

Public Document Pack

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee

**Monday, 2 February 2026 in Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters,
Fulwood commencing at 10.00 am.**

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

Agenda

Part 1 (open to press and public)

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. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

Members are asked to consider any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests they may have to disclose to the meeting in relation to matters under consideration on the agenda.
- 3. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 1 - 12)**
- 4. Consultation Strategy - Annual Review (Pages 13 - 24)**
- 5. Blue Light Collaboration Board Update (Pages 25 - 28)**
- 6. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Update (Pages 29 - 34)**
- 7. Council tax precept consultation (Pages 35 - 36)**
- 8. Annual Service Plan 2026/2027 (Pages 37 - 48)**
- 9. Urgent Business**

An item of business may only be considered under this heading where, by reason of special circumstances to be recorded in the Minutes, the 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.

10. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee has been agreed for 10:00 hours on **Monday 13 July 2026** in the Main Conference Room, at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Further meetings are: scheduled for 16 November 2026
proposed for 8 March 2027

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee

**Monday, 17 November 2025, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room,
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.**

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
N Alderson	
U Arif	
S Asghar (Vice-Chair)	
J Ash	
G Baker	
I Duxbury (Chair)	
J Hugo	
L Hutchinson	
F Jackson	
E Worthington	

Officers	
S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)	
S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS)	
T Powell, Area Manager, Head of Service Improvement (LFRS)	
D Howell, Legal Services & Standards Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer (LFRS)	
S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS)	
L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)	

In attendance	
K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union	

10-25/26	Apologies for Absence
	No apologies were received but it was noted that County Councillor U Arif had been delayed.

11-25/26	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.

12-25/26	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	Resolved: That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 14 July 2025 be confirmed

	as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
13-25/26	<p>Strategic Assessment of Risk 2025/2026</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) presented a report on the Service's Strategic Assessment of Risk for 2025/26.</p> <p>Risk in Lancashire would always remain dynamic: it changed over time, differed by area and demographic, and needed different interventions to reduce the likelihood of the risk occurring or to lessen its consequences. These risks were identified in the Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAoR) which was refreshed annually and was also informed by the Lancashire Resilience Forum Community Risk Register and the services Political, Economic, Socio-cultural, Technological and Infrastructure, Environmental, Legislative and Organisational (PESTELO) analysis. Through its risk management framework, the Service continually assessed changing risk and prioritised its response framework.</p> <p>The Strategic Assessment of Risk reflected the knowledge and experience of a variety of specialist departments and utilised Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) Incident Recording System (IRS) data to derive a data driven methodology that highlighted the incident types that posed the greatest risk to the county of Lancashire and the individuals who lived and worked within it.</p> <p>This year's document built on previous iterations as LFRS sought to continually improve its risk management processes. Pages 13 – 76 of the agenda pack detailed a number of risks including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ UK Government Fire Reform White Paper ◦ Wars, conflicts and political unrest • Economic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Deprivation ◦ Inflation/ Cost of living ◦ Fuel Poverty • Socio-Cultural <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Population changes ◦ Dwellings and households ◦ Cultural Diversity ◦ Health and Wellbeing • Technological (and Infrastructure) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Emerging Technology – Electrical vehicles (EVs) and energy storage systems ◦ Emerging Technology – Hydrogen ◦ Artificial Intelligence/ Robotics/ Autonomous Vehicles ◦ Infrastructure • Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Climate change – wildfires ◦ Climate change – flooding ◦ Built environment • Legal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The Building Safety Act 2022

- The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- The Fire Safety Act 2021
- Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023
- Organisational
 - Risk that service funding over the medium term was insufficient to achieve 2022-27 CRMP objectives
 - LFRS resilience issues e.g. staff availability, recruitment, retention, loss of key staff
 - Impact of public inquiries e.g. Grenfell and Manchester Arena

Pages 49- 73 of the agenda pack detailed the risk associated against the 32 incident types with commercial property fires identified as the highest risk.

In response to a question from County Councillor E Worthington in relation to types of commercial property, the DCFO explained that since the coronavirus pandemic there had been an increase in deliberate fires across commercial properties, this also included within prison environments. Additionally, there were a number of farm fires. Area Manager (AM) Tom Powell added that the risk was centred on the building type rather than the causation of the fire with a number of buildings derelict former commercial buildings.

In relation to the heat map on page 74 of the agenda pack, County Councillor E Worthington asked if deprivation was driving the increased risk. The DCFO explained that deprivation was a significant factor of the increased risk and added that some of the risk in Blackpool could be attributed to the number of derelict hotels within the Blackpool area since the pandemic. The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) explained that the fair funding review formula had not been updated since 2013/14 with 58% relating to population and 10% deprivation, due to bigger changes in population in other areas Lancashire would see a funding cut of 7%, although this was still in consultation.

At 10:18 County Councillors E Worthington left the meeting and U Arif joined the meeting.

In response to a question from County Councillor S Asghar in relation to additional resources and training for electric vehicle battery fires, the DCFO explained that there were high power 'cold cutting' systems that were used in some of the Scandinavian countries that were being explored along with the use of large fire blankets that could be used to restrict oxygen. However the use of a blanket could risk the battery reigniting once it had been removed. Manchester Fire and Rescue Service were using a mobile skip type vehicle to submerge cars allowing them to be towed away safely. AM Powell added that LFRS was working with recovery companies and educating partners in relation to the storage of electric vehicles following fires.

County Councillor E Worthington rejoined the meeting at 10:20.

Councillor G Baker asked how contaminated water was disposed of after use, the DCFO explained that the polluter was responsible for safe disposal of any contaminated water and in the case of electric vehicle fires this would be the responsibility of the car owner/ insurers. He added that LFRS would take all the

	<p>necessary steps to protect drains during incidents and would work with partners including the environmental agency to help contain and subsequently remove contaminated water.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor E Worthington in relation to applying pressure to electric vehicle manufacturers, the DCFO commented that there were pros and cons to electric vehicles and explained that the National Fire Chief Council (NFCC) could lobby government in relation to this and he would report concerns into the appropriate NFCC workstream.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the Strategic Assessment of Risk for publication.</p>
14-25/26	<p>Business Continuity Planning and Testing</p> <p>County Councillor S Asghar left the meeting.</p> <p>AM Tom Powell presented the annual report to members.</p> <p>Significant progress had been made since the 2024 report, delivering on all of the developments previously presented to the Committee and embedding a mature, evidence-based Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) across Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS).</p> <p>A Business Continuity Management Group (BCMG), chaired by AM Tom Powell, provided central oversight of all business continuity activity. It had approved the updated Business Continuity Policy and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), endorsed the creation of an exercise and testing suite, and initiated the development of an LFRS-specific National Power Outage Plan.</p> <p>Following the introduction of standardised Business Continuity (BC) templates in 2024, all stations and departments had completed bespoke Business Impact Analyses (BIAs) and Business Continuity Plans (BCPs). An annual review cycle was now underway.</p> <p>The Business Continuity SharePoint system, live since April 2025, served as the single repository for all BC documentation.</p> <p>A comprehensive Exercise and Testing Suite, developed in 2024, was routinely used to validate operational plans. In November 2024, LFRS conducted its annual service-wide tactical and strategic exercise, simulating a wide-area power loss, which successfully tested escalation, decision-making, and interdepartmental coordination. Building on this, in 2025, the Service was participating in a Tier 1 national exercise, coordinated through the Lancashire Local Resilience Forum (LRF), focused on a pandemic scenario, alongside further tactical and strategic tests before year-end.</p> <p>Since the last report, there had been 51 BC exercises and 42 BC incidents across the Service. Of the 42 incidents, 9 triggered a tactical plan activation which included; major incidents such as significant fires, appliance degradation due to multiple incidents ongoing at once, and North West Fire Control in fallback</p>

conditions due to partial loss of communication methods. The 33 incidents which triggered an operational plan activation included; loss of utilities on LFRS premises such as water, power and heating, station break-ins, system outages and faults on fire alarms within LFRS premises.

A service-wide internal audit of Business Continuity commenced in 2025, providing positive initial feedback on governance, documentation, and exercising arrangements. The final report was pending publication and was expected to confirm continued assurance that the BCMS meets both ISO 22301:2019 and Civil Contingencies Act requirements.

At a national level, LFRS continued to lead the North West NFCC Business Continuity Group and had authored the national Fire and Rescue Service Business Continuity Guidance Document, due for formal NFCC adoption later this year.

During its most recent inspection, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) identified Business Continuity as an area of significant improvement, recognising the Service's strengthened policies, processes, and governance.

Areas of focus for 2025–26 included;

- Continuous improvement and assurance
- Lessons and learning integration
- External validation and peer review
- National and regional collaboration
- Scenario development and resilience forecasting
- People, training and awareness

Resolved: That members;

- (i) Noted the significant progress made in strengthening LFRS's Business Continuity arrangements.
- (ii) Acknowledged the positive feedback received from HMICFRS and early findings of the internal audit.
- (iii) Endorsed the continued embedding of the Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) and the forward exercise programme.

15-25/26 **Blue Light Collaboration Board 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. The workstreams were managed effectively through both the Strategic and Tactical Boards and contributed towards improving outcomes, providing better value for money, reducing demand, and reducing inequalities within communities.

Leadership Development

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS), Lancashire Police (LanCon), and North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) continued to seek efficiencies and foster professional relationships across Blue Light Services.

Over the last 12 months, each Service had hosted a Leadership Event, covering

three shared themes identified using insights from each organisation. The first session, hosted by LFRS, saw 60 attendees from all three Services. The session, titled “Nourish to Flourish,” focused on self-care for effective leadership. The second session addressed media handling for Blue Light leaders. The final leadership event was held by LanCon and focussed on generational differences.

The group was exploring an ‘Outside-In’ Leadership program and the creation of a cross-coaching network for shared learning, potentially including a coaching exchange initiative.

County Councillor S Asghar rejoined the meeting at 10:37.

Health and Wellbeing

A new collaborative group was formed earlier this year, bringing together Health and Wellbeing leads from all three Services. The group’s goal was to understand and align the health and wellbeing offerings across Blue Light organisations, exploring joint opportunities to support staff.

The group’s initial step was to share policies and procedures for best practice and learning. NWAS had delivered menopause awareness sessions, and LFRS had developed a workshop to raise awareness of suicide from a responder’s perspective elements of which could be shared across all services.

Estates and Co-location

The estates and co-location initiative between LFRS, NWAS, and LanCon aimed to identify opportunities for shared sites, enhance collaboration and value for money. Successful co-location at Lancaster, St Annes, Darwen, Preston, and other Fire Stations had improved operational efficiency and fostered stronger inter-service relationships, ultimately benefiting Lancashire communities.

An updated Blue Light Collaboration Project Initiation Document had provided direction for the Estates and Co-location sub-group, which was exploring further collaboration. Quarterly meetings between Heads of Estates from LFRS, NWAS, and LanCon had shown that benefits extended beyond site sharing. The project’s objectives, principles, and expected benefits had been updated. The group was also considering system knowledge exchange, shared procurement specifications, and joint supplier frameworks.

Community First Responder (CFR)

A cost-benefit analysis by the New Economy showed that Emergency Medical Response (EMR) yielded a return of £4.41 for every £1 invested. In areas with EMR co-responding, firefighters were dispatched alongside ambulance services for suspected cardiac arrests, with the first to arrive providing life-saving care. This parallel response increased the likelihood of timely intervention and supported ambulance crews in advanced clinical work.

While this model had been successful in parts of the UK, the South Western Ambulance Service Foundation Trust was phasing out fire EMR in favour of strengthening its volunteer Community First Responder (CFR) scheme, a decision met with disappointment by FRS’ involved in EMR.

	<p>In Lancashire, the CFR workstream enabled LFRS staff volunteers to respond to life-threatening emergencies from their workplace. Since 2023, over 200 incidents had been attended, with LFRS staff providing life-saving interventions before ambulance arrival.</p> <p>The operational model had three phases:</p> <p>Phase 1: Green book staff respond voluntarily while on duty.</p> <p>Phase 2: Flexi Duty Officers (FDOs) respond while on duty.</p> <p>Phase 3: On Call staff respond within their communities. This phase was being developed with NWAS and stations had been identified in the communities where NWAS required most support.</p> <p>The DCFO explained that collaboration with unions was ongoing and it was hopeful that national agreement would be reached in relation to CFR's.</p> <p>The DCFO explained two additional workstreams had been developed that would be considered in the future, relating to recruitment and retention, including sharing the cost of recruitment fayres and sharing best practice and fleet, including the potential development of shared fleet maintenance resources.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted the report.</p>
16-25/26	<p>His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services Update</p>
	<p>AM Powell presented the report to Members regarding His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) activity.</p> <p>Round 3 Overview</p> <p>LFRS HMICFRS Round 3 inspection concluded in April 2025. 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 LFRS's partner organisations and visited North West Fire Control.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The official report was released publicly on 14 August 2025 along with a HMICFRS press release included on page 93 of the agenda reports pack.</p> <p>LFRS Round 3 Report</p> <p>The Service had been awarded an unprecedented six 'Outstanding' and five 'Good' ratings across all 11 inspection areas. This remarkable achievement included being the only service in the country to receive a minimum rating of 'Good' across every category. LFRS had received the best ratings of any fire and rescue service in England.</p>

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

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

Councillor G Baker left the meeting at 10:45.

HMICFRS Inspection 2025 – 27

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

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

HMICFRS Activity

A formal letter was sent to HMI Michelle Skeer, officially closing the six Areas for Improvement (AFIs) identified during the Round 2 inspection. The inspectors for Round 3 expressed their satisfaction with the progress made to address the AFIs that were previously identified.

The service would provide a quarterly report on the progress of its AFI regarding Equality Impact Assessments and work was already underway to progress this area. The Round 3 report had also been scrutinised to gather any further areas identified that may assist the service in elevating any aspects from good to outstanding. Department engagement was taking place to address any findings and actions would be tracked by the Organisational Assurance Team on the Assurance Monitoring System (AMS).

State of Fire and Rescue

The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2024–25 was published on 5 November. This was His Majesty's Chief Inspector's third annual report to the Secretary of State under section 28B of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

It was his first annual report on fire and rescue since the new Government came into power in July 2024. The report contained his assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of fire and rescue services in England, which was based on the inspection reports published between February 2023 and August 2025.

Between March 2023 and August 2025, the HMICFRS carried out their third full round of inspections of all 44 fire and rescue services in England. Several services made improvements in the Round 3 inspections. They closed 416 of 695 outstanding areas for improvement (AFIs) and issued fewer AFIs in this round. They also identified 67 examples of promising and innovative practice across 25 services.

Overall, 73 percent of the graded judgments awarded in Round 3 were 'adequate', 'good' or 'outstanding'. This meant services were able to show at least some of the characteristics of good performance in most areas and 43 percent of all grades met or exceeded the benchmark for good performance, where they issued good or outstanding grades. Overall, in this round, the HMICFRS gave the following proportion of grades:

- 4 percent outstanding
- 39 percent good
- 30 percent adequate
- 24 percent requires improvement
- 3 percent inadequate.

Councillor G Baker rejoined the meeting at 10:47.

LFRS were identified for positive practice on several occasions within the national report.

The full report could be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-state-of-fire-and-rescue-2024-to-2025>.

HMICFRS Chief and Chairs event

The annual Chiefs and Chairs event was held in Nottingham on 4 November 2025. Chief fire officers, authority chairs (and equivalents), sector leaders, and Government representatives were brought together to discuss key issues facing the sector. Chief Fire Officer Jon Charters and County Councillor Usman Arif attended on behalf of LFRS.

The day consisted of several presentations that were delivered by sector leaders, and the new Minister for Building Safety, Fire and Democracy Samantha Dixon MBE MP was also in attendance to deliver the keynote speech. The presentations and discussions focussed on:

- Key findings from the round 3 inspections
- Internal Governance
- Protection and Risk Based Inspection Programme
- Use of technology

HMICFRS Data Collection

The HMICFRS had discontinued the collection of Autumn data returns and transitioned to an annual return, which would next be requested in Spring 2026. The information included in the return was expected to be similar to the information requested in Spring 2025.

The DCFO encouraged members to read the state of fire and rescue report and

	<p>explained that of seven national recommendations, four remained in progress;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Home Office, in consultation with the fire and rescue sector, should review and with precision determine the roles of: (a) fire and rescue services; and (b) those who work in them. • The Home Office, the Local Government Association, the National Fire Chiefs Council and trade unions should consider whether the current pay negotiation machinery requires fundamental reform. If so, this should include the need for an independent pay review body and the future of the 'Grey Book'. • The Home Office should consider the case for legislating to give chief fire officers operational independence. In the meantime, it should issue clear guidance, possibly through an amendment to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, on the demarcation between those responsible for governance and operational decision making by the chief fire officer. • By 1 March 2025, the Home Secretary should introduce amendments to Parliament concerning the inspectors of fire and rescue that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ place a requirement on fire and rescue authorities to publish comments, within 56 days, in response to HMICFRS inspection reports on their fire and rescue services; and ◦ allow fire and rescue authorities, as well as mayors, county councils and police, fire and crime commissioners, to request that HMICFRS inspects the fire and rescue services in their areas. <p>Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted the report.</p>
17-25/26	<p>Community Risk Management Plan and Service Review</p> <p>The DCFO presented the report to members.</p> <p>As required by the government's Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, each Fire and Rescue Service must produce a high-level Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) which explains how they will use their resources to respond to and reduce the risks they have identified in their local area.</p> <p>As part of LFRS's planning process, the service identified and assessed all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks across Lancashire and used this information to plan how to control these risks, respond to emergencies and deliver fire prevention and protection activities in the most efficient and effective way.</p> <p>This CRMP would set out the priorities, which supported LFRS's vision of 'making Lancashire safer', and would in turn be supported by its six key strategic documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response Strategy • Prevention Strategy • Protection Strategy • People Strategy • Digital Strategy • Finance Strategy <p>Proposed approach</p>

Phase I

From January 2026, for a minimum of eight weeks. The service would explain the challenges and drivers for change and invite views on its proposed direction of travel.

Phase I would allow the service to listen and learn about its communities' and workforce priorities, before detailed options were developed ahead of Phase II.

A pre-consultation document would be submitted to December's full CFA meeting for approval to engage with communities and staff in early 2026.

Phase II

Following feedback from the pre-consultation, a draft CRMP and strategic strategies would be developed alongside options for how LFRS's services could be delivered in the future. A full consultation would then take place during summer 2026 where the service would present and seek feedback on the CRMP 2027-2032 and options for shaping the future of LFRS. The new CRMP would go live and the implementation of any proposed changes would take place from April 2027.

Timeline

- 17 November 2025 Planning Committee: CRMP 2027-32 development overview and timeline for approval
- 15 December 2025 Combined Fire Authority (CFA): Pre-consultation approval
- January - February 2026: 8 week CRMP Pre-consultation engagement
- January to June 2026: Review of core strategies, develop CRMP and Service Review documents
- 13 July 2026 Planning Committee: Draft CRMP and Service Review documents approval to consult
- July – October 2026: CRMP and Service Review full stakeholder consultation
- 16 November 2026 Planning Committee: Final draft CRMP and Service Review proposals for consideration and recommending to full CFA
- 14 December 2026 CFA: Final CRMP & Service Review proposals for approval
- 1 April 2027: CRMP 2027-32 published
- 1 April 2027 – 31st March 2032: Service Review implementation

Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted, endorsed, and approved the approach taken for the production of the CRMP 2027-2032 alongside a Service Review.

18-25/26 Council tax precept consultation

The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) presented the report to members.

LFRS was required to consult the public on the proposed council tax precept for 2026-27.

The draft local government finance settlement, which set out government funding

	<p>and to what extent the precept could be raised, was usually announced in late December. Due to the timing, the Service would not be able to seek approval for consultation from the Planning Committee in sufficient time to undertake consultation prior to the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) annual budget meeting in February.</p> <p>For this reason, members had previously agreed to delegate approval to undertake consultation to the Chair in consultation with the Treasurer and the Chief Fire Officer. It was intended to consult the public between late December and early February.</p> <p>A report detailing consultation activity would be taken to the Planning Committee at its meeting on 2 February 2026 ahead of the final results being discussed at the budget meeting on 25 February 2026, where CFA members would consider and agree a final budget and the resultant council tax implications.</p> <p>The precept increase in 2024/25 was 5.9%, which was the equivalent of £5 per year on a Band D property, and in 2023/24 it was 2.99% which were the maximum precept increases permitted.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted the report.</p>
19-25/26	Date of Next Meeting
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday 2 February 2026 at 10:00 hours in the main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.</p> <p>Further meeting dates were noted for 13 July 2026 and 16 November 2026.</p>

M Nolan
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Planning Committee

Meeting to be held on Monday 2 February 2025

Consultation Strategy – Annual Review

(Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information – Stephanie Collinson, Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement, Tel: 01772 866787

Executive Summary

The Authority has a consultation strategy which provides a framework through which it can seek public opinion on matters such as its services, council tax precept, and proposals for changes that impact on communities.

The strategy (attached as appendix 1) has been reviewed to ensure that it continues to meet statutory requirements; incorporates good practice; and provides the public and stakeholders with timely opportunity to influence development of their fire and rescue service.

This year's review concludes that the strategy continues to be legally compliant and in line with good practice.

Recommendation

The planning committee is asked to note and endorse the consultation strategy and to approve the proposal to create a five-year strategy next year, aligned with the next community risk management plan.

Information

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service undertakes public consultation on a range of issues on behalf of the Authority to ensure that the views of communities, partners, and stakeholders are used to inform decision-making. The planning committee considers and grants permission for any requests to consult with the public and grants permission to consult.

The Authority's consultation strategy (attached as appendix 1) provides a framework for consulting effectively. It has been reviewed and continues to be legally compliant and in line with good practice.

The following amendments have been made:

- Section 4 has been added to explicitly state the legal principles which govern consultation.
- In section 5, a paragraph has been added to provide further clarity about the approach to determining whether consultation will take place.
- In section 7, service users / those most at risk of fires and other emergencies have been added as a distinct stakeholder in the list of potential stakeholders.

- In section 8, reference has been made to the information provided in consultations being available, accessible, and interpretable for consultees.

The planning committee has previously reviewed the strategy every year to assure continued compliance with guidance or legislation and to incorporate learning from any public consultation exercises undertaken. It is proposed that next year, the strategy is aligned with the new community risk management plan which will cover the period 2027-2032 and is only brought back for review within that five-year period if a material change is required.

Business risk

The consultation strategy provides the necessary framework to help the Authority ensure that the Service provides relevant stakeholders with the opportunity to influence decisions, policies and services. Effective consultation gives the Service better understanding of the needs and expectations of its communities and stakeholders, and helps to create services that are more closely aligned to those needs. The Service is at risk of failing to meet community needs if it does not consult effectively.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

The strategy sets out that equality impact assessments should be undertaken for all consultations. These assessments inform stakeholder analysis of who to involve and how; describe the positive and reasonable adjustments that may be made to reach groups of people with protected characteristics; and understand the barriers that may be encountered when trying to involve them.

Data Protection (GDPR)

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

HR implications

None.

Financial implications

None.

Legal implications

Legal implications are set out in Section 4: Legal principles and Section 9: Data use and subjects and transparency obligations.

A consultation can be challenged if it was unfair, if the process was flawed or the consultation gave rise to misleading expectations. The recourse for those who feel they have been unfairly served is judicial review. This is the legal instrument in place as a check to make sure public bodies carry out their duties fairly. In a judicial review, a judge will use the Gunning Principles (Section 4) to determine whether the consultation is lawful.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper: Consultation Strategy

Date: 3 February 2025

Contact: Steve Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Public Consultation Strategy

1. Background

The Lancashire Combined Fire Authority's consultation strategy has been in place since the integrated risk management planning arrangements were introduced in 2003.

The strategy is reviewed annually by the Planning Committee to ensure that it continues to meet statutory requirements; incorporates good practice; and provides the public and stakeholders with timely opportunity to influence development of their fire and rescue service.

2. Scope

This strategy sets out the Authority's arrangements for public consultation which are delivered on its behalf by Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service. The Authority acknowledges the significant contribution of fire and rescue service staff in terms of service delivery and encourages the active participation of employees in consultation exercises. Arrangements to consult staff are not included in this strategy as they feature within internal documentation.

3. Definitions

Engagement is an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining links with stakeholders. It is not in itself consultation, although consultation uses these links to reach people or individuals to take part in a specific consultation. It is a term given to a range of techniques that give stakeholders opportunities to influence how organisations work and the services that are delivered.

Consultation is one of these techniques and is a process through which the views of relevant stakeholders are sought about a particular issue, proposal or options over a defined period of time, to which due consideration is given by the Authority in reaching a decision.

Other engagement techniques include:

Informing – telling people what is going on, what decisions have been made and what action will be taken but views are not actively sought.

Involving – asking people for views to help shape the development or implementation of options, plans and activity on an ongoing basis or at the start of a policy development.

Collaborating – involving people in working together to develop solutions or proposals.

Negotiating – discussion with people to seek a jointly owned outcome where differences are addressed.

Empowering – giving people the power to control decisions and services within available resources in a specific area.

A public consultation led by the Authority may also involve some of these techniques as part of the consultation plan. Particularly, it will seek to involve people throughout work undertaken to develop options for change and will inform them about actions that will be taken which will not be subject of a consultation exercise.

4. Legal principles

The legal principles which govern stakeholder and public consultation are the Gunning Principles¹:

- 1. Proposals are still at a formative stage.** A final decision has not yet been made, or predetermined, by the decision maker.
- 2. There is sufficient information to give ‘intelligent consideration’.** The information provided must relate to the consultation and must be available, accessible, and easily interpretable for consultees to provide an informed response.
- 3. There is adequate time for consideration and response.** There must be sufficient opportunity for consultees to participate in the consultation.
- 4. ‘Conscientious consideration’ must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made.** Decision-makers should be able to provide evidence that they took consultation responses into account.

5. Public consultation approach

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service will undertake public consultation on a range of issues on behalf of the Authority to ensure that the views of communities, partners, individuals who have characteristics that are protected in the Equality Act and stakeholders are used to inform decision making.

An express duty to consult exists in certain circumstances when the law positively requires public authorities to undertake consultations before taking particular decisions. There can also be an implied duty to consult when a public authority has promised that it will engage in consultation before making a specific decision or where there is past practice of the authority consulting on the relevant type of decision. The more serious the impact of a decision on affected individuals, the more important it is that the views and concerns of those affected are considered by the Authority.

¹ New Conversations 2.0 LGA guide to engagement

5.1 Subjects of public consultation

The extent of the consultation will be proportionate to the nature and extent of any proposals being considered. It may include consultation on:

- The draft community risk management plan.
- Annual service plans.
- Budget and council tax.
- Proposals which may have a major effect on the services we provide to the public.

In some cases, a formal consultation exercise may not be necessary. For example:

- Where it is necessary to implement a legal judgement or Government instruction.
- Where stakeholders have influenced proposals by early involvement in the consideration of options and planning of proposals.
- Where minor adjustments are being advocated.
- Where issues can be resolved without formal consultation.
- Where the Authority has already reached consensus and consultation results are unlikely to influence a decision.
- Where there are no genuine options except for that which is proposed.
- Where the Authority has already taken a decision through its usual democratic process.

In these instances, the Authority will communicate information to stakeholders to inform them and raise awareness of the changes that have been made or the decisions that have been taken.

5.2 Planning public consultation

The annual service plan, published in April, outlines the planned priorities to be delivered in the year that might require public consultation. These consultations may not take place immediately following publication of the plan but at the time that is most relevant to the planned priority. At this point the Authority's Planning Committee will be provided with details about the issue and options being considered and permission to consult with the public sought.

Due to the pace of change, issues may arise during the year that require public consultation, but which have not been considered within the annual service plan. In these cases, permission to consult with the public will be sought from the Planning Committee chair and chair of the Authority as urgent business, if the meeting schedule does not permit discussion at a meeting.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service will maintain a calendar to ensure that consultation exercises do not clash and to avoid public consultation overload or fatigue.

6. Timings

There must be sufficient opportunity for consultees to participate in a consultation. It is commonplace to use a standard 12-week period for public consultation (not including major public holidays or summer months when people are away) however the length of time given for consultees to respond can vary depending on the subject and extent of impact of the consultation. A minimum of four weeks should be given for small scale consultations. In setting timings, consideration will be given to:

- The scale of the issue or proposals.
- The size of the audience we need to consult with.
- The need to work with voluntary groups who require time to extend the consultation through their memberships.
- The time of year and any impact on the availability of target groups.
- The urgency with which a decision needs to be taken
- Allowing a realistic time to enable the formulation of a considered response.

All information provided about the consultation will provide details of the deadline for responses.

7. Targeting public consultation

Before undertaking any consultation exercise, identification and mapping of stakeholders will be undertaken to understand which audiences (stakeholders) are most likely to be impacted by any resulting proposals. An equality impact assessment of the proposals on groups likely to be particularly affected will also be carried out.

A plan will then be prepared which sets out which stakeholders with legitimate interest in the proposals it will attempt to consult with them to give them opportunity to express their views.

Where appropriate, this will include:

- The public in Lancashire – particularly those that are likely to be directly affected by the proposal or issue.
- Service users or those most at risk of fires and other emergencies.
- Community organisations, including specific community groups, particularly those that represent the interests of people with legally protected characteristics. Protected characteristics that are legally protected include, but are not necessarily limited to: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership (including the right not to be married or in a civil partnership,) pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- Public representatives, such as Members of Parliament and local councillors.
- Businesses or business organisations.
- Local authorities, public agencies and other emergency services.
- Third sector organisations including voluntary groups and charities.
- Relevant government departments.

- Employees and representative bodies.

8. Information about a public consultation

The focus of consultation will be on meaningful engagement, through relevant methods, with staff, the public, stakeholders and any other requesting body or individual, during which the following information will be provided on the Service website:

- Details of the issue and/or proposal.
- Why the issue has arisen and/or what is being proposed.
- How the proposals are likely to impact on the provision of service.
- Background statistics and assessments.
- The anticipated timescales for decision/implementation.

However, it is recognised that while this information is a useful reference, it is not in itself enough to secure consultee response. The information provided must be available, accessible, and easily interpretable for consultees to provide an informed response. For all but the shortest written document, a concise summary will be provided for each consultation detailing the issue and options and setting out opportunities to contribute. This should be written or produced graphically using simple and engaging language in an accessible format. Information will be localised to ensure that people understand how plans may affect their local area. Assistance in providing information in alternative formats will be offered.

Information will be distributed using methods that are most appropriate to target relevant stakeholders, internally and externally. The Service's communications strategy sets out communication channels that should be considered including a range of options. For example, consultation about the community risk management plan could be communicated using news stories in the media, digital channels including the Service's social media platforms and website, and public engagement events.

9. Consultation methodology

No single activity or mix of activity through which to consult will be right every time. Our approach is to create a dedicated consultation plan to address the specific objectives with a mix of activities designed to seek the views of the identified stakeholders. This may involve a mix of:

- Surveys
- Engagement events
- Focus groups
- Consultation through the Service's employee voice groups
- Feedback given at open public meetings
- Attendance at local authority meetings or scrutiny committees
- Debate and feedback given through social media
- Written submissions
- Public scrutiny panel

- Deliberative forum

Where it is feasible, participation in the consultation and responses received will be acknowledged and an audit trail kept of responses. Explanations, where requested and appropriate, will be given to respondents who ask why individual proposals have been rejected.

A mid-point review should be conducted as close as possible to the mid-point of the open consultation. It is an opportunity for a formal review of progress achieved and provides an opportunity for any adjustments to be made to the consultation plan as required.

10. Data use and subjects and transparency obligations

The Combined Fire Authority is under a duty to and will be compliant with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018, which is the UK's implementation of the General Data protection Regulations (GDPR), as well as the re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, which came into force on 18 July 2015, subject to relevant exceptions.

The GDPR prohibits the processing of personal data unless there is a lawful basis for it such as doing so being in the public interest. The Combined Fire Authority will therefore need to process such data in relation to the legal obligations conferred upon it in the exercise of its public functions or in relation to any activity that supports or promotes democratic engagement.

The Authority will ensure that all relevant information provided by data controllers to data subjects and all communications with data subjects will be concise, transparent, intelligible and easily accessible, in clear plain language. This applies to but is not limited to situations when the Authority collates special categories of personal data where more stringent compliance burdens are placed on organisations which process personal data relating to matters such as:

- Racial or ethnic origin.
- Disability status.
- Political opinions.
- Religious and philosophical beliefs.
- Trade union membership.
- Genetic data.
- Biometric data for uniquely identifying a natural person.
- Data concerning health.
- Sexual orientation.
- Marital status.
- Age.

11. The decision-making process

At the end of the consultation period a closing review will be undertaken to determine if sufficient response has been obtained to close a public consultation as scheduled, or whether an extension or specific additional activities are required to be undertaken to ensure that sufficient views have been obtained from potentially impacted groups.

A report on the consultation exercise will be presented to the Authority, or a relevant committee of the Authority, which will include a summary of statistical results and feedback and views offered. This will include an updated equality impact assessment.

Consultation rarely concludes in a single opinion and elected members will make their own judgements about the weight to be given to different views alongside other factors such as financial cost, environmental impact and professional experience and advice. However, all consultation responses will be available to the Authority, or a relevant committee of the Authority, before associated democratic decisions are taken.

12. Feedback and evaluation

Decisions made about proposals that have been the subject of public consultation will be conveyed via the Service's communications channels. More detailed feedback will be made available to consultation participants directly or through the Service's website, depending on the extent of their involvement with the consultation.

Specific and individual requests for feedback will be accepted but any decision to respond individually will be balanced against the general feedback already provided and the nature and reason for any specific request for an individual response.

Consultation exercises will be evaluated to assess the effectiveness of the processes adopted.

Reviewed January 2026

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee

Meeting to be held on 2 February 2026

Blue Light Collaboration Board Update

Contact for further information: Deputy Chief Fire Officer Steve Healey
Tel: 01772 866802

Executive Summary

This paper provides an update regarding Blue Light Collaboration.

Recommendation

Planning Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

Planning committee is asked to agree for this to be the last update into Planning Committee due to the same content being reported into Performance Committee.

Information

The Police, Fire & Rescue Service, and Ambulance Service are mandated to work together under the Policing and Crime Act 2017. The aim is to encourage closer working between police, fire, and ambulance services to improve efficiency and emergency response.

This report outlines the progress of major workstreams overseen in Lancashire by the Blue Light Collaboration Board (BLCB). These workstreams are managed through both Strategic and Tactical meetings, supporting improved outcomes, better value for money, reduced demand, and addressing inequalities in communities. The following workstreams feed into the BLCB.

Leadership Development

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS), Lancashire Police (LanCon), and North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) continue to seek efficiencies and foster professional relationships across Blue Light Services.

Following the success and positive feedback from the three leadership events held in 2025, one hosted by each blue light service, planning is underway for another series of events in 2026. It is proposed that they will follow a similar format, with each blue light service hosting one of the events.

The group is also continuing to progress a cross-service coaching and mentoring network where people with similar roles at a comparable level are identified to link with each other in the role of either a coach or a mentor. The events that ran in 2025 provided an opportunity for the attendees to be briefed on the benefits of

this and indicate whether they would be willing to enter into a coaching or mentoring arrangement. This received a positive response.

Health and Wellbeing

A new collaborative group was formed earlier this year, bringing together Health and Wellbeing leads from all three Services. The group's goal is to understand and align the health and wellbeing offerings across Blue Light organisations and explore joint opportunities to support staff. It is led by LFRS. It is recognised that there are a number of similarities in the challenges faced by personnel across the three services, such as dealing with distressing incidents and shift work. By collaborating and sharing mechanisms to support staff, interventions can be optimised.

The group's initial step was to share policies and procedures for best practice and learning. Work planned for the group includes continuing to develop the idea of a Tri-service wellbeing event for any member of blue light staff and continuing to explore the possibility of a joint blue light fitness and nutrition support offer. LFRS and LanCon are developing an online module for mental health awareness, to be available to all staff and shared more widely once completed.

Estates, Co-location & Fleet

The estates and co-location initiative between LFRS, NWAS, and LanCon aims to identify opportunities for shared sites, enhancing collaboration and value for money. Successful co-location at Lancaster, St Annes, Darwen, Preston, and other Fire Stations has improved operational efficiency and fostered stronger inter-service relationships, ultimately benefiting Lancashire communities.

The updated Blue Light Collaboration Project Initiation Document continues to provide direction for the Estates and Co-location sub-group, which is exploring further collaboration. Quarterly meetings between Heads of Estates from LFRS, NWAS, and LanCon have shown that benefits extend beyond site sharing. The project's objectives, principles, and expected benefits have been updated. The group continues to consider system knowledge exchange, shared procurement specifications, and joint supplier frameworks.

Fleet have now been added as part of this group and have started work to explore the opportunities around joint servicing of vehicles across the blue light services. The group are also assessing the viability of sharing the use of vehicle maintenance unit (VMU) facilities in cases of high demand or business continuity. Work has already been carried out to reduce the number of notices of intended prosecution (NIPs) sent to blue light partner agencies, where appropriate. Further workstreams will be identified as the group matures such as electric vehicles and supporting infrastructure, collisions and driver management.

Community First Responder (CFR)

A cost-benefit analysis by the New Economy shows that Emergency Medical Response (EMR) yields a return of £4.41 for every £1 invested. In areas with EMR co-responding, firefighters are dispatched alongside ambulance services for suspected cardiac arrests, with the first to arrive providing life-saving care. This parallel response increases the likelihood of timely intervention. While this model has been successful in parts of the UK, the steer is now to phase out EMR in favour of supporting the CFR volunteer framework.

In Lancashire, the CFR workstream enables LFRS staff volunteers to respond to life-threatening emergencies from their workplace. Since April 2025, nearly 300 incidents have been attended by LFRS personnel acting within phases 1 and 2.

Phase 1: Green book staff respond voluntarily while on duty.

Phase 2: Flexi Duty Officers (FDOs) respond while on duty.

Phase 3: On Call staff respond within their communities.

LFRS are currently at the point of developing phase 3. Stations have been identified to align with NWAS data indicating greatest demand for CFR and where implementation of the scheme will maximise the positive impact.

Recruitment

Recruitment is the most recent subgroup to be set up and is still in its infancy. This group is looking at opportunities for joint recruitment initiatives, exploring ways to improve the vetting and references protocol, reviewing best practice for supporting applicants with neurodiverse conditions and consider cost saving collaboration through shared recruitment events and recruitment material.

Evaluation

Through evaluation, LFRS has considered the value and benefits of several workstreams and has considered how the BLCB contributes to LFRS' aim of "*Making Lancashire Safer*". The evaluation of the three leadership events held over the last 12 months found that all events were positive, with future events now being planning to build on this success. CFR continues to be evaluated as part of the delivery framework.

Financial Implications

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

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

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

N/A

Equality and Diversity Implications

N/A

Data Protection (GDPR)

N/A

HR Implications

N/A

Business Risk

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

Legal implications

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

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Planning Committee

Meeting to be held on 2 February 2026

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

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

Executive Summary

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

Additionally, the report provides information regarding updates on the 25-27 HMICFRS inspection which started in Summer 2025.

Recommendation(s)

The Authority is asked to note the report.

HMICFRS 2025-27 Inspection:

The 2025-27 HMICFRS inspection process is well underway; there is a greater focus on governance arrangements and their effects on services. HMICFRS will not evaluate the governing authority itself; instead, they will assess how CFA governance directly influences LFRS. The people assessment will consider whether governance and oversight frameworks promote a positive organisational culture, as well as whether established code of conduct standards effectively support workforce health and well-being. Leadership at all levels, values and culture, and a more detailed review of major incident preparedness will also be examined by HMICFRS. HMICFRS plans to share key insights from the fire and rescue services (FRS) inspected so far during their next External Reference Group (ERG) meeting, scheduled for 24 February 2026. The inspection timetable for Phase 1 and Phase 2 has now been published: Phase 1 will include inspections of 14 FRSs, and Phase 2 will cover another 15, making 29 in total. LFRS will be included in Phase 3, with dates yet to be confirmed.

Changes at the Inspectorate:

His Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) Sir Andy Cooke will leave office in March 2026, HMICFRS have assured the sector that the inspection programme will continue without disruption during the process to appoint his successor.

Digital and Cyber Thematic Inspection:

His Majesty's Inspector (HMI) Michelle Skeer wrote to all Chief Constables and Chief Fire Officers to announce that the HMICFRS will be conducting a joint thematic inspection examining police forces' and FRSs' response to increasing areas of cybersecurity risk. Three FRSs have already been chosen for this process. Although Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) volunteered to participate in the inspection to help refine its procedures and identify both strengths and areas needing improvement, HMICFRS clarified that the selection of the three FRSs was already complete. Nevertheless, they expressed interest in holding engagement sessions with LFRS and reviewing documentation related to its cyber security practices. As this is a thematic inspection, the evidence will be used to inform the HMICFRS's understanding of the management of cybersecurity in FRS's generally. The HMICFRS won't be publishing reports on individual services or making graded judgments but will highlight positive practice when identified.

National HMICFRS Report Themes:

The Organisational Assurance Team will continue to monitor national patterns and insights from all HMICFRS reports, adding essential findings to the theme tracker. From January 2026, the theme tracker will be available on the Organisational Assurance Team's SharePoint page. The tracker will provide the Executive Board, Service Management Team (SMT), and Department Heads with a "real-time" overview of sector-wide key themes that are emerging from the HMICFRS inspections. The Organisational Assurance Team are anticipating the first reports to be published around February 2026.

Characteristics of good:

The HMICFRS has updated the characteristics of good performance. These characteristics describe the levels of performance a Fire and Rescue Service needs to achieve to be graded 'good'. They help the HMICFRS to make consistent assessments across all services and show services what they are being graded against.

Round 3 Area for Improvement (AFI):

The Service received one AFI in the report concerning Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs).

AFI SPoC: Director of People and Development – Liz Sandiford

The service should make sure it has robust processes in place to carry out Equality Impact Assessments and review any actions agreed as a result.

“Although the service has a process in place to assess equality impact, we found inconsistencies with EIAs. We found that most EIAs we reviewed had been completed following the completion of a project or activity. Some only had the initial assessment completed, not the full assessment. Although the service has introduced a quality assurance process for EIAs since our last inspection, four out of the five assessments we reviewed hadn’t been quality assured. Where EIAs had been completed, most recommendations weren’t transposed into the strategy or document. For example, although an EIA was completed for the prevention strategy, there was no mention of the significant findings or mitigations in the strategy itself. This is an area for improvement.”

AFI Update:

1. The EIA Form and Guidance has been updated and published on the intranet.
2. The mechanism for administering EIAs has been built into a SharePoint site, this is currently being tested and should make it easier from a quality assurance and tracking of actions perspective.

Forward Look:

HMICFRS requires quarterly updates on progress against this AFI through their online portal, and progress will also be reported into the SMT Performance and Assurance meeting for review.

While LFRS only received one AFI, the report included several recommendations and observations for ongoing development. The Organisational Assurance Team has identified 13 actions from these suggestions, which they will monitor and track.

The Organisational Assurance Team has conducted engagement sessions with the following departments to review the areas highlighted within the report and clarify expectations for future actions.

- Prevention
- Protection
- Service Improvement
- Finance
- Property
- Human Resources

After the engagement sessions concluded, the Organisational Assurance Team entered the actions into the Assurance Monitoring System and assigned them to the appropriate stakeholders for updates.

Service Liaison Lead (SLL) Visit to Lancashire:

Phil Innis, our HMICFRS SLL, conducted a session with the Organisational Assurance Team on Wednesday 26 November, to highlight the changes and expectations regarding the 25/27 inspection. A presentation has been prepared to capture some of this essential information. This has been forwarded to SMT along with a copy of the updated characteristics of good. Phil Innis will also be in Service on Thursday 29 January 2026 for further engagement at the SMT Development at the Leadership and Development Centre.

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

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee

Meeting to be held on Monday 2 February 2026

Council tax precept consultation

Contact for further information – Steven Brown, Director of Corporate Services
Tel: 01772 866804

Executive Summary

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service is currently consulting the public on its council tax precept for the year ahead.

The purpose of this report is to update members of the planning committee on the consultation plan following announcement of the provisional local government finance settlement in December 2025.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note the report.

Information

A consultation plan is being implemented to consult the public on Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's council tax precept for the year ahead. The consultation aims to understand levels of support for a proposed increase in 2026-27 which equates to £5 per year (on a Band D property).

An online consultation was launched on 11 December 2025 at www.lancsfirerescue.org.uk/budget.

Stakeholders from organisations including local authorities, town and parish councils, and community groups have been invited to take part in the consultation, along with approximately 100,000 subscribers to the Service's In The Know email newsletter. It is also being publicised in news outlets, on social media platforms and through internal communication channels within the organisation.

In a mid-point review on 15 January 2026, there had been 934 responses.

The consultation closes at 5pm on Wednesday 4 February 2026. A full report will be provided to the Authority as an appendix to the budget report at its budget meeting on Monday 23 February 2026.

Approval to undertake the annual budget consultation is delegated to the Chair of the CFA in consultation with the Treasurer and the Chief Fire Officer, due to the limited amount of time between the announcement of the local government financial settlement and the Authority's budget meeting.

Business Risk

Ascertaining support levels for the Service's financial plans and views from communities and stakeholders is essential to provide opportunity to influence development of their fire and rescue service and will be used to inform decision making.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

An equality impact assessment has been undertaken and equalities monitoring is in place to understand if the consultation has reached all parts of the community.

Data Protection (GDPR)

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

HR implications

None.

Financial implications

The consultation is being delivered by the Service's in-house corporate communications team using its departmental budget without any additional resources.

Legal implications

Consultation over the council tax precept is a statutory requirement.

The consultation plan is aligned to the Service's consultation strategy which is reviewed annually by the Planning Committee to ensure that it continues to meet statutory requirements and incorporate good practice.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper: Council Tax Precept Consultation

Date: 17 November 2025

Contact: Steven Brown, Director of Corporate Services and Treasurer

Paper: Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Public Consultation Strategy

Date: 3 February 2025

Contact: Steve Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Planning Committee

Meeting to be held on 2 February 2026

Annual Service Plan 2026/2027

(Appendix 1 refers)

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

Executive Summary

This year's Annual Service Plan (ASP) continues to provide Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) with the platform to highlight the priority activities and projects the Service intends to deliver over the coming year. We are leading improvements and innovation in our sector with some of the best firefighting equipment in the country and a highly skilled and motivated workforce.

The year ahead will see us build on our achievements by staying focused on continuous improvement that makes the people of Lancashire safer, particularly the most vulnerable members of our communities. Many of our priorities are initiatives that will transform the way we work and bring lasting benefits.

This year's Annual Service Plan provides the direction and deliverables that have been identified to deliver against the strategic aims of our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and supporting core strategies.

Recommendation(s)

The Planning Committee are asked to note and endorse the ASP for publication.

Information

The Annual Service Plan is a core part of our planning framework which sets out the activities we intend to deliver during the next 12 months and is built around the Service's five corporate priorities that are detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan. These are:

1. **Valuing** our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer
2. **Preventing** fire and other emergencies from happening
3. **Protecting** people and property when fires happen
4. **Responding** to fire and other emergencies quickly and competently
5. **Delivering** value for money in how we use our resources

Role in the planning framework

The Annual Service Plan sits at the heart of our framework and informs activity that will be led across the Service, as well as locally within district plans. Activities that we plan

to deliver also inform our staff performance appraisal process, so all staff understand our plans and are involved in helping to deliver our key activities.

As in previous years, detailed under each corporate priority is a series of activities and projects with a brief description of each item to give further clarity and context. This ensures that all staff and the public are informed of the changes and activities the Service aims to progress and how these items fit within our priorities. This provides the opportunity for the Service to ensure that we continue to provide transparency and visibility of our plans in a clear and concise format. The governance arrangements for delivery of the Annual Service Plan items will continue to be monitored through the Service's Corporate Programme Board and Service Management Team.

As always, we aim to continually improve and refine our planning processes and this year's document aims to add focus on achievable progress within the year, acknowledging that a proportion of items are continued from the 2025/26 Plan, reflecting our commitment to a number of long-term projects. It is presented in a style to remain consistent with that of the CRMP 2022-27.

Business risk

The Annual Service Plan forms an integral part of the Service's corporate planning process. It sets and communicates a clear strategic direction of travel for the next 12 months. The provision of such a document ensures that proper business planning takes place.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

The Annual Service Plan has been produced in accordance with accessibility guidelines. The overarching strategic documents have also had equality impact assessments carried out.

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

No implications, however, the ASP should form part of the district planning process and will link through to individual appraisals.

Financial implications

The updated ASP directs the Service's focus over the next 12 months. All items within the Annual Service Plan are either already within revenue and capital budgets or will be progressed accordingly through the Resources committee, as required.

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

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Welcome to our Annual Service Plan

Our Annual Service Plan sets out how Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service will adapt to changing risks and challenges, to ensure our services remain effective and efficient for the future.

A key focus for the year ahead is shaping our next Community Risk Management Plan, a five-year plan to guide how the Service will make Lancashire safer from 2027 onwards. We intend to review all our services alongside, to make sure we are well prepared to deliver the activities and interventions in the new plan.

The Service faces a range of pressures that are driving change: risks are evolving across communities, and demand is shifting towards more varied types of emergencies, including those linked to climate change. At the same time, significant financial pressures and the need to invest in buildings, require greater efficiency.

Last year, we set the national benchmark for excellence, achieving the best performance in the country in His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services' inspection programme. We want to evolve in ways that preserve what is exceptional about Lancashire and intend to use our expertise and experience to introduce changes carefully and to the highest standards.

Data, digital and technology will sit at the heart of opportunities to innovate and modernise vehicles, equipment, and ways of working, with the aim of using our resources in the most impactful and cost-effective ways.

Residents, businesses, our staff, and partners will be invited to help shape this new direction, and we will listen to the feedback to understand what is important to the people who live and work in our county.

The Service is consistently recognised not just for the work we do but also the way we do it; through our strong values and positive culture. I firmly believe that these are our greatest strengths and Lancashire's communities can trust that we will rise positively to our challenges and continue providing the best possible services.

Jon Charters

Chief Fire Officer

Shaping our services for the future

Develop a new plan for making Lancashire safer

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) is a five-year plan for how we will achieve our aim of making Lancashire safer. Our next CRMP will set out the direction of the Service from 2027 to 2032, based on the greatest risks to the people and communities of Lancashire.

The environment we operate in is constantly changing and new risks to our communities frequently emerge. Wildfires, illegal waste site incidents, and e-charging fires are all examples of emergencies that have become higher risks in recent years.

It is our job to make sure we are equipped to deal with these changing risks by adapting our services and skills to prevent, protect and respond effectively. This is the purpose of our CRMP.

We will:

- Consult with a wide range of stakeholders including residents, businesses, partner agencies and employees to produce a new CRMP for 2027-32 and supporting strategies.

Review our services to meet changing risk and demand in Lancashire

The ways we operate evolve as risks to public safety change. The number of fires we attend has gone down over the last 15 years and the types of emergencies has changed, with incidents like flooding, road traffic collisions, and assisting other agencies rising.

Where we are located, the types of vehicles and equipment we use, and the skills our people possess must match community risks and incident levels across the county. Our prevention and protection services are also targeted at reducing emergencies in the areas of highest risk.

Our services must be capable of delivering the activities and interventions in our new CRMP for 2027-32. It is also critical to address operational and financial challenges so that we can continue to deliver effective services across Lancashire in the most efficient way.

We will:

- Review all our services and consult the public on options for how they could be delivered in future to align with the new CRMP, address our challenges, and capitalise on opportunities to make Lancashire safer.
- Trial different ways of working that make better use of our resources to inform our approach to delivering services in the future.

Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer

Service headquarters and leadership and development centre masterplan

We have developed a masterplan for the redevelopment of Service headquarters and our leadership and development centre in Chorley, including new training props and modernised learning and office space. The redevelopment represents vital investment in aging buildings and facilities that are uneconomical to maintain and will lead to efficiency, sustainability, and modernisation gains.

We will:

- Continue to develop the masterplan focussing on the replacement of training props to ensure training provision is aligned to the risks identified in our Strategic Assessment of Risk.

Upgrade fire station facilities

Investment in fire stations is part of our commitment to ensuring our people have facilities that are fit for the future to support their health and wellbeing by providing a safe and positive working environment.

We will:

- Following building condition and decarbonisation surveys undertaken last year, develop our Property Asset Management Plan to inform decisions about short, medium, and long-term investment required in our property and estates assets.

Invest in firefighter safety

We aspire to the highest standards of health, safety, and wellbeing for our staff. This year our focus is on reducing the risks to firefighters from being exposed to harmful substances and introducing new breathing apparatus (BA), which is worn by firefighters to enable them to breathe safely in environments filled with smoke, toxic gases, or low oxygen levels.

We will:

- Following a series of rigorous trials and evaluations, introduce new BA sets across the Service supported by a training programme to provide the highest level of firefighter safety.
- Introduce several new 'clean cab' fire engines into our fleet that store breathing apparatus separately from the cab (where firefighters ride), meaning it is kept clean and free of contaminated equipment after a fire.
- Continue our work to lessen the impacts of fire contaminants in line with our new Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy by implementing national best

practice, the latest developments in guidance and research, and developing procedures based on feedback from our staff.

Create more efficient people processes

We aim to offer a welcoming environment and simple processes for people from applying for a job, to joining our Service, and throughout their career. Improved systems and digitisation will create a smoother experience for both job applicants and our staff.

We will:

- Introduce a new, more streamlined recruitment system which improves the candidate experience and prepares new employees for their new roles.
- Continue to digitise and streamline HR processes, including the automation of forms, to improve efficiency and the employee experience.

Improve how we assess the impact of our decisions

Acting on feedback from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, we are committed to improving how we assess the equality impacts of our work, ensuring our practices remain fair, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of our workforce and communities.

We will:

- Develop skills in our staff to analyse how decisions and policies impact on diverse groups of people and implement a new system to monitor the completion of effective equality impact assessments.

Preventing fires and other emergencies from happening

Review how prevention services are delivered

Prevention is by far the most effective way to make Lancashire safer. We identify those who are most vulnerable in our communities, and design and target our prevention activities to support people to adopt safe practices and reduce their risk. Our main service is the home fire safety check service, where we make practical interventions in the homes of those most at risk of having a fire.

We will:

- Review prevention activities to ensure we continue to deliver targeted activity to those most at risk, aligning resources and interventions to risk making communities safer.

Protecting people and property when fires happen

Adapt services to support new safety measures and increase efficiency

Our protection services aim to reduce the number of fires that occur in commercial premises and the impact on life, property, and business disruption when fires do occur. We support businesses, employers, and landlords to meet their legal duties and keep people safe in their buildings with a county-wide inspection programme. We take a risk-based approach to inspecting businesses: fire safety inspectors focus their activity on complex, high-risk premises and operational crews check lower risk premises such as schools, shops, and offices through our business fire safety check service.

We will:

- Introduce a new digital system within our prevention and protection functions to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity across all our fire safety activities through mobile working, streamlining, and automation.
- Adapt how we support businesses for the introduction of new residential evacuation procedures, which become mandatory in tall buildings from 1 April 2026.
- Work locally, regionally, and nationally to implement the impacts of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 recommendations.

Responding to fires and other emergencies quickly and competently

Focus on availability, preparedness, and operational competence

Risks in communities are changing and the types of emergencies firefighters respond to are increasingly varied. We constantly review and adapt our approach to ensure we have the right vehicles, equipment, skills, and technology to respond to different types of incidents quickly and competently. In 2026-27, fire engine availability, preparedness, and operational competence are the key priorities to ensure we continue to deliver the highest standards of emergency response.

We will:

- Review management structures to ensure arrangements support the key priorities and balance responsibilities, leading to closer contact between firefighters and leaders
- Empower firefighters to drive operational excellence through our new Operational Tactics Group, bringing together learning and best practice in structural firefighting and incident command.

Strengthen on-call fire engine availability

Lancashire has 32 fire engines crewed by on-call firefighters, who often have another job outside Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service. They live or work very close to the fire stations they operate from and respond to emergencies in their communities from home or work. We undertake continuous improvement to strengthen recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters and increase availability of on-call fire engines.

We will:

- Analyse national on-call research to identify opportunities and implement recommendations to improve the on-call model in our Service.
- Deliver revised pay arrangements for on-call firefighters that better reflect hours of cover and reward acquisition of key skills.

Review specialist appliances

The Service has multiple specialist vehicles and equipment designed to fight and rescue people from a wide range of emergencies. A detailed evaluation of some of these specialist resources, in particular our aerial and water rescue provision, will inform our replacement programmes and future requirements.

We will:

- Review the types, risk, usage, numbers and locations of aerial appliances and water rescue resources.

Invest in our fleet and equipment

The Service conducts extensive research and development to ensure we invest in vehicles that provide the most effective response to emergencies and increased firefighter safety. Our staff are actively involved in developing, trialling, and evaluating vehicles to ensure they meet operational needs.

We will:

- Introduce and evaluate a new welfare unit designed to improve welfare for firefighters on the incident ground.
- Acquire and evaluate two smaller 4x4-type fire engines capable of off-road travel, which can give improved access to rural areas in the event of flooding or wildfires, in addition to being available to respond to all other incident types safely.
- Support the replacement of the mobilising system at North West Fire Control to ensure it is fit for the future, serves the needs of Lancashire's communities, and provides value for money.

Lead drone modernisation in fire and rescue

As the national fire and rescue service lead for drones, the Service is a partner in a project to ensure emergency services are included in future changes to UK airspace. Modernisation includes using drones to take aerial imagery from the incident ground prior to arrival of fire engines, the 'drone in a box' concept which negates the need for a human operator, and heavy lifting drones. Our participation will keep us at the forefront of innovation, development, and operations.

We will:

- Participate in research and trials, host drone activity at our Leadership and Development Centre, and facilitate show and tell events to share learning and innovation.

Delivering value for money in how we use our resources

Increase operational competence to strengthen resilience

Our plans to become more efficient in how we use our resources include utilising all our operational staff to respond to emergencies when needed. Ensuring firefighters who work in specialist roles, like training delivery and fire safety, retain the skills required to crew fire engines when needed will strengthen our resilience.

We will:

- Implement a training programme tailored to individuals so they can perform operational duties, alongside their primary roles, at times when more firefighters are needed.

Drive efficiencies through digital innovation

Our digital agenda aims to create a positive, inclusive culture that encourages innovation to increase efficiency and effectiveness across the Service. A workforce that is digitally engaged underpins our digital journey and our staff are at the centre of generating ideas and implementing solutions.

We will:

- Implement ideas from our new Modern Ways of Working Forum to drive improvements across the organisation through digital innovation and better use of technology.
- Upskill key people in the Service to build simple digital solutions and create more efficient ways of working by providing the tools and capability.
- Continue with our programme to develop Power-BI dashboards including tailored performance dashboards, financial reporting dashboards, and a self-service tool.

Maximise productivity and efficiency

We are driving improvements in how productive and efficient the Service is, making sure all our resources are used in a way that has the greatest impact on and delivers the best possible value for money for Lancashire's communities.

We will:

- Support the development of a national productivity tool for fire and rescue services to benchmark performance and identify areas for improvement.
- Update our annual Productivity and Efficiency Plan to reflect improvements made and planned initiatives.
- Consider options for more efficient, alternative fuelled vehicles including expansion of our infrastructure to enable onsite charging of electric vehicles.
- Support national and regional procurement activity through collaboration.