

Public Document Pack

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

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

Car parking is available on the Main Drill ground.

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

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

Reform UK – Pendle Room

Labour Group – Lancaster House 4

Conservative Group – Lancaster House 5

Progressive Lancashire – Lancaster House 6

Agenda

Part 1 (open to press and public)

Chair's Announcement – Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

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

1. Chair's Welcome and Introduction

Standing item.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interests

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

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 1 - 14)

5. Minutes of meeting Wednesday 2 July 2025 of Performance Committee (Pages 15 - 48)

6. Minutes of meeting Tuesday 8 July 2025 of Resources Committee (Pages 49 - 62)

7. **Minutes of meeting Monday 14 July 2025 of Planning Committee (Pages 63 - 76)**
8. **Minutes of meeting Wednesday 16 July 2025 of Audit Committee (Pages 77 - 92)**
9. **Membership of Committees 2025/26 (Pages 93 - 94)**
10. **Proposed amendment to Strategy Terms of Reference (Pages 95 - 98)**
11. **Proposed amendment to Member's Code of Conduct (Pages 99 - 116)**
12. **Member Champion Activity Report (Pages 117 - 122)**
13. **Fire Protection Reports (Pages 123 - 126)**
14. **Operational Incidents of Interest (Pages 127 - 130)**
15. **His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Update (Pages 131 - 138)**
16. **Member Complaints**

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

The next meeting of the Authority will be held on **Monday 15 December 2025** at 1030 hours at Washington Hall, Leadership and Development Centre, Euxton.
18. **Urgent Business**

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

The Authority is asked to consider whether, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, they consider that the public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there would be a likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the appropriate paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, indicated under the heading to the item.
20. **Strategy Meeting Notes (Pages 139 - 188)**
21. **Appointment of the Clerk and Monitoring Officer (Pages 189 - 192)**

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	L Hutchinson
A Ali OBE	F Jackson
U Arif (Vice-Chair)	Z Khan MBE
S Asghar	L Parker
J Ash	L Parkinson
G Baker	A Riggott
P Buckley	M Ritson
M Clifford	S Sidat MBE
I Duxbury	D Smith
J Fox	J Tetlow
D Howarth	R Walsh
J Hugo	E Worthington

1-25/26	Appointment of Chair
	The Clerk to the Authority welcomed new and returning members to the meeting. 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. 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. 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. The CFO expressed congratulations to both FF Shah and Bob Warren and members applauded their achievements.

	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. The motion was therefore carried and it was: Resolved: That County Councillor G Mirfin be appointed Chair of the Combined Fire Authority for 2025/26.
2-25/26	Appointment of Vice Chair
	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. The motion was therefore carried and it was: Resolved: That Country Councillor U Arif be appointed Vice-Chair of the Combined Fire Authority for 2025/26.
3-25/26	Chair's Welcome and Introduction
	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. 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. 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.

	The Chair remarked that he hoped all members would enjoy their time on the Fire Authority. 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.
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
	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. It was noted that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Strategy Group were the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority. 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

	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. 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. 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: <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> ii) That the Authority confirmed appointment of the following four Member Champions for 2025/26 as:- • 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
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																				
8-25/26	Representation on Outside Bodies																					
	The Authority was requested to determine its representation on outside bodies for the 2025/26 municipal year. 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.																					

	Resolved: i) That County Councillor G Mirfin, Chair of the Authority be authorised to cast the Authority's vote at the LGA Annual General Assembly; 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; 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; 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.
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
	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. Resolved: That the proposed programme of meetings for the Combined Fire Authority for 2026/27 be agreed as: - 27 April 2026 15 June 2026 (Annual Meeting of the CFA) 21 September 2026 14 December 2026 22 February 2027 (Budget Meeting)
12-25/26	Safety Health and Environment Annual Report 2024/25
	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. 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.

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.

	County Councillor M Clifford expressed his thanks for the partnership working recently undertaken at Cuerden Valley Park. 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. 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. 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. Resolved: That the Authority noted and endorsed the report and associated safety, health and environment performance outcomes.
13-25/26	Policy on dealing with habitual and vexatious complaints - annual update
	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. 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. During the previous 12 months there had been no complainants judged to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious. Resolved: That the report be noted and endorsed.
14-25/26	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 newly

	appointed Member Champions and their areas of responsibility were: • 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 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. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) went through the detail of the report. 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. 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. 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. 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. Resolved: That the Authority noted the report and acknowledged the work of the respective Champions.
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.

	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: • 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) 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. 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. 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. 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

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

	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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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.
17-25/26	Member Complaints
	The Monitoring Officer confirmed that there had been no complaints since the last meeting. 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. Resolved: That the current position be noted.
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.
--	---

M Nolan
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 15 September 2025

Proceedings of Performance Committee held 2 July 2025

(Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information:

Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager - Tel: 01772 866720

Executive Summary

The proceedings of Performance Committee meeting held 2 July 2025.

Recommendation(s)

To note the proceedings of Performance Committee as set out at appendix 1 now presented.

Information

Attached at Appendix 1 are the proceedings of the Performance Committee meeting held on 2 July 2025.

Business Risk

None.

Environmental Impact

None.

Equality & Diversity Implications

None.

Financial Risk

None.

HR Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Performance Committee

Wednesday, 2 July 2025, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room,
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
S Asghar	
M Clifford	
L Parker	
A Riggott	
S Sidat MBE	
J Tetlow (Vice-Chair)	
E Worthington (Chair)	

Officers
S Pink, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) M Hamer, Area Manager, Prevention and Protection (LFRS) P Jones, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery J Rossen, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery (LFRS) C Burscough, Prevention Support Officer (LFRS) S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)
In attendance
K Matthews, North West Fire Control K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union

1-25/26	Apologies For Absence
	Apologies were received from Councillor J Hugo and County Councillors G Mirfin, L Parkinson, and M Ritson. County Councillor L Parker was in attendance as substitute for County Councillor G Mirfin.
2-25/26	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
3-25/26	Minutes of Previous Meeting

	Resolved: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on the 5 March 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
4-25/26	Performance Management Information Q4 The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented a comprehensive report to the Performance Committee. This was the 4th quarterly report for 2024/25 as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-2027. In quarter 4, one Key Performance Indicator (KPI), 2.9 Business Fire Safety Checks, was shown in positive exception and two KPIs were shown in negative exception. These were 1.2.1 Staff Absence Wholetime (WT) and 1.2.3 Staff Absence Greenbook. Members examined each indicator in turn focusing on those KPIs in exception as follows: KPI 1 – Valuing our people so that they can focus on making Lancashire safer 1.1 Overall Staff Engagement Members received an update on how staff were engaged during the period. A pulse survey, a short survey designed to measure staff engagement levels in between full staff surveys, was conducted from 18 December 2024 to 7 January 2025. It was an online survey only and received 252 responses (20%). The resultant staff engagement index score of 79% was a 5% increase on the 2023 score. From January to March 2025, 17 station visits were carried out by Principal Officers and Area Managers as part of the service-wide engagement programme. In addition, six engagement sessions were held across the county for Station, Watch, and Crew Managers and Community Fire Safety Team Leaders with Heads of Service Delivery to reflect on progress achieved in 2024-25 and consider priorities for 2025-26. Thirty wellbeing interactions were undertaken ranging from workshops with crews to wellbeing support dog interactions. Seven online sessions were held to update all operational staff on the final stage of implementing the Service's dynamic cover software. Two On the Menu digital sessions were held: the first was about leadership and development pathways and attended by 56 people, and the second was about digitalisation of the incident ground attended by 33 people. The Service engaged with staff over several topics that related to the Service's fleet and equipment, and views were sought by survey and through employee voice groups in relation to a new project to replace breathing apparatus. Staff engagement over improvement works at Blackpool and Preston fire stations

continued.

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

Year	Engagement Index	Response Rate
2023	74%	49%
2020	79%	44%
2018	70%	43%
2016	64%	31%

The engagement index was calculated based on five questions that measured pride, advocacy, attachment, inspiration, and motivation; factors that were understood to be important features shared by staff who were engaged with the organisation.

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

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

1.2.1 Staff Absence Wholetime

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

Annual Standard: Not more than 8 shifts lost.

Annual Shifts Lost ÷ 4 quarters = 2

Quarter shifts lost: 2.235

Cumulative total number of shifts lost: 8.284

The agreed target performance level was 8 shifts lost per employee per year across both Grey (KPI 1.2.1) and Green Book (1.2.3) staff. The actual combined shifts lost for both for 2024/25 was 7.97 shifts lost per employee, which was within

the overall target.

The negative exception report was due to the number of shifts lost through absence per employee being above the Service target for quarter 4.

The element of that section of the report referred to sickness absence rates for the period 01 April 2024 to March 2025.

The agreed target performance level was 8 shifts lost per employee per year for wholetime staff. The actual shifts lost for the period for that group of staff was 8.28, which was 0.28 shifts above target. During the previous year, 8.72 shifts were lost which was a reduction of 0.44 shifts lost per wholetime employee compared to the same period of the previous year.

A total of 5,186 wholetime absence shifts lost = 8.28 against a target of 8.00.

The number of cases of long-term absence which spanned over the total of the 3 months reduced from 2 cases in Q3 to 1 case in Q4. Forty-six shifts were lost during quarter 4 as a result of the one case of long-term absence. This was in comparison to 158 shifts which were lost during the same quarter of 2023-24. That case accounted for 0.07 shifts lost per person over the quarter.

There were 27 cases of long-term absence which were recorded within the 3 months:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| • Musculo Skeletal | 8 cases |
| • Hospital/Post Operative Procedure | 8 cases |
| • Mental Health (Other 4 cases) | 4 cases |
| • Other absence types | 8 cases |

There were 64 shifts lost which related to Respiratory related absences including Coronavirus absence. This was compared to 154 shifts lost in the same quarter of 2023-24.

The Service had an Absence Management Policy which detailed its approach to how it would manage absence to ensure that staff time was managed effectively, but also members of staff were supported back to work or exited from the Service in a compassionate way.

The Human Resources (HR) system ITrent automatically generated monthly reports to line managers and HR Business Partners in relation to employees and the periods and reasons for absence, which were closely monitored. Where employees were absent due to a mental health or stress related condition, they were referred to the Occupational Health Unit (OHU) as early as possible. Employees returning to work had a return-to-work interview and stress risk assessment, or individual health risk assessments were completed where required.

The Service had several support mechanisms available to support individuals to return to work or be exited as appropriate which included guidance from Occupational Health, access to Trauma Risk Management (TRiM), access to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), and the Firefighters Charity.

Where an employee did not return to work in a timely manner, an absence review meeting would take place with the employee, the line manager, and a representative from Human Resources. The meetings were aimed at identifying support to return an individual back to work which could include modified duties for a period, redeployment, but ultimately could result in dismissal, or permanent ill health retirement from the Service.

The Absence Management Policy detailed when a formal review of an employee's performance levels would normally take place. In terms of short-term absence, a formal review would take place where an employee had 3 or more periods of absence in 6 months, or an employee had 14 days absent. In terms of long-term absence, a formal review would normally take place at 3, 6, 9 and 11 months.

A key challenge for supporting operational staff return to work was that the threshold for fitness and return to work for operational firefighters was higher than in other occupations due to their hazardous working conditions.

In response to a question from County Councillor A Riggott in relation to the possibility of including a breakdown of the 'other absence types category', the ACFO confirmed that this could be considered ahead of the next meeting.

1.2.2 Staff Absence On-Call (OC)

This indicator measured the percentage of contracted hours lost due to sickness for all on-call contracted staff.

Annual Standard: No more than 2.5% lost as a % of available hours of cover.

Cumulative on-call absence (as a % of available hours cover) at the end of the quarter, 1.27%.

1.2.3 Staff Absence Greenbook

The ACFO explained that Grey book referred to operational staff and Green book referred to support staff who were generally non-operational. There were some dual contract green book staff who provided on-call cover whilst fulfilling their green book role.

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

Annual Standard: Not more than 8 shifts lost.

Annual Shifts Lost ÷ 4 quarters: 2

Quarter shifts lost: 2.123

Cumulative shifts lost: 7.221

The agreed target performance level was 8 shifts lost per employee per year across both Grey and Green Book staff. The actual shifts lost for both combined for 2024/25 was 7.97 shifts lost per employee, which was within the overall target.

The negative exception report was due to the number of shifts lost through absence per employee being above the Service target for quarter 4.

The agreed target performance level was 8 shifts lost per employee per year for Green Book staff. The actual shifts lost for the period for this group of staff was 7.22, which was 0.78 below target. During the same period of the previous year, 7.04 shifts were lost which was an increase of 0.18 shifts lost per green book employee compared to the same period last year.

During January – March 2025, absence statistics showed non-uniformed personnel absence above target for the quarter with 2.12 shifts lost in the quarter against a target of 2.00 shifts lost.

1,863 non-uniformed absence shifts lost = 7.22 against a target of 8.00 during the quarter 1 to 4. There were three cases of long-term absence which spanned over the total of the 3 months.

The number of long-term absence cases recorded in the quarter reduced from 13 in Q3 to 10 in Q4:

- Mental Health 5 cases
- Musculo Skeletal 2 cases
- Other absence types 3 cases

During the quarter, 188 shifts were lost as a result of the 10 cases of long-term absences, this was in comparison to 93 shifts lost during the previous quarter. These cases accounted for 0.73 shifts lost per person over the quarter.

Respiratory related absences accounted for 54 lost shifts, which included Coronavirus absence. This was compared to 28 shifts lost in the same quarter of 2023-24.

The Service had an Absence Management Policy which detailed its approach to how it would manage absence to ensure that staff time was managed effectively, but also members of staff were supported back to work or exited from the Service in a compassionate way.

The Human Resources (HR) system ITrent automatically generated monthly reports to line managers and HR Business Partners in relation to employees and the periods and reasons for absence which were closely monitored. Where employees were absent due to a mental health or stress related condition, they were referred to the Occupational Health Unit (OHU) as early as possible. Employees that returned to work had a return-to-work interview and stress risk assessment, or individual health risk assessments were completed where required.

The Service had several support mechanisms available to support individuals to return to work or be exited as appropriate which included guidance from Occupational Health, access to Trauma Risk Management (TRiM), access to an Employee Assistance Programme and the Firefighters Charity.

Where an employee did not return to work in a timely manner, an absence review meeting would take place with the employee, the line manager, and a representative from Human Resources. The meetings were aimed at identifying support to return an individual back to work which could include modified duties for a period, redeployment, but ultimately could result in dismissal or permanent ill health retirement from the Service.

The Absence Management Policy details when a formal review of an employee's performance levels would normally take place. In terms of short-term absence, a formal review would take place where an employee had 3 or more periods of absence in 6 months, or an employee had 14 days absent. In terms of long-term absence, a formal review would normally take place at 3, 6, 9, and 11 months.

County Councillor J Tetlow asked if the 'other absence types category' could be broken down for this section too, as suggested by County Councillor A Riggott in the earlier wholetime absences section.

1.3.1 Workforce Diversity

This indicator measured diversity as a percentage.

Combined diversity percentage of grey book (operational) and green book (support) staff. The percentages outside of the brackets represented the current quarter, with the percentage within the brackets illustrating the same quarter of the previous year:

Gender:	Female 23%(21%)	Male 77%(79%)	
Ethnicity:	BME 4%(4%)	White 91%(93%)	Not stated 5%(3%)
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 5%(4%)	Heterosexual 61%(57%)	Not stated 34%(39%)
Disability:	Disability 3%(3%)	No disability 94%(94%)	Not stated 3%(3%)

Diversity percentage by Grey Book Staff and Green Book Staff. Counts included double counts if the member of staff was dual contracted between Grey and Green Book.

Separate diversity percentage of grey book (operational) and green book (support) staff:

Gender:	Female	Grey book 11%	Green book 62%
	Male	Grey book 89%	Green book 38%
Ethnicity:	BME	Grey book 3%	Green book 6%
	White	Grey book 92%	Green book 85%
	Not stated	Grey book 5%	Green book 9%
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT	Grey book 5%	Green book 3%
	Heterosexual	Grey book 59%	Green book 65%
	Not stated	Grey book 36%	Green book 32%

Disability:	Disability	Grey book 3%	Green book 5%
	No disability	Grey book 95%	Green book 89%
	Not stated	Grey book 2%	Green book 6%

1.3.2 Workforce Diversity Recruited

This new indicator measured workforce diversity recruited as a percentage.

Combined diversity percentage of grey book (operational) and green book (support) staff. The percentages outside of the brackets represented the current quarter, with the percentage within the brackets illustrating the same quarter of the previous year:

Gender:	Female 32%(32%)	Male 68%(68%)	
Ethnicity:	BME 4%(5%)	White 65%(90%)	Not Stated 31%(5%)
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 6%(8%)	Heterosexual 78%(87%)	Not stated 16%(5%)
Disability:	Disability 5%(4%)	No disability 85%(94%)	Not stated 10%(2%)

During quarter 4, there were a total of 59 new entrants.

It was noted that a further breakdown of the data would not be provided as it may enable the identification of individuals, due to the small numbers of persons recruited during the period.

County Councillor M Clifford asked if previous years comparison figures could be included within the report, the ACFO confirmed this could be included in future reports.

In response to a question from County Councillor L Parker, in relation to focusing on capability rather than diversity, the ACFO confirmed that this was a national requirement, and it was important for the service to reflect the community that it served. She added that the service would always appoint the best person for the job and there was no diversity quota to meet but diversity was important to the service.

1.4 Staff Accidents

This indicator measured the number of accidents which occurred to staff members at work within the quarter: Wholetime, On-Call and Greenbook.

Total number of staff accidents, 16 for quarter 4; year to date 61; previous year to date 70. Quarterly activity decreased 33.33% (8 incidents) over the same quarter of the previous year.

KPI 2 - Preventing, fires and other emergencies from happening and Protecting people and property when fires happen

2.1 Risk Map Score

This indicator measured the fire risk in each Super Output Area (SOA), of which there were 942. Risk was determined using fire activity over the previous 3 fiscal years along with a range of demographic data, such as population and deprivation. The County risk map score was updated annually and presented to the Performance Committee in the quarter 1 reporting period.

Annual Standard: To reduce the risk in Lancashire – an annual reduction in the County risk map score.

$(\text{Dwelling Fires} \div \text{Total Dwellings}) + (\text{Dwelling Fire Casualties} \div \text{Resident Population} \times 4) + \text{Building Fire} + (\text{IMD} \times 2) = \text{Risk Score}.$

The current score was 30,750 and the previous year's score was 31,170 which meant that the fire risk continued to reduce.

County Councillor J Tetlow asked if the risk map could be labelled to allow for easier identification of areas and County Councillor A Riggott asked if members could have a digital version. AM Matt Hamer advised that there were roughly 1000 areas contained within the map and due to this volume it may be difficult to see with labels, he therefore offered to share the spreadsheet that informed the map with members.

County Councillor M Clifford asked why the number of high risk areas identified had increased for the 2025 risk map, the ACFO advised that some ward areas had changed which could impact areas, she further advised that some contributory factors were out of the services control as areas of deprivation were taken into account. County Councillor A Riggott requested that members be given a summary of changes once the 2025 map had been finalised.

2.2 Overall Activity

This indicator measured the number of incidents that LFRS attended with one or more pumping appliances. Incidents attended included fires, special service calls, false alarms and collaborative work undertaken with other emergency services i.e.: missing person searches on behalf of the Lancashire Constabulary (LanCon) and gaining entry incidents at the request of the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS).

Incidents attended, year to date 16,963; previous year to date 17,389. Quarterly activity increased 9.64% over the same quarter of the previous year, whilst the year to date activity decreased by 2.45%.

In quarter 4, the Service attended 4,027 incidents. The report presented a chart which represented the count and percentage that each activity had contributed to the overall quarter's activity:

- Total False Alarm Calls (due to apparatus, good intent and malicious) – 1649, 41%
- Total Primary Fire Calls (accidental dwelling / building and deliberate dwelling / commercial fires and other primary fires) – 438, 11%
- Total Secondary Fire Calls (deliberate and accidental fires) – 704, 18%
- Total Special Service Calls (critical incidents, gaining entry, RTCs, Flooding and other critical incidents) – 1215, 30%

In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow in relation to weather related spikes during the summer period, the ACFO confirmed that these were often due to wildfires. AM Phil Jones added that as the temperature increased, lifestyles changed with more barbeques and outdoor activities. Additionally, the same practices were often carried out, such as burning weeds but additional dryness caused fires. The Chair asked if historical peaks were used to inform increased prevention activities, AM Phil Jones confirmed that weather warning messages were used to ensure the service could be proactive in its prevention activities. AM Matt Hamer added that every month a data and intelligence group broke down incidents to identify any trends and inform prevention activities.

County Councillor L Parker asked if prevention literature could be shared with Lancashire County Council (LCC) colleagues for distribution around communities, AM Matt Hamer confirmed that he would be happy to do this and any support would be gratefully received.

The ACFO explained that work was ongoing to reduce road travel to automatic fire alarm (AFA) detections, this included working with alarm handling companies and North West Fire Control (NWFC). The service would always attend calls where there was a sleeping risk and although the figures looked high they had been reduced. The ACFO added that malicious calls were very minimal and were continuously worked on.

In response to a question from County Councillor A Riggott in relation to how good intent false alarms were defined and how these could be reduced, AM Matt Hamer explained that there were three categories of false alarms. System and maintenance faults, where the service would work with businesses to educate them. Malicious calls which often originated from specific sites including mental health units and schools, who the service would work with to prevent future calls and calls of good intent where the caller had the right intention and the service needed to consider what the outcome could have been if the intent had been correct. To reduce the number of good intent false calls, North West Fire Control (NWFC) would challenge callers where appropriate and the service would provide education through schools and educate and communicate at key times throughout the year. AM Phil Jones added that any false alarms with good intent from sheltered housing accommodation would receive a fire safety check and appropriate safeguarding, AM Matt Hamer added that these would be treated as near misses.

In response to a question from County Councillor M Clifford in relation to fire alarm faults caused by the building owner not maintaining alarms, AM Matt Hamer explained that most business owners worked collaboratively with the service but every month false activations in commercial properties were reviewed, the first step

was engagement with business owners, should they not engage enforcement would then be implemented before moving to prosecution if required. Most business owners complied with enforcement activity.

County Councillor A Riggott asked if the service published enforcement and prosecution activity in the same way that trading standards published the outcome of their test purchasing. AM Matt Hamer confirmed that any prosecution outcomes were published via the services Corporate Communications Team and any enforcement activity was recorded on a public register but not publicised as the service was promoting collaboration with enforcement notices. AM Matt Hamer added that every three months a protection fire safety newsletter was published including any learning and business safety advice which informed the services communication campaigns. Additionally, the Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSCs) included teaching and education. County Councillor A Riggott asked if anonymised enforcement activity could be shared and the Chair asked if the protection fire safety newsletter could be shared with members. AM Matt Hamer confirmed that the newsletter was moving to a new system but he would bring this to a future Performance Committee meeting, he also confirmed he would take away the idea of publicising anonymised information.

County Councillor J Tetlow asked if the service could fine businesses for repeated false alarms, the ACFO confirmed that the service would identify trends and work with businesses to reach a solution. AM Matt Hamer added that full cost recovery and fines could be implemented at court on successful prosecutions. County Councillor L Parker asked if national data could be brought to the next meeting.

Councillor S Sidat asked about the cost implications of an AFA detection, AM Matt Hamer explained that it could be difficult to quantify the cost of an AFA but national work was ongoing and a paper could be brought to future meetings. Councillor S Sidat asked if any fines would cover the cost to us. AM Matt Hamer confirmed that any prosecutions would result in full cost recovery and a fine in court. He explained that the service could also have an impact with enforcement activity which could include restricting use of areas of the business which would encourage compliance.

County Councillor J Tetlow asked if fines could be used for income generation and if this was done nationally, AM Matt Hamer explained that the fire safety act didn't allow this to be done but the service would be fully recompensed in court at prosecution stage.

2.3 Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a dwelling had been affected and the cause of the fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

Members noted that a primary fire was one involving property (excluding derelict property) or any fires involving casualties, rescues or any fire attended by 5 or more pumping appliances.

Accidental Dwelling Fires, 168 in quarter 4; year to date 686; previous year to date 705. Quarterly activity increased 10.53% over the same quarter of the previous year, with the cumulative to date decreasing by 2.70%.

2.3.1 ADF – Harm to people: Casualties

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

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

Fatal	0 in quarter 4; year to date 6; previous year to date 3
Injuries appear Serious	1 in quarter 4; year to date 7; previous year to date 12
Injuries appear Slight	8 in quarter 4; year to date 32; previous year to date 30

Quarterly activity increased 45% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.3.2 ADF – Harm to property: Extent of damage (fire severity)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a dwelling had been affected and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

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

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

Current quarter, combined percentage of 85% against same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 93%.

Combined quarterly percentage had therefore decreased 8.00% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.4 Accidental Building Fires (ABF) (Commercial Premises)

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

ABF (Commercial Premises), 65 in quarter 4; year to date 253; previous year to date 235. Quarterly activity increased 30.00% over the same quarter of the previous year, and by 7.66% in the year to date.

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

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

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

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

- current quarter, combined percentage of 76% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 68%.

Combined quarterly percentage had therefore increased 8.00% over the same quarter of the previous year, with whole building decreasing by 7.00%.

2.5 Accidental Building Fires (Non-Commercial Premises)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a private garage, private shed, private greenhouse, private summerhouse, or other private non-residential building had been affected and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known.'

ABF (Non-Commercial Premises), 13 in quarter 4; year to date 71; previous year to date 72. Quarterly activity increased 30.00% over the same quarter of the previous year, whilst the year to date increased by 1.39%.

2.5.1 ABF (Non-Commercial premises: Private garages and sheds) – Harm to property: Extent of damage (fire severity)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a private garage, private shed, private greenhouse, private summerhouse, or other private non-residential building had been affected and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known.'

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

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

- current quarter, combined percentage of 15% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 20%.

Combined quarterly activity had therefore decreased 5.00% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.6 Deliberate Fires Total: Specific performance measure of deliberate fires

This indicator provided an overall measure of primary and secondary fires where the cause of fire had been recorded as deliberate.

Deliberate Fires – 450 in quarter 4; year to date 1,928; previous year to date 1,811. Quarterly activity increased 48.51% over the same quarter of the previous year,

and the year to date increased by 6.46%.

2.6.1 Deliberate Fires – Dwellings

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

Deliberate Fires – Dwellings, 21 in quarter 4, year to date 86; previous year to date 84. Quarterly activity increased 50.00% (7 incidents) over the same quarter of the previous year, and the year to date increased 2.38% (2 incidents).

2.6.2 Deliberate Fires - Commercial Premises

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

Deliberate Fires – Commercial Premises, 38 in quarter 4; year to date 140; previous year to date 145.

Quarterly activity decreased 5.00% over the same quarter of the previous year, and year to date decreased by 3.45%.

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

In response to a question from the Chair in relation to the driving force for fires within Crown premises, AM Matt Hamer explained that there was a prison working group to address fire safety within Crown premises. The service had no enforcement ability for Crown premises but had good working relationship with partners. He explained that the drivers were usually crime and weapon related or to engineer a move within the prison system. He also explained that e-cigarettes and vapes were involved in a number of prison fires. The service was providing prevention advice in prisons and working with the probation service. The chair asked a further question in relation to funding, AM Matt Hamer explained that funding for fire services within Crown establishments was funded by the crown services. He added that the number of fires in crown premises' was a national risk and figures were high nationally.

2.6.3 Deliberate Fires – Other (rubbish, grassland, vehicles etc).

This indicator reported the number of primary and secondary fires where the property type was other than a building, except where the building was recorded as derelict, and the cause of fire had been recorded as deliberate.

The majority of deliberate fires were outdoor secondary fires and included grassland and refuse fires. Derelict vehicle fires were also included under secondary fires.

Deliberate Fires – Other, 391 in quarter 4; year to date 1,702; previous year to date 1,582. Quarterly activity increased 57.03% over the same quarter of the previous

year, and the year to date increased by 7.59%.

2.7 Home Fire Safety Checks

This indicator reported the percentage of completed Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC), excluding refusals, carried out where the risk score had been determined to be high.

An improvement was shown if:

- the total number of HFSC's completed was greater than the comparable quarter of the previous year; and
- the percentage of high HFSC outcomes was greater than the comparable quarter of the previous year.

HFSCs completed, 5,330 in quarter 4; year to date 23,533; previous year to date 23,300. Quarterly activity decreased 11.30% against the same quarter of the previous year.

HFSCs with high-risk outcomes, Quarter 4, 55%; previous year Quarter 4, 54%.

High risk outcomes increased 1% against the same quarter of the previous year.

2.8 Numbers of prevention activities such as Childsafe, wasted lives etc

Members received an update on the number of sessions delivered against the following prevention activities during the quarter:

ChildSafe, 171 sessions delivered to 5,492 students;
RoadSense, 197 sessions delivered to 5,830 students;
SENDSafe, 5 sessions delivered to 97 students;
Wasted Lives, 22 sessions delivered to 3,461 students;
Biker Down, 4 sessions delivered to 38 attendees;
FIRES, 48 referrals opened prior to Q4 and carried over. 43 referrals received in Q4. 41 referrals closed in Q4. 53 referrals carried to 2025-26, Q4;
Partner Training (including care providers), 22 sessions delivered to 111;

Specific Education packages – delivered Water Safety, BrightSparx, ASB, Deliberate Fire Setting etc (Covers key stages 2, 3 and 4). Planning undertaken for commencement of water safety campaign. Bright Sparx campaign report and evaluation completed.

Arson Threat Referrals – 193.

2.9 Business Fire Safety Checks

This indicator reported the number of Business Fire Safety Check (BFSC's) completed and whether the result was satisfactory or unsatisfactory. If the result of a BFSC was unsatisfactory, fire safety advice would be provided to help the business comply with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. If critical fire safety issues were identified, then a business safety advisor would conduct a

follow-up intervention.

- The pro rata BFSC target was delivered through each quarter.

A +/-10% tolerance was applied to the completed BFSCs and the year to date (YTD) BFSCs, against both the quarterly and YTD targets. When both counts were outside of the 10% tolerance, they would be deemed in exception which enabled local delivery to flex with the needs of their district plan over the quarters.

BFSCs completed, 887 in quarter 4; Cumulative 3,637; YTD target, 2,500; previous YTD 3,372.

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being satisfactory, 3,191. Top 5 completed satisfactory premise types (Shops 1173, Factories/Warehouses 429, Other Workplaces 382, Offices 359, Other Public Premises 253).

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being unsatisfactory, 446. Top 5 completed unsatisfactory premise types (Shops 208, Factories/Warehouses 62, Licensed Premises 41, Other Workplaces 36, Offices 28).

The positive exception report was due to the number of completed Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSCs) being greater than 10% of the quarterly target, and the cumulative year to date target.

Service delivery personnel had carried out BFSCs in their respective districts over the last 2 years, and BFSC work was now embedded into business-as-usual activity. The KPI dashboard and District Intel Profiles were used to identify and target both the business types and business locations for that activity.

In response to a question from Councillor S Sidat in relation to timescales for compliance, AM Matt Hamer explained that there were no timescales given in relation to education and advice, enforcement notices could be fast tracked to 28 days or they could be 3 to 6 months. He added that due to the scale of work and delays with materials and skills, cladding related enforcement could be years. He emphasised the need to give realistic timescales as unrealistic timescales could impact prosecutions. County Councillor S Sidat asked a further question relating to risk to life, AM Matt Hamer stated that any risk to life would be prioritised and the risk mitigated by working with the buildings responsible person.

County Councillor A Riggott remarked that he was surprised to see the number of shops with unsatisfactory BFSCs. He explained that town centres have teams supporting town centres where licensing inspections were discussed but not fire safety checks, he stated that shops and their sleeping arrangements fed into a wider town centre strategy. AM Matt Hamer explained that Fire Safety Managers worked closely with Community Safety Partnerships but he could look to share the risk information further. County Councillor A Riggott suggested that city centre shops could promote passing their BFSC which would push all businesses to achieve this.

In response to a question from the Chair in relation to inspection of asbestos, AM Matt Hamer explained that the service would record asbestos as present but would

not provide advice and could share the information if requested. County Councillor J Tetlow asked if asbestos provided a similar risk when involved in a fire to when broken apart, the ACFO confirmed that there would be a risk and anyone involved in an incident would decontaminate their kit, gloves and helmet and follow an established bagging procedure. She added that the service was careful with decontamination of all dust.

Councillor S Sidat asked if places of worship were visited, AM Matt Hamer confirmed that places of worship did receive a BFSC and were offered specific advice. The ACFO added that a Hindu Temple had recently been visited and provided advice to use battery operated candles during Diwali to mitigate the risk that traditional candles presented. Councillor S Sidat asked if the buildings surrounding places of worship were also considered, AM Matt Hamer confirmed that they were and the service would also advise on refurbishment or changes within the building with a view to making them more compliant.

2.9.1 Fire Safety Activity (including Business Fire Safety Checks)

This indicator reported the number of Fire Safety Enforcement inspections carried out within the period which resulted in supporting businesses to improve and become compliant with fire safety regulations or where formal action of enforcement and prosecution had been taken for those that failed to comply.

An improvement was shown if the percentage of audits that required formal activity was greater than the comparable quarter of the previous year.

Total Fire Safety Enforcement Inspections, Quarter 4, 424;
Formal Activity in Quarter 4, 8%, same quarter of the previous year 7%.
Quarterly activity increased 1% against the same quarter of the previous year.

Members noted the cumulative number of Fire Safety inspections undertaken for 2024/25 was 1,984.

2.10 Building Regulation Consultations (BRC) (number and completed on time)

Where the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applied to premises (or would apply following building work) the building control body must consult with LFRS for comments / advice regarding fire safety. LFRS should make any comments in writing within 15 working days from receiving a BRC.

This indicator provided Members with information on the number of building regulations consultations received during the period together with improvement actions.

In Quarter 4, Building Regulation Consultations received 247, of which 235 were completed within the timeframe (LFRS should make comments in writing within 15 working days of receiving a BRC).

KPI 3 - Responding to fire and other emergencies quickly

3.1 Critical Fire Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance

This indicator reported the 'Time of Call' (TOC) and 'Time in Attendance' (TIA) of the first fire engine arriving at the incident in less than the relevant response standard.

The response standards included call handling and fire engine response time for the first fire engine attending a critical fire, as follows: -

- Very high-risk area = 6 minutes
- High risk area = 8 minutes
- Medium risk area = 10 minutes
- Low risk area = 12 minutes

The response standards were determined by the risk map score and subsequent risk grade for the location of the fire.

Standards were achieved when the time between the 'Time of Call' (TOC) and 'Time in Attendance' (TIA) of the first fire engine arriving at the incident, averaged over the quarter, was less than the relevant response standard. Expressed in minutes & seconds.

Critical Fire Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance, Quarter 3, Very High 06:03 min; High 06:09 min, Medium 07:35 min, Low 08:14 min.

Q4 overall 07:31 min. Year to date overall 07:38 min. Previous year to date overall 07:30 min.

In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow in relation to whether the impact of the Haweswater Aqueduct Resilience Programme (HARP) which may require road closures had been considered, AM Phil Jones confirmed that the service was notified of road closures by highways and would usually be involved in larger projects. He added that the service had not been made aware of this project yet.

3.2 Critical Special Service Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance

This indicator reported the 'Time of Call' (TOC) and 'Time in Attendance' (TIA) of the first fire engine arriving at the incident in less than the relevant response standard.

The response standard included how long it took the first fire engine to respond to critical special service (non-fire) incidents where there was a risk to life such as road traffic collisions, rescues, and hazardous materials incidents. For these critical special service call incidents there was a single response standard of 13 minutes (which measured call handling time and fire engine response time).

Critical Special Service Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance, 09:14 min in quarter 4; year to date 08:46 min; previous year to date 08:31min.

3.3 Total Fire Engine Availability

This indicator measured the availability of the 1st fire engine at each of the 39 fire stations. It was measured as the percentage of time the 1st fire engine was available to respond compared to the total time in the period.

Standard: to be in attendance within response standard target on 90% of occasions.

Total Fire Engine Availability, 89.57% in quarter 4; year to date 87.97%; previous year to date 88.66%.

Quarterly availability increased 0.69% over the same quarter of the previous year, whilst the year to date decreased by 0.69%.

A progress update was provided up to the end of quarter 4.

KPI 4 - Delivering value for money in how we use our resources

4.1 Progress Against Allocated Budget

Members received an update on spend against the approved budget for the year.

The annual budget for 2024/25 was set at £75.1 million. Spend at the end of the year was £74.5 million. £0.6 million savings was mainly attributable to bank interest received.

The capital budget was £12 million, with a spend at the end of the year of £4.1 million. The remaining £7.9 million would slip into the 2025/26 year. Extended lead times and a resourcing shortfall ensued the slippage.

Quarter 4 variance -0.80% (Revenue budget variance).

4.2 Partnership Collaboration

Under the Policing and Crime Act 2017, blue light services were under a formal duty to collaborate to improve efficiency, effectiveness and deliver improved outcomes.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS), Lancashire Constabulary and North West Ambulance Service had met at both tactical and strategic levels and had agreed and signed a strategic statement of intent which contained the following aims:

- **Improved Outcomes** – The collaboration maintains or improves the service we provide to local people and local communities;
- **Reduce Demand** – The collaboration should contribute towards our longer-term strategic objective of decreasing risk in communities and reducing demand on services;

- **Better Value for Money** – The collaboration produces quantifiable efficiencies either on implementation or in the longer term;
- **Reduced inequalities within our communities** – The collaboration contributes towards reducing inequalities wherever possible.

The following were examples of partnership working from a number of departments across the Service. The aim was to increase efficiency and effectiveness of working practices whether this related to equipment, technology, appliances, or training.

- North West Fire Control (NWFC) Mobilising System replacement – following a successful procurement phase, the implementation phase had now started with a regional collaboration between NWFC, Lancashire, Cumbria, Manchester and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Services to introduce a state of the art mobilising system in Spring 2026.
- Regional Breathing Apparatus (BA) Procurement – This project had been initiated and would ensure new and improved BA sets were procured and successfully rolled out to relevant staff. The procurement exercise would include regional Fire and Rescue Services and would involve operational and support staff from across the region, including procurement, training, fleet, health and safety, policy, ICT, and equipment teams, as well as the firefighters themselves.
- Welfare Unit Project – This project would deliver improved facilities on the incident ground for LFRS staff, it was currently in the scoping phase and discussions were ongoing with LanCon as to whether they wanted to collaborate on the unit.
- 13/16 agreement for the North West region – 13/16 arrangements form part of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, this enabled Fire and Rescue Services to collaborate across authority boundaries to ensure continuity of service and mutual support. An updated regional agreement had been signed by all five Fire and Rescue Services, this has resulted in the removal of any charging for appliances going across the border.
- Hazardous Materials and Environmental Protection Officer training – during the last quarter LFRS hosted initial training for new officers at the Leadership and Development Centre. The Service collaborated with Cheshire and Cumbria who sent delegates, this reduced the cost per student whilst providing consistency in terms of the skills & training received.
- The chair of both the Strategic and Tactical Blue Light Collaboration Boards had transferred to Lancashire Constabulary until 2026. Terms of Reference for both boards had been updated. The Strategic board had agreed changes to reduce the collaboration subgroups to 4 groups. The Estates subgroup now included Fleet and Kit – this is with a view to issues such as electric vehicles and charging, where all services faced similar challenges and it was useful to work together on potential efficiencies, good practice, or learning from one another. An on-going example of a Fleet collaboration was a new welfare vehicle that LFRS were procuring, and there were possibilities to be

	explored with a memorandum of understanding and a financial contribution from other agencies if required. County Councillor J Tetlow asked for confirmation of what the 13/16 agreement referred to, the ACFO explained that 13/16 was part of the fire safety act and referred to collaboration across borders and providing mutual aid to other fire and Rescue Services. AM John Rossen explained that a focus of the Blue Light Collaboration Board was Community First Responders and LFRS had responded to over 200 cardiac arrests. County Councillor J Tetlow asked if operational staff carried defibrillators, AM John Rossen confirmed that all fire engines, flexi duty officers (FDOs) and community first responders carried defibrillators. 4.3 Overall User Satisfaction People surveyed included those who had experienced an accidental dwelling fire, a commercial fire, or a special service incident that the Service attended. The standard was achieved if the percentage of satisfied responses was greater than the standard. Annual Standard: 97.50% In quarter 4, 100 people had been surveyed and the number satisfied with the service was 97. The running number of people surveyed for the year was 3,871 with 3,820 of those people being satisfied with the Service; 98.68% against a standard of 97.50%; a variance of 1.18%. Resolved: - That the Performance Committee noted and endorsed the Quarter 4 Measuring Progress report, including one positive and two negative exceptions.
5-25/26	Annual Report on Road Safety Intervention Activity 2024/25 Area Manager (AM) Matt Hamer and Prevention Support Officer Clare Burscough presented the annual report regarding Road Safety Intervention Activity which explained the Service's core prevention offer and also the challenges on Lancashire's roads. Members noted that, through the Prevention Strategy 2022-2027, prevention and protection services and the structure for delivery were reviewed to ensure that the Service was delivering appropriate services in line with the changing operating environment. As a result, working practices had changed with a strategic focus on the quality of the services that continued to be delivered. The services were delivered around key themes: helping people to start safe, live safe, age safe, be safe on Lancashire's roads, and be safe in and around water, with a focus on working collaboratively with other organisations. To ensure constant improvement in all parts of prevention delivery, the Service had dedicated thematic groups whose priorities aligned to the more recent Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-2027 and Strategic Assessment of Risk alongside District Plans. Road Safe Thematic Group

The Thematic Road Safety Group continued to meet every quarter during 2024-2025 with an option of in-person and virtual meetings. Membership of the group came from all areas of the county and was a mix of Community Safety and Operational Staff.

An annual plan aligned to the terms of reference had been developed alongside a priority work programme which supported the Lancashire Road Safety Partnership (LRSP) 'Towards Zero' strategy. An ambition of the group was to improve communication between strategic and practitioner levels and also to send clear messages out to Service Areas with key road safety priorities. The Service sought to deliver focused activities in areas identified as having issues and evaluate effectiveness.

The Service continued to offer a variety of delivery methods for the community, improving reach and efficacy. The offer of virtual delivery remained part of the service's plan and continued to be selected by schools as a delivery method across the county for campaigns such as Road Safety Week and Elective Home Education Sessions. The group was responsible for ensuring all road safety packages were kept up to date and continuous evaluation of the feedback received was considered and steered change where appropriate.

Lancashire Road Safety Partnership (LRSP)

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) continued to be a proactive member of LRSP and had representatives at both Strategic and Operational group level. The partners worked closely with each other and delivered the partnership strategy 'Towards Zero' Lancashire: Road Safety Strategy for Lancashire 2016 – 2026', in an attempt to reduce those killed or seriously injured on Lancashire's roads.

LFRS played an active role on the Children and Young People workstream (as Chair) and the Powered 2 Wheelers / Ebike and Escooter Working Group and Senior Road Users Workstream. The Delivery Group brought partners together to look at what was currently delivered, what worked well and where the gaps were so that resources could be pooled to work effectively and without duplication. At each meeting, Lancashire County Council (LCC) shared up to date statistics which enabled the group to quickly identify any emerging issues and formulate an appropriate response.

The LRSP continued to work through the action plan following the review of the partnership completed in 2022. There had been significant change in the year 23/24 with the loss of both members of staff (the Coordinator and Manager). In the current reporting period, due to a change in the Police and Crime Commissioner Office, Area Manager Matt Hamer had been voted in as Chair of the Lancashire Road Safety Partnership and had the responsibility of steering the Challenge Board. Under the new format, the Delivery Group provided a detailed report for the Challenge Board, so each organisation was more accountable were more accountable than they had been previously.

LFRS Road Safety Core Prevention Offer

1. Road Sense
2. Wasted Lives – Young Driver Road Safety Education Programme
- 2.1 The Crashed Car
3. Biker Down
4. Alive to Drive Events
5. Road Safety Week 2024

1. Road Sense

Road Sense was the name given to the road safety education programme delivered to Year 6 pupils. The session was mixed and started with a 20-minute fire safety recap followed by 40 minutes of road safety input. It provided the opportunity to draw on a previous session the pupils would have received in Year 2 and explored the consequences of hoax calls and deliberate fires. During the current reporting period, information was added about Ebikes and Escooters, to cover both the fire safety and road safety issues.

The Package focused on five key road safety themes which were selected to reflect Lancashire's issues with young people:

- In Car Safety;
- Pedestrian Safety;
- Cycle Safety;
- Be Safe Be Seen;
- Bus Safety;
- Ebikes & Escooters.

Staywise had now adopted the package. Staywise was an online resource website for Fire and Rescue Services across the country.

Evaluation of the package provided positive feedback from schools with 97% of teachers selecting that they 'strongly agreed' the session was age appropriate. Out of the teachers that responded, 98% said they 'strongly agreed or agreed' the session would positively affect pupils' behaviour. Utilising the QR code allowed the teachers to give more honest feedback and improved the efficiency of the process. Any feedback received could be dealt with in a timely manner as there was no reliance on paper forms being returned. This feedback had enabled the Road Safe Thematic Group to update all the delivery slides. Whilst the key messages remained, the package had been refreshed to create a slicker running order and cleaner feel to the format. The feedback from teachers noted additional groupwork would complement the session so this had been made clearer for the delivery at appropriate points of the presentation. The breakout activities assisted children of that age group to learn from their peers, a recognised learning method which they regularly utilised at school.

The following feedback had been received from teachers following a Road Sense delivery:

"Lots of useful information given to children that really needed the information. Children were engaged fully throughout. Many thanks."

“Session was delivered extremely well, and any questions were answered. Everything was explained perfectly for the children to understand.”

The Road Sense Fact Sheet continued to be popular, with the inclusion of a QR Code for the pupils to fill in following a session to assist the Service to better evaluate the behaviour change effectiveness of the session as the pupils filled this in at home. Some examples the pupils have marked in the free text box:

“Pay attention when crossing the roads and be safe be seen.”

“Wear helmet when cycling and do not wear dark clothing and get out stay out call 999.”

There were 6 questions on the form and the correct responses ranged between 83% and 99% of answers. It was extremely positive that the pupils retained such a high percentage of the information they had received as the feedback was not always submitted on the day the session took place. During the reporting period, 19,303 Year 6 pupils had received the input, with 603 sessions delivered.

2. ‘Wasted Lives’ Young Driver Road Safety Education Programme

LFRS was now the only delivery partner for Wasted Lives on behalf of LRSP. The programme was aimed at young people and pre-drivers which aimed to influence behaviour and change attitudes either as a driver or a passenger, thereby reducing risk to that specific group and to other road users.

By actively engaging with the age group of 15 - 25-year-olds, Wasted Lives aimed to maximise the opportunities for people to evaluate and reflect on their own attitudes and behaviour behind the wheel and as a passenger. Extensive evaluation had demonstrated how the package promoted real and lasting changes in how each participant behaved in a car. Since the introduction of Wasted Lives in 2010, LFRS had delivered road safety education to over 135,000 young people throughout Lancashire, including Blackpool, and Blackburn with Darwen. For the period 2024-2025, LFRS had delivered the programme to 7,432 young people, mainly face-to-face delivery but with some virtual sessions. Largely, schools opted for an assembly as timetable constraints made this an easier option.

A suite of assembly session had been developed which could be adapted in length to fit in with schools’ timetables. As the Service had developed different ways of working, it now offered a short 15-minute virtual version of Wasted Lives during Road Safety Week. Schools had 3 delivery options and with the Service being more flexible in what it could deliver and how, more young people could be reached. Whilst the focus was primarily on delivery in high schools, there had been an increase in the number of requests for delivery to apprentice groups and colleges following the removal of Safe Drive Stay Alive through LRSP. Due to this and with LFRS Prevention Support Officer for Road Safety leading the Young Driver Group for LRSP a trial had been taking place with a number of colleges to formulate a delivery plan for the 25 – 26 Academic year.

The delivery would consist of 3 different offers and be relevant to the risk profile of

each area:

- Bronze Delivery – assembly format Wasted Lives - Fatal 5 delivery.
- Silver Delivery – assembly format Wasted Lives - Fatal 5 delivery followed by a ‘marketplace’ of road safety professionals from LFRS, Police, North West Ambulance Service (NWS), Lancashire County Council (LCC) and Tyre Safe Charity. This would allow the large groups to split into small groups so they can take part in some practical activities and experience a Road Traffic Collision (RTC) through the use of VR headsets.
- Gold Delivery – as Silver above plus a live Road Traffic Collision Demonstration with a real casualty extraction.

600 students from Myerscough College received the Silver input on the run up to the Easter break. The college was very grateful for the delivery and felt it was an invaluable day for the students to be taken off timetable to attend.

“It was a fantastic day, it gave the students a fantastic, informative, educational experience!”

The feedback from teachers in high schools also continued to be very positive with a similar theme about behaviour change and an engaging session being received:

“Engaging session for our year 10 students with key facts and statistics used well to emphasise points.”

“Session was delivered with respect and sensitivity whilst also delivering an important message to those just starting their driving careers.”

In an attempt to reach young drivers who would not be in school or college, a Christmas Road Safety Campaign took place at Halton Barracks focusing on Lancashire’s Fatal 5. This included Speeding, Drugs, Alcohol, Mobile Phones and Seatbelts.

Over 70 soldiers attended the half-day session, and it was really well received. Statistically, the military lost more soldiers to RTCs as opposed to war zones and they were overrepresented in the statistics.

This was a Lancashire Road Safety Partnership supported event with Lancashire County Council (LCC) attending and providing an interactive workshop with Virtual Reality headsets. The Prevention Support Team did a presentation to the group which included a clip about a young girl, Bonnie Barrow, who was tragically killed in Lancashire by her cousin driving under the influence and on his mobile phone, whilst speeding. This included footage of the crash itself so was very impactful. Following on from this input, the soldiers watched a clip from the Master Driver which complemented the Fatal 5 and went on to focus on fatigue, a common contributing factor in collisions involving military personnel.

The Chair asked who was the best point of contact to provide inputs for schools, as she was providing support on a case with children aged two and upwards. Clare Burscough confirmed that this age group would be covered by the Safer Travel Team at LCC. AM Matt Hamer added that if he was appraised of the details he could also share information with the relevant partnership groups.

In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow in relation to accessing roads that are inaccessible due to the type of road and the way vehicles have been parked, AM Matt Hamer advised that the public response was strong in response to blue lights and vehicles would often move out of the way to allow access. He added that LFRS work with schools to ensure parking around school start and finish times still allowed access to emergency service and schools were proactive in this area.

County Councillor J Tetlow asked a further question in relation to passing red lights to allow emergency vehicles access. AM Phil Jones confirmed that this was an offence and as such LFRS staff were trained to wait at red lights so members of the public did not pass red lights. AM Matt Hamer added that LFRS vehicles responding to an emergency would use their exemptions and anticipate the roads ahead to ensure they arrived at incidents safely.

In response to a question from County Councillor M Clifford in relation to offering the course to larger employers. Clare Burscough confirmed that the course was delivered to BAE apprenticeships. AM Phil Jones added that the delivery of courses was risk driven and once a risk was identified the prevention team would approach as appropriate. AM Matt Hamer added that delivery of the course was a benefit for big employers as employees would often have access to pool cars. AM Matt Hamer added that members were welcome to attend a course and this could be facilitated through the prevention team.

2.1 The Crashed Car

The Wasted Lives package also had the option of being complemented by a 'crashed car', which was a vehicle from a real incident where, tragically, there had been a fatality. Alternatively, the car could be used as a standalone resource at a community event. The Service now completed a full year with Corey Hudson's vehicle where the circumstances of the collision were solely speed related. He had no alcohol or drugs in his system, and he made a wrong decision to speed which cost him his life. Corey's story had been well received by communities across the county as most drivers recognised at some point in their driving career, they had made similar mistakes. There were 2 passengers in the vehicle who were not wearing seatbelts and both sustained serious, life changing injuries during the Road Traffic Collision (RTC). Due to their own decisions not to put their seatbelts on, they had not received substantial payouts from Corey's insurance. This strengthened the seatbelt message as it was a real example of the lifelong implications that poor decision making had. Whilst all the vehicles LFRS had in the past had been a very important engagement tool, Corey's story has been met with empathy and many people have commented how seeing his car has really brought the importance of road safety to the forefront of their minds. This vehicle was to be decommissioned and work was ongoing with the Road Policing Team to identify a replacement.

In the 12-month reporting period, the crashed car had increased in use at Mosques during Friday Prayers. In Central, Eastern and Pennine areas, staff had worked alongside the Imam to deliver key messages prior to prayers and then deliver bespoke sessions to young people at the Madrassas. This activity had been increased around Ramadan on the run up to Eid where commonly high-powered

vehicles were rented by young inexperienced drivers and shared amongst friends and family.

A partnership with Lancashire Partnership Against Crime (LANPAC), has covered the cost of a scrap car to be cut up at a Mosque in Preston, funding for a further 5 had been secured. This formed part of a wider piece of work to increase engagement with ethnic minority communities across the county. Previously, we struggled to engage with some members of the community about the dangers of speed, but this engagement was ever increasing with Lancashire Council of Mosques working alongside us to share the importance of our key messages. This was highlighted at the 1st Road Safety Summit that took place in Pendle, an event that was broadcast over the radio to thousands of listeners country wide. There was a 'call to action' for influential members of the community to come together and drive positive behaviour change.

3. Biker Down

Biker Down was a course that was aimed at motorcyclists and pillions of all ages and experience. The free 3-hour course offered members of the public a chance to learn practical skills which could be put into practice anywhere at any time.

The 3 modules covered were:

- Incident Management;
- First Aid;
- The Science of Being Seen.

The initiative started in Kent and LFRS had signed a memorandum of understanding with Kent Fire and Rescue Service to allow the Service to use the logo and delivery material.

LFRS had worked with LRSP to ensure that delivery was complementary to Bike Safe, which was a Police-led initiative. Anyone who attended Biker Down was encouraged to book onto Bike Safe which was seen as the next step in training as it involved a ride out with an Advanced Police Motorcyclist. Biker Down was seen as the start of a motorcyclists 'learning journey'.

During the reporting period, there had been 144 motorists killed or seriously injured (KSI). This was 14% of the total KSI figure. Lancashire's statistics showed that someone was 72 times more likely to die on a motorcycle than in a car on the road, higher than the national average of 60. These statistics were very concerning as motorists made up less than 1% of Lancashire's total road user population.

There had been 309 attendees at 18 Biker Down sessions.

Appetite for the courses continued to be apparent with the Facebook page reaching over 1,200 likes and the reach of posts sometimes exceeding 1500 people.

All attendees took part in a practical element of the course which included helmet removal and CPR. These were really important skills which might be needed should they be faced with a road traffic collision involving a motorcyclist. Feedback

from attendees mirrored how important this part of the course was and how valuable they felt it was.

Feedback included:

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

“Superb course. So many helpful tips and a great confidence builder. Thank you!”

The Pre and Post questionnaire maintained very positive feedback about the behaviour change impacts of the session. One of the questions the attendees were asked was around their confidence to remove a motorcycle helmet following a road traffic collision. The scale they used was 1-5 (1 not confident – 5 very confident). Prior to the session, the average rating was 2.9 but increased to 4.77 following the session.

This year, Biker Down was fortunate to be gifted First Aid Kits by a bereaved widow who said from her husband attending a course and he never stopped talking about how much he enjoyed the session and learnt from it. A collection from his funeral was split and she was happy to be able to contribute towards something useful for future attendees of the course.

The delivery model was flexible so courses could be hosted for individual motorcycle clubs or advertised using an online booking platform for members of the public to book on independently. The Biker Down team aim to run 12 courses per year but currently far exceeded that aspiration due to such a high demand for courses.

Over the last 12 months the team had forged very strong links with Bowker Motorrad who regularly hosted courses at their showroom. Bowker also provide hot food and refreshments for all attendees. The venue was big so could accommodate larger groups, enabling up to 40 attendees per course.

4. Alive to Drive Events

Alive to Drive was a long-standing road safety event initiative. The event initially started as a partnership between LFRS and Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) in Chorley 16 years ago. Since its inception, the event had grown from strength to strength and the partners who attended had grown. During the reporting period, 4 events took place in South Ribble, Preston, Blackpool, and Blackburn. These events were free to members of the public and allowed them an insight as to what happened at an RTC. There was an RTC demo at each event which involved LFRS, Police, North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) and National Highways. One of the key messages that was pushed throughout the day was that when roads were closed for long periods it was for the safety of staff working at the scene and to ensure the best possible casualty care for those involved. Whilst people got frustrated they were encouraged to be glad they were not involved in the incident itself.

As well as looking to educate members of the public of all ages and road user types, there was particular emphasis based on signing young drivers (17-25yrs) up to the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) Course at a reduced rate, partly funded by LRSP. The plan for these events next year was to run one per geographical area due to the success and high attendance. The partners involved included Police, LCC, NWAS, National Highways, IAM, South Lancs Advanced Motorcyclists, Blood Bikes, Mountain Rescue, Royal British Legion Riders, Tyre Safe, Pro Tyre, Fresh Drivers, Blackburn with Darwen Council, Blackpool Council and Wincanton.

5. Road Safety Week 2024

The 17th November marked the start of National Road Safety Week. This week was organised by BRAKE, a charity who supported families who were bereaved as a result of a road traffic collision. On the Sunday, Area Manager, Phil Jones and Prevention Support Officer, Clare Burscough attended a multi-cultural service at Country Hall to mark World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims. This service was attended by members of Lancashire Road Safety Partnership and bereaved families from across Lancashire. Area Manager Jones delivered a reading and laid a wreath.

An event took place at Springfield Power Plant delivering Wasted Lives to all new apprentices with the inclusion of the crashed car trailer. As the apprentices were well paid, they often drove newer, faster vehicles than other young people their age, so it was a really important group to deliver a session too.

At West Lancs College, a Wasted Lives Session was delivered then an extrication demo by Red Watch for the Public Service and Motorsport students to witness and better understand what happens in the event of an RTC. The display confirmed learning from the classroom-based part of the session and engaged learners well.

Two Biker Down sessions were delivered during the week, firstly a large session at Bowker BMW, then a slightly smaller session at Chorley Fire Station for a womens' motorcycle club. Biker Down very much supported this year's theme of 'After The Crash,' two-thirds of the session was Incident Management and First Aid. Attendees of both sessions engaged fully with the input and enjoyed the practical activities of helmet removal and basic life support.

The biggest event of the week was a multi-agency attended full day at Burnley College. The highlight of the day was a Road Traffic Collision demonstration that utilised students from the college. The day started with an assembly style input of Wasted Lives, paying particular importance to Lancashire's 'Fatal 5' which explored the 5 most common causes of fatal collisions. Following this, the students watched a video that had been produced by Performing Arts students then were taken outside to watch the demo. Throughout the afternoon all partners had a stall outside, and all students were timetabled to attend.

Summary

The 12-month period had been a really positive period for Road Safety Education and the Service's ability to engage with the communities of Lancashire. The

	Service continued to adapt its offerings and, with increased use of technology and innovative ideas by members of the Road Safety Thematic Group, this meant that road safety education had been delivered to around 32,500 people. The Service continued to be an active member of the LRSP and, building on the review, looked forward to continuing to be involved in a collaborative approach. This would have an emphasis on the strengths that the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service brand could bring to the partnership working to deliver the collective ambition of a safer road system. Focusing on the Service's priorities for 2024/25, some notable progression and successful outcomes had been achieved, engaging with pupils in primary, secondary and higher education and adapting our delivery model to reach groups who were not in these education establishments. Our action plan for the forthcoming year built on this. The figures had maintained a high level, and we would continue to build on this year on year. We had identified that young road user KSIs were on the increase and our efforts would be focused on how we could reduce this over the coming months. This would run in conjunction with a review of the Wasted Lives packages over the summer of 2025 to ensure a fresh approach for the new academic year. Over the next 12 months, the Service would be focusing on further evaluation of Road Safety initiatives, campaigns, and educational packages. The evaluation would look at 4 distinct areas; Is our targeting correct and appropriate, are we delivering according to end user expectations, are we influencing a positive behaviour change, and are we delivering value for money (i.e. for every £1 spent on prevention, what does that save in terms of prevention of an incident). Each road death costed society £2.3 million so every life saved would save a large amount of public money. However, behind each death was, more importantly, a bereaved family whose lives were changed forever, often as the result of a poor decision. Staff were well placed to educate the community to come together and recognise that road safety was everyone's responsibility. All the Service's Road Safety Delivery was focused on the risks identified in Lancashire and a continuous check of this at LRSP meetings ensured focus on engagement of vulnerable and at-risk groups. Resolved: - That the Committee noted and endorsed the Annual Road Safety Intervention report.
6-25/26	Annual Review of KPI 3.3 - 1st Pump Availability of Wholetime and On-Call Fire Engines
	The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented the report on the annual review of the Fire Engine Availability Key Performance Indicator (KPI) 3.3. At a resolution of the Planning Committee of 17 July 2023 (08/23), the decision was taken to adjust the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) relating to overall fire engine availability, to report against how effectively fire cover was provided across the 39

fire stations (risk areas) of the county.

The decision approved the proposal to report on the combined availability of the primary asset at each of the 39 stations in percentage terms, whether that be a wholetime or retained duty system fire appliance, with a revised overall target of 90%. Furthermore, that this target would be reviewed annually aligned to the continued work being delivered to strengthen on call appliance availability.

Under the resolution approved at Planning Committee, the KPI change would be subject to annual review with an intention to incrementally increase the standard, if and when appliance availability performance was sustained above the agreed standard. The Service deemed the business year-end to be the most suitable point to conduct this exercise each year and, as such, the report formed the basis of the 2024 review.

At national level, on-call availability remained a significant challenge, as emphasised by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). Ongoing efforts, both locally and nationally, were focused on addressing those key issues. Within the Service, considerable initiatives were underway to enhance recruitment, training, retention, and the wider use of on-call personnel, all while maintaining realistic role expectations given the limited training hours available each week.

The introduction of the Dynamic Cover Tool at North West Fire Control had mitigated Service risk by aiding the deployment of resources more efficiently.

The total availability over 2024/25 was 89.97% which was slightly below the 90% target. Each quarter was below the standard with 86.91% availability reported in quarter 1, 86.14% in quarter 2, 89.30% in quarter 3, and 89.57% in quarter 4.

The months of June, July, and August 2024 were below the lower control limit which meant that an exception report was published for Q1 and Q2.

However, in Q3 and Q4, availability increased, with December 2024 achieving 90.35% (0.35% above the 90% availability standard), and January 2025 achieving 91.19% (1.19% above the 90% standard).

The Service KPI change appeared to provide an appropriate balance of oversight and ambition for fire engines crewed by both Wholetime and On-Call firefighters. The 90% availability performance standard was supplemented by further internal KPIs for use by local managers to drive contractual performance and ensure value for money.

Area Manager (AM) John Rossen added that there had been improvements in on-call availability through the on-call improvement projects and that the 90% first pump availability standard continued to be an appropriate target.

The Service recommended that Members maintained the combined 90% first pump availability target across the 39 fire stations in Lancashire.

Resolved: - That the Performance Committee endorsed and maintained no

	changes to KPI 3.3 further to the year-end review of the standard of 90% first pump availability target across the 39 fire stations in Lancashire.
7-25/26	Date of Next Meeting
	The Chair thanked members for attending the first Performance Meeting of the municipal year. The next meeting of the Committee would be held on 03 September 2025 at 10:00 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood. Further meeting dates were noted for 03 December 2025 and agreed for 11 March 2026. County Councillor L Parker remarked that there was a big opportunity for collaboration with councillors to distribute LFRS communications throughout the county, including prevention and awareness messages. The Chair added that this could include weekly or monthly bitesize pieces of information. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) advised that the Service used the In the Know system to communicate a lot of information, members could sign up for this system and encourage members of the community to sign up allowing them to receive frequent messages on key themes including prevention. The ACFO added that the service had recently advertised water safety messaging at all EG Garages across the North West. In response to a question from County Councillor L Parker in relation to how this had been achieved, the ACFO confirmed that the agreement was reached through good working relationships. County Councillor L Parker asked if there was opportunity to identify other businesses to work with. The ACFO confirmed that the service would welcome any suggestions for collaborative working. County Councillor M Clifford added that all members could follow LFRS social media pages and share this information to their own pages and in relevant groups. Area Manager (AM) Matt Hamer confirmed that he would share his email address and review ways to collaborate with members to communicate key messages.

M Nolan
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 15 September 2025

Proceedings of Resources Committee held 8 July 2025

(Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information:

Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager - Tel: 01772 866720

Executive Summary

The proceedings of Resources Committee meeting held 8 July 2025.

Recommendation(s)

To note the proceedings of Resources Committee as set out at appendix 1 now presented.

Information

Attached at Appendix 1 are the proceedings of the Resources Committee meeting held on 8 July 2025.

Business Risk

None.

Environmental Impact

None.

Equality & Diversity Implications

None.

Financial Risk

None.

HR Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Resources Committee

Tuesday, 8 July 2025, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
N Alderson (Vice-Chair)	
A Ali OBE (Chair)	
J Fox	
Z Khan MBE	
A Riggott (Substitute)	
M Ritson	
S Sidat MBE	
D Smith	
J Tetlow	

Officers
S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS) J Meadows, Head of Finance (LFRS) J Hutchinson, HR Manager - Pay, Pensions and Performance (LFRS) S Hunter, Member Service Manager (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)
In attendance
K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union

1-25/26	Apologies for Absence
	Apologies were received from County Councillor L Parkinson and Councillor G Baker. County Councillor A Riggott was in attendance as substitute.
2-25/26	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	County Councillor A Riggott declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 10 pertaining to his role as both County and Borough Councillor as the proposed development was within his division.
3-25/26	Minutes of the Previous Meeting

	Resolved: That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 26 March 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
4-25/26	Year End Treasury Management Outturn 2024/25
	The Director of Corporate Services advised that this report set out the Authority's borrowing and lending activities during 2024/25. All treasury activities undertaken throughout the year were in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25. Economic Overview UK inflation had been relatively static throughout 2024/25. Having started the financial year at 2.3% (April), the Consumer Price Index (CPI) measure of inflation briefly dipped to 1.7% in September before ending the financial year at 2.8%. The latest data showed CPI was 3.4% (June 2025) and expectations were that it would average 3.2% over the financial year; this compared to the 2% budgeted figure. Against that backdrop and the global economy, the Bank Rate reductions had been limited. Bank Rate currently stood at 4.5%, despite the Office for Budget Responsibility reducing its 2025 GDP forecast for the UK economy to only 1% (previously 2% in October). Borrowing was currently expensive although rates were expected to reduce over the coming year or two. Borrowing Overview The borrowing levels of the Fire Authority remained unchanged at year end at £2m with no new long-term loans being taken. The existing loans were taken out with the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) in 2007 when the base rate was 5.75%; with 3 loan amounts, maturity dates and respective interest rates set out in the report. Total interest paid on PWLB borrowing was £90k, which equated to an average interest rate of 4.49%. The approved capital programme had no requirement to be financed from borrowing until 2026/27 and the debt related to earlier years' capital programmes. While the borrowing was above its Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), which was the underlying need to borrow for capital purposes, this was because the Fire Authority had a policy of setting aside monies in the form of statutory and voluntary minimum revenue provision (MRP) in order to repay debt as it matures or to make an early repayment. If the loans were to be repaid early there would be an early repayment (premium) charge. Previous reports on treasury management activities had reported that the premium and the potential loss of investment income had been greater than the savings made on the interest payments therefore it was not considered financially beneficial to repay the loans especially with the potential for increased interest rates. However, at 31 December the Authority would save £10k in interest, split over 10-years, if the loans were to be repaid early. As the Authority was budgeting a borrowing requirement to fund the capital programme from 2026/27, the additional interest on new loans would outweigh the £10k saving achieved from early repayment.

Investments

Both the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code and the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Guidance required the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. Throughout the year when investing money, the key aim was to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return.

To reduce credit risk to the Authority, HM Treasury's Debt Management Office was the main counterparty for the Authority's investments via the operation of overnight deposits at 31 March 2025. This changed from the operation of a call account with Lancashire County Council from 1 October 2024.

The Treasury Management Strategy does permit investment with other high-quality counterparties including other local authorities. During the year the total cash held by the Authority had been positive with the highest balance being £60.2m and the lowest £27.0m. For the monies invested with Lancashire County Council/Debt Management Office the range was £38.1m to £3.5m. The overnight deposit with the Debt Management Office at year end was £29.5m.

By placing monies in longer term fixed rate investments, it was anticipated a higher level of interest would be earned. However, having fixed term deals did reduce the liquidity of the investments and therefore their use was limited. At the year-end fixed investments of £20.0m were in place. During the year seven fixed term investments had matured and six new investments were made. The table on page 13 of the agenda pack showed the interest earned on fixed term investments in 2024/25.

The call account provided by Lancashire County Council paid six base points (0.06%) below the base rate to 30 September 2024. From 1 October 2024 the overnight deposits with the Debt Management Office averaged five base points (0.05%) below the base rate. Each working day the balance on the Authority's current account was invested to ensure that the interest received on surplus balances was maximised. The average balance using these investments during the year was £22.5m earning interest of £1.08m.

The overall interest earned during this financial year was £2.27m at a rate of 5.07% which compared favourably with the backward-looking 1-month index (Sterling Overnight Index Average) which averaged 4.94% over the same period. The main factor for this was fixed deposits commencing in 2024/25 with high interest rates.

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

Cash flow and interest rates continued to be monitored by the Director of Corporate Services and the Authority's finance team, and when rates were felt to be at appropriate levels further fixed term deposits would be placed.

Prudential Indicators

In order to control and monitor the Authority's treasury management functions, several prudential indicators were determined against which performance could be

	measured. From 1 April 2024 the Fire Authority were required to implement international accounting standard IFRS 16 Leases, replacing IAS 17. The standard eliminated the distinction between finance and operating leases for lessees, which required most leases to recognise a right of use asset and liability on the balance sheet. IFRS 16 had an impact on the Fire Authority's private finance initiative (PFI) agreements which had resulted in an increase of the Authority's other long-term liabilities, which had been included in the actual totals in the table on page 15 of the agenda reports pack. The Fire Authority had identified several property leases which were impacted. The liability for these properties was not included in the table however, the impact was expected to be within the authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt. The revised indicators for 2024/25 were presented in the report alongside the actual outturn position. In response to a question from County Councillor A Riggott in relation to the variance in levels of investment in 2024/25, the DoCS confirmed that the service had received a Pensions Grant of £10m which had earned interest for the service, this had now began to be paid to members of the pension scheme. County Councillor A Riggott asked a further question in relation to why the split of investments had changed, the DoCS confirmed that the decision had been made to invest in more longer term investments, lasting 12 months as this was a more fruitful process. In response to a question from Councillor S Sidat in relation to the Services reserves, the DoCS confirmed that the service had an estimated £5m in general reserves, £5/6m in earmarked reserves, £20m in Capital Reserves which would be utilised as part of the capital projects and £5m in PFI reserves which would be fully utilised. The Chair requested that members of Resources Committee be emailed a summary of reserves and details of earmarked reserves. Resolved: That the Committee noted and endorsed the outturn position report.
5-25/26	Financial Monitoring - Provisional Outturn 2024/25
	The Director of Corporate Services advised that this report presented the financial outturn position for 2024/25, and the impact of this on usable reserves. The revenue outturn position showed an underspend of £0.569m after proposed transfers to earmarked reserves. The Capital outturn expenditure for the year was £4.091m which was also in line with the previous forecast. Revenue Provisional Outturn The annual budget for the year was set at £75.155m. The provisional outturn position showed net expenditure of £74.586m, giving a total overspend for the financial year of £0.569m. The total underspend was made up of a (£0.774m) underspend relating to non-pay costs, and a £0.205m overspend relating to pay costs. The detailed provisional revenue outturn was considered by members as set out in appendix A of the report with more significant variances of note shown separately in the table below: -

Area	Overspend/ (Underspend) £m	Reason and Action
Service Delivery - Pay	0.648	As reported previously to the Committee the variance was largely due to higher than budgeted pay assumptions. On call and support staff budgets were mainly within allocated budgets. The budget for 2025/26 was taken account of the higher than budgeted pay award therefore no further action taken.
Prevention and Protection - Pay	(0.509)	The outturn variance was due to vacancies as reported through the year, this underspend had increased further as efforts to reduce the number of vacancies continued. The budget for 2025/26 had been adjusted for expected vacancies, no further action taken.
Training Centre – non pay	(0.111)	A number of budgets were slightly underspent at the end of the year resulting in the underspend of just over £0.1m, no further action taken.
Property – non pay	(0.168)	The underspend related to a number of factors including lower than budgeted utility costs and maintenance costs.
Bank Interest	(0.449)	The underspend reflected slippage on the capital programme, higher than budgeted interest rates and additional returns from a more proactive investment strategy. The underspend was presented after a £0.5m transfer to the capital reserve reflecting additional returns on grants received.

Future Pressures

Emerging pressures to report to the Resources Committee included inflation forecasts. As reported to the CFA in February, government grants were increased by the September rate of inflation (1.7%) whereas the latest rate of inflation was now 3.5%, which would put pressure on budgets in 2025/26.

The grey book pay award had also been agreed at 3.2% effective from July, this compared to the budgeted assumption of 3%, at the time of writing the green book pay award had not been agreed.

Finally, the Spending Review was announced on 11 June which set out the future departmental spending plans. All fire functions and associated budgets had transferred from the Home Office to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as of 1 April 2025 which meant fire funding was now embedded within MHCLG's departmental totals which had increased by 1.2% in real terms over the period of the Spending Review. The impact on the fire service would emerge later in the year and with certainty for Lancashire in the Provisional Settlement that was traditionally announced in December.

Savings Targets

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

General Reserve

The General Reserve existed to cover unforeseen risks and expenditure that may be incurred outside of planned budgets. In February the Authority approved the minimum level of General Reserve as advised by the Treasurer at £3.85m. Following the provisional outturn the level of the General Reserve at 31 March 2025 was £5.556m, this was above the minimum level of General Reserve set by the Authority.

Earmarked Reserves

Earmarked reserves were all funds that have been identified for a specific purpose. Appendix B of the report set out the proposed transfers to earmarked reserves not previously approved of £1.677m. The balance of all the earmarked reserves was £28.926m as at the 31 March 2025; this included the Capital Reserve of £18.501m and Private Finance Initiative (PFI) reserves of £5.036m.

Capital Budget Provisional Outturn

The revised Capital Budget for 2025/26 was £5.213m. Total capital expenditure for the year was £4.091m, with slippage of (£1.123m) proposed to be transferred to the 2025/26 Capital Budget and a net over spend of £0.070m. Members considered the provisional outturn for the main programmes and projects set out in appendix C of the report.

The original approved capital programme for 2025/26 was £12.761m. This was updated for £1.123m of slippage outlined previously giving a revised Capital Budget for 2025/26 of £13.884m. The revised 2025/26 Capital Budget and funding was set out in appendix D of the report.

In response to a question from the Chair in relation to the large Climate Change Vehicle, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) explained that it was agreed in the Emergency Cover Review (ECR) in 2022 that a Climate Change Vehicle would be procured in place of a fire engine for use during flooding and wildfire incidents to allow the vehicle to go off road. The tendering process had concluded with the vehicle overbudget, the service was therefore revising its requirement for a smaller vehicle.

In response to a question from Councillor S Sidat in relation to the services 5 year plan for its capital growth programme, the DoCS confirmed he would share this after the meeting.

In response to a question from County Councillor A Riggott in relation to the most challenging aspect of managing the budget, the DoCS explained that pay made up 75% of the services budget and was the more difficult to forecast due to retirements, pay awards and overtime for large scale incidents.

County Councillor J Tetlow asked if the recent national insurance and tax changes had had an impact on the services budget, the DoCS confirmed that the national insurance changes had come in to effect from 1 April 2025 meaning the service

	had had time to budget for the change. He explained that the changes had equated to £1.2m, the service had received some funding taking the cost to £0.7m which had been factored into the budget. County Councillor J Tetlow asked if this funding would continue, the DoCS confirmed it would and the £0.7m pressure would continue. In response to a question from Councillor S Sidat in relation to replacement of firefighters following retirement, the DCFO explained that it was difficult to predict retirements due to a number of different pensions schemes being in operation. The service tried to plan ahead with recruitment and ran new recruit courses throughout the year. The service had tried to hold some posts vacant due to forecasted funding pressures and currently had 10 firefighter vacancies across the service. In response to a question from the Chair in relation to vacancies across the service, the DCFO explained that it was challenging to recruit to green book roles and had been since the covid pandemic with many employers now offering working from home and other benefits. He confirmed that most grey book positions were filled with only 10 vacancies across the service. The DCFO explained that there were additional challenges within the Prevention and Protection Teams, although it was important to note that grey book staff delivered prevention activities as part of their role. Green book staff were trained and upskilled in Protection Team roles but then often left for the private sector with greater financial benefits. The Service was working to utilise operational staff in the best way to keep fire engines available. Councillor D Smith noted that the service had an underspend of £0.569m with a budget of over £75m, he praised the service for keeping the budget within 1% variance. The DCFO explained that this was largely due to increased interest rates and underspend and overspend in staffing areas balancing each other out. Resolved: That the Committee: - i) Noted the Revenue Budget provisional revenue outturn. ii) Noted the Capital Budget provisional outturn. iii) Noted and endorsed the revised Capital Budget for 2025/26. iv) Approved the transfer of 2024/25 slippage to the 2025/26 capital budget. v) Noted and endorsed the transfer to earmarked reserves and year end reserve levels.
6-25/26	Local Pensions Board Annual Report HR Manager Jayne Hutchinson presented the report to members. The Public Service Pensions Act (PSPA) 2013 introduced the requirement to have a Local Pension Board (LPB) to assist in the governance of the Scheme. The Board had no remit as a decision-making body but was established to assist Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) as the Scheme Manager to fulfil its functions which covered all aspects of governance and administration of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS). The Combined Fire Authority delegated its functions to Bob Warren, then Director of People and Development. Although he had retired from that role, due to the current complexity and pension agenda relating to the Age Discrimination and Part Time Workers remedies which had resulted in the implementation of new pension and HMRC legislation and the development of new policy, he had continued assisting in the pension's activity for

an interim period.

Work Programme during 2024/25

The focus of pension workload during this year had been reported to the Local Pension Scheme Board and was primarily a continuation of the work on the implementation of the following major projects:

- The Sargeant/McCloud judgement related to age discrimination, this arose after the implementation of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 and followed a successful challenge by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) of age discrimination in relation to the protections put in place for existing members.
- Matthews's judgement affecting on-call members commonly referred to as the 'Second Options Exercise'. This arose following a legal challenge around on-call firefighters who were eligible to join the pension scheme from the start of employment.

Sargeant/McCloud Age Discrimination Remedy

During the first quarter of 2024/25 Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) completed the pay, tax and contribution data for almost 1,000 members affected by the age discrimination remedy. This allowed the services pension administrator, the Local Pensions Partnership Administration (LPPA) to issue Annual Benefit Statement – Remediable Service Statements (ABS-RSS) to active employees. 50 active employees did not receive ABS-RSS due to a number of reasons principally caused by late or non-receipt of Government guidance. As a result of this it was necessary for the Scheme Manager to report a breach of statutory duties to The Pensions Regulator (TPR).

368 Immediate Choice members (retired before 1 October 2023 with legacy scheme service) were due to receive an Immediate Choice Remediable Service Statement (IC-RSS) before 31 March 2025. 54 individuals did not receive the IC-RSS due to data processing difficulties and late notification of government guidance and the Scheme Manager notified the Pensions Regulator of this breach in statutory procedures as required. The Pension Scheme Manager in accordance with the legislative procedures also notified the Pensions Regulator that due to the necessary government guidance not being issued it was necessary to defer the deadline for the issuing of the IC-RSS for 64 individuals. The reasons for many of the delays was due to the need for the Matthews remedy to be enacted and resolved before the McCloud correction could be progressed.

Individuals who were not going to receive their RSS statement were individually notified before the deadline.

The Pensions Regulator had acknowledged the breaches and deferment and currently had not requested any further information.

The failure to issue both the ABS- RSSs and the Immediate Choice Remediable Service Statement (IC- RSSs) applied across all Fire Authorities in respect of the Firefighter pension schemes. Lancashire's performance in conjunction with close liaison with the services pension provider was significantly better than most Fire

Services.

The service was endeavouring to progress the outstanding IC-RSSs as soon as possible. It was anticipated that all the IC-RSSs would be issued by 31 July 2025.

Matthews Second Options Exercise

The Service had identified over 600 existing and former members of staff who were eligible to express an interest in the exercise to allow members to join or purchase additional pension under the Modified Pension Scheme. The Service had made reasonable endeavours to contact all eligible members, this had involved sending several follow-up letters to each individual where necessary using their last known address. As many individuals left LFRS employment over 20 years ago this had also involved the use of a tracing service to 'track down' individuals at their current address. To date 400 individuals had responded, and the Service continued to make repeated attempts to contact individuals.

Calculations for the exercise were complicated and, in a small number of cases, required data going back as far as the 1960's and 1970's. To date approximately 270 calculations/options packs had been sent to members. This work would continue into 2025/26.

Measures were currently being explored to reduce the timeframe of putting the resulting pensions into payment.

Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure and Pensions Ombudsman

In 2020/21, the Service implemented the pensionable allowances project, retrospectively applying backdated pensionable allowances for six years to existing and former employees who had worked a range of duty systems where allowances were previously non-pensionable. As a result of this, the Service had received a number of Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures (Appeals) from employees and former employees. All applications were from members who were dissatisfied that they were not included in the pensionable allowances exercise due to the backdating period or the non pensionability of their pay associated with the temporary nature of their role. The Board had also been informed about a number of complex cases that had been dealt with at Stage 1 and Stage 2 over this period, including through the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (Appeals). The Service had now been contacted from the Pensions Ombudsman regarding a number of cases, information had been provided but no Pensions Ombudsman outcome had yet been advised.

Pensions Dashboard

The Pensions Dashboard Programme continued to publish regular updates and newsletters in the leadup to the pension schemes beginning their connections in April 2025. The services connection date had been advised as 31.10.2025.

The Board continued to focus on key areas identified by the Pensions Regulator and maintained an oversight of the key risks to the fund. The Risk Register had continued to be reviewed at Board meetings. The service was involved in the LPPA project plan for implementation that was on track.

Risk Register

	A key activity of the Local Pensions Board during the year was monitoring and reviewing the Firefighter Pensions Risk Register. In response to a question from Councillor D Smith in relation to the 31 July 2025 deadline for IC-RSSs to be issued, Jayne Hutchinson confirmed that the LPPA had set out a program up to October 2025 with different pension categories still awaiting guidance. Councillor D Smith asked if all pensions would be paid by October 2025, the DCFO explained that the timeline had slipped and was out of the services control, he acknowledged that LPPA had done all that they could. Jayne Hutchinson added that there were two providers of the pensions system Civica and Heywoods. Heywoods had not built a solution meaning that manual calculations were required, the service used Civica. The DCFO added that fire and rescue services were only one part of the pensions issue. Jayne Hutchinson added that she met fortnightly with the LPPA and the scheme manager met with the LPPA monthly. In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow in relation to the financial impact, Jayne Hutchinson confirmed that the different pension schemes afforded different benefits but previous tax relief and interest had to be considered. The DCFO added that the service had received government grant funding meaning there had been no impact on the budget position. He added that the previous day crewing plus pension (DCP) remedies did have a financial impact on the service and any cases that were upheld by the Pension Ombudsman would have a financial impact on the authority. The Chair requested that any information received in relation to pensions be distributed to members of the committee to help newer members gain an understanding of the background information. Resolved: That the Committee noted the report.
7-25/26	Date and Time of Next Meeting
	The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday 24 September 2025 at 1000 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood. Further meeting dates were noted for 26 November 2025 and 25 March 2026.
8-25/26	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.
9-25/26	Update from Capital Building Projects Working Group
	(Paragraph 3)

	Members were provided with an update from the Capital Building Projects Working Group. Resolved: That the report be noted.
10-25/26	High Value Procurement Projects
	(Paragraph 3) Members considered a report that provided an update on all contracts for one-off purchases valued in excess of £100,000 and high value procurement projects in excess of £100,000 including: new contract awards, progress of ongoing projects and details of new projects. Resolved: That the Committee noted and endorsed the report.

**LFRS HQ
Fulwood**

**M Nolan
Clerk to CFA**

This page is intentionally left blank

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 15 September 2025

Proceedings of Planning Committee held 14 July 2025

(Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information:

Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager - Tel: 01772 866720

Executive Summary

The proceedings of Planning Committee meeting held 14 July 2025.

Recommendation(s)

To note the proceedings of Planning Committee as set out at appendix 1 now presented.

Information

Attached at Appendix 1 are the proceedings of the Planning Committee meeting held on 14 July 2025.

Business Risk

None.

Environmental Impact

None.

Equality & Diversity Implications

None.

Financial Risk

None.

HR Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee

Monday, 14 July 2025, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
N Alderson	
S Asghar (Vice-Chair)	
G Baker	
I Duxbury (Chair)	
J Hugo	
F Jackson	
J Tetlow (Substitute)	

Officers
S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS) E Sandiford, Director of People and Development (LFRS) M Hamer, Area Manager, Prevention, Protection and Road Safety (LFRS) S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)
In attendance
K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union

1-25/26	Apologies for Absence
	Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors U Arif, J Ash, L Hutchinson and E Worthington. With County Councillor J Tetlow in attendance as substitute.
2-25/26	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
3-25/26	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	Resolved: That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 3 February 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4-25/26	HMICFRS Update
	The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) updated Members regarding His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) activity and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) planning arrangements. Round 3 Overview LFRS HMICFRS Round 3 inspection commenced on 20 January 2025, initiated by a request for a collection of documents, a self-assessment proforma and three surveys (staff survey, human resources survey and a trade union survey) to assist with preparation for the fieldwork phase of the inspection. This was succeeded by a three-week period of staff engagement, during which two weeks were conducted on-site throughout the organisation. The final week was conducted remotely with department heads. On Friday, 28 March 2025, the strategic brief was presented by the Chief Fire Officer (CFO), Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO), and Director of People and Development (DoPD). It was an opportunity for the Service to brief the HMI and service liaison lead, provide 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 inspection acknowledged that every staff member they interacted with was highly engaging, and they felt genuinely welcomed throughout the organisation. The Service had recently received the draft inspection report, which afforded LFRS the opportunity to conduct factual accuracy checks. The release of the official final report was anticipated in early August, following this the service would focus on addressing any areas for improvement that may have been identified and continuing the services journey towards outstanding. HMICFRS had published 38 Round 3 inspection reports. A summary of the gradings for all 38 FRSs inspected so far were included in the report. 3 grading reports were due to be published on 15 July 2025 and the final 3 reports including LFRS's were due to be published in August. In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow in relation grade changes at other services, the DCFO explained that all HMICFRS reports were available online and he was unable to commend on individual services gradings. He also explained that the service monitored the publication of reports and identified areas of learning to be implemented at LFRS. HMICFRS Inspection 2025-2027 Update The 2025-27 inspection programme would involve a number of changes from the previous round. These included the following: a) Reduction in diagnostic questions: In previous rounds of inspections, HMICFRS assessed and gave graded judgments for 11 diagnostic questions. For the 2025-27 inspection programme HMICFRS had

reduced the overall number of diagnostic questions to 10 by combining the efficiency questions.

b) Characteristics of good:

In the 2025-27 inspections, the HMICFRS would measure fire and rescue services against the characteristics of good performance. These characteristics described the levels of performance a fire and rescue service (FRS) needed to achieve to be graded 'good'.

c) Impact of Governance on FRSs:

In the 2025-27 inspections, the HMICFRS would look more closely at the governance arrangements and how services were impacted by their governance. They would not inspect the governing authority, only the impact of governance on the FRS.

When assessing effectiveness, they would assess how governance impacted the effectiveness of the FRS and examine how FRS work with local communities to make them more resilient. In their assessment of efficiency, they would assess how each FRS was affected by its authorities governance, oversight and scrutiny arrangements.

In their assessment of how well the FRS looked after their people, they would assess whether the governance and scrutiny arrangements created a positive culture, and whether standards of conduct existed to support the health and well-being of the workforce.

d) Leadership:

The assessment of how each FRS looked after its people would focus on leadership at all levels of the organisation. They had enhanced the leadership questions, and as part of the overall summary, the HMI would set out the most important findings relating to the service's leadership.

The FRS Inspection Schedule for 2025-27 had been published, and the dates for the inspection program would be released in three phases. The initial phase of the schedule would commence with the inspection of Bedfordshire FRS in July 2025. Currently, LFRS were listed as the last service to undergo inspection, although this was subject to potential amendments.

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

HMICFRS published their 'Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services' report in August 2024. This followed the detailed inspection of 10 FRSs, as well as analysing data provided by all 44 FRSs in England about their grievance and discipline cases.

LFRS had been onboarded on to the HMICFRS Monitoring Portal and the service have completed the 15 recommendations and uploaded all evidence to the new Monitoring Portal.

Values and culture in Fire and Rescue Services

Values and culture in Fire and Rescue Services remained a focus for HMICFRS,

	LFRS continued to work proactively in terms of promoting its values and engendering an organisational culture where all employees could thrive. LFRS had been onboarded on to the HMICFRS Monitoring Portal and had submitted evidence to close all recommendations applicable to the Service. Joint Fire and Rescue Service and Policing positive practise event The first joint Fire and Rescue Service and Policing positive practise event was held on 19 June 2025 at the College of Policing, Ryton-on-Dunsmore. The agenda focused on Culture, Leadership and Misconduct and provided opportunities for the different sectors to learn from one another to improve this mutually challenging area. The event was attended by Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Jon Charters, who presented alongside former CFO Justin Johnston on the LFRS journey. In response to a question from Councillor J Hugo in relation to the reports due to be published, the DCFO confirmed that Hampshire and Isle of Wight, South Yorkshire and Cumbria's HMICFRS reports were due to be published on 15 July 2025 and Lancashire, Kent and Durham and Darlington's HMICFRS reports were due to be published in August 2025. Councillor J Hugo asked a further question in relation to if the service raised any questions as part of the fact checking process. The DCFO explained that the service was unable to challenge the content of the report at the fact checking stage but did make some corrections to data and amended wording. Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the report.
5-25/26	Blue Light Collaboration Update
	The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) advised that the report updated on progress of the ongoing workstreams that were being progressed under the Blue Light Collaboration Board (BLCB). The workstreams were being managed effectively through both the Strategic and Tactical Boards and contributed to improving outcomes, providing better value for money, reducing demand, and addressing inequalities within communities. Leadership Development Collaboration between Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS), Lancashire Police (LanCon) and North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) had continued to explore efficiencies and build professional working relationships across the Blue Light Services. It was agreed for each Service to host a Leadership Event, and through intelligence from each organisation, three common themes were identified. The first session was organised and hosted by LFRS in October 2024 and 60 people attended across all three Services. LFRS staff consisted of Area Managers, Group Managers, and Heads of Service, similar audiences attended from NWAS and LanCon and included aspiring leaders. This session was on "Nourish to Flourish" and focussed on looking after yourself to be an effective leader. Session 2 was held in March, focussing on handling media as leaders in a Blue

Light Service. The two completed events were successful according to the evaluations. The final leadership event recently took place at Lancon and was around generational differences.

The group were also exploring an 'Outside-In' Leadership programme and looking to implement a cross-coaching network to develop shared learning, which may include a coaching exchange programme.

Health and Wellbeing

This was a new collaboration group involving the Health and Wellbeing leads from all three Services. The aim was to understand the health and wellbeing offer across the different blue light services and to explore opportunities to work together to look after our people in a collaborative way.

The starting point for the group was to share policies and procedures for good practice and learning. NWAS had delivered several sessions about menopause and LFRS had developed a workshop to raise awareness of suicide from a responder's point of view, elements of which could be shared across all services.

Estates and Co-location

The co-location initiative between LFRS, NWAS, and LanCon focused on identifying opportunities for shared site use to enhance collaboration and deliver better value for money. Successful co-location arrangements at Lancaster, St Annes, Darwen, Preston, and other fire stations had led to operational efficiencies and shared facilities. These joint working environments had also fostered stronger relationships and a deeper understanding of each service's role within the Blue Light community ultimately contributing to improved outcomes for the people of Lancashire.

The updated Blue Light Collaboration Project Initiation Document had given the Estates and Co-location sub-group leads renewed direction in exploring further collaboration opportunities. Quarterly meetings between the Heads of Estates from LFRS, NWAS, and LanCon had revealed that the benefits extended beyond co-location alone. The project's objectives, guiding principles, and expected benefits had been redefined, and the scope of work had been updated accordingly. In addition to site sharing, the group was exploring collaborative efforts such as system knowledge exchange, shared procurement specifications, and joint supplier framework opportunities.

Community First Responder (CFR)

A cost-benefit analysis by the New Economy confirmed that Emergency Medical Response (EMR) delivered a strong return on investment, £4.41 for every £1 spent. In areas where EMR co-responding had been practiced, when a person suffered a suspected cardiac arrest, firefighters were deployed in parallel to the ambulance service under blue-light conditions. Staff from whichever service arrived first immediately begin to provide potentially life-saving treatment before the other arrived. Not only did parallel mobilisation therefore facilitate the probability of a timely response; the additional on-scene activity also supported ambulance crews to undertake advanced clinical work while fire and rescue services (FRSs) operated in a support capacity. This scheme had been running successfully for many years in several parts of the UK, however, South Western Ambulance Service Foundation

	Trust had recently announced it was phasing out fire EMR to develop and strengthen its volunteer CFR scheme. This decision had been met with sadness and disappointment from FRSs involved in EMR, due to the improved outcomes for communities. The CFR workstream within Lancashire enabled LFRS staff volunteers to respond to life-threatening emergencies directly from their workplace. Since 2023, over 200 incidents had been attended, with LFRS staff delivering life-saving interventions before ambulance crews arrived. The operational model was structured in 3 phases: Phase 1: 8 Green book staff respond voluntarily while on duty. Phase 2: Flexi Duty Officers (FDOs) provide response while on duty. Phase 3: On Call staff provided response within their local communities. This phase was in development, with the assistance of a heat map from NWS. This identified areas within Lancashire that were proving difficult to recruit CFRs, and would enable LFRS to target local On-Call Firefighters who were interested in volunteering for the scheme. The DCFO explained that national work was ongoing with trade unions with a hope of implementing a national CFR agreement for firefighters. Councillor J Hugo added that nationally Labour were lobbying the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for a paid arrangement to be included in firefighter contracts. In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow in relation to the number of defibrillators within the service, the DCFO explained that each fire engine carried a defibrillator, some fire stations had them outside the station and some flexi duty officers and green book staff acting as CFR's carried defibrillators. County Councillor J Tetlow remarked that the fire service carried out a wide variety of roles. Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted the report.
6-25/26	Annual Service Report
	The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) presented the report. The Annual Service Report was produced annually by the Service as part of its accountability to measure progress against the items set out as deliverables as part of the Annual Service Plan. These actions were derived from the medium-term strategic goals highlighted in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). The Annual Service Report highlighted a number of key deliverables against the priority areas of: i) people, ii) prevention, iii) protection, iv) response and v) value for money related work streams: i) Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer • Create an organisational culture where diversity is encouraged and valued. • Deliver tailored learning and development opportunities

- Encourage and listened to employee voice
- Staff feedback leading to Service improvements
- Invest in training and technology to improve health and safety
- Service headquarters and leadership and development centre masterplan
- Upgraded fire station facilities
- A Celebration of LFRS's people
- Honours and awards

ii) Preventing fires and other emergencies from happening

- Lancashire led the way in reducing accidental house fires
- Invest in improvements to LFRS's home fire safety check service
- Deliver targeted fire prevention activity
- Fire engines displayed prevention messages

iii) Protecting people and property when fires happen

- Supported living care provider prosecuted for fire safety breaches
- Transform fire protection and business safety
- Strengthen LFRS's fire safety inspection programme to meet evolving standards

iv) Responding to fires and other emergencies quickly and competently

- Implement LFRS's emergency cover review
- Introduce more resilient crewing arrangements
- Review emergency cover in Preston
- Optimise emergency cover through dynamic cover software
- Strengthen firefighting and rescue capabilities in high-rise and commercial buildings
- Two new water towers joined the Service fleet
- Broaden on-call firefighting capabilities to strengthen operational response
- Lancashire's new on-call planning tool is a UK first
- Strengthen the services response to climate change emergencies
- Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service tests drones for wildfire prevention
- Invest in LFRS's Learning and Development Centre
- Drill tower replacement programme
- Invest in LFRS's fleet and operational equipment
- Lancashire firefighter delivered international flood rescue training in Malawi

The report included a summary of the Service's performance in relation to responding:

Overall activity

- 16,963 incidents attended
- 4,723 fires attended
- 678 road traffic collisions attended
- 85 missing person searches
- 948 gaining entry to property incidents in support of North West Ambulance

	Service Average attendance time • Overall - 8 minutes 20 seconds • Critical fire response – first fire engine attendance – 7 mins 38 seconds • Critical special service response – first fire engine attendance – 8 minutes 46 seconds Total availability of the first fire engine at each of LFRS's 39 fire stations - 87.97% v) Delivering value for money in how we use resources • Create a new rota management team • Review productivity and efficiency • Drive efficiencies through digitalisation • Introduce Microsoft Power BI dashboards • Collaborate with other public services • Community fire responder collaboration County Councillor J Tetlow congratulated the DCFO on his award of the King's Fire Service Medal, details of which were contained within the report. Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the Annual Service Report.
7-25/26	People Strategy The Director of People and Development (DoPD) presented the report. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England set out the government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue services. The framework stated that each fire and rescue authority should have a people strategy in place. The Home Office collected and published a range of workforce data that fire and rescue authorities were required to provide. The People Strategy for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) 2025 – 2027, as attached at Appendix A of the agenda pack, was a comprehensive three-year plan that outlines how the Service would manage and develop its workforce in alignment with its Community Risk Management Plan. It was a framework that ensured the right people were in the right roles, equipped with the necessary skills to contribute to the success of LFRS. The Strategy involved various aspects of human resources, including recruitment, training, development, engagement, effective utilisation of data, and retention. The development of the Strategy and its priorities was influenced by HMICFRS recommendations, Fire Standards, legislative changes, the changing nature of the services operating environment, as well as policy development and learning from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). The current people priorities were to:

	• Embed Service values, behaviours, and the Code of Ethics making LFRS a place where everyone felt valued and included. • Promote LFRS as an employer of choice, recruiting a workforce which was diverse, meet the needs of the people of Lancashire, and addressed any employment needs identified in the services workforce plan. • Continue to develop the capability and resilience of leaders who can energise their teams, who encourage flexibility, innovation and who promote continuous improvement. • Continue to embed talent management and succession planning, shaping the workforce to meet Service needs and support individuals to achieve their full potential. • Promote a resilient and healthy workforce. • Continue to actively engage with the LFRS workforce responding to feedback and involving staff in the shaping of the services plans and decision-making. Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the People Strategy for 2025/2027.
8-25/26	Protection Update
	Area Manager (AM) Matt Hamer gave a presentation to members to provide an overview of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Services (LFRSs) actions and investment in the services Protection (Fire Safety) department since the Grenfell Tower incident. Following the tragic incident at Grenfell Tower on the 14 June 2017 where 72 persons lost their lives, LFRS had invested significantly to adapt and innovate in strengthening the services Protection department which oversees LFRSs duties as the Fire Safety Enforcing Authority for the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and other fire safety legislation. With the introduction of new primary legislation (Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Act 2022) new statutory duties fell to LFRS to regulate. In addition, the creation of the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) saw LFRS act on behalf of the Health and Safety Executive in regulating relevant buildings. Alongside new legislation, changes impacting local authorities, the construction industry and competency requirements had required the service to adapt and train staff to regulate circa 65,000 commercial premises in the county. Further legislation was expected to continue to be released with Residential Personals Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) legislation expected in April 2026. Lancashire had 5238 high risk premises comprised of 72 high-rise, 166 mid-rise, 418 care homes and hundreds of hospitals and hotels. High-rise referred to buildings that were over 18 meters tall or over 7 storeys high, AM Matt Hamer explained that the number of high-rise buildings could fluctuate depending on changes to landscape and methods of measuring. Methods of measuring were now being standardised with trained inspectors and the potential use of drones.

Lancashire had around 65,000 medium and lower risk premises including shops, factories and offices. AM Matt Hamer explained that any live risks identified were inspected and the risks mitigated.

In response to a question from Councillor J Hugo in relation to the fluctuation in numbers, AM Matt Hamer explained that reasons for fluctuation could include changes to buildings such as adding additional storeys or conversion of buildings.

Councillor J Hugo asked a further question in relation to where empty properties sat on the risk ladder. AM Matt Hamer explained that buildings classified as empty were considered by the Community Safety Partnership to ensure they were secure, any specific fire risks identified would be brought to the attention of the local authority. If a building was to be considered under planning regulations LFRS would be involved to ensure any proposals were fire safety compliant. He added that LFRS was working with Blackpool Council in relation to empty buildings within the Blackpool area. Councillor G Baker asked if empty buildings needed a fire certificate, AM Matt Hamer confirmed that they did not. Councillor G Baker then asked if insurance companies considered the fire risk of empty buildings, AM Matt Hamer stated that he could not comment on insurance company regulations but added that LFRS could not carry out enforcement as an empty building would not have a responsible person, LFRS could put a notice on the building to request the service be updated if the building became occupied. The DCFO added that the Fire Precautions Act 1971 allowed the issue of a certificate until the implementation of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, with the onus then on the responsible person within the building.

Over the previous 8 years, LFRS had invested over £1 million of government uplift grant funding in the Protection function, restructuring, creating new roles, new guidance and new performance metrics to ensure that the service met its nationally leading, risk-based intervention programme (RBIP). LFRS had introduced dedicated leads for high-rise, mid-rise and hospitals ahead of the national direction towards mid-rise buildings.

Upskilling had also been undertaken with operational staff to allow them to both prevent incidents occurring, through the delivery of LFRS's Business Fire Safety Checks service, and respond more effectively if they did, through the provision of dedicated built environment training.

The investment in people was supported by an investment in digital systems to allow staff to work more effectively and efficiently. New hard and software had been developed and procured to enable staff to better share information and provide a more consistent regulatory programme.

In 2021 50% of LFRS's building regulation consultations were responded to within the set timeframe, in 2024 this had improved to 95%. Some submissions were more complex and had large volumes of paperwork or missing information which could lead to delays. The service averaged over 1000 consultations per year.

Councillor J Hugo commended the increase in response compliance by the protection team.

LFRS remained actively engaged locally, regionally and nationally to remain agile for further legislative changes along with significant changes to supporting guidance. Investment in the services Protection function continued, with further awareness training for operational crews and responding officers along with the procurement of a new digital system.

In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow in relation to fighting fires within high-rise buildings, the DCFO explained that the highest buildings in Lancashire were up to 30 stories high, crews would be able to safely use their breathing apparatus (BA) sets from the ground floor to the top. He explained that for taller buildings crew may be instructed to only use their BA once they were a few floors under the fire, however crews would be carrying gas sensors and be instructed to use their BA if this sensor began to indicate. He added that high-rises would often use sprinkler systems and the use of drones was being explored in other international countries. Additionally LFRS's tallest Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) could reach up to 45 meters, it was acknowledged that this would not reach the top of Lancashire's tallest buildings. AM Matt Hamer added that new buildings had been designed with Fire Safety Regulations in place however the quality of the build was important, LFRS would use different tactics for older buildings.

In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow in relation to the 'stay put' policy instructed at Grenfell Tower, the DCFO explained that generally flats were self-contained units that could stay safe for one hour. In Lancashire if immediate evacuation was required fire control would instruct residents who made contact to evacuate the building. He added that LFRS's high-rise evacuation was tested during an exercise with HMICFRS during its recent inspection and went well. It was noted that modern buildings now react very differently to older buildings.

County Councillor J Tetlow asked a further question in relation to evacuation of high-rise hotels, the DCFO explained that hotel rooms should be safe for one hour and hotels would have fire evacuation procedures in place.

In 2023/24 the service had two successful prosecutions with the outcomes being 11 month custodial sentences, 6 months suspended sentences, 200 hours community service and £10,414 to be paid in costs. In 2024/25 the service had 3 successful prosecutions with the outcomes being 14 months suspended sentences, 420 hours community service, 20 days rehabilitation, £142,500 fines and £44,225 costs. In 2025/26 the service had 1 prosecutions, 1 case in the court system and 16 case files in development with the outcomes being £30,000 fines, £18,000 costs and a £2,500 victim surcharge. AM Matt Hamer explained that 2 further cases had very recently been through court, the first case resulting in a suspended sentence and costs and the second case resulting in fines and costs. AM Matt Hamer added that LFRS was very robust with prosecutions and had one of the highest prosecution rates nationally, but it was important that individuals and businesses were not frightened of asking for help.

In response to a question from Councillor J Hugo in relation to the income from fine payments, AM Matt Hamer explained that any fines went to the CPS, Courts and Central Government and any costs were received by LFRS. AM Matt Hamer added that for any cases likely to lead to prosecution the service recorded all actions and costs from the commencement of the incident to allow them to be accurately

	submitted to court. He also explained that one of the cases taken to court in June 2025 had happened in 2021, as the service had had to work closely with police and the coroner. Prosecution cases could take anywhere between 150 to 500 hours of work. County Councillor J Tetlow asked if prosecutions were prepared within the service, AM Matt Hamer explained that cases were prepared by the Legal Protection Support Officer, then reviewed by the LFRS Solicitor before being sent to an external barrister. AM Matt Hamer explained that the journey for LFRS continued with further legislation expected, changing risks surrounding modern building methods and building operational knowledge. Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted the report and the contents of the presentation.
9-25/26	Date of Next Meeting
	The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday 17 November 2025 at 10:00 hours in the main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood. Further meeting dates were noted for 02 February 2026 and agreed for 13 July 2026. County Councillor J Tetlow remarked that there seemed to be a big gap between meetings. The DCFO explained that there were 3 meetings per year but additional meetings could be scheduled if required. The Chair thanked the DCFO, DoPD and AM Matt Hamer for comprehensive reports.

M Nolan
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 15 September 2025

Proceedings of Audit Committee held 16 July 2025

(Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information:

Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager - Tel: 01772 866720

Executive Summary

The proceedings of Audit Committee meeting held 16 July 2025.

Recommendation(s)

To note the proceedings of Audit Committee as set out at appendix 1 now presented.

Information

Attached at Appendix 1 are the proceedings of the Audit Committee meeting held on 16 July 2025.

Business Risk

None.

Environmental Impact

None.

Equality & Diversity Implications

None.

Financial Risk

None.

HR Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Audit Committee

Wednesday, 16 July 2025, at 2.00 pm in the Main Conference Room,
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
S Asghar	
P Buckley	
M Clifford (Chair)	
J Hugo (Vice-Chair)	
Officers	
S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS)	
J Meadows, Head of Finance (LFRS)	
A Latham, Financial Accountant (LFRS)	
S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS)	
L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)	
In attendance	
L Rix, Internal Audit, Lancashire County Council	
Z Abbas, Internal Audit, Lancashire County Council	
C Wallace, External Audit, Grant Thornton	
1-25/26	Apologies for Absence
	Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Joanne Ash, Lee Hutchinson, and Russell Walsh.
2-25/26	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
3-25/26	Minutes of the Previous Meeting
	Resolved: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 27 March 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
4-25/26	Internal Audit Annual Report
	The Chair welcomed Zaheer Abbas, Senior Auditor, to the meeting.

The report was presented by Laura Rix, Senior Auditor. The Internal Audit Annual Report summarised the work that the Internal Audit Service had undertaken during 2024/25 and the key themes arising from it. It provided an opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of governance, risk management and internal control.

On the basis of programme of work for the year, the Head of Internal Auditor provided substantial assurance over the adequacy of design and effectiveness in operation of the organisation's frameworks of governance, risk management and control. Overall, it was very positive.

Internal Audit Work Undertaken

All the budgeted days (70) had been used to deliver the internal audit plan and all 2024/2 work had been completed.

Overall governance, risk management and control arrangements

Substantial assurances were provided regarding the adequacy of design and effectiveness in operation of the organisation's frameworks of governance, risk management and control. Systems and processes were generally working effectively and ensured staff were aware of correct processes. Action plans were agreed with Senior Managers for issues raised during the year.

Accounts payable, Accounts receivable, and General ledger

Audit work across each of these three key financial systems was completed.

Pensions administration

Assurance over the operation of the Pension Fund had been obtained from work conducted directly by Lancashire County Council's Internal Audit Service, work undertaken by the Local Pensions Partnership (Administration) Ltd, (LPPA), and Local Pension Partnership (Investments) Ltd (LPPI). Both entities had also received an independent auditor's view of their controls through Audit and Assurance Faculty assurance reviews conducted by KPMG.

In response to a question from the Chair in relation to the reason for the high number of substantial assurances, Laura Rix explained that substantial assurances were given due to the Service's strong accuracy and effectiveness, and systems and control. She highlighted that substantial assurances were not given without due consideration, and it had been a very positive year. There was a dual approach to granting the assurance opinion as auditors carried out the work and she would then assess that work.

The DoCS commented that he valued the assessment. The Internal Auditors were an independent body and that level of independence was valued. It was the last Audit Committee that Laura would attend and thanks were given to Laura and the team for their work.

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

5-25/26 **Enquiries of Management**

	Steven Brown, Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) presented the report. It was noted that in order to comply with Auditing Standards, the External Auditors, Grant Thornton needed to establish an understanding of the management processes in place to prevent and detect fraud and to ensure compliance with laws and regulations. They were also required to make enquiries of both management and those charged with governance as to their knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud. It was a document that was linked to the Financial Strategy. International auditing standards placed certain obligations on auditors to document managements' view on some key areas that affected the financial statements. In addition to the request to management, they also needed to gain an understanding of how those charged with governance maintained oversight of the above processes as set out in letters to management (Executive Board) and the Chair of the Audit Committee as considered alongside separate responses. Councillor Hugo asked for confirmation of the identity of the Executive Board, and the DoCS responded that the Executive Board was made up of the Principle Officers: Jon Charters (Chief Fire Officer); Steve Healey (Deputy Chief Fire Officer); Sam Pink (Assistant Chief Fire Officer); Steven Brown (Director of Corporate Services; Liz Sandiford (Director of People and Development); and Steph Collinson (Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement). Resolved: That the Committee noted and endorsed the response submitted by the Executive Board.
6-25/26	Annual Governance Statement
	The Director of Corporate Services presented the report. The Authority was required to publish an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) along with the Authority's financial statements, following a self-assessment review of the effectiveness of the internal controls in place. The report and the statements set out the key elements of the Authority's governance framework, how these had been evaluated, the outcome of the assessment of effectiveness and any areas for improvement. The Audit Committee had previously approved a Code of Corporate Governance, in line with guidance produced jointly by CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants) and SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives). The Code defined corporate governance as the way an authority ensured that it was doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest, and accountable manner. In order to assess the effectiveness of the Authority's current arrangements a self-assessment had been undertaken by the Executive Board who had considered the various sources of assurance that supported the core principles outlined in the report and the outcome of this was considered by Members under appendix A. The assessment also considered recommendations made as part of last year's Annual Governance Statement i) a project to replace the existing Performance Management System would commence; ii) an upgraded Finance system would be implemented in April 2022 and the Service would review and implement

	improvements to the monthly budget monitoring process which made greater use of additional functionality provided; iii) a mechanism to report to Members of the CFA the services response to national recommendations made by the HMICFRS during the year would be identified. The Authority had addressed these areas which include the development of a new performance management system, improvements to financial monitoring processes, and the establishment of an Organisational Assurance Team to oversee internal audits and preparedness. As part of the review, the Service was required to identify and disclose any significant governance issues, of which there had been none, hence the overall conclusion was that the system of internal controls was adequate. County Councillor Buckley asked a question regarding whether there were significant changes to the Annual Governance Statement yearly or if it remained static, as Councils had a constitution which was a single point of contact for all Governance information. The DoCS explained that the Service had a Constitution and Standing Orders, and a Scheme of Delegation akin to Local Authorities which did remain fairly static. However, the Service were required to provide the AGS to confirm its governance arrangements and if there had been any changes. There were not many changes unless government required additional information, there had been a change in structure, or any issues emerged from independent reviews. Changes specific to the AGS would not require the Constitution to be updated. Resolved: That the Committee noted and endorsed I. The self-assessment and the Annual Governance Statement based on this and recommended that the Chair of the Authority sign the Statement. II. The updated Local Code of Governance
7-25/26	Accounting Estimates 2024-25
	An updated report with an amendment was tabled at the meeting for Councillors. The update was to the figures in the PFI (Private Finance Initiative) Liability section. The Director of Corporate Services presented the report. It was noted that the International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 540: Auditing Accounting Estimates and Related Disclosures was revised in December 2018 by the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB), an independent standard-setting body that served the public interest by setting high-quality international standards for auditing, quality control, and review. The auditing standard was revised because Statement of Accounts were increasingly subject to judgements and estimations performed by management and experts on a range of items within them, as required by current accounting standards. These changes required that auditors should understand and evaluate: “the nature and extent of oversight and governance that the entity has in place over management’s financial reporting process relevant to the accounting estimates.” The Audit Committee needed to understand what significant estimates would be included within the Statement of Accounts which were those that: • Required significant judgement by management to address subjectivity; • Had high estimation uncertainty;

	• Were complex to make; • Had, or ought to have had, a change in method, assumptions or data compared to previous periods; or • Involved significant assumptions. The Statement of Accounts contained estimated figures that were based on assumptions about the future or that were otherwise uncertain. Estimates considered past and current trends and/or other relevant factors. However, because balances could not be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates. The Statement of Accounts were prepared in line with the most recent Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (known as the Code), published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). It was noted that the Statement of Accounts were prepared with the underlying significant assumption of Going Concern, which meant that the Authority considered its financial position to be stable for the foreseeable future, as assessed at the most recent budget setting exercise finalised in February 2025. Accounting standards required that management made an annual assessment of Going Concern, although the Code recognised that Local Authorities could not be created or dissolved without statutory prescription, the accounts must therefore be prepared on a Going Concern basis. Management had prepared the assessment in line with requirements. Members considered the significant Accounting Estimates for 2024/25 including the: estimated value, degree of uncertainty and methodology used for the: i) valuation of land and buildings; ii) depreciation of property and equipment; iii) valuation of both Firefighter (FF) and Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) liability; iv) valuation of LGPS pension asset; v) fair value measurement – Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes; and vi) holiday pay expenditure accrual. It was highlighted that the FF Pension Scheme was unfunded and did not have assets to match the liabilities, however, it had no impact on financial sustainability but to comply with international accounting standards those balances were included. The Actuary's key assumptions were included in the report. It was noted that each year Executive Board was asked to consider whether there were any transactions, events, or conditions (or changes in these) that might trigger the recognition of an additional significant accounting estimate, or the potential recognition, known as a contingent liability. Based on the returns received from Executive Board, the contingent liabilities note had been updated to reflect the current position, but there were no further significant events or transactions identified by this process. Resolved: That the report be noted and the accounting estimates as reported be endorsed.
8-25/26	Financial Statements Updates 2024-25
	A copy of the report was tabled for Members at the meeting which replaced the

verbal update.

The Director of Corporate Services provided the committee with an update on the preparation of the Authority's 2024/25 unaudited financial statements and included the draft core financial statements for information; the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account, Movement in Reserves Statement and Balance Sheet.

The Director of Corporate Services explained that for the financial year 2024/25, the draft accounts should have been published by the statutory deadline; 30 June 2025, and the audited accounts should have been made available by 30 September 2025. Unfortunately, this timeline would not be met due to reasons outside the organisations control, but the draft accounts would be published by 18 July 2025 following receipt of the North West Fire Control statements earlier in the month.

There was no requirement to present the unaudited accounts to the Committee before the external audit process commenced, however, to ensure the Committee was kept up to date with the process towards completion of the audited accounts, the draft core financial statements were included in Appendix 1.

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 applied to the preparation, approval and audit of the Statement of Accounts and other financial statements. The regulations were based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) which attempted to standardise accounts in a consistent format across both the public and private sectors with the aim of achieving greater transparency. The table in the report summarised the adjustments required to the revenue outturn to reach the Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure and reported in the financial statements.

The draft Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account, Movement in Reserves Statement and Balance Sheet were set out in Appendix 1. Subject to changes as part of the Quality Assurance Processes, they would form part of the accounts for audit.

In response to a question from County Councillor Buckley in relation to the collection of uncollected council tax and how that affected the Fire Service, the DoCS explained that the financial statements reflected the reality of that and budgeting to manage throughout the year. Each district council provided an estimate of the level of council tax arrears expected over the coming year which was built into the council tax base. However, when the council tax base was set, district councils had a statutory responsibility to pay the amounts that had been agreed to be met. Uncollected council tax had a long-term effect on the amounts received by the Fire Service which, in turn, impacted on resources.

County Councillor Buckley queried whether the Fire Service took any action to help Councils with council tax collection. The DoCS advised that the Service was motivated in the same way as district councils although they had no legal responsibility to collect council tax and the responsibility was that of the councils. The Service had regular meetings with the Section 151 Officer where the collection of council tax was discussed, and the County Council had carried out a lot of work to maximise the amount of council tax collected. Regardless of the external factors

	which influenced the collection of council tax, there were no concerns from the Service about any individual Council's performance in that area. In response to a question from the Chair in relation to penalties for missing the statutory deadline for the draft accounts, the Director of Corporate Services confirmed there were no penalties, but the Service had to publish a notice on the final date it was due with an indication of the completion date. The Chair asked whether training for Audit should be mandatory, especially with so many new Members who had not been Councillors previously and had no prior training. The DoCS stated that mandatory training would support assurance for the Service with regards to scrutiny, however, he understood how demanding Councillors roles could be and appreciated any feedback in relation to training. Laura Rix commented that it was standard when setting up new committees for Members to receive training, although currently, it was the Members and not the Committee which was new, but she felt training would represent best practice. County Councillor Buckley expressed concern with making training mandatory as that would limit the number of Councillors who could sit on the Committee as potential substitutes as they would also require training. The Chair requested that any future invites for training should stress the importance of being fully trained. Resolved: That the committee noted the update with progress in preparing the unaudited Financial Statements; and noted the Authority's draft core financial statements that would form part of the 2024/25 unaudited Financial Statements.
9-25/26	External Audit Plan 2024-25 Curtis Wallace, Public Sector Audit Manager presented the Audit Plan 2024/25. It was noted that the external auditors were required to produce an annual audit plan, setting out the areas intended for review during the year. Members considered the Audit Plan which included key matters that impacted on the audit, details of significant risks identified and the key aspects of proposed response to the risk, other matters, progress against prior year recommendations, Grant Thornton's approach to materiality, IT audit strategy, value for money arrangements, audit logistics and team, audit fees, independence and non-audit services, and communication of audit matters with those charged with governance. The proposed audit fee was £103.053k (last year's fee was £97.6k). The report identified significant risk areas were i) Management of override of controls, ii) The revenue cycle includes fraudulent transactions, iii) The expenditure cycle includes fraudulent transactions, iv) Valuation of land and buildings, vi) valuation of the pension fund net liability, and vii) IFRS 16. It was noted that, as of 1st April 2024, IFRS 16 leases was mandatory for all Local Government bodies. Curtis Wallace confirmed that the audit was ongoing, and fieldwork would be completed in September/October with the Findings report being taken to the November Audit Committee Meeting in time for the February deadline.

	The Chair asked if there were any indications that fees would increase. Curtis Wallace advised that the fees were set and there was no mention of those being increased. The only reason for an increase in fees would be if an area of work were needed which was above their normal procedures. Resolved: That the Audit Committee agreed the external audit plan for 2024/25.
10-25/26	Internal Charter and Mandate
	The report was presented by Laura Rix, Senior Auditor. The Internal Charter established the framework within which Lancashire County Council's Internal Audit Service operated to best serve the Combined Fire Authority and to meet its professional obligations under applicable professional standards. It defined the purpose, authority, and responsibility of internal audit activity, established the Internal Audit Service's position in relation to the Combined Fire Authority; authorized access to records, personnel and physical properties relevant to the performance of engagements; and defined the scope of internal audit activities. Following a review by the Head of Service – Internal Audit (Head of Internal Audit), it had been updated and presented to the Audit Committee for approval. Resolved:- That the Committee approved the Audit Charter and Mandate.
11-25/26	Internal Audit Monitoring Report
	The Internal Auditors produced a summary of progress against the annual plan for each Audit Committee meeting, setting out progress to date and any significant findings. The report for the period up to 06 June 2025 was presented by Laura Rix, Senior Auditor. The meeting was informed that there was one piece of work on Risk Management which was in the testing phase and update would be provided the next meeting of the Audit Committee. Work had not yet begun on business continuity, however, there was sufficient time within the year for that to be completed. To date, 2 days had been spent this financial year on completion of the 2025/26 plan. The table in the report provided a summary of the assignments that comprised the 2025/26 audit plan. In response to a query from the Chair as to whether it was felt that there were sufficient days left to complete the outstanding work, Laura Rix stated that she was satisfied that assurance could be given within the remaining time. Resolved: That the Committee noted and endorsed the report.
12-25/26	Risk Management
	The Director of Corporate Services presented the report to Members. In November 2024, the Audit Committee supported the updated Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) risk management policy, procedure, and the associated organisational risk register. This aligned with ISO 31000:2018

standards, was in line with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) template and represented good practice in the sector. Effective risk management practices were integrated into quarterly Corporate Performance Board (CPB) meetings agendas, provided strategic oversight, ensured legislative compliance, optimised resource allocation, and facilitated risk reporting to the Combined Fire Authority.

The Audit Committee was a cornerstone of the Authority's governance framework, tasked with providing independent assurance to governance stakeholders regarding the adequacy of LFRS's risk management framework, annual governance processes, and internal control environment. Its primary function included evaluating the effectiveness of the Authority's risk management arrangements.

The Civil Contingencies Act (CCA 2004) set out the legal framework for contingency arrangements to assess, plan and advise against LFRS organisational risks, be it departmental or corporate, however, there was no prescriptive way within the framework of doing that. Therefore, the Service had the freedom to manage risk using a method that ensured a clear governance structure that best met the needs of the business.

This moral and statutory duty not only required LFRS to take all reasonable actions to safeguard its employees, assets, and the public, but also ensured that it was not financially or operationally disrupted. It could meet this duty by ensuring that risk management played an integral part in the governance of the Service at a strategic, tactical, and operational level.

The risk management policy and procedure at LFRS ensured compliance with legislative requirements and NFCC good practice. The policy and procedure were aligned with ISO 31000:2018, to ensure an accurate description and appropriate monitoring and management of LFRS risks. Additionally, a tiered approach to risk was in place which allowed for escalation and de-escalation as needed.

Effective risk management practices aligned with ISO 31000:2018 yielded numerous benefits for LFRS that included proactive risk mitigation, enhanced decision-making, clear accountability, and improved financial control.

Risk Management was integrated into quarterly CPB meetings, as a standing agenda item LFRS aimed to provide strategic oversight of the risk management process. Overall, the measures enabled LFRS to fulfil its legislative duties and optimise resource allocation whilst providing a structured mechanism for reporting on risk to the Audit Committee. The Corporate Risk Register was reviewed quarterly, and updates provided by all pertinent risk managers and owners.

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

- Loss of Funding.
- Retention and Recruitment of On-Call Staff.

In response to a question from County Councillor Buckley in relation to adding the risk relating to potential local government reorganisation, the DoCS explained that changes in government structures were constant but would not necessarily impact the risk profile of the service but could impact on governance. He would take

	forward the suggestion. In response to a question from the Chair in relation to the reduction of risk surrounding management of personal data, the DoCS advised that the Service had recruited to a vacant post which had resulted in reducing the risk. Resolved: - That the Committee: - i) Endorsed LFRS's risk management arrangements: and ii) Noted the up-to-date Corporate Risk Matrix and Register.
13-25/26	Contract Standing Orders and Procurement Update The Procurement Act 2023 was designed to regulate and standardise the procurement processes across public bodies. It aimed to ensure transparency, fairness, and efficiency in acquiring goods, services, and works. The Procurement Act 2023 came into effect on 24 February 2025 and included significant changes to the procedures that governed UK procurement. Those changes were intended to create a simpler, more flexible, commercial system that better met the needs while remaining compliant with international obligations. Leaving the EU provided the UK with the responsibility and opportunity to overhaul the public procurement regulations. The four existing sets of public regulations (The Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016, the Concession Contracts Regulations and the Defence and Security Public Contracts Regulations 2011) would be replaced by one set of regulations, namely the Procurement Act, which came into force on 24 February 2025. Procurements that commenced on or following 24 February 2025 would be regulated by the Procurement Act 2023 and the new rules. Procurement activity since 24 February to date had not been impacted by the new requirements as new procurements had been via frameworks which were compliant, but adoption of the Contract Standing Orders (CSO) would ensure all procurement routes met the requirements in the Act. The key changes under the Procurement Act were set out below: a. Enhanced contract transparency - This required all procurement contracts to be made publicly available to ensure openness and accountability. It mandated clear documentation of procurement decisions, rationale, and outcomes. Authorities must begin implementing these transparency measures by March 2025. b. Greater pre-market engagement - Encouraged dialogue between procuring entities and potential suppliers before formal procurement processes begun. It was aimed at understanding market capabilities and fostering innovation. c. Streamlined procurement processes - Simplified the steps and requirements involved in procurement to reduce

administrative burdens and speed up project delivery. The new streamlined procedures to be adopted by March 2025.

d. Digitally led procurement

- Promoted the use of digital platforms and tools to manage procurement activities efficiently. It included online submission of bids, electronic documentation, and digital contract management. LFRS had a new e-tendering system that linked to the Central Digital Platform and ensured we were complying with the electronic tendering requirements as well as allowing us to publish all required tender notices required by law.

e. Supplier and buyer accountability

- Established mechanisms to hold both suppliers and buyers accountable for their actions during the procurement process. This included performance monitoring and compliance audits. The accountability framework was effective from March 2025.

f. Emphasis on public benefit and non-commercial factors

- Focused on achieving broader social, environmental, and economic benefits through procurement. It encouraged considering factors like sustainability, social value, and ethical practices in decision-making. Local authorities should integrate these considerations into their procurements by March 2025.

g. New below-threshold procedure

- Introduced a simplified process for procurements that fall below certain financial thresholds, making it easier and faster to engage smaller contracts. This new procedure came into effect in March 2025.

h. Central debarment list

- Implemented a centralised list of suppliers who were banned from participating in public procurements due to past misconduct or poor performance. Local authorities needed to check this list as part of their due diligence from March 2025.

i. Revised evaluation criteria

- Updated the criteria used to evaluate bids to ensure they aligned with modern procurement goals such as innovation, sustainability, and value for money. These revised criteria were mandatory for all procurements starting from March 2025.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) had made progress against all the changes and adoption of the new CSOs would enable further compliance. Since the implementation of the Act, new procurements had been undertaken via frameworks that met the requirements of the Act. To ensure alternative procurement routes could be undertaken, such as open and negotiated tenders, the CSOs were required to be updated.

A review of the CSOs against the Procurement Act requirements identified several areas that needed updates to meet best practices. The CSOs were revised accordingly, with key changes summarised below:

	Threshold Changes i. The new thresholds must also account for VAT to ensure compliance with the Transparency requirements in the Act; these have been updated and rounded accordingly. Procurement Routes ii. The Act introduced several new procurement routes that included competitive tendering, negotiated procedures, and dynamic purchasing systems. These routes were designed to improve transparency, efficiency, and value for money in public procurement. The Act also included evaluation criteria set by the Cabinet Office. The CSOs had been updated to align with the Act's procurement routes and included amended evaluation criteria from the Cabinet Office, the evaluation criteria summary was set out below: - Value for Money: Ensuring the best possible outcome relative to expenditure. - Social Value: Considering the impact on local communities and the environment. - Supplier Capability: Assessing the ability of suppliers to deliver goods or services effectively. - Innovation: Encouraging creative solutions and technological advancements. Roles, Responsibilities iii. Clarity regarding the roles, responsibilities and sign off procedures were included in the amended CSOs and outlined who was responsible for the contract management in relation to each contract once the contract had been awarded. Other Changes iv. Reference of old systems and processes had been removed and changes to the layout to ease the readability of the CSOs had been made where appropriate. The Contract Procedure Rules would be reviewed annually or in line with any necessary legislation changes and would be presented to the CFA's Corporate Governance Committee for approval. The Chair asked for assurance that the Contract Standing Orders was as robust as possible. The Head of Finance and Procurement provided assurances that all procurement standards had been met, and the Service had worked with other Fire and Rescue Services to ensure robustness. Laura Rix added that Procurement was included in the audit plan and would be assessed later in the year. Resolved:- That the Committee: - i) Noted progress with implementing the requirements under the new Procurement Act 2023; ii) Approved amendments to the Contract Standing Orders as set out in the report and the revised CSOs in Appendix A.
14-25/26	Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on **25 September 2025** at 10:00 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Further meeting dates were noted for 27 November 2025 and agreed for 26 March 2026.

County Councillor Buckley asked for clarification on the start time of the meetings, the DoCS confirmed that the meetings ordinarily commence at 10am, the current meeting had been an exception.

Councillor Hugo asked if there would be an option to dial into the meeting virtually. The Member Services Manager explained that hybrid meetings were only utilised for working groups, not committee meetings. The DoCS added that this was due to the need for statutory decisions to be made.

County Councillor Buckley asked if any documents could be printed landscape in the agenda pack. The Member Services Manager explained that the agenda packs were system generated but this could be checked and implemented if possible.

The Chair noted that today would be Laura Rix's last Audit Committee Meeting and thanked her for her work over the past few years.

M Nolan
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood

This page is intentionally left blank

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 23 June 2025

Membership of Committees 2025/26

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

Executive Summary

The membership of committees and related appointments of the Combined Fire Authority for the year 2025/26.

Recommendation

The Authority is asked to note and endorse the membership of the committees of the Combined Fire Authority for 2025/26 as set out below.

Information

The Combined Fire Authority is 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 means 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 is set out below.

Committee	Total Membership	Reform UK	Labour	Progressive Lancashire	Conservative	Liberal Democrat
Full CFA	25	12	5	4	3	1
Performance	10	5	2	2	1	0
Planning	10	5	2	2	1	0
Resources	10	5	2	2	1	0
Audit	7	3	2	1	1	0
Appeals	7	4	1	0	2	0

Business Risk

None.

Environmental Impact

None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None.

HR Implications

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None.

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

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on Monday 15 September 2025

Proposed Amendment to Strategy Group Terms of Reference

(Appendix 1 Refers)

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

Telephone: 01772 866720

Executive Summary

The Authority last reviewed the terms of reference of the Strategy Group on 23 April 2018.

Members are asked to consider some minor amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Strategy Group to reflect its expanding remit and ensure the Group maintains its principle aims and objectives to suit the changing needs of the Authority.

Recommendation

The Authority is asked to approve the amendment to the revised terms of reference for the Strategy Group, as outlined at Appendix 1.

Information

The Terms of Reference for the Strategy Group have not been reviewed since April 2018, and all policies and constitutional documents should be reviewed at least every three years.

Whilst the current Terms of Reference remain relevant, there is an expansion of the remit of the Strategy Group as a discussion forum for ideas, not only from the Service but also to promote and encourage ideas from the Authority.

The proposed changes are marked in red.

Business Risk

Governance arrangements form a key element of the control framework within which the Authority operates. The changes proposed are merely procedural and do not impact on the effectiveness of the Strategy Group to discharge its function.

Environmental Impact

None identified.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None identified.

HR Implications

None identified.

Financial Implications

None identified.

Legal implications

None identified.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper: Report to CFA and subsequent minute 89/17

Date: 23 April 2018

Contact: Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority

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

Appendix 1

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

CFA Strategy Group **Terms of Reference**

It is envisaged that the Group will meet twice a year, without a fixed timetable, to remain flexible to respond to any need for urgent change.

The purpose of the Strategy Group is to provide a private discussion forum for all Members of the Combined Fire Authority – in essence it is a ‘think tank’.

The Strategy Group is also a forum in which to share proposals for strategic and operational developments outside of the constitutional structure, in order to obtain general viewpoints and reactions to proposals and to promote healthy discussion and member engagement about some of them.

The proposed terms of reference are:

- To consider and make appropriate recommendations to the Authority on the contents of reports submitted by: Committees, Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer and Clerk in relation to new policy areas, taking into account the impact of such proposals on the staff and financial resources of the Authority;
- To consider and make appropriate recommendations to the Authority on the:
 - Formulation of the Authority’s objectives;
 - Priority of those objectives.
- To consider and make appropriate recommendations to the Authority or the appropriate Committee on significant changes to the:
 - Committee Structure;
 - Terms of Reference of Committees;
 - Powers of Committees;
 - Scheme of Delegation;
 - Constitutional Standing Orders.
- To consider proposals of government departments and other national or regional bodies which have national or regional implications which would affect the Authority in its relationship with other bodies and make appropriate recommendations to the Authority or appropriate Committee;
- To consider presentations from any organisation/individual it feels would be useful in achieving the role of the Strategy Group.

The Strategy Group will not have decision-making powers; it will only be able to make recommendations to the Combined Fire Authority or a Committee. For it to have decision making powers it would need to be a Committee

Approved at CFA on : 23-04-18
Last Review Date 14-08-25
Next Review By 13-08-28

covered by 'openness and transparency rules'. Meetings of the Strategy Group will not therefore be open to the public. Notes of the meetings should not be disclosed to the public or any third parties outside of the Combined Fire Authority, including other elected officials who are not members of the Authority, as proposals may not be taken forward, voted up or ultimately adopted. This is an important requirement to ensure the respect for the free flowing dialogue within the Strategy Group is maintained.

The LFRS Executive Board will be responsible for identifying issues to be considered by the Strategy Group. However, the Fire Authority, individual committees and individual members may on occasions wish to refer items, should they wish to contribute towards effective dialogue to discuss issues with a view to positive change, in the event they wish to do so.

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on Monday 15 September 2025

Proposed Amendment to Member's Code of Conduct

(Appendix 1 Refers)

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

Executive Summary

The Authority last reviewed, enhanced and updated the Member's Code of Conduct on 22 February 2021.

Members are asked to consider a very minor amendment to the Code to reflect a minor change recommended by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, which was made in 2022 and adopted widely throughout the public sector. The 2021 update took the principles of respect and leadership within a similar sphere but the emphasis on respect for others was re-stated as part of the Nolan Principles, specifically the principle relating to Leadership.

Recommendation

The Authority is asked to approve the amendment to the Member's Code of Conduct, in order to keep up to date, as outlined at Appendix 1.

Information

Whilst the Code of Conduct was enhanced significantly in 2021, all policies and constitutional documents should be reviewed at least every three years.

Whilst the current Code is fit for purpose and remains 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 outlines 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 is now corrected.

The proposed change is marked in red.

Business Risk

Governance arrangements form a key element of the control framework within which the Authority operates. The changes proposed are merely housekeeping to keep up to date and do not impact on the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct.

Environmental Impact

None identified.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None identified.

HR Implications

None identified.

Financial Implications

None identified.

Legal implications

None identified.

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

Paper: Report to CFA and subsequent minute 126/19

Date: 22 February 2021

Contact: Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority

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

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Code Of Conduct For Members.

[Proposed 15 September 2025]

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a “councillor” means a member or co-opted member of a local authority. A “co-opted member” is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as “a person who is not a member of the authority but who

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;
- b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, “local authority” includes combined authorities and district and town councils.

Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The Authority encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

General principles of councillor conduct

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors and local authority officers; should uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), also known as the Nolan Principles.

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor and will apply to your role as councillor co-opted on the Combined Fire Authority.

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role

of councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

Application of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when:

- you are acting in your capacity as a councillor and/or as a representative of your council
- you are claiming to act as a councillor and/or as a representative of your council
- you are giving the impression that you are acting as a councillor and/or as a representative of your council
- you refer publicly to your role as a councillor or use knowledge you could only obtain in your role as a councillor.

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct.

Standards of councillor conduct

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

General Conduct

1. Respect

As a councillor:

1.1 I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.

1.2 I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's councillor-officer protocol.

2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination

As a councillor:

2.1 I do not bully any person.

2.2 I do not harass any person.

2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service ('ACAS') characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying

might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

3. Impartiality of officers of the council

As a councillor

3.1 I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral (unless they are political assistants). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

4. Confidentiality and access to information

As a councillor:

4.1 I do not disclose information:

- a. given to me in confidence by anyone**
- b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless**
 - i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;**
 - ii. I am required by law to do so;**
 - iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or**

iv. the disclosure is:

- 1. reasonable and in the public interest; and**
- 2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and**
- 3. I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.**

4.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.

4.3 I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

5. Disrepute

As a councillor:

5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.

As a councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in your or your local authority's ability to discharge your/it's functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute.

You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

6. Use of position

As a councillor:

6.1 I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not use the advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

7. Use of local authority resources and facilities

As a councillor:

7.1 I do not misuse council resources.

7.2 I will, when using the resources of the local or authorising their use by others:

- a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport
- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

8. Complying with the Code of Conduct

As a councillor:

8.1 I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.

8.2 I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.

8.3 I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.

8.4 I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.

It is extremely important for you as a councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your

Monitoring Officer.

Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority

9. *Interests*

As a councillor:

9.1 I register and declare my interests.

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should declare an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be declared by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

You should note that failure to register or declare a disclosable pecuniary (i.e. financial) interest is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

Appendix B sets out the detailed provisions on registering and declaring interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer.

10. *Gifts and hospitality*

As a councillor:

10.1 I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.

10.2 I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.

10.3 I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as

a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact your Monitoring Officer for guidance.

Appendices

Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life

The principles are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour **and treat others with respect**. They should actively promote and robustly support these principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix B

Registering interests

1. Within 28 days of this Code of Conduct being adopted by the local authority or your election or appointment to office (where that is later) you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) and Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests). Disclosable Pecuniary Interests means issues relating to money and finances.
2. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a

registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.

3. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor/member or co-opted member, or a person connected with the member or co-opted member, being subject to violence or intimidation.
4. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Declaring interests

5. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, you must declare the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to declare the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest.
6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Other Registerable Interests, you must declare the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', again you do not have to declare the nature of the interest.
7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which *directly relates* to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must declare the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room

unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to declare the nature of the interest.

8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which *affects* –
 - a. your own financial interest or well-being;
 - b. a financial interest or well-being of a friend, relative, close associate; or
 - c. a body included in those you need to declare under Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

you must disclose the interest.

9. Where the matter affects the financial interest or well-being:
 - a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
 - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

you must declare the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to declare the nature of the interest.

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the

	councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and Property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. ‘Land’ excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor’s knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor’s knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were

	spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.
--	---

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2: Other Registerable Interests

Any Body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the council;	
Any Body -	(a) exercising functions of a public nature;
	(b) directed to charitable purposes; or
	(c) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)
of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.	

Appendix C – the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The Local Government Association has undertaken this review whilst the Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on [Local Government Ethical Standards](#). If the Government chooses to implement any of the recommendations, this could require a change to this Code.

The recommendations cover:

- Recommendations for changes to the Localism Act 2011 to clarify in law when the Code of Conduct applies
- The introduction of sanctions
- An appeals process through the Local Government Ombudsman
- Changes to the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012
- Updates to the Local Government Transparency Code
- Changes to the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person
- That the criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests should be abolished

The Local Government Ethical Standards report also includes Best Practice recommendations. These are:

Best practice 1: Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

Best practice 2: Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

Best practice 3: Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

Best practice 4: An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

Best practice 5: Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

Best practice 6: Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

Best practice 7: Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

Best practice 8: An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to

review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

Best practice 9: Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

Best practice 10: A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

Best practice 11: Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council as a whole, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

Best practice 12: Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

Best practice 13: A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

Best practice 14: Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

Best practice 15: Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

The Combined Fire Authority will review this Code of Conduct on a regular basis to ensure it is still fit for purpose.

This page is intentionally left blank

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 15 September 2025

Member Champion Activity Report

Contact for further information – Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Sam Pink.

Tel: 01772 866802

Executive Summary

This paper provides a report on the work of the Member Champions for the period up to 14 September 2025.

Recommendation(s)

The Authority is requested to note and endorse the report and acknowledge the work of the respective Champions.

Information

The concept of Member Champions was introduced in December 2007 with a review of the roles in 2017.

The Authority appoints its Member Champions at its Annual Meeting in June, and the current Member Champions are:

- Community Safety – County Councillor 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 are provided on a regular basis to the Authority. During this period, all have undertaken their respective role in accordance with the defined terms of reference. Their activity to date is as follows:

Community Safety - County Councillor Andy Blake

Throughout July, staff across Lancashire have been busy promoting World Drowning Prevention Day. 11,393 young people received face-to-face Water Safety Education, and a further 9,135 students across the County received this information virtually. Several local monuments and landmarks were also lit up blue to support the day, which included Blackpool Tower, Rivington Pike and Pigeon Tower, Fleetwood Marine Hall, Lytham Windmill and Chorley Town Hall.

A host of activities have taken place across the County to support the Water Safety Campaign. Staff from Chorley Fire Station engaged with the public at Yarrow Valley Country Park during a period of hot weather, as this was a site of a previous drowning.

Operational and Community Safety staff from Skelmersdale Fire Station continued to support multi-agency work at East Quarry in Appley Bridge, another risk area for drowning. This work included patrolling the area and engaging directly with young people visiting the site.

The Southern Community Safety Teams supported a football tournament organised by Wigan Athletic in memory of Alex Crook, who lost his life at Scotsman's Flash in Wigan. Although out of County, some of the young people that attended this event had previously visited East Quarry. Between the games, the players received water safety advice, along with input from Alex's parents, which was incredibly hard hitting.

Accidental dwelling fires, along with deliberate fires, continued to be a high priority across the Fylde Coast. Community Safety staff have worked hard to build relationships with the growing refugee and asylum seeker communities, which has enabled a better understanding of their cultures, and the opportunity to provide fire safety advice around cooking and open fires in the outdoors, particularly during warm weather and around the Sand Dunes, where there are Public Space Protection Orders in place.

The Community Safety Team in Western worked with partners during Dementia Action Week in May, to raise awareness, promote early diagnosis and encourage support for those affected by the condition. The team had safety information stands at Blackpool Victoria Hospital and Trinity Hospice and participated in events organised by the Dementia Action Alliance group.

Nelson Fire Station hosted a joint health event between Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS), Primary Care Network, the NHS and Children and Family Wellbeing Service, to encourage residents to take up the offer of a free health check.

Nelson Fire Station is located within one of the most deprived wards in England, and therefore all agencies who attended had a vested interest in engaging with people from the area. These included Social Prescribers, Breast and Bowel Screening, Oral Health, Minds Matter, Alzheimer's Society, Age UK, Falls Prevention and Stroke Association. The event had some positive outcomes, with 19 full health checks, 34 Hep C tests, 35 liver screening tests, and 25 blood pressure checks completed. Which led to thirteen home fire safety check referrals being generated through the initiative.

Staff from Lancaster Community Fire Safety (CFS) worked in partnership with HMP Lancaster Farms Prison, a Class C resettlement prison that houses approximately 549 male prisoners aged 18 and over. The Head of Safety at the prison had reached out to the CFS Team Leader (TL) to discuss the possibility of arranging fire safety advice for inmates, due to some prisoners setting fires within their cells. A meeting was arranged to discuss the issues at hand and the CFS TL agreed to deliver fire and road safety awareness sessions to inmates due to be released.

The first Prisoner Pre-Release Fire Safety sessions took place on the morning and afternoon of 31 July 2025 and were attended by 42 inmates. This initiative also presented an opportunity to raise awareness of the Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) service for prison staff, and the team were invited to attend future staff Wellbeing Days. In addition to this, the Head of Safety agreed to display campaign literature in the Visitors' Centre and invited the team to have an information stand throughout the year, to talk to families and promote the HFSC service.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion - Councillor Salim Sidat

The Fire and Rescue National Framework sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for FRAs in England in terms of identifying risk, making provision for prevention and protection activities, and working in partnership with communities. During the last quarter, LFRS continued to minimise risk by strengthening its engagement with communities and employees through a series of targeted safety campaigns and outreach initiatives.

Wildfire and water safety have remained central themes in our prevention work. A targeted campaign was launched in collaboration with regional Councils of Mosques. Letters and posters were distributed to mosques and madrassahs, ensuring that safety messages reached thousands of families across the North West. This initiative was timed to coincide with the summer period and was supported by digital engagement through mosque portals and Friday sermons. Broadcasts on Awaaz Radio and Pendle Community Radio helped promote safety messages and new initiatives, including our Cooking Safety Campaign. Fire safety talks were delivered to asylum seekers and refugees, and clothing-related fire risks were identified, particularly among women.

Further wildfire prevention efforts included the installation of 32 banners communicating fire safety messages at high-risk sites, the distribution of 669 letters to residential properties, offering tailored advice and HFSCs, and outreach to 87 businesses with commercial-specific guidance. Rural communities were engaged through 'In The Know' emails and communications to farmers, anglers and gamekeepers, as well as parish and town councils, ensuring location-specific messaging was delivered effectively.

The Chief Fire Officer visited EG On The Move's Blackburn headquarters to thank the organisation for its support in running free digital safety adverts across petrol forecourts. These adverts focused on reducing the risk of wildfire and keeping people safe through water safety messages. Further water safety advice was promulgated to over 45,000 students using digital platforms to mark World Drowning Day.

To help create an inclusive and understanding work environment, some members of staff will undertake additional training to become workplace assessors to support members of staff in the workplace who are neurodiverse. By providing support the organisation aims to improve equality of access, creating a culture of acceptance and recognition of diverse learning and working styles.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue (HMICFRS) assessed LFRS as outstanding in protecting the public but did identify an area of improvement in relation to how the Service undertakes equality impact assessments (EIAs). Further to that feedback work is underway to digitalise and streamline the process.

Health, Wellbeing & Climate Change - County Councillor Sohail Asghar

Climate Change and Environment

As part of the Services compliance with the Separation of Waste (England) Regulations, bins and kitchen food waste caddies have been distributed to all Whole-Time stations and the Leadership and Development Centre (LDC). Provisions have been put in place for On-Call stations, as food waste is not produced as regularly.

Food waste generated at LFRS sites is not new waste. Although concerns have been raised by stations regarding food waste left in internal bins overnight or external bins for up to a week between collections, this practice is not fundamentally different from the current waste management process. The sole distinction is that food waste is currently not separated from other waste. While this legislation does entail an increase in the number of bins, it does not imply an increase in waste generation. Moving forward, this waste will also contribute to our recycling percentage, as it will no longer be disposed of as general waste. Consequently, it will facilitate the achievement of Safety, Health, and Environment (SHE) objectives and actions.

Health and Wellbeing

Following the previous report, the Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) Department planned to review the members of the Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) volunteer team, as several of the current teams were unable to provide support due to competing work demands. The SHE Department was also to review the Wellbeing Support Dog (WSD) team, to be able to increase this and provide support across the Service. Courses for both TRiM and WSD will be delivered in Q4 2025/26.

In terms of the Fitness Function, 31 per cent of Grey Book (operational) staff have completed their annual fitness assessment, indicating that the Service was on track to ensure all Grey Book staff completed an annual fitness assessment by the end of this training calendar (2025/26).

Information about the enhanced Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) mobile app has been distributed across the Service. The Wisdom app is more intuitive than the previous app and has a lot more resources, such as 10-minute yoga sessions, guided meditations, interactive mood tracker, and healthy recipes.

Road Safety - County Councillor Jordan Fox

Over the last two months, two major Road Safety Summer Events have been held, namely Alive to Drive on the Promenade in Blackpool and Alive to Drive in Morecambe.

Originally launched in Chorley 17 years ago as a joint initiative between LFRS and the Institute of Advanced Motorists (Chorley Group), the event has grown significantly over the years. It is now supported by a wide range of partners, including Lancashire County Council (LCC) Northwest Ambulance Service (NWAS), Lancashire Constabulary, National Highways and the Institute of Advanced Motorcyclists.

Additional contributors include Blood Bikes, the Royal British Legion, Wincanton Transport, Specsavers, the two unitary authorities (Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen Councils), TyreSafe, ProTyre and Westgate Tyres, with occasional attendance from Air Ambulance and Car Seat Safety.

While encouraging sign-ups to Institute of Advanced Motorist/ Motorcyclists (IAM) courses remained a core objective, the event has also evolved to offer essential road safety information for all ages and types of road users.

Another highlight of the event is the multi-agency Road Traffic Collision (RTC) demonstration, delivered by LFRS, NWAS and Lancashire Constabulary. This offers the public a behind-the-scenes view of what happens during a road closure.

Representatives from each service provide live commentary, explaining their roles while reinforcing key safety messages around Lancashire's Fatal 5 i.e. inappropriate speed, driving under the influence, mobile phone use, lack of seatbelt compliance and careless or reckless driving.

This year's event also included a display of illegal E-bikes and E-scooters to raise awareness of the dangers they pose. The display explained which vehicles are road-legal and outlined the potential consequences of using illegal models. This initiative supported Lancashire Constabulary's Operation Centurion, which focused on tackling anti-social driving. Alarming, illegal E-bikes and E-scooters were involved in six fatalities and 200 injuries on Lancashire roads last year.



Business risk

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

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

The Member Champion role provides leadership on environmental issues and assists in engaging Authority members in strategic objectives relating to protecting the environment.

Equality and Diversity Implications

The Member Champion role provides leadership on equality and diversity issues and assists in engaging Authority members in strategic objectives relating to equality and diversity.

Data Protection (GDPR)

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

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

HR implications

Some Member and Officer time commitments.

Financial implications

Activities are within budget.

Legal implications

None identified.

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

Paper:

Date:

Contact: ACFO Sam Pink

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

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 15 September 2025

Fire Protection Report

Contact for further information – Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Sam Pink.
Tel: 01772 866802

Executive Summary

This report summarises Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) prosecutions pertaining to fire safety offences, in addition to convictions resulting from arson incidents which have been progressed via the criminal justice process.

Given the rapidly evolving regulatory change in building fire safety, an update on Fire Protection and Business Support may also be provided, detailing how the Service is adapting delivery whilst developing our workforce, to ensure that we keep pace with the changes and improve public and firefighter safety within the built environment.

Recommendation

The Authority is asked to note the report.

Fire Safety Convictions

Prosecutions

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.

Prosecutions in the Court system

Three cases currently sit within the court system.

The other defendant in the Morvern Care Centre prosecution case will now be sentenced on 26 September 2025 after pleading guilty to breaches of the Fire Safety Order on 16 June 2025.

The responsible person for two houses in multiple occupation (Bacup and Darwen) pleaded guilty to breaches of the Fire safety Order on 13 August 2025 at Preston Magistrates Court. A sentencing date is yet to be set.

An NHS Trust and maintenance company are to appear at Blackburn Magistrates Court on 1 of October 2025.

Protection teams continue to investigate and build case files in relation to nine other premises where offences are believed to have been committed under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005, which include the following:

- Care and Nursing Home x 1
- House in Multiple Occupation x 1
- Residential Flats x 1
- Mixed commercial and Residential x 1
- Commercial but not residential (Used for sleeping) x 2
- Large Nightclub x 1
- Hotel x 1
- Supported Living x 1

Arson Risk Reduction

R V Sharon Wilson

Address – Pringle Street, Blackburn

Date and Time of Call – 29/10/2023, 21:08

This incident involved the deliberate ignition of clothing in the lounge of a purpose built flat. Fire spread caused severe damage to a window frame and carpet, and severe smoke damage to the lounge.

The defendant pleaded guilty to arson (criminal damage) and was sentenced to 12 months in prison, suspended for 24 months.

R v Katrina McGough

Address – Wickworth Street, Nelson

Date and Time of Call – 19/05/2024, 01:52

This incident involved the deliberate ignition of a blanket and sofa in the lounge of a mid-terraced house. The fire caused minor damage to the blanket and sofa cushions and light smoke damage to the room of origin.

The defendant, who was the occupier of the property, pleaded guilty to reckless arson and was sentenced to 12 months in prison, suspended for 18 months.

R v Harry Cockshutt

Address – Adelaide Street, Fleetwood

Date and Time of Call – 10/03/2025, 23:36

This incident involved the deliberate ignition of combustible materials in the bedroom of a mid-terraced house. The fire caused severe damage by fire to the carpet, clothing, TV and bed, and severe smoke damage to the remainder of the first floor and contents.

The defendant pleaded guilty to reckless arson and was sentenced to 2 years in prison, suspended for 18 months.

R v K Gaskell

Address – Park Road Blackpool

Date and Time of Call – 26/11/2024, 04:40

This incident involved the deliberate ignition of combustible materials in the rear bedroom of a semi-detached house. The fire caused severe damage by fire, smoke and heat to the room and contents, and severe smoke damage to the remainder of the first floor.

The defendant pleaded guilty to reckless arson and was sentenced to 14 months in prison, suspended for 18 months, having served approximately 5 months in prison when remanded from the initial charge.

There are another 18 live cases ongoing through the Criminal Justice System that we are continuing to progress.

Business risk

Moderate – Members are made aware of prosecutions related to fire safety activity and / or arson within Lancashire, to satisfy themselves that the required robust approach is being pursued.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None.

Data Protection (GDPR)

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

No

HR implications

None.

Financial implications

None.

Legal implications

Failure of Responsible Persons to meet new legislative requirements placed upon them, may result in LFRS undertaking additional prosecution cases in future.

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

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 15 September 2025

Operation Incidents of Interest

Contact for further information – Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Sam Pink.

Tel: 01772 866802

Executive Summary

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

Recommendation(s)

The Authority is asked to note the report.

Information

This report provides Members with information relating to operational incidents of interest. This has been a busy operational period, therefore the report details only the larger deployments or more complex incidents attended. As a result, some incidents that Members have been made aware of locally, may not form part of the report.

The following summarises the incidents with further detail provided within the body of the paper:

- 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 Leyland (2/8/25)

LFRS station area:	P90 Burnley
Date:	31 May 2025
Time:	14:30

At 14:30 hours on Saturday 31 May 2025, eight fire engines, the drone and two aerial ladder platforms from Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) attended a fire on Holmes Street, Burnley. The incident involved a derelict building measuring approximately thirty-five metres by twenty-five metres consisting of five floors, with the fourth and fifth floors well alight and partial building collapse. Firefighters used two hose reels jets, two ground monitors and the aerial ladder platforms. Crews remained on scene for several days working with partner agencies.

LFRS station area:	N16 Hornby
---------------------------	-------------------

Date:	5 June 2025
Time:	12:02

At 12:02 hours on Thursday 5 June 2025 four fire engines from Hornby, Carnforth, Lancaster and Bolton le Sands attended Borwick Road, Arkholme. The fire involved a quantity of hay within barn. The barn contained five hundred new bales of hay and one hundred old bales. Crews used four breathing apparatus, two hose reel jets, one main jet and a positive pressure ventilation fan to extinguish the fire with the farmer assisting with removal of hay using a tractor on site. Crews in attendance for five hours and thirty minutes.

LFRS station area:	N33 Preesall
Date:	18 June 2025
Time:	05:37

At 05:37 hours on 18 June 2025, six fire engines from Blackpool, Bispham, Preesall, Fleetwood and South Shore fire stations along with the air unit attended a commercial building on Moss Side Lane, Stalmine-with-Staynall. Firefighters extinguished the fire involving animal pens in a farm outbuilding using two hose reel jets, four breathing apparatus, two thermal imaging cameras. One casualty suffering from burns to face was assessed by fire service personnel and has been conveyed to hospital by ambulance. Fire crews remained on scene for a number of hours.

LFRS station area:	W30 Blackpool
Date:	21 June 2025
Time:	14:40

At 14:40 hours on 21 June 2025, eight fire engines, one aerial ladder platform and a water tower along with several other special appliances attended a commercial building fire on Kent road, Blackpool. On arrival fire service personnel dealt with a fire involving a two-storey derelict working mens club, four breathing apparatus, three jets, one 10.5 metre ladder and a water tower were used. LFRS remained in attendance for 6 hours.

LFRS station area:	N14 Carnforth
Date:	23 June 2025
Time:	10:09

At 10:09 hours on 23 June 2025, two fire engines from Bolton-le-Sands and Carnforth and the Urban Search and Rescue Team attended the rescue of a person in a major entrapment on Sand Lane, Warton. The casualty was trapped by the hand in tractor machinery and was extricated by fire service personnel. The casualty was treated by helimed paramedics at the scene. Crews were in attendance for three hours.

LFRS station area:	N12 Morecambe
Date:	13 July 2025
Time:	09:37

At 09:37 on 13 July 2025 eight fire appliances and special appliances attended a fire which involved a warehouse on White Lund industrial estate in Morecambe. The

building was 70m x 50m and contained approximately 300 cylinders containing inert gas. The Fire service remained in attendance for several days damping down.

LFRS station area:	P73 Bacup
Date:	22 July 2025
Time:	08:29

At 08:29 hours on 22 July 2025 five fire engines from Preston, Chorley, Bacup and Rawtenstall attended a road traffic collision on Rochdale Road, Bacup. On arrival the incident was involving a bus and seven parked cars. Fire service crews worked alongside North West Ambulance Service and other agencies to ensure the scene was made safe and to bring the incident to a close. Fire Service were in attendance two hours and forty five minutes.

LFRS station area:	E71 Blackburn
Date:	22 July 2025
Time:	12:59

At 12:59 hours on 22 July 2025 five fire engines and several specialist appliances including Urban Search and Rescue and a Hazardous Materials Unit from Burnley was called to Whalley New Road, Blackburn to a road traffic collision involving a heavy goods vehicle. On arrival fire service personnel dealt with an overturned articulated lorry and a 300-litre diesel spillage using an environmental grab pack and a hazardous materials unit. One casualty was left in care of ambulance. Fire Service were in attendance for approximately two hours.

LFRS station area:	W30 Blackpool
Date:	31 July 2025
Time:	19:27

At 19:27 on 31 July 2025, six fire engines from LFRS and the Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) from Preston responded to a domestic building fire on Normoss Avenue, Blackpool. The fire involved a detached timber framed domestic property and was extinguished using six breathing apparatus and three hose reels. One casualty was conveyed to hospital for precautionary checks for smoke inhalation. Fire crews remained in attendance for several hours.

LFRS station area:	S55 Leyland
Date:	2 August 2025
Time:	03:23

At 03:23 hours on 2 August 2025 six fire engines, the drone, command unit and water bowser from LFRS attended Dawson Lane Whittle-le-Woods. The fire, involved one hundred metres by seventy-five metres of landfill site. Firefighters used handheld jets and ground monitors during the incident. Crews remained in attendance working with site staff for over 12 hours.

Business risk

None.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

Potential impact on local environment in relation to operational incidents. Significant incidents benefit from the attendance of specialist water towers and the hazardous materials unit both of which have positive impacts on firefighting operations and reduce environmental impacts.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None.

Data Protection (GDPR)

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

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

HR implications

None.

Financial implications

None.

Legal implications

None.

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

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on Monday 15 September 2025

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

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

Executive Summary

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

Additionally, the report provides information regarding Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's (LFRS's) HMICFRS Round 3 inspection report findings, and the national results.

Recommendation(s)

The Authority is asked to note the report.

Round 3 Inspection Overview

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 our 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 our 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 (Appendix 1).

LFRS Round 3 Report

The Service have been awarded an unprecedented six 'Outstanding' and five 'Good' ratings across all the 11 inspection areas. This remarkable achievement includes being the only service in the country to receive a minimum rating of 'Good' across every category. LFRS have received the best ratings of any fire and rescue service in England.

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
Understanding fire and risk	Preventing fire and risk			
Public safety through fire regulation	Responding to fires and emergencies			
Responding to major incidents	Future affordability			
Best use of resources	Promoting fairness and diversity			
Promoting values and culture	Managing performance and developing leaders			
Right people, right skills				

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.

Some of the highlights from the report include:

- Our excellent performance at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks.
- Our outstanding understanding of risk and how we use data and technology to keep our communities safe.
- Our sector-leading protection work, including our risk-based intervention programme and our commitment to reducing unwanted fire signals.
- Our strong values and inclusive culture, with staff feeling supported, listened to, and proud to work here.
- Our innovative use of resources, from mobile data terminals and drones to our investment in training and development.

The inspectorate praised the Service for its excellent performance and recognised our commitment to continuous improvement, our collaborative approach with partners, and our 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.

National HMICFRS Results

HMICFRS have now completed their Round 3 inspection and have published all 44 reports.

The table below shows the summary of the gradings for all 44 FRSs inspected in Round 3 demonstrating the performance of each service based on grading.

Scoring Key	
Outstanding	Blue
Good	Green
Adequate	Yellow
Requires Improvement	Orange
Inadequate	Red

	Category Key
A	Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies
B	Preventing fires and other risks
C	Protecting the public through fire regulation
D	Responding to fires and other emergencies
E	Responding to major and multi-agency incidents
F	Making best use of resources
G	Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future
H	Promoting the right values and culture
I	Getting the right people with the right skills
J	Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity
K	Managing performance and developing leaders

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Rank	Region	Effectiveness				Efficiency			People			
1	Lancashire											
2	Humberside											
3	Merseyside											
4	County Durham & Darlington											
5	Kent											
6	Greater Manchester											
7	Nottinghamshire											
8	Staffordshire											
9	Royal Berkshire											
10	Derbyshire											
11	Cambridgeshire											
12	Cheshire											
13	West Yorkshire											
14	London											
15	Isles of Scilly											
16	North Yorkshire											
17	West Sussex											
18	East Sussex											
19	South Yorkshire											
20	Hereford & Worcester											
21	Northumberland											
22	Dorset & Wiltshire											
23	Leicestershire											
24	Tyne and Wear											
25	Cleveland											
26	West Midlands											
27	Norfolk											
28	Northamptonshire											
29	Lincolnshire											
30	Cumbria											
31	Devon & Somerset											
32	Bedfordshire											
33	Essex											
34	Hertfordshire											
35	Hampshire and Isle of Wight											
36	Oxfordshire											
37	Surrey											
38	Suffolk											
39	Warwickshire											
40	Shropshire											
41	Cornwall											
42	Buckinghamshire											
43	Gloucestershire											
44	Avon											

HMICFRS Inspection 2025 – 27

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

The 2025-27 inspection programme will involve a number of changes from the previous round, there will be some focus on the impact of governance on fire and rescue services, leadership, and a reduction in inspection areas from 11 to 10. The Service continue to engage with our Service Liaison Lead from HMICFRS.

Appendix 1

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service congratulated for excellent performance

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service is outstanding in many areas, including understanding risk and protecting the public through fire regulation, the fire inspectorate has said.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has graded Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's performance across 11 areas. It found the service was 'outstanding' in six areas and 'good' in five areas.

HMICFRS said the service is outstanding at understanding risk. It builds a comprehensive risk profile using information from a wide range of sources, including consultation with local communities. The service uses IT effectively to share incident information quickly. It has invested in an automated post-incident system which supports a shared understanding of risk across the service.

Inspectors said the service works well to protect the public by regulating fire safety. The service's protection strategy is clearly linked to the risks identified in its community risk management plan, which allows effective information sharing between staff across the service. The service also proactively works with local businesses and organisations to promote compliance with fire safety legislation. For example, the service has reduced attendance to unwanted fire signals leading to efficiency savings.

HMICFRS also found that the service is well prepared for major and multi-agency incidents, working closely with the local resilience forum and investing in innovative equipment to respond to wildfire incidents and wide-scale flooding. It is also familiar with the significant risks neighbouring fire and rescue services may face and works well with other services to respond to emergency incidents.

Inspectors said the service continues to be outstanding at promoting its values and culture. Leaders demonstrate the service's values, and staff feel appreciated and included. Staff told inspectors that they felt the service was inclusive, supported individuals and took action against those who didn't model the values and behaviours expected.

However, the service needs to do more to make sure that its equality impact assessment process is robust, and the assessment findings are acted on appropriately.

His Majesty's Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services Michelle Skeer said:

"I congratulate Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service on its excellent performance in keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks. I was pleased to see that the service has made good progress since our last inspection.

"The service is outstanding in six areas, including understanding risk, protecting the public by regulating fire safety and responding to major and multi-agency incidents. It uses a wide range of data to understand risk at a

local level, and it has a robust plan and resources in place to inspect its highest-risk buildings.

“The service continues to be outstanding at promoting its values and culture. Leaders demonstrate the service’s values and staff feel appreciated and included. It also works hard to make sure its staff are trained and skilled, with a culture of continuous learning throughout the service.

“The service’s current leadership, management, and staff, alongside the contributions of former Chief Fire Officer Justin Johnston, have further improved its services to the public. I am confident the service will address the area for improvement we have identified around its equality impact assessment process.”

Ends

Business risk

The inspectorate will monitor LFRS’s direction of travel, it could cause reputational damage if it is perceived that we have not made reasonable progress during inspections.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None.

Data Protection (GDPR)

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

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

HR implications

None.

Financial implications

None.

Legal implications

None.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank