

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Monday, 15 September 2025 at 10.30 am in Washington Hall, Leadership and Development Centre, Euxton

Minutes

Present:

G Mirfin (Chair)

Councillors

A Ali OBE

U Arif

S Asghar

A Blake

M Clifford

I Duxbury

J Fox

D Howarth

J Hugo

L Hutchinson

F Jackson

Z Khan MBE

G Mirfin

L Parker

A Riggott

M Ritson

S Sidat MBE

D Smith

J Tetlow

R Walsh

19-25/26	Chair's Welcome and Introduction
	The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and congratulated all members, firefighters, officers and the Chief Fire Officer on a fantastic His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) report. The Chair provided statistics relating to new housing targets across the county and explained that the target for Lancashire was to build over 4000 new homes, which could impact response times should fair funding not be agreed for all fire authorities. The chair therefore proposed a motion, discussion ensued, and it was agreed that the motion would be considered under urgent business further in the agenda, subject to the motion being justified as an item of urgent business, upon advice from the Clerk to the Authority.
20-25/26	Apologies for Absence
	Apologies were received from County Councillors N Alderson, J Ash and P Buckley and Councillor G Baker.
21-25/26	Disclosure of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interests
	It was agreed that the disclosure of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests would be revisited later in the agenda once the details of the motion were known.
22-25/26	Minutes of Previous Meeting

	Resolved: That the Minutes of the CFA held on 23 June 2025 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.
23-25/26	Minutes of meeting Wednesday 2 July 2025 of Performance Committee
	County Councillor E Worthington remarked that the meeting had been very productive and congratulated the team at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) on it's outstanding performance. County Councillor J Tetlow added that the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) results were an amazing achievement. The Chair added that the service had received the best results across the country. County Councillor D Howarth left the meeting at 11am. County Councillor M Clifford added that the next HMICFRS inspection would continue to focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and training should be carried out for members to ensure the service remained as outstanding in its next inspection. County Councillor D Howarth re-joined the meeting and County Councillor L Parker left the meeting at 11:02am. Resolved: That the proceedings of the Performance Committee held on 2 July 2025 be noted and endorsed.
24-25/26	Minutes of meeting Tuesday 8 July 2025 of Resources Committee
	County Councillor A Ali remarked that the meeting had been a good introductory meeting and the services treasury management strategy was good with investment in the right places. He thanked officers for producing the reports. County Councillor L Parker re-joined the meeting at 11:03am. Resolved: That the proceedings of the Resources Committee held on 8 July 2025 be noted and endorsed.
25-25/26	Minutes of meeting Monday 14 July 2025 of Planning Committee
	County Councillor I Duxbury remarked that the service had received a positive HMICFRS inspection result, the planning committee had reviewed the services blue light collaboration and annual service report during a productive and instructive meeting. County Councillor S Asghar added that the first meeting went well and received good engagement. County Councillor J Tetlow added that members of the public might not realise how much the service was involved with supporting other blue light services, with community first responders attending incidents to support the ambulance service and provide lifesaving support. County Councillor A Blake left the meeting at 11:06am. The Chair remarked that committees were important to the work of the authority.

	Resolved: That the proceedings of the Planning Committee held on 14 July 2025 be noted and endorsed.
26-25/26	Minutes of meeting Wednesday 16 July 2025 of Audit Committee
	County Councillor A Blake re-joined the meeting at 11:07. County Councillor M Clifford remarked that the internal audit annual report had received lots of substantial reassurances which was very positive. Resolved: That the proceedings of the Audit Committee held on 16 July 2025 be noted and endorsed.
27-25/26	Membership of Committees 2025/26
	The Clerk to the Authority presented the report to members. The Combined Fire Authority was required to confirm the membership of committees in accordance with the political balance rules set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. This meant that the makeup of each committee must reflect the proportions of seats held on the Combined Fire Authority by each political group. The composition of each committee was set out within the report. Resolved: That the Authority noted and endorsed the membership of the committees of the Combined Fire Authority for 2025/26.
28-25/26	Proposed amendment to Strategy Terms of Reference
	The Clerk to the Authority presented a report for Members to consider amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Strategy Group to reflect its expanding remit and ensure the Group maintained its principle aims and objectives to suit the changing needs of the Authority. In response to a question from County Councillor M Clifford, the Clerk advised members that a further amendment would be required to clarify the confidentiality of the group. In response to a question from Councillor J Hugo relating to the notes of the Strategy Group being included as a part two item, the Clerk advised that the notes had been included to allow newer members to understand the business transacted and for transparency. County Councillor D Howarth remarked that the item should be agreed in principle with the terms of reference brought back to the next full authority meeting in December with new wording relating to confidentiality. Resolved: - That the Authority approved the amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Strategy Group.

29-25/26	Proposed amendment to Member's Code of Conduct
	County Councillor E Worthington left the meeting at 11:15am. The Clerk to the Authority presented the report to members. Whilst the current Code was fit for purpose and remained relevant, having been based on a model Code recommended by the Local Government Association, the Committee on Standards in Public Life recently published a report called “Leading in Practice” which outlined guidance into building an ethical culture within public organisations. The previous upgrade of the Code for the most part pre-empted the recommendations made by the Committee, subsequently, save and except for a very minor addition, which was now corrected. Resolved: - That the Authority approved the amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Strategy Group.
30-25/26	Member Champion Activity Report
	The concept of Member Champions was introduced in December 2007. A review of the areas of focus for Member Champions was considered at the Authority meeting held in June 2017 where new areas of responsibility were agreed. The current Member Champions and their areas of responsibility were: • Community Safety – County Councillor Andy Blake • Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Councillor Salim Sidat • Health and Wellbeing – County Councillor Sohail Asghar • Road Safety – County Councillor Jordan Fox. 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 14 September 2025. During this period all had undertaken their respective role in accordance with the defined terms of reference. Member Champions went through the detail of their reports and expressed thanks to the officers who supported them in their roles. Resolved: That the Authority noted and endorsed the report and acknowledged the work of the respective Champions.
31-25/26	Fire Protection Reports
	The report summarised Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) prosecutions pertaining to fire safety offences. On 26 June 2025 sentencing took place at Preston Crown Court for the responsible person (Mr Shahzad Syed Haider) for breaches of the Fire Safety Order at a commercial car parts /garage premises in Blackburn. This incident also

involved a fire death on the premises. Mr Shahzad Syed Haider was sentenced to:

- 9 months imprisonment suspended for 18 months
- 100 hours community service
- £10,000 costs.

On 26 June 2025 sentencing also took place at Preston Crown Court for the responsible person (Mr Sean Broadhurst) and company (St Lukes (Preston) Ltd) for breaches of the Fire Safety Order at a set of residential flats in Preston. The sentencing outcomes were as follows:

- Sean Broadhurst was fined £17,000 and £14,161.66 costs.
- St Lukes (Preston) Ltd were fined £60,000 and £14,161.66 costs.

On 11 July 2025 Fire Safety Officers attended Preston Crown Court for an outcome appeal by Fylde Fire Systems who were sentenced on 7 May 2025. Fylde Fire Systems Limited were originally sentenced and received the following sanctions due to their actions at the Morvern Care Home, Thornton-Cleveleys.

- 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 Judge upheld the initial fine and costs to Fylde Fire Systems, a reduction in the victim's surcharge was awarded.

Three cases sat within the court system.

Members also noted there had been four arson convictions during the quarter resulting in a number of suspended sentences. There were 18 live cases ongoing through the Criminal Justice System.

County Councillor M Clifford remarked that it was disappointing that convictions had resulted in suspended sentences but acknowledged that this was outside of the services control. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) explained that it was positive that all cases had resulted in a guilty plea based on the strength of evidence provided which was testament to Area Manager Matt Hamer and the team.

In response to a question from County Councillor M Ritson in relation to responsible persons with cases in the court system, Area Manager Matt Hamer confirmed that the protection team engaged with responsible persons and utilised companies house and the land registry to identify and inspect other properties with the same responsible person. This often required collaborative working with other fire and rescue services and local authorities.

In response to a further question from County Councillor M Ritson in relation to sharing details of cases within the court system, Area Manager Matt Hamer confirmed that details of live cases could not be shared but press releases were prepared once sentencing had taken place and these could be shared with members.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

32-25/26	Operational Incidents of Interest
	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: • Derelict building fire in Burnley (31/5/25) • Commercial building fire in Hornby (5/6/25) • Commercial building fire in Preesall (18/6/25) • Commercial building fire in Blackpool (21/6/25) • Major entrapment in Carnforth (23/06/25) • Commercial building fire in Morecambe (13/7/25) • Road Traffic Collision in Bacup (22/7/25) • Road Traffic Collision in Blackburn (22/7/25) • Domestic building fire in Blackpool (31/7/25) • Waste fire in Chorley (2/8/25) Members noted a correction to the report with the final waste fire incident having taken place in Chorley rather than Leyland as stated in the report. In response to a question from County Councillor D Howarth in relation to the challenges of responding to waste fires, the ACFO explained that waste fires can be challenging incidents requiring a multi-agency response. Resolved: That the Authority noted and endorsed the report.
33-25/26	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Update
	The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) presented the report to member to provide an update on Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's (LFRS's) HMICFRS Round 3 inspection report findings, and the national results. LFRS had been awarded an unprecedented six 'Outstanding' and five 'Good' ratings across all the 11 inspection areas. This remarkable achievement included being the only service in the country to receive a minimum rating of 'Good' across every category. LFRS had received the best ratings of any fire and rescue service in England. Area Manager Tom Powell and Group Manager Emma Price gave a presentation to members on the HMICFRS inspection and results. LFRS HMICFRS Round 3 inspection commenced on 20 January 2025, initiated by a request for a collection of documents, a self-assessment and three surveys (staff survey, human resources survey and a trade union survey) to assist with preparation for the fieldwork phase of the inspection. The inspection lasted

several weeks and included staff engagement across the organisation, from Firefighter to Chief Fire Officer, inspectors visited a number of fire stations and departments, hosted staff focus groups and analysed numerous data sets and documents. HMICFRS inspectors also engaged with some of the services partner organisations and visited North West Fire Control.

As part of the inspection, a strategic brief was presented by Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Jon Charters, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) Steve Healey, and Director of People and Development (DoPD) Liz Sandiford. It was an opportunity for the Service to brief the HMI and Service Liaison Lead, providing a summary of performance, achievements, and work completed on previous areas of improvement. Following the brief, the Chair of the Fire Authority was interviewed.

The feedback from the HMICFRS inspectors acknowledged that every staff member they interacted with was highly engaging, and they felt genuinely welcomed throughout the organisation.

In mid-June the Service received the draft inspection report, which afforded the opportunity to conduct factual accuracy checks. The official report was released publicly on 14 August 2025 along with a HMICFRS press release.

LFRS attained two Outstanding ratings in the People pillar during the inspection, making it the only service in the country to receive Outstanding in this category. LFRS were among only 3 services, out of a total of 44, that attained an Outstanding rating in protection, understanding risk, and making best use of resources. Five areas of promising practice were also recognised in the report.

The Inspectorate praised the Service for its excellent performance and recognised LFRS's commitment to continuous improvement, the Service's collaborative approach with partners, and the Service's ability to adapt to new challenges and legislation. The Service's commitment to inclusivity, staff wellbeing, and community engagement were also highlighted as sector leading.

One area for improvement was identified which was that the Service should make sure it had robust processes in place to carry out equality impact assessments and review any actions agreed as a result. This was an area that the Service had done a lot of work in, and work was ongoing to track and report progress. Progress against this area for improvement would be reported into Planning Committee.

HMICFRS had published their inspection schedule for 2025-27, the dates for the inspection programme would be released in three phases. The first inspections of the new round had recently commenced. Currently, LFRS were listed as the last service to undergo inspection, which was anticipated to take place around Spring 2027, although this was subject to potential amendments.

The 2025-27 inspection programme would involve a number of changes from the previous round, there would be some focus on the impact of governance on fire and rescue services, impact of leadership at all levels, a review of benefit realisation from projects, and a reduction in inspection areas from 11 to 10. The

Service continued to engage with the Service Liaison Lead from HMICFRS.

In response to a question from County Councillor L Parker in relation to learning from other services who had received outstanding in areas Lancashire had not, Area Manager Tom Powell explained that as HMICFRS reports were published, they would be reviewed and benchmarking exercises undertaken to further improve the service.

County Councillor A Riggott congratulated the Chief Fire Officer and wider Authority and suggested that a copy of the HMICFRS report be sent to the former chairs and vice-chairs of the authority, former County Councillors Nikki Hennessy, Sean Serridge, David O'Toole and John Shedwick. County Councillor A Riggott then asked where progress against the area for improvement would be tracked. The CFO confirmed that progress against the area for improvement would be reported into the Planning Committee and the Clerk to the Authority added that the minutes from the Planning Committee would then be reported into the full CFA Meeting, for commentary by the Authority, in due course.

The CFO explained that the focus of the next HMICFRS inspection would include the impact of governance on the effective running of the service, the effectiveness of leadership at all levels and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) benefits. The Service would also focus on the one area of improvement identified in this inspection and would continue lobbying for sustainable funding for all fire and rescue services.

In response to a question from Councillor J Hugo in relation to the impact of equality impact assessments (EIAs), Area Manager Tom Powell explained that examples of when EIAs were used were at the start of a new project or when new equipment was introduced to assess and understand the impact on staff members and the public. He explained that the outcome of an EIA may impact the approach taken. The CFO added that the service was happy with its use of EIAs but the systems and processes needed to be reviewed to ensure EIAs were properly documented.

County Councillor M Ritson left the meeting at 11:56am.

County Councillor M Clifford congratulated the service on its positive HMICFRS result and thanked former County Councillors David O'Toole, John Shedwick, Nikki Hennessy and Sean Serridge.

County Councillor M Ritson rejoined the meeting at 11:58am.

In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow in relation to the two outstanding gradings achieved in the people section, Area Manager Tom Powell explained that the feedback received from the HMICFRS inspectors was that they felt very welcomed to the Service by everyone they met. He explained that a lot of work had been done to engage and develop staff whilst being open and honest and to get the right people in the right roles. The CFO added that lots of work had been done through the services EDI Culture Board with the service learning from culture and misconduct reviews and other services and ensuring that leadership

	and cultural expectations and standards were clear across the Service. County Councillor E Worthington left the meeting at 12:05pm. The Chair suggested that the service could look at commercialisation to generate income and sessions could be held for staff and members to discuss opportunities to save money. The CFO confirmed that work was ongoing with a series of workshops being held for leaders to generate efficiency ideas and members could be involved through the Strategy Group Meetings. County Councillor E Worthington rejoined the meeting at 12:08pm. Resolved: That the Authority noted the report.
34-25/26	Member Complaints
	The Monitoring Officer confirmed that there had been no complaints since the last meeting. Resolved: That the current position be noted.
35-25/26	Date of Next Meeting
	The next meeting of the Authority would be held on Monday 15 December 2025 at 10:30am at the Training Centre, Euxton.
36-25/26	Urgent Business
	Proposal of Motion Following discussion earlier in the agenda, the following motion was proposed by the Chair. 1. The Fire Authority to ask the Director of Corporate Services to explore opportunities under CIL / Section 106 and provide information back to the CFA at the next meeting (15 December 2025), specifically writing to Planning Authorities, including Unitary Planning Authorities, for information and a view as to the funding arrangements. 2. Additionally, to write to the Fire Minister to explore conversations relating to Fair Funding for the Combined Fire Authority. 3. To ask the Chair, Vice Chair, and Chief Fire Officer to lobby Lancashire MPs in relation to the Fair Funding Review. In response to a question from County Councillor A Riggott, the Chair confirmed that the County Councils Planning Authority was also included. County Councillor A Ali proposed an amendment to point 2 of the motion as follows.

	2. Additionally, to write to the Fire Minister to ask for a meeting to explore conversations relating to Fair Funding for the Combined Fire Authority. The proposed amendment was accepted by the Chair. Disclosure of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interests Following the notice of motion the following members declared non-pecuniary interests relating to their roles within other councils; Councillor D Smith, County Councillors M Clifford, D Howarth, R Walsh and M Ritson. In response to a question from County Councillor A Ali relating to members declaring an interest due to being on a planning committees, the Clerk confirmed that members did not need to declare an interest simply as a matter of course, it would be a decision for individuals but was supportive of the requirement for best practice. The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) explained to members that a new Fire Minister had recently been appointed, and the Chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) would be writing to them within the very short term over funding. Councillor J Hugo added that she was a member of the Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Commission and could assist with support in that capacity. The Chair moved the motion which was seconded by County Councillor A Ali. The motion was then put out to a vote and was carried. Resolved: That; 1. The Fire Authority to ask the Director of Corporate Services to explore opportunities under CIL / Section 106 and provide information back to the CFA at the next meeting (15 December 2025), specifically writing to Planning Authorities, including Unitary Planning Authorities, for information and a view as to the funding arrangements. 2. Additionally, to write to the Fire Minister to ask for a meeting to explore conversations relating to Fair Funding for the Combined Fire Authority. 3. To ask the Chair, Vice Chair, and Chief Fire Officer to lobby Lancashire MPs in relation to the Fair Funding Review.
37-25/26	Exclusion of Press and Public
	Resolved: That the press and members of the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there would be a likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the appropriate paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, indicated under the heading to the item.
38-25/26	Strategy Meeting Notes
	(Paragraph 3)

	Members were provided with the notes and presentation from the Strategy Group Meeting. Resolved: That the notes and presentation of Strategy Meeting held on 23 June 2025 be noted.
39-25/26	Appointment of the Clerk and Monitoring Officer
	(Paragraph 1) The Clerk to the Authority withdrew from the meeting for this item. Resolved: That the Authority approved the extension of contract of Mr Mark Nolan as Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority for a period of six months and approved that the Legal Services and Standards Manager be designated as Deputy Monitoring Officer, enhancing resilience in this statutory function.

**LFRS HQ
Fulwood**

**M Nolan
Clerk to CFA**