline of 4352 tonnes of CO₂ in 2007/08. The Service had achieved an overall reduction of 20.4% by March 2025 which related to measured carbon emissions for gas, electric and fleet vehicle fuel. Separately water was currently seeing a 25% reduction from the baseline year.

The total waste created in 2024/25 was 103 tonnes, a decrease of approximately 2.55% compared to 2023/24. The overall recycling rate across the Service remained very good at 34.3%.

A look ahead to 2025/26

The report also detailed key safety, health and environmental priorities for 2025/26 which included: maintaining certified standards; continuing to implement the Health, Safety and Wellbeing 5-year Plan and progress aspirational development items; focus on safety, health and environmental issues to enhance internal checks; reducing accidents and related sickness absence; engage and support Environmental Champions to assist the continued reduction of carbon emissions from energy and fuel use, and reduce waste collected and increase waste recycled; delivering the programme of wellbeing promotional and awareness activities; refreshing fitness equipment issued to fire station gyms; and reviewing the Service's position against further released guidance and best practice arrangements.

	<p>County Councillor M Clifford expressed his thanks for the partnership working recently undertaken at Cuerden Valley Park.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor L Hutchinson in relation to maintaining Firefighter fitness, the DCFO confirmed Area Manager (AM) Neil Taylor led the Service fitness arrangements which were based on a national standard. AM Taylor added that each firefighter was tested annually and a plan implemented for anyone who fell below accepted fitness levels.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow in relation to comparing accidents across other fire authorities in a league table, the DCFO confirmed that he was not aware of a league table relating to near misses but there was one relating to sickness absences. He stated that this could be looked at further, but if a series of near misses were identified in LFRS these would be addressed through the introduction of an electronic learning module.</p> <p>Councillor J Hugo remarked that the Service should be proud of its achievements in relation to carbon reduction, although it was not at its target level the strides made were commendable. She then asked if the 40% target was achievable. The DCFO confirmed that it was a stretching target, especially given the age of some LFRS buildings, however it was a 5-year plan that would be reviewed with a view to achieving zero emissions by 2050.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Authority noted and endorsed the report and associated safety, health and environment performance outcomes.</p>
13-25/26	Policy on dealing with habitual and vexatious complaints - annual update
	<p>At its meeting held 20 June 2016 the Authority adopted a formal Policy on Dealing with Habitual and Vexatious Complaints (resolution 13/16 refers) which was fair and proportionate, yet which did not prevent genuine complaints from being properly investigated and fair and equitable outcomes promulgated.</p> <p>On an annual basis the Clerk and Chief Fire Officer reviewed the status of complainants judged to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious and reported this to the Authority. In addition, each year the Clerk reviewed the policy, as now presented. This year's review concluded that the effectiveness of this policy was demonstrable, and accordingly the policy remained appropriate, proportionate and effective to the needs of Members, officers and staff.</p> <p>During the previous 12 months there had been no complainants judged to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious.</p> <p>Resolved: That the report be noted and endorsed.</p>
14-25/26	Member Champion Activity Report
	<p>The concept of Member Champions was introduced in December 2007. A review of the areas of focus for Member Champions was considered at the Authority meeting held in June 2017 where new areas of responsibility were agreed. The newly</p>

	<p>appointed Member Champions and their areas of responsibility were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Safety – County Councillor Lance Parkinson • Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Councillor Salim Sidat • Health and Wellbeing – County Councillor Sohail Asghar • Road Safety – County Councillor Jordan Fox <p>Reports relating to the activity of the Member Champions were provided on a regular basis to the Authority. This report related to activity for the period up to 22 June 2025. During this period all had undertaken their respective role in accordance with the defined terms of reference.</p> <p>The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) went through the detail of the report.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor E Worthington in relation to the cost of campaigns, the ACFO confirmed that she would confirm these details after the meeting. Councillor J Hugo stated that it was important to consider the cost of campaigns alongside the cost to society if these campaigns did not take place, and the number of lives saved. The CFO added that although campaigns were sponsored through Member champions, largely these campaigns supported core prevention and protection activities delivered by both operational and non-operational staff and formed part of the Service inspection regime by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) and activities were evaluated frequently to understand their effectiveness in reducing risk.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor I Duxbury in relation to expanding the Biker Down offering to car clubs, the ACFO confirmed that this could be done, and any suggestions would be welcomed. The Chair added that Biker Down was very popular within the Ribble Valley.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor M Clifford in relation to if LFRS was required to complete climate score card questionnaires, the DCFO confirmed that he would look into this and confirm outside of the meeting.</p> <p>County Councillor P Buckley stated that there had been a number of road-related fatalities in his local area. He asked if the Service was working with driving schools to deliver the Wasted Lives input. Area Manager (AM) Matt Hamer confirmed that LFRS was a key partner of Lancashire Road Safety Partnership who were working to try and influence the national curriculum to include information on the Wasted Lives campaign. The CFO and Vice-Chair added that this was currently encompassed as part of the driving theory tests hazard awareness section.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Authority noted the report and acknowledged the work of the respective Champions.</p>
15-25/26	Fire Protection Reports
	The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) presented the report which summarised Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) prosecutions pertaining to fire safety

offences under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005.

Prosecutions

On 1 December 2020, Fire Safety Officers inspected the Morvern Care Centre, Thornton-Cleveleys. The fire safety breaches posed a serious threat to the life and safety of all residents and staff, resulting in the issue of a Prohibition Notice.

At the time of the inspection, the home was occupied by forty-five elderly and vulnerable residents, as well as the staff. Over the following two weeks, a co-ordinated multi-agency approach was followed to relocate the residents into other available care facilities.

On the 15 October 2024 Fylde Fire Systems Limited pleaded guilty to three offences under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO), those being:

- Failure to ensure the premises were equipped with appropriate fire detectors and alarms. Article 13(1)(a) FSO.
- Failure to safeguard the safety of relevant persons by ensuring that any facilities, equipment and devices provided in respect of the premises were subject to a suitable system of maintenance and were maintained in an efficient state and in an efficient working order. Article 17(1) FSO.
- Failure to co-operate with other responsible persons, so far as was necessary to enable compliance with the requirements placed upon them. Article 22(1)(a) FSO.

On Wednesday 7 May 2025, sentencing took place at Blackburn Magistrates Court, where Fylde Fire Systems Limited were sentenced and received the following sanctions:

- A fine of £30,000, and a £2,000 victim surcharge.
- Ordered to pay £18,725 in costs to Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.

The sentencing outcome had been appealed by Fylde Fire Systems Ltd.

Four other cases currently sat within the court system.

Protection teams continued to investigate and build case files in relation to 16 other premises where offences were believed to have been committed under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Members noted that there had been two arson convictions during the quarter, one resulting in a caution and one resulting in a prison sentence of 2 years and 2 months.

There were another 18 live cases ongoing through the Criminal Justice System that the Service was continuing to progress.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

	<p>The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) presented the report which provided Members with information relating to operational incidents of note. As the operational period had been very busy, the report detailed only the larger deployments or more complex incidents. As a result, some incidents that Members had been made aware of locally, may not have formed part of the report. Full details of the following incidents were provided in the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Incident involving electrical substation in Padiham (11/4/25) • Wildfire in Darwen (12/4/25) • Wildfire in Chorley (12/4/25) • Domestic property fire in Ormskirk (14/4/25) • Road Traffic Collision in Lancaster (20/4/25) • Commercial building fire in Clitheroe (22/4/25) • Commercial fire in Preesall (9/5/25) • Commercial fire in Blackburn (10/5/25) • Commercial fire in Longridge (14/5/25) • Commercial fire in Fulwood (16/5/25) • Wildfire in Burnley (17/5/25) <p>In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow in relation to determining the safety of properties and the potential for solar panels to still be live during incidents, the ACFO confirmed that the Service was reliant on building owners informing them of any risks, but tactics were implemented to ensure that crews operated safely and isolated power sources using a variety of methods.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor I Duxbury in relation to any common causes identified following the recent agricultural building fires, the ACFO confirmed that not all causes had been confirmed at this time, but work was ongoing with the Prevention Teams to work with farmers, game keepers and other relevant parties. She further confirmed that should any common themes be identified, these would be used to inform the Services future prevention strategies. The Chair added that the Assistant Director of Communication and Engagement was working with the agricultural community to share key messages and prevention advice. The CFO added that there could be a number of different causes which commonly include self-heating of materials, stacking of materials in barns near light fittings and farming practices being carried out during a protracted period of dry weather, there was an amalgamation of a number of different causes.</p> <p>County Councillor R Walsh asked if the causes of incidents could be included in the report going forward. The CFO confirmed that the cause could look to be included where appropriate to do so; he added that in some incidents the extent of damage could impact the ability to determine the exact cause and in some cases there were limitations on reporting due to coronial or separate legal proceedings.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow in relation to the identification of cladding in the Lancashire area following the Grenfell Tower tragedy, the ACFO confirmed that on the conclusion of the Grenfell Tower investigation two sets of recommendations had been produced. LFRS had</p>

completed the phase 1 recommendations and was working through the phase 2 recommendations. Building owners had been consulted and the Protection Team had made very good progress in relation to the safety of high-rise buildings and had now moved on to medium-rise buildings. The DCFO added that this information was reported through the Planning Committee. Area Manager (AM) Matt Hamer confirmed that a medium rise building was defined as a building between 11 and 18 metres and there were in the region of 170 medium rise buildings identified throughout Lancashire.

Resolved: That the Authority noted and endorsed the report.

Group Manager (GM) Tom Cookson and Station Manager (SM) Ben Maris gave a presentation to members on the building fire at Tensar Manufacturing, Blackburn. Tensar was a world-leading manufacturer and provider of ground stabilisation and soil reinforcement solutions.

The initial call was received at 00:43hrs on 31 March 2025. The site consisted of a large building that was surrounded by large rolls of matting with lots of airflow. The site was surrounded by a number of smaller manufacturing buildings.

Following the initial call, a member of the public used the '999eye' system to relay a number of images to North West Fire Control (NWFC). Upon receipt of these images NWFC increased the response to 6 fire engines and an Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP). This was then increased again to 10 fire engines, an ALP, a water tower, a water bowser, a robot, a high-volume pump (HVP), a command unit, a drone, a Hazmat Officer and Flexi Duty Officers (FDOs).

The incident management objectives were to: account for all building occupants, implement firefighting tactics, secure sufficient water supplies to manage the incident, prevent fire spread, stabilise the incident, control utilities to reduce hazards, access implications for surrounding areas and protect the environment. The incident priorities were firefighter, employee and public safety.

The firefighting tactics included use of multiple firefighting jets, use of water towers, ALP, robotic firefighting unit, ground monitors, hose reels and breathing apparatus.

The size of the fire was considerable, and the intensity was high; plastic within the site had melted to liquid and was on fire across the site. The building had a drencher system fitted to the outside of the building which assisted in slowing radiant heat from breaking through to the factory.

SM Maris explained that on his arrival at the incident at 01:15hrs he shared a pre-determined multi-agency information message with partners and declared a major incident due to people imminently starting their commute to work, the hospital being in close proximity, and the risk that the smoke plume could drift in that direction. He also explained that he had requested a high-volume pump (HVP) which could draw water from 1.5 miles away and would need to utilise Haslingden Road through the centre of Blackburn.

SM Maris explained that as a Station Manager he would manage incidents up to 6

	<p>fire engines, therefore at 01:30hrs Group Manager (GM) Cookson took over management of the incident. GM Cookson managed factors outside of the incident, including working with partner agencies and SM Maris continued as operations commander.</p> <p>GM Cookson explained that he used the Command Unit to monitor footage being captured by the drone, this allowed him to have an aerial view, assess where the fire was travelling and communicate this with SM Maris. He advised that the Service received multi-agency support throughout the incident and the external drencher system assisted with limiting damage to the building.</p> <p>LFRS remained on site for several days to conclude the incident. CCTV had helped to establish the cause of the fire as being of deliberate origin.</p> <p>In response to a question from J Tetlow in relation to the advancement of technology and the use of drones to carry water, GM Cookson confirmed that the Drone Manager within the Service was the national Fire and Rescue lead for drones and was working on a project to use drones to carry water. The UK technology was not there yet but could be developed over the next 5 years.</p> <p>The CFO thanked GM Cookson and SM Maris for their presentation and stated that there was an appetite for innovation within LFRS and investment from the CFA had allowed the Service to continue to improve equipment used by firefighters to deliver an effective operational response across the county.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor L Hutchinson in relation to if external sprinkler systems were recommended by LFRS, the CFO confirmed that under Fire Safety legislation it was the responsible person within the buildings responsibility to risk assess and identify fire prevention methods. However, LFRS were able to advise and support businesses.</p> <p>The Chair remarked that the ALP had saved a number of houses recently, in Blackburn. He then asked how long LFRS remained on scene to dampen down at the Tensar incident. SM Maris confirmed that LFRS dampened down for at least two days following the incident.</p>
17-25/26	Member Complaints
	<p>The Monitoring Officer confirmed that there had been no complaints since the last meeting.</p> <p>County Councillor A Riggott apologised for his remarks under item 7 and confirmed that contact had been received in relation to committee nominations. County Councillor A Riggott stated that a written apology would follow in due course. The Clerk accepted his apology and advised a written apology was not necessary.</p> <p>Resolved: That the current position be noted.</p>
18-25/26	Date of Next Meeting

	The next meeting of the Authority would be held on Monday 15 September 2025 at 10:30am at the Leadership and Development Centre, Euxton.
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**LFRS HQ
Fulwood**

**M Nolan
Clerk to CFA**