

# Public Document Pack

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

**Monday, 23 February 2026 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 3 December 2025 of Performance Committee (Pages 15 - 52)**

#### 6. **Minutes of meeting Thursday 11 December 2025 of Audit Committee (Pages 53 - 62)**

7. **Minutes of meeting Monday 2 February 2026 of Planning Committee (Pages 63 - 74)**
8. **Annual Statement of Assurance 2024-25 (Pages 75 - 96)**
9. **Matters of Governance in relation to appeals and dismissals of statutory officers (Pages 97 - 112)**
10. **2026/27 Budget (Pages 113 - 188)**
11. **Member Champion Activity Report and Feedback (Pages 189 - 194)**
12. **Fire Protection Reports (Pages 195 - 198)**
13. **Operational Incidents of Interest (Pages 199 - 202)**
14. **Member Complaints**

Standing item.

15. **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.

16. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Authority will be held on **Monday 27 April 2026** at 1030 hours at Washington Hall, Leadership and Development Centre, Euxton.

17. **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.

18. **Appointment of Monitoring Officer (Pages 203 - 206)**

(Paragraphs 1 and 3)

19. **Business Continuity Planning (Pages 207 - 212)**

(Paragraphs 3 and 4)

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Monday, 12 January 2026 at 10.30 am in Washington Hall, Leadership and Development Centre, Euxton

### Minutes

### Present:

### Councillors

G Mirfin (Chair)  
 N Alderson  
 A Ali OBE  
 J Ash  
 A Blake  
 P Buckley  
 M Clifford  
 I Duxbury  
 J Fox  
 D Howarth  
 J Hugo

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

40-25/26	<b>Chair's Welcome and Introduction</b>
	<p>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting which had been adjourned from Monday 15 December 2025 as the meeting was not quorate, as there was no representative from one of the constituent authorities.</p> <p>County Councillor D Howarth left the meeting at 10:33.</p> <p>The Chair expressed his thanks to members that had travelled to London to lobby the Fire Minister, Samantha Dixon and Lancashire MP's in relation to the fair funding review and funding for fire authorities. He acknowledged the cross-party working relationships and expressed his ambition to maintain cross-party working. He added that he would continue campaigning activities for central government to recognise the work of fire services in relation to flooding and lobby for funding for flooding activities.</p>
41-25/26	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
	Apologies were received from County Councillors U Arif and S Asghar and Councillors G Baker and Z Khan.
42-25/26	<b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interests</b>
	None received.

	County Councillor D Howarth rejoined the meeting at 10:39.
43-25/26	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>
	<p>It was noted that County Councillor E Worthington was missed off the list of attendees at the previous meeting, this had been corrected in the minutes.</p> <p>The Chair provided an update in relation to the motion that was passed at the previous meeting, lobbying had been undertaken in London and would continue.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Minutes of the CFA held on 15 September 2025 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.</p>
44-25/26	<b>Minutes of meeting Wednesday 3 September 2025 of Performance Committee</b>
	<p>The Chair of Performance Committee, County Councillor E Worthington remarked that she was honoured to chair the Performance Committee and thanked officers for their experience and guidance. She drew members attention to the staff survey engagement and increased number of responses and commended the Comms Team on this increase. She advised that she had experience within research teams and would be willing to provide support.</p> <p>County Councillor E Worthington also commented that Performance had improved and informed members that there had recently been an a-political meeting to discuss funding suggestions which was very beneficial.</p> <p>The Chair added that there had been an increase in wildfire and flooding activities and on behalf of the authority passed his congratulations on to Prevention Support Officer Paul Slee on his recent award for Water Safety.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the proceedings of the Performance Committee held on 3 September 2025 be noted and endorsed.</p>
45-25/26	<b>Minutes of meeting Wednesday 24 September 2025 of Resources Committee</b>
	<p>The Chair of Resources Committee, County Councillor A Ali summarised discussions in relation to the revenue budget and future developments and referenced the recent lobbying. He emphasised the importance of effective lobbying at the right time and in the right place. He advised that he and the vice-chair of Resources Committee had signed off a number of tender processes for equipment and advised he was happy to answer any questions relating to these.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the proceedings of the Resources Committee held on 24 September 2025 be noted and endorsed.</p>
46-25/26	<b>Minutes of meeting Thursday 23 October 2025 of Member Training and Development Working Group</b>
	County Councillor M Ritson commented that it had been discussed at the working

	<p>group that there had been a number of meeting clashes with fire authority and Lancashire County Council (LCC) meetings, and although Democratic Services now had access to the LCC meeting calendar there had been a further clash. The Member Services Manager advised that the further clash had been a pre-arranged 2025 meeting and going forward into 2026 there should be no further clashes. She asked that should any further clashes be identified these be brought to the attention of Democratic Services.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the proceedings of the Member Training and Development Working Group held on 23 October 2025 be noted and endorsed.</p>
47-25/26	<b>Minutes of meeting Monday 17 November 2025 of Planning Committee</b>
	<p>The Chair of Planning Committee, County Councillor I Duxbury drew members attention to the Strategic Assessment of Risk and discussed innovative ways that services were responding to electric vehicle fires, including using large skips filled with water to submerge vehicles. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) explained that responding to electric vehicle fires was discussed by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) as it was a national issue. Lancashire was trialling the use of fire blankets for use on electric vehicles and worked closely with partners to ensure road safety. He advised that there were challenges in relation to reignition of electric vehicle battery fires.</p> <p>County Councillor I Duxbury added that Planning Committee had also received an update in relation to Business Continuity Planning and identified that business continuity was identified at the recent His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire &amp; Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection as an area of significant improvement. He also explained that the Planning Committee had reviewed the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and service review timeline.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the proceedings of the Planning Committee held on 17 November 2025 be noted and endorsed.</p>
48-25/26	<b>Minutes of meeting Wednesday 26 November 2025 of Resources Committee</b>
	<p><b>Resolved:</b> That the proceedings of the Resources Committee held on 26 November 2025 be noted and endorsed.</p> <p>Councillor J Hugo left the meeting at 10:55.</p>
49-25/26	<b>Proposed amendments to Strategy Group Terms of Reference</b>
	<p>The Clerk to the Authority presented the report to members.</p> <p>The Authority last reviewed the terms of reference of the Strategy Group on 15 September 2025, members were asked to consider some further minor additions to the Terms of Reference of the Strategy Group to reflect the need for confidentiality of those discussions, which was essential to maintain the efficacy and usefulness of the dialogues within the Group and the continued efficacy, efficiency and effectiveness of the Service and its changing needs and</p>

	<p>obligations.</p> <p>Councillor J Hugo rejoined the meeting at 10:57.</p> <p>County Councillor M Clifford requested that a vote be taken and it was unanimously voted to approve the proposed amendments.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Authority approved the amendments to the Terms of Reference for Strategy Group.</p>
50-25/26	<p><b>Community Risk Management Plan pre-consultation</b></p>
	<p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) presented the report to members and advised that the draft timeline had been approved by the Planning Committee.</p> <p>Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's (LFRS's) Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) was a five-year plan for how the service would make Lancashire safer. The service had started work on the next CRMP, which would set out the direction of the Service from 2027 to 2032, based on the greatest risks to the people and communities of Lancashire.</p> <p>The environment LFRS operated within was constantly changing and new risks to communities frequently emerged. It was LFRS's job to make sure it was equipped to deal with these changing risks by adapting services and skills to prevent, protect and respond effectively.</p> <p>To help shape the CRMP and options for how LFRS delivered services in the future, the service wanted to engage and consult with a wide range of stakeholders in two phases. This report detailed plans for phase one of consultation.</p> <p>From week commencing 12 January to 15 March 2026, LFRS would explain the challenges and drivers for change and invite views on its proposed direction of travel. Phase one would allow the service to listen and learn about community and workforce priorities, before drafting its CRMP and developing options for how services may be delivered in the future. There would then be a second phase of consultation in more detail.</p> <p>Key challenges and drivers for change were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Changing risk:</b> risks changed over time, differed by area and demographic, and needed different interventions to reduce the likelihood of happening or to lessen the consequences.</li> <li>• <b>Changing demand:</b> the number and types of fires attended had gone down and the types of emergencies responded to had changed, with incidents such as assisting other agencies on the rise, and the challenges of dealing with climate change in respect of flooding and wildfire increasing.</li> <li>• <b>Fire engine availability:</b> the number of fire engines available fluctuated during each day and the lowest availability was often when demand was highest, particularly in rural areas where on-call firefighter availability was reduced due to recruitment and retention challenges. LFRS wanted to</li> </ul>

balance this to a sustainable model that provided more resources when demand was highest.

- **Lancashire's population:** the makeup of communities was changing and more vulnerable people required tailored prevention support.
- **Budget pressures:** income had not kept pace with rising costs and future funding was uncertain, requiring efficiency savings to ensure financial sustainability.
- **LFRS buildings:** many fire stations were outdated and not fit for modern operational needs, maintenance costs were increasing and vital investment was needed.
- **Technology and innovation:** there were opportunities to modernise the types of vehicles used and how LFRS got the right skilled people and equipment to incidents as quickly and safely as possible.
- **Future investment:** as a high performing fire and rescue service, LFRS needed to continually invest in people, systems, and assets to deliver the best possible services.

Potential areas for change were identified as;

- Re-locating or merging stations and vehicles to better match risk and demand.
- Changing staffing (duty) systems to deploy resources more flexibly based on risk and demand.
- Reviewing the response model for attending emergencies.
- Reviewing the way prevention, protection and support services were delivered.
- Rationalising LFRS's estate and reinvesting in training facilities and more efficient buildings.

The purpose of the consultation was to understand community needs and expectations of LFRS to shape the services CRMP and options for how it delivered services in the future. LFRS also wanted to strengthen trust and confidence between the community and the Service.

In phase one LFRS would share information about its services, financial position, challenges and opportunities and ask for views on:

- The services delivered and what was most important to people.
- The issues and risks the service could face in the future, such as the impact of extreme weather, new technology, and how the area LFRS served grows and changes.
- What people think LFRS should prioritise for investment.
- How LFRS used and organised resources in relation to risk and demand including people, systems and assets.

County Councillor A Ali left the meeting at 11:02.

All the feedback would be analysed independently and used to draft the CRMP 2027-32 and develop options for delivering services in the future before consulting again in more detail in phase two during summer / autumn 2026.

It was noted that due to the adjournment of the December CFA Meeting there had been an amendment to the proposed timeline, with the new consultation start date 12 January 2026.

**The proposed timeline was as follows.**

- W/c 12 January 2026: Phase one consultation starts.
- W/c 2 February 2026: Mid-point consultation review and implementation of any required adjustments to the consultation plan.
- W/c 9 March 2025: Closure review to determine if sufficient response had been obtained or whether additional activity was required.
- 15 March 2025: Phase one consultation ends.
- January to June 2026: Draft CRMP 2027-32, review core strategies, conduct Service Review and develop options for how services were delivered in the future.
- 13 July 2026 Planning Committee: Draft CRMP and Service Review documents approval to consult.
- July - October 2026: CRMP and Service Review phase two consultation.
- 16 November 2026 Planning Committee: Final draft CRMP and Service Review proposals for consideration and recommending to full Combined Fire Authority.
- 14 December 2026 full CFA: Final CRMP and Service Review proposals for approval.
- 1 April 2027: CRMP 2027-32 and core strategies published.
- 1 April 2027 - 31 March 2032: Service Review implementation.

The DCFO explained that depending on the number of efficiencies required the final CRMP and service review proposals may be taken to the February 2027 meeting rather than the December 2026 meeting.

County Councillor A Ali rejoined the meeting at 11:04.

The Chair commented that fires represented 27% of all incidents attended by Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) with an increase of flooding and special service incidents. The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) explained that the risk in Lancashire was changing and the service recognised that through its strategic assessment of risk. The nature of incidents was changing with the types of incidents attended broadening and falling within the special services category.

The Chair requested that a report be taken to the Performance Committee relating to battery fires.

In response to a question from County Councillor I Duxbury in relation to the number of false alarms that the service attended, the DCFO explained that the full data in relation to false alarms was presented to the Performance Committee, the number of malicious false alarm calls were very low with many calls relating to fire alarm activations at commercial and domestic premises with causes including calls of good intent and apparatus and equipment faults.

In response to a question from County Councillor L Parker in relation to

	<p>engagement with electric vehicle manufacturers, the CFO explained that there was an NFCC working group which focused on electric vehicles, liaising with manufacturers and sharing best practice. He explained that technology was moving quickly and it was important that the service and the NFCC monitored developments, utilised national learning and developed safe responses. He added that LFRS had an internal working group which looked at new items of technology to deal with electric vehicle fires. County Councillor L Parker asked if the service was happy with the level of engagement from manufacturers, the CFO confirmed that the NFCC group was very active in this area, liaising with a number of vehicle manufacturers.</p> <p>The Chair requested that a report be taken to Performance Committee relating to fires within houses of multiple occupancy (HMO's), the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) confirmed that this had been requested and would be brought to the next Performance Committee.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Authority endorsed the first phase of consultation to take place in early 2026. The Service would use the feedback to draft the CRMP 2027-32 and to develop options for how services may be delivered in the future, before consulting again in more detail in phase two during summer / autumn 2026.</p>
51-25/26	<p><b>Governance Review</b></p>
	<p>The Clerk presented the report to members.</p> <p>Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) was undertaking a review of internal and external governance to ensure oversight and scrutiny arrangements remained effective and efficient at keeping the public safe from fire and other risks. This would involve codifying and updating existing authority procedures as set out in its constitution, scheme of delegation and standing orders. At the same time, arrangements would be reviewed against best practice, such as the Local Government Association's Improvement and Assurance Framework, and external assurance would be sought.</p> <p>There were several drivers for the review including the introduction by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) of a new assessment of how each fire and rescue service was affected by its authority's governance. Policy and legislation changes were also planned such as the government's plans for strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England.</p> <p>The authority was asked to establish a member working group to work with officers to conduct this review ahead of any changes being brought to the authority for approval. As the working group would not have any decision-making powers, there was no requirement for there to be political balance.</p> <p>The Clerk requested that nominations for members to join the working group be submitted to Democratic Services by Monday 19 January 2026 with membership to be confirmed the following week.</p>

Councillor J Hugo suggested that if possible there should be a member included in the working group from each constituent authority. The Clerk agreed that this would be beneficial.

County Councillor M Clifford emphasised that governance would be a focus of the next HMICFRS inspection. He stated that he would be putting his name forward for the working group and suggested that where possible, meetings of the working group could be held after a committee meeting to assist with diary management.

The Chair explained that discussions were ongoing to repurpose Audit Committee into an Audit, Governance and Standards Committee. As the Chair of Audit Committee County Councillor M Clifford agreed with this approach and stated that the committee should encompass all aspects. The Clerk confirmed that a paper should be being brought to the February CFA meeting to request this change to Audit Committee.

Councillor J Hugo left the meeting at 11:25.

The CFO explained that it was proposed that the Governance Working Group meet monthly which would mean there may be some opportunities to hold the Working Group meeting after a committee meeting. He also explained that the Working Group would report directly into Audit Committee.

In response to a question from Councillor D Smith in relation to any future implementation of a mayoral model, the Clerk advised that should the Fire Authority fall under a Mayor in the future, they would still need a blueprint of governance for the authority. The CFO added that although the future was uncertain the service was reviewing constitutions from other services within a mayoral/ Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) governance system to future proof the new constitution.

County Councillor M Ritson commented that the potential for the authority to fall under a Mayoral model would impact on other projects going forward and as such should be noted as a risk within larger longer term projects.

**Resolved:** - That the Authority approved the establishment of a Constitution Working Group to ensure member engagement in the review and updating of governance procedures and documents.

52-25/26

**Member Champion Activity Report**

The current Member Champions and their areas of responsibility were:

- Community Safety – County Councillor Andy Blake
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Councillor Salim Sidat
- Health and Wellbeing – County Councillor Sohail Asghar
- Road Safety – County Councillor Jordan Fox.

Reports relating to the activity of the Member Champions were provided on a regular basis to the Authority. This report related to activity for the period up to

	<p>14 December 2025.</p> <p>Member Champions highlighted several details within the reports and expressed thanks to the officers who supported them in their roles.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Authority noted and endorsed the report and acknowledged the work of the respective Champions.</p>
53-25/26	<p><b>Fire Protection Reports</b></p>
	<p>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.</p> <p>On the 26 September 2025 the prosecution of the Article 5(3) person under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (FSO) (Mr Rajeshkumar Chechani) was sentenced for breaches of the FSO for a residential care home in Thornton-Cleveleys. The initial inspection and further prohibition of the premises required forty-five residents to be relocated during the Covid-19 period to other care homes over a period of two weeks. This was due to substantial fire safety deficiencies being identified within the premises.</p> <p>Mr Rajeshkumar Chechani was sentenced to 3 months imprisonment suspended for 12 months, given a £10,000 fine and LFRS were awarded £33,000 costs.</p> <p>Three cases sat within the court system, the DCFO advised that since the report had been published there were amendments to the court dates listed. The responsible person for two Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) premises, (located in Bacup and Darwen) pleaded guilty to breaches of the FSO on the 13 August 2025 at Preston Magistrates Court. A sentencing date had been adjourned until 30 January 2026 at Preston Crown Court.</p> <p>An NHS Trust and maintenance company were due to appear at Blackburn Magistrates Court on the 1 October 2025. This hearing was adjourned until the 22 April 2026 at Preston Crown Court.</p> <p>The responsible persons and a company were to appear at Blackburn Magistrates Court on the 18 February 2026 for breaches of the FSO relating to a nightclub venue.</p> <p>Protection teams continue to investigate and build case files in relation to eleven other premises where offences are believed to have been committed under the FSO.</p> <p>Members noted that there had been five arson convictions during the quarter.</p> <p>The DCFO added that LFRS had been graded as outstanding for its protection work at the recent HMICFRS inspection.</p> <p>County Councillor M Ritson left the meeting at 11:36.</p>

	<p>In response to a question from County Councillor M Clifford in relation to the sentences received for arson convictions, the ACFO explained that the sentences received were a credit to AM Matt Hamer and his team. The CFO added that the sentences were granted in line with sentencing guidelines and the Clerk added that each case was judged independently and mitigating factors including a guilty plea could impact on the sentence received.</p> <p>County Councillor M Ritson rejoined the meeting and County Councillor D Howarth left the meeting at 11:38.</p> <p>The Chair requested that an item be taken to Performance Committee relating to arson cases and convictions.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the report be noted.</p>
54-25/26	<p><b>Operational Incidents of Interest</b></p>
	<p>The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) presented the report which provided Members with information relating to operational incidents of note. As the operational period had been very busy, the report detailed only the larger deployments or more complex incidents. As a result, some incidents that Members had been made aware of locally, may not have formed part of the report. Full details of the following incidents were provided in the report:</p> <p>County Councillor D Howarth rejoined the meeting at 11:42.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential building fire in Lancaster (26/8/25)</li> <li>• Derelict commercial building fire in Preston (4/9/25)</li> <li>• Domestic building fire in South Shore (7/9/25)</li> <li>• Out of County Incident in West Yorkshire (9/9/25)</li> <li>• Derelict building fire in Bacup (17/9/25)</li> <li>• Sinkhole in Darwen (21/9/25)</li> <li>• Derelict building fire in Blackpool (27/9/25)</li> <li>• Commercial building fire in Fleetwood (28/9/25)</li> <li>• Rescue from water in Blackburn (28/9/25)</li> <li>• Fire in high rise building in Preston (27/10/25)</li> </ul> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor M Ritson in relation to the out of county incident in West Yorkshire, the ACFO advised that the investigation into the cause of the incident was being managed by West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service.</p> <p>County Councillor P Buckley left the meeting at 11:43.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor E Worthington in relation to the typical cause of a derelict building fire, the ACFO explained that although there was not a typical cause, derelict buildings were often left insecure. LFRS worked with building owners to ensure derelict buildings were boarded up appropriately.</p>

Area Manager (AM) Phil Jones added that the service worked with district councils to ensure properties were reboarded quickly, with the relevant council recharging the building owners with the cost.

County Councillor P Buckley rejoined the meeting at 11:46.

In response to a question from County Councillor R Walsh in relation to the effectiveness of utilising the second fire engine at two engine stations, the ACFO explained that the service was using resources effectively and performance was reported into the Performance Committee. The service continued to meet its response times and was satisfied it had enough resources to meet demand. County Councillor J Tetlow added that the response time for the first engine to arrive on scene was 5:50 minutes which was very quick. The ACFO added that this response time was comparable to times achieved by some metropolitan services.

**Resolved:** That the Authority noted and endorsed the report.

The ACFO introduced Station Manager (SM) Louis Davies who gave a presentation to members on the Sinkhole incident in Darwen on 21 September 2025.

The initial call was received at 07:20 with one fire engine, the station manager and drone team in attendance to work with the local authority to ensure the area was safe. Following a multi-agency meeting the service handed the incident back to the local authority at 12:30. The sink hole continued to develop and LFRS reattended at 17:20 and began to work with the mine remediation authority. A number of new hazards emerged including exposed live gas services to properties, the sink hole continuing to expand, the risk of the car and skip entering the sinkhole, the risk of explosion, the exclusion zone limiting firefighter tactics and managing public curiosity.

The multiagency objectives and priorities included the welfare of 60 properties and their residents, managing the risk of damage to the gas network, removing the risk of the car and skip falling into the sink hole, creating a stable environment in which to start filling the hole back in as soon as possible, ensuring the safety of responders and the wider public and creating an access and egress point for specialist fire and rescue equipment and other responding agencies.

Cadent attended and isolated the main gas supply coming into the estate, heaters and hot plates were provided to homes to support the welfare of residents. A gas vacuum was utilised to remove the gas quickly.

Blackburn and Darwen Council assisted in managing the welfare of evacuated residents, facilitated long term road closures and provided a constant site presence. They had also continued to support communities after the emergency phase.

The Mine Remediation Authority provided accurate risk information, sourced and funded a crane, sourced stone for a quicker resolution and provided a constant

site presence.

Attendance by LFRS included a fire engine, station manager, group manager, the Urban Search and Rescue Team (USAR), aerial ladder platform (ALP) and command unit. LFRS gathered initial information, established water supplies should the incident escalate, assisted Cadent to notify residents of the gas supply being turned off, provided lighting at the scene and documented risks and hazards. The use of the ALP allowed for a defensive water application strategy, gathering of incident information and provided a high anchor for the USAR team to utilise. The command unit was utilised to coordinate partner communications and collate resident information. The USAR team attached slings to the vehicle and skip to extract them safely.

The ACFO thanked SM Louis Davies for his presentation and commended the multi-agency response.

County Councillor M Ritson remarked that he was in attendance during the incident and commended the organised and methodical response upon contacting the fire service. He expressed his thanks to everyone who attended the incident.

County Councillor E Worthington left the meeting at 12:07.

In response to a question from County Councillor L Parker in relation to the cost of the incident to the service, the ACFO explained that the cost of the crane was covered by the Mine Remediation Authority and there was no additional cost to the fire service outside the use of resources. In response to a further question from County Councillor L Parker the CFO explained that the service was statutory funded to respond to fires and other emergencies, and although the service could calculate a notional cost this was just one incident of many attended throughout the year.

At 12:08 County Councillor E Worthington rejoined the meeting and County Councillor R Walsh left the meeting.

In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow in relation to the relevant searches being carried out ahead of the new build site commencing construction, Councillor D Smith confirmed that the mining authority checks had been completed in relation to coal mines however this was a slate quarry from approximately 1830 and had not been picked up.

County Councillor R Walsh rejoined the meeting at 12:10.

County Councillor M Ritson asked if the occupants had returned to their houses, Councillor D Smith confirmed that the last update he had received was that the occupants of the three houses affected were still in temporary accommodation. County Councillor D Howarth remarked that the incident was alarming.

The Chair thanked SM Louis Davies for a good presentation.

	<p>The Assistant Director of Communication and Engagement (ADoCE) presented the report.</p> <p>Following the Service's annual staff celebration event on 20 November 2025, the report set out staff recognition activity and individuals celebrated for a variety of achievements in 2025. As part of the Service's staff recognition activity, more than 50 people were honoured with Long Service Good Conduct Awards, Star Awards, Chief Fire Officer's Commendations, Bravery Awards, Academic Achievements and Humanitarian Medals. Details of all award recipients were included within the report within the agenda pack.</p> <p>The Chair suggested that a round of applause be given for all who had received an award.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Authority noted and endorsed the report and acknowledged the achievements of award recipients.</p>
56-25/26	<b>Member Complaints</b>
	<p>The Monitoring Officer confirmed that there had been no complaints since the last meeting.</p> <p>County Councillor A Riggott requested that this item be renamed to allow an opportunity for members to give positive feedback, this was unanimously agreed.</p> <p>County Councillor A Riggott expressed his thanks to Station Manager Adam Baron, Community Fire Safety Team Leader Rachel Ditchfield and all at Chorley Fire Station who had facilitated his recent visit.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the current position be noted.</p>
57-25/26	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>
	<p>The next meeting of the Authority would be held on Monday <b>23 February 2026</b> at 10:30am at the Training Centre, Euxton.</p>
58-25/26	<b>Exclusion of Press and Public</b>
	<p><b>Resolved:</b> 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.</p>
59-25/26	<b>Notes of Strategy Meeting held 3 November 2025</b>
	<p><b>Resolved:</b> That the proceedings of the Strategy Group held on 3 November 2025 be noted and endorsed.</p>

**LFRS HQ  
Fulwood**

**M Nolan  
Clerk to CFA**

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 23 February 2026

### Proceedings of Performance Committee held 3 December 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 3 December 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 3 December 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

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## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Performance Committee

Wednesday, 3 December 2025, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

### Minutes

<b>Present:</b>	
<b>Councillors</b>	
S Asghar	
M Clifford	
G Mirfin	
A Riggott	
S Sidat MBE	
J Tetlow (Vice-Chair)	
E Worthington (Chair)	

<b>Officers</b>
<p>S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)  S Pink, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)  E Sandiford, Director of People and Development (LFRS)  S Collinson, Head of Media and Communications (LFRS)  M Hamer, Area Manager, Prevention and Protection (LFRS)  P Jones, Area Manager - Head of Service Delivery (LFRS)  K Matthews, North West Fire Control  D Howell, Deputy Monitoring Officer (LFRS)  P Slee, Prevention Support Officer (LFRS)  S Hunter, Democratic Services Manager (LFRS)  L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)</p>

<b>In attendance</b>
K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union

14-25/26	<b>Apologies For Absence</b>
	Apologies were received from County Councillors A Blake and M Ritson, and Councillor J Hugo.
15-25/26	<b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests</b>
	County Councillor M Clifford declared a non-pecuniary interest in Cuerden Valley Park as Director due to it being mentioned and discussed in the Flooding Data

	Report and Water Safety Presentation.
16-25/26	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>
	<b>Resolved:</b> - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on the 03 September 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to County Councillor A Blake's apologies being noted.
17-25/26	<b>Q2 Performance Management Information</b>
	<p>The Chair reminded Members of the importance of political neutrality within the Performance Committee meetings to ensure a cohesive approach for the benefit of the Service and the residents of Lancashire.</p> <p>The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) presented a comprehensive report to the Performance Committee. This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarterly report for 2025/26 as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-2027.</p> <p>In quarter 2, three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), 1.2.3 Staff Absence Greenbook, 2.3.1 ADF – Harm to People: Casualties, and 2.9 Business Fire Safety Checks were shown in positive exception and two KPIs were shown in negative exception. These were 1.2.1 Staff Wholetime Absence Wholetime (WT), and 2.5 ABF (Non-Commercial Premises).</p> <p>Members examined each indicator in turn focusing on those KPIs in exception as follows:</p> <p><b>KPI 1 – Valuing our people so that they can focus on making Lancashire safer</b></p> <p><b>1.1 Overall Staff Engagement</b></p> <p>Members received an update on how staff were engaged during the period.</p> <p>Between July and September 2025, 33 station visits were carried out by Principal Officers and Area Managers as part of the service-wide engagement programme.</p> <p>Forty-two wellbeing interactions were undertaken ranging from workshops with crews to wellbeing support dog interactions.</p> <p>Staff consultation began in September with wholetime firefighters on efficiency plans to optimise crewing through changes to crewing levels and improved rota management. All wholetime units provided feedback to shape the plans.</p> <p>The Service engaged with staff over several topics relating to fleet and equipment including trials to test several breathing apparatus sets, looking at functionality, communications, and telemetry as part of a regional procurement exercise. Engagement workshops also took place with operational stakeholders relating to the Service's Masterplan for the Leadership and Development Centre, and a survey was conducted on videos used in internal communications.</p>

The latest staff survey was launched on 2 July 2025 and ran for eight and a half weeks until 29 August 2025. An independent research service coordinated the survey. It was delivered online and via paper copies which were sent to all stations.

The survey was supported by 51 visits to on-call and wholetime crews on station by the Communications Team. Three focus groups with on-call staff, wholetime supervisory managers, and support staff were also held to gain qualitative feedback to complement the survey data. In total, 511 responses to the survey were received (equating to 44% of staff).

The responses reflected good representation across different roles, ranks, and geographical areas of the Service.

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.

The 2025 index score was 69%, down from 74% in 2023. The score varied significantly by staff group; for wholetime firefighters the score was 53%, and for both on-call firefighters and service support staff, it was 81%.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Engagement Index</b>	<b>Response Rate</b>
2025	69%	44%
2023	74%	49%
2020	79%	44%
2018	70%	43%
2016	64%	31%

The survey results highlighted areas of success as well as areas for development and the feedback would be considered by the Service and used to inform current and future planning. Feedback would also be provided to staff to demonstrate that views had been listened to in terms of action taken as a result.

### **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 headcount strength. This followed the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) reporting methodology.

Annual Standard: Not more than 8 shifts lost.

Annual Shifts Lost ÷ 4 quarters = 2

Quarter shifts lost: 2.414

Cumulative total number of shifts lost: 4.396

The negative exception report was due to the number of shifts lost through absence per employee being below the Service target for quarter 2.

The element of that section of the report referred to sickness absence rates for the period 01 April 2025 to 30 September 2025.

The agreed target performance level was 4 shifts lost per employee per year for wholetime staff, which equated to a target of 4.00 shifts lost per employee per year for quarters 1 and 2. The actual shifts lost for the period for that group of staff was 4.396, which was 0.396 shifts above target. During the same period of the previous year, 4.093 shifts were lost which was an increase of 0.303 shifts lost per wholetime employee compared to the same period of the previous year.

A total of 3,960 wholetime absence shifts lost = 4.396 against a target of 4.00.

The number of cases of long-term absence which spanned over the total of the 3 months remained at 4 cases in Q2. The absence reasons were:

- Mental Health 3 cases
- Other absence types 1 case

One Hundred and ninety-two shifts were lost during quarter 2 as a result of the above four cases of long-term absence. This was in comparison to 204 shifts which were lost during the same quarter of 2024-25. Those cases accounted for 0.26 shifts lost per person over the quarter.

There were 34 cases of long-term absence which were recorded within the 3 months:

- Musculo Skeletal 12 cases
- Mental Health 9 cases
- Hospital/Post Operative Procedure 7 cases
- Gastro-Intestinal (abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhoea) 2 cases
- Other absence types 1 case

There were 125 shifts lost which related to Respiratory related absences including Coronavirus absence. This was compared to 6 shifts lost in the same quarter of 2024-25.

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 the Chair regarding any correlation between mental health absences and trauma from attending operational incidents, the ACFO explained that mental health illnesses could be for work-related or external reasons, however, all employees could receive psychological support from Occupational Health. A proactive approach was used to support operational employees back to work such as modified duties or redeployment. The DCFO advised that there was a programme to support those with PTSD with their mental health, such as Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and International Search and Rescue (ISAR), who dealt with devastating and traumatic incidents at home and overseas.

County Councillor A Riggott stated that a breakdown of the mental health illnesses into external and work-related would be useful to enable Members to scrutinise them from a different viewpoint. The DoPD advised that she could look into how the cases were recorded to provide some further information. The DCFO added that the Service differentiated between work-related and external pressures in mental health cases as discussed in the Health and Safety Committee.

### **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, 1.41%.

### 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: 1.276

Cumulative shifts lost: 3.124

The positive exception report was due to the number of shifts lost through absence per employee being below the Service target for quarter 2.

The agreed target performance level was 8 shifts lost per employee per year for Green Book staff, which equated to a target of 4.00 shifts lost per employee per year for quarters 1 and 2. The actual shifts lost for the period for this group was 3.12, which was 0.88 below target. During the same period of the previous year, 2.93 shifts were lost which was an increase of 0.19 shifts lost per green book employee compared to the same period last year.

During the period, April – September 2025, absence statistics showed non-uniformed personnel absence above target for the quarter with 1.28 shifts lost in the quarter against a target of 2.00 shifts lost.

806 non-uniformed absence shifts lost = 3.12 against a target of 4.00 during quarters 1 and 2. There were no 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 increased from 8 in Q1 to 10 in Q2:

- Mental Health (Stress – 1 case, 4 cases  
Other – 1 case)
- Hospital/Post Operative Procedure 3 cases
- Other absence types 3 cases

During the quarter, 230 shifts were lost as a result of the 10 cases of long-term

absences, this was in comparison to 185 shifts lost during the same quarter of 2024-25. These cases accounted for 0.60 shifts lost per person over the quarter.

Respiratory related absences accounted for 21 lost shifts, which included Coronavirus absence. This was compared to 27 shifts lost in the same quarter of 2024-25.

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.

### **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 22%(23%)	Male 78%(77%)	
Ethnicity:	BME 4%(4%)	White 91%(91%)	Not stated
	5%(5%)		

Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 5%(5%)	Heterosexual 61%(61%)	Not stated 34%(34%)
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 61%
	Male	Grey book 89%	Green book 39%
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 60%	Green book 67%
	Not stated	Grey book 35%	Green book 30%
Disability:	Disability	Grey book 3%	Green book 5%
	No disability	Grey book 94%	Green book 89%
	Not stated	Grey book 3%	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 31%(59%)	Male 69%(41%)	
Ethnicity:	BME 0%(6%)	White 83%(68%)	Not Stated 17%(26%)
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 3%(6%)	Heterosexual 80%(79%)	Not stated 17%(15%)
Disability:	Disability 0%(6%)	No disability 89%(91%)	Not stated 11%(3%)

During quarter 2, there were a total of 7 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 certain periods.

## **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, 14 for quarter 2; year to date 23; previous year to date 29. Quarterly activity increased 75.00% (6 incidents) over the same quarter of the previous year. Year to date activity decreased 20.69% (6 incidents over the same period 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 941. 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 30,532 and the previous year's score was 30,750 which meant that the fire risk continued to reduce.

### **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 9,696; previous year to date 8,669. Quarterly activity increased 5.12% over the same quarter of the previous year.

In quarter 2, the Service attended 4,621 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) – 1275, 28%
- Total Primary Fire Calls (accidental dwelling / building and deliberate dwelling / commercial fires and other primary fires) – 484, 11%

- Total Secondary Fire Calls (deliberate and accidental fires) – 937, 20%
- Total Special Service Calls (critical incidents, gaining entry, RTCs, Flooding and other critical incidents) – 1170, 25%

### 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, 169 in quarter 2; year to date 364; previous year to date 329. Quarterly activity increased 3.68% over the same quarter of the previous year.

#### 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 2; year to date 1; previous year to date 5
Injuries appear Serious	2 in quarter 2; year to date 3; previous year to date 15
Injuries appear Slight	3 in quarter 2; year to date 11; previous year to date 2

The positive exception report was due to the number of Accidental Dwelling Fire casualties meeting the lower control limit during the month of August.

During the month of August 2025, there were no recorded ADF casualties, and the overall quarter recorded just five casualties. Whilst the Accidental Dwelling Fire KPI 1.3 showed similar activity levels to quarter 2 of the previous year, the resultant casualties were half of those recorded during the same quarter.

The actions taken to reduce Accidental Dwelling Fires naturally affected the likelihood of a casualty arising, as such, the activities undertaken to reduce KPI 2.3 were applicable to this KPI also.

#### 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 85%.

Combined quarterly percentage remained static compared to 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), 58 in quarter 2; year to date 115; previous year to date 131. Quarterly activity decreased 1.69% over the same quarter of the previous year.

### **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 81%.

Combined quarterly percentage had therefore decreased 5.49% over the same quarter of the previous year.

## **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), 39 in quarter 2; year to date 78; previous year to date 42. Quarterly activity increased 85.71% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The negative exception report was due to the number of accidental non-

commercial building fires being above the upper control limit during August of quarter 2.

A high number of accidental fires involving private garden sheds were responsible for breaching the upper control limits in August. Of the 20 incidents, there were 11 garden shed fires, 4 private garages, and 5 other private non-residential buildings.

Fires involving garden sheds had since reduced, with only 2 fires recorded in the following month of September. Due to the nature of the construction, the majority of the sheds resulted in the extent of damage affecting the whole building. The most common causes of ignition were spread from a secondary fire due to the burning of garden or household waste, and discarded cigarettes.

Activity levels in September had now returned to below the previous three-year average.

Above average temperatures in August coincided with the school holidays and there had been a large increase in domestic accidental building fires, primarily garden sheds.

The main reason for this was the lifestyle changes during periods of hot weather, school holidays, and spending more time outdoors, with activities using hot processes, such as barbeques, along with burning away of weeds and having fires to discard of garden waste and other waste.

The Key actions taken across all districts that saw an increase were:

- Utilising the virtual library to provide leaflets for Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs), warning of the dangers of garden fires and barbeques.
- Social Media posts by the Service and individual Service accounts.
- Post fire activity and leaflet drops in areas of accidental building fire activity.

### **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 21% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 10%.

Combined quarterly activity had therefore increased 10.99% 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 – 542 in quarter 2; year to date 1,406; previous year to date 1,033. Quarterly activity remained static against the same quarter of the previous year.

### **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, 16 in quarter 2, year to date 35; previous year to date 42. Quarterly activity decreased 5.88% over the same quarter of the previous year.

### **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, 39 in quarter 2; year to date 79; previous year to date 71.

Quarterly activity increased 77.27% over the same quarter of the previous year.

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

### **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, 487 in quarter 2; year to date 1,292; previous year to date 920. Quarterly activity decreased 3.18% over the same quarter of the previous year.

## **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, 6,171 in quarter 2; year to date 12,137; previous year to date 12,233. Quarterly activity decreased 2.9% against the same quarter of the previous year.

HFSCs with high-risk outcomes, Quarter 2, 52%; previous year Quarter 2, 52%.

High risk outcomes remained static against the same quarter of the previous year.

Members noted that the slight decrease in the number of HFSCs completed correlated with the busy period for firefighters during July and August which decreased prevention activities.

## **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, 55 sessions delivered to 1,468 students;  
RoadSense, 50 sessions delivered to 1,449 students;  
SENDSafe, 6 sessions delivered to 144 students;  
Wasted Lives, 9 sessions delivered to 2,148 students;  
Biker Down, 5 sessions delivered to 96 attendees;  
FIRES, 79 referrals opened prior to Q2 and carried over. 42 referrals received in Q2. 75 referrals closed in Q2. 46 referrals carried to 2025-26, Q3;  
Partner Training (including care providers), 28 sessions delivered to 243 delegates;

Specific Education packages – delivered Water Safety, BrightSparx, ASB, Deliberate Fire Setting etc (Covers key stages 2, 3 and 4).

Arson Threat Referrals – 218.

## **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, 753 in quarter 2; Cumulative 1,522; YTD target, 1,250; previous YTD 943.

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being satisfactory, 1,368. Top 5 completed satisfactory premise types (Shops 472, Offices 217, Factories/Warehouses 199, Other Workplaces 166, Other Public Premises 97).

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being unsatisfactory, 154. Top 5 completed unsatisfactory premise types (Shops 61, Other Workplaces 25, Factories/Warehouses 18, Flats = <3 10, Licensed Premises 8).

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.

The ACFO highlighted that the Service undertook proactive prevention work given that if a business ceased trading due to a fire, resuming business was difficult which affected local economy and employment.

County Councillor G Mirfin queried whether Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) were classed as a business, and the difference between HFSCs and BFSCs in rented accommodation. Area Manager, Matt Hamer explained that HFSCs were conducted in flats and BFSCs were undertaken in communal areas of HMOs. Community Fire Safety Practitioners were trained to conduct HFSCs whilst also identifying any fire safety non-compliance issues in communal areas. Members were advised that Local Authorities also had responsibility in joint legislative spaces and the Service worked closely with housing teams to receive referrals to ensure fire safety. Staff were trained to deal with opportunistic landlords/residents and use enforcement action as needed or transfer the issue to the Local Authority.

In response to a request from County Councillor G Mirfin to include safety checks in HMOs within the report, Area Manager Matt Hamer advised that some properties that would classify as a HMO were not registered as such with the Local Authority who were custodians of that data. However, information for safety checks in known HMOs could be brought to a future meeting for that premises type. The current data would be included in the 'flats' premises types.

County Councillor G Mirfin commented that rigorous regulatory regime was important and that, due to costs, it was dissuading some landlords from continuing

with HMOs and they were converting their properties back to residential or Bed & Breakfast accommodation. Area Manager, Matt Hamer stated that the Service worked closely with Local Authorities and Housing Authorities and was aware that some hotels and Air B&Bs could inadvertently become HMOs through the process of long term lets, however, in regulatory terms, it could be difficult to categorise. Some Local Authorities and Housing Authorities were taking the route of selective licensing for HMOs and were supported by Fire Inspectors and Prevention staff from the Service.

County Councillor A Riggott requested that a presentation be given to a future Committee meeting regarding HMOs and the work of the Service in that area as it would be useful for Members.

In response to a question by the Chair, Area Manager, Matt Hamer explained that social housing came under the remit of Local Authority housing. Under the smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm regulations, the responsibility to have those fitted was incumbent upon the landlord, and under legislation, it was the Local Authority's responsibility to enforce it. When the Service entered a rented property, staff would ensure alarms were fitted so as not to leave residents at risk and would seek to refer to the Local Authority. In most social housing, alarms were mains powered, however in battery powered alarms, the responsibility for changing batteries rested with the tenant

### **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 2, 442;  
Formal Activity in Quarter 2, 7%, same quarter of the previous year 6%.  
Quarterly activity increased 1% against the same quarter of the previous year.

Members noted the cumulative number of Fire Safety inspections undertaken for 2025/26 was 844.

### **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 2, Building Regulation Consultations received 289, of which 275 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 – 1<sup>st</sup> 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 – 1<sup>st</sup> Fire Engine Attendance, Quarter 2, Very High 05:00 min; High 06:38 min, Medium 07:07 min, Low 09:21 min.

Q2 overall 08:02 min. Year to date overall 07:49 min. Previous year to date overall 07:41 min.

The ACFO asked Members to note that the Service had maintained its critical fire response through a quarterly rise in incidents of 5.12% in the long period of hot weather as this related to the Dynamic Resource Management report in the agenda pack.

County Councillor G Mirfin queried how the winter weather affected response times in respect of snow and ice etc, and asked if the data could be broken down into months. The DCFO advised that the data could be subdivided into months as that data set was available and was provided to the government. Drivers of appliances would always travel to incidents as safely as possible and any difference in times for months was very slight. LFRS was still one of the best Services in the country for overall response times and standards.

In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow regarding the Service's ability to grit in icy conditions, Area Manager, Phil Jones stated that bags of grit

were carried on some appliances, some had 4x4 capabilities, winter tyres were used and there was grit available on stations, however, the Highways Department were usually called to assist with winter conditions.

### **3.2 Critical Special Service Response – 1<sup>st</sup> 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 – 1<sup>st</sup> Fire Engine Attendance, 08:47 min in quarter 2; year to date 08:42 min; previous year to date 08:29 min.

### **3.3 Total Fire Engine Availability**

This indicator measured the availability of the 1<sup>st</sup> fire engine at each of the 39 fire stations. It was measured as the percentage of time the 1<sup>st</sup> 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, 88.58% in quarter 2; year to date 88.95%; previous year to date 86.52%.

Quarterly availability increased 2.44% over the same quarter of the previous year.

## **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 2025/26 was set at £77.5 million. The spend of £37.6 million was broadly in line with allocated budget at the end of quarter 2 with a small overspend of £0.2 million; £0.1 million on each pay and non-pay. In the main, the pay overspend reflected the higher than budgeted pay awards of 3.2% for all staff compared to the 3% budgeted and the non-pay overspend was the result of inflationary pressure.

Looking ahead to the latter half of the year, inflationary pressures were likely to continue and the budgeted savings of £0.5 million from the new Dynamic Resource Management Policy were on target to be delivered.

The annual revised capital budget for 2025/26 was £12.7 million and spend at the end of September was £2.3 million. Slippage of £0.1 million had been identified.

Quarter 2 variance 0.26% (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 chair of both the Strategic and Tactical Blue Light Collaboration Boards had transferred to Lancashire Constabulary until 2026. Several workstreams were ongoing with subgroups for Leadership Development, Health & Wellbeing, Estates and Co-location, and Community First Responder.

### 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, which covered 3 shared themes identified using insights from each organisation. The first session, hosted by LFRS, saw 60 attendees from all three Services, including Area Managers, Group Managers, Heads of Service, and aspiring leaders. 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.

### Health and Wellbeing

A new collaborative group was formed earlier this year, bring together Health and Wellbeing leads from all 3 Services. The group’s goal was to understand and align

the health and wellbeing offerings across Blue Light's 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 enhancing 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**

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 CFR scheme, a decision met with disappointment by FRS' involved in EMR.

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.

The operational model had three phases:

- 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. This phase was being developed with NWAS, and stations had been identified in the communities where NWAS required most support.

### **4.3 Overall User Satisfaction**

People surveyed included those who had experienced an accidental dwelling fire,

	<p>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.</p> <p>Annual Standard: 97.50%</p> <p>In quarter 2, 52 people had been surveyed and the number satisfied with the service was 50. The running total number of people surveyed was 3,998 with 3,943 of those people being satisfied with the Service; 98.62% against a standard of 97.50%; a variance of 1.12%.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Performance Committee noted and endorsed the Quarter 2 Measuring Progress report, including three positive and two negative exceptions.</p>
18-25/26	<p><b>Flooding Data Report</b></p>
	<p>The report was produced in response to a Member request and summarised special service incidents related to flooding incidents recorded by Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS), between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2025. The Analysis covered flooding due to surface water, rising river levels, high tide, or reservoir, and the recorded causes (heavy rainfall, obstruction/blockage, structural failure). Incidents involving burst pipes etc., were excluded. Fiscal years were used to align with seasonal effects and included the most recent 2025 data.</p> <p>Area Manager, Phil Jones explained that there had been 881 flood related incidents over the ten-year period. Activity peaked in 2015/16 due to storm Desmond and Eva, both of which occurred in December 2015, with activity generally trending downward since then. The most recent year recorded 67 incidents, equating to 74.1% fewer incidents than the 259 recorded in 2015/16, and 31.5% fewer incidents than the ten-year average.</p> <p>Over the first half of the analysis period, activity typically followed an alternating peak and trough pattern, however, activity over the most recent 2 years had been static.</p> <p>Overall, the winter months accounted for 41.7%, autumn 31.1%, summer 24.1%, with the lowest activity months being the spring season at 3.2%. However, incidents occurred most frequently in the individual months of December (26.1%) and November (18.8%), which combined, accounted for 44.9% of activity.</p> <p>Whilst the source of a flooding incident may be due to surface water for example, the actual cause of the incident may be due to an event such as heavy rainfall, obstruction or blockage, or structural failure. For instance, the large-scale flooding seen in the village of St Michaels on Wyre during Storm Desmond in December 2015 was due to rising river levels and a structural failure i.e. embankment. Structural failure was a relatively rare event and accounted for just 1.1% of the 881 incidents. Overall, heavy rainfall accounted for 90.60% of the causes, with an obstruction or blockage accounting for just 7.5%. An obstruction or blockage could be caused by drainage issues (blocked roadside drains, culvert etc).</p> <p>Over the last 10-year period, Lancaster district accounted for the largest number</p>

of flooding incidents, recording 190 (21.6% of the total). This was quite distantly followed by West Lancashire with 90 (10.2%) and 87 occurring in Wyre (9.9%). The top four districts Lancaster, West Lancashire, Wyre, and Rossendale accounted for almost 50% of the incidents. Lancaster districts accounted for the largest amount of surface water, rising river levels, and high tide incidents. The high tide incidents were mainly around the Glasson Docks area. There were five reservoir incidents within Chorley district which were from the area north of Anglezarke reservoir.

There were large variations of activity with each district between the years. Lancaster recorded almost 50% (93 incidents) of its activity in 2015/16, with another peak in 2017/18 accounting for an additional 32%. All districts but three had a decreasing trend, with only Blackburn with Darwen, Chorley, and Fylde recording a small increasing trend. During the most recent year, only West Lancashire had recorded a notably greater number of incidents with 17. These were almost exclusively heavy rainfall related.

Flooding events could quickly affect many properties over a wide area and in certain circumstances, spate conditions were declared. These conditions were when many calls were received simultaneously for incidents not at the same address. This meant that affected property counts could be recorded as estimates, or there was a single record for the original location/property, but the actual number affected was far greater. This could involve a large number of properties in which the counts were only captured within free text narrative. However, overall, there had been 8,708 recorded properties affected by flood water entry. This included three separate incidents in 2017/18 in which a count of 500 properties at each incident were recorded.

Spate conditions would affect the recording of casualties, rescues, and evacuations, as these could sometimes be estimates, especially when large numbers of people were not directly evacuated by the Fire Service. There was an incident type which might be used as an alternate to, but related to flooding, such as a rescue or evacuation from water. These were where people had been rescued/assisted by the Fire Service from a vehicle or a location/property surrounded by water. An example would be when a vehicle had entered floodwater and become stranded. Over the ten-year period, there had been 115 such rescues/evacuations. There was a tragic incident in the previous year in the Pendle District when a car became stuck in a ford and the individual died, sadly. Safety messages were distributed through the Communications department as soon as flood warnings were released.

In response to a question from the Chair in relation to the volume of surface water floods related to blocked gullies, Area Manager, Phil Jones explained that leaves could cause drain blockages which had a negative impact on the amount of surface water in wet conditions, however, Local Authorities were responding quickly to clear culverts.

County Councillor Tetlow asked why Lancaster had experienced significantly more floods than other areas. Area Manager, Phil Jones advised that, over the past 10 years, Storms Desmond and Eva had occurred which had flooded Lancaster City Centre which was close to the River Lune. Area Manager, Matt

Hamer added that one of the key issues in the north of the county was that during rainfall, it bore the consequence of the water overflow from Cumbria which then had a negative impact on water levels when it met the River Lune. Links through the Community Safety Partnership helped with preventative methods when heavy rainfall was expected. The DCFO explained the brunt of the responsibility for flood defence was with the Environment Agency which was investing heavily in flood control. Climate change and developments on flood plains could also have increased flood risk.

The ACFO explained that, thanks to North West Fire Control (NWFC) that also covered Cumbria & Cheshire, LFRS was informed when river levels were rising. Notifications around severe weather enabled the Service to send pre-emptive warning and informing messages for Lancashire residents, and in some cases, evacuations from homes. Area Manager, Phil Jones added that the assistance provided to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) by providing boats etc. was at its own cost as there was no statutory requirement.

Area Manager, Matt Hamer explained that the Service worked with Planning Departments on applications for new developments as every house built prevented approx. 100,000 litres of water from being soaked up by soil. As the population of Lancashire grew, it was possible that the amount of surface water would increase.

The Chair queried and Area Manager, Phil Jones replied that, outside of Lancaster, West Lancashire had seen the largest increase in flood related incidents in the past 10 years. The DCFO highlighted the map on Page 87 of the agenda pack which displayed the largest areas of flooding which were Lancaster (River Lune in the red and yellow area), and West Lancashire. Area Manager, Phil Jones advised that through the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and the Environment Agency (EA), each district had a flood plan and locally, the Service had a Climate Change Operation Response Plan (CCORP) which included a number of rapid catchment areas where flooding was likely. Station Managers, Groups Managers, and the Fire Safety Manager in the Protection department had preventative response plans that they would implement in the event of an Amber Flood Warning.

County Councillor M Clifford stated that he was the Director of Cuerden Valley Park which housed a Victorian reservoir and asked for further information on the structural failing of a reservoir in the chart of Page 83 of the agenda pack. Area Manager Phil Jones advised that there were 5 reservoir incidents in Chorley and 1 in Blackpool, however he was not aware of any significant flooding incidents caused by the structural failing of a reservoir. He added that he would gather and provide the information to the Member outside of the meeting. The DCFO explained that LFRS did not have legislative responsibility for reservoirs as it was placed with the Local Authority and EA. He advised that reservoir failure was high on the LRF risk register within the county.

County Councillor A Riggott referenced a flooding incident in Chorley where the West Coast Mainline was impassable with water and asked who had the responsibility to close the roads in those instances and how that was managed. Area Manager, Phil Jones confirmed that, under the Fire and Rescue Act, LFRS

	<p>could legally close roads and redirect traffic when they were in attendance at an incident until the Local Authority Highways arrived to block roads.</p> <p>County Councillor G Mirfin commented that the report was excellent and should be promoted to the public and press as it contained many important messages. In particular the report highlighted the 'Rescue' aspect of the Service. When in London lobbying the Fire Minister, Members also raised the need for DEFRA and the EA to provide Fire and Rescue Services with funding in recognition of the work they conduct on their behalf. In terms of flooding data, he stated that it may be useful to conduct a re-map of data to show how many properties were affected by flood per district. Despite the fact that the Ribble Valley had fewer properties and was not as densely populated as other areas in Lancashire, the last two major flood impacted 175 properties which was significant.</p> <p>Area Manager, Phil Jones advised that Flood Groups seemed to end during the Covid-19 pandemic, and it was important that they were reinstated where possible as the public could prepare for floods in advance. LFRS were happy to be involved with Flood Groups. The ACFO added that when recruiting for On-Call firefighters, Fire Stations worked with local Flood Groups to recruit flood volunteers who were likely to be deployed in harsh weather conditions to protect vulnerable properties. County Councillor A Riggott suggested that information about Flood Groups and how they work be circulated to new Members.</p> <p><b>Resolved :-</b> That the Performance Committee noted the analysis of flood-related demand and the continued importance of effective planning, preparedness, and response to severe weather events impacting on communities.</p>
19-25/26	<p><b>Water Safety Presentation</b></p>
	<p>Area Manager, Matt Hamer introduced Prevention Support Officer (PSO), Paul Slee to Members. He explained that Paul worked in the Central Prevention Team, designed education packages and was the driving catalyst behind the Lancashire Water Safety Partnership.</p> <p>Prevention Support Officer, Paul Slee provided members with a presentation regarding Water Safety in Lancashire.</p> <p>Members were advised that water incidents attended* by Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service over the past 5 years (01/01/2020 – 30/09/2025) included: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total number of water incidents attended (non-suicide related) - 283 (2025 – 38 up to 30<sup>th</sup> September).</li> <li>• Number of casualties rescued from water (inc. fatalities) – 322 (53% were male, 25% female, and 22% were no gender recorded. Where gender was recorded 68% were male and 32% were female).</li> <li>• Suicide attempts at water locations – 39 incidents (14% of total number of incidents).</li> <li>• Fatalities – 34 (85% male, 12% female, 3% not known – in line with UK data).</li> <li>• Suicide fatalities – 5 (100% male) (15% total number of suicide attempts – half of UK percentage).</li> </ul>

\*It was noted by Members that this did not include coastal incidents.

The districts of Lancaster (almost 25% of the total), Preston, Blackburn with Darwen and Burnley had seen the highest concentration of LFRS attended water incidents. Just over 50% of the water related incidents for October 2024 – September 2025 were linked to flooding in the winter months, mainly in January 2025 all of which were vehicle related. This could be attributed to people trapped on top of vehicles. The busiest months for water related incidents were June, July, and August, although, many incidents still occurred in winter related to ice and driving in darkness.

Members noted that the permeability of soil types across the county could influence the volume of flooding.

The Eastern Area had experienced the most water related fatalities, followed by Southern, Pennine, and Northern (though the latter only included one District – Lancaster). Most fatalities noted on the map in the agenda pack were around rivers in the county. The current year (2025), as confirmed by the Met Office, had the warmest Spring on record and the driest summer on record, which contributed to a high number of fatalities across the country.

An LFRS Incidents – yearly break down was presented to Members.

LFRS Incidents and Fatalities by known age were shown in the slide pack. The top three in all categories were young males, who tended to be risk takers, and young people on holiday. The UK fatalities were also linked to 50–70-year-olds. Some of those figures could be higher as ages weren't always captured and individuals would be described as middle-aged or elderly. Young males and middle-aged people were the target group for the Service.

Targeting Water Safety Prevention Work (LFRS data 01 January 2020 – 30 September 2025): -

- Highest Incident Districts - Lancaster (24% of total), Burnley (10%), Preston (10%), BwD (8%).
- Highest Fatality Districts - Lancaster, Burnley, BwD, West Lancs.
- Highest Fatality Districts in proportion to number of incidents there - Hyndburn, West Lancs, Rossendale, Fylde.
- UK Fatalities (National Water Incident Database (WAID) 2024) - 84% males.
- Lancashire Fatalities - 85% male, 12% female, 3% not known.
- Lancashire Casualties rescued from water by recorded gender (inc. fatalities) - 68% male, 32% - female.

The new LFRS Incident Dashboard allowed quick view, as well as more detailed analysis to aid prevention work.

The target audience related to both age groups and activities and could be explained through key themes which also took their guidance through national messaging. These were:-

- Activities in water.
- Activities near water.

- (almost 40% of people who lose their lives to accidental drowning did not intend to enter the water in the first place i.e. walking on ice or jogging near water).
- Away from home.
- In an emergency - who to call and what to do.

The Service were supporting national water safety campaigns which linked to the LFRS campaign and local risk reduction objectives in conjunction with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS), National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), and the National Water Safety Forum (NWSF).

The Service delivered the KS3/4 Water Safety Package to schools in high-risk localities as an in-person session, schools in lower risk localities, and offered to all high schools in Lancashire. The figures for 2025 showed that there were approximately 17,000 learners from 43 schools (at least 8,000 in-person, 9,000 virtual). The total engagement, which was education specific and community engagement, as recorded as approximately 26,000). The Service also worked with partners through multi agency collaboration which included: training/demonstration awareness events; engaging with people at known or perceived high-risk sites; and helping install Water Safety Boards (WSB).

The Prevention Support Team at LFRS were responsible for the Water Safety Board initiative and worked closely with landowners, North West Fire Control (NWFC) and other key partners. WSBs had been install at recognised high-risk locations in collaboration with landowners, including United Utilities, Canal and River Trust, Cuerden Valley Park Trust, District Councils, and Local Clubs. WSBs worked by providing clear instructions advising what to do in an emergency. Each WSB had a unique location reference code linked to Fire Control mobilising Action Plan and Risk Information on Fire Appliance Computers. A throwline and whistle were in a locked canister, and the lock combination was provided by Fire Control on dialling 999. The boards were designed with a consistent look but could be tailored according to location and situation. The boards had warnings to raise awareness of the location dangers and included a damage reporting number so any issues could be addressed promptly. Members were informed that Landowners decided if they wanted to install WSBs at areas of risk and it was their responsibility to fund, site, and maintain them with the support of LFRS. In certain circumstances, throwlines might not be the most effective, such as in fast-moving water. However, water safety guidance was provided, with location details displayed on the board, and the provided float could, when used together, help save a life.

Regarding education ambitions, the Service was considering developing online options so that teachers etc. could download resources for different age groups providing lesson plans and activities for class/community groups with a variety of outcomes. The Service also hoped to encourage a team of Water Safety Ambassadors, possibly from Cadets/High Schools to help monitor “where the kids play” – which could highlight potential spots for education as well as raising the profile in the community of education about water safety in the KS3 and KS4 environs. There were links into Water Safety in the National Curriculum for KS2 in schools swimming and KS3 and 4 for Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) and the knowledge of the water safety code (which was a new element included in

the current year). Further resources would be produced for particular times in the calendar to highlight specific risk e.g. holidays/beach (spring/summer). Freshers' Week (autumn), Ice and Flooding (winter/spring) so this could be delivered working with Service partner educators.

Following each education session (inc. Water Safety) the teacher/lead adult was given a QR code and asked to use it to access the Education Webform which compiled the results automatically. After each Year 2 (Fire Safety) and Year 6 session (Road Safety), the children were given a 'Factsheet' which was, in effect, a letter home to tell parents/carers what they did in the session. On each form there was also a QR code for the children to complete with their parents/carers to help the Service get an indication of what they learnt/remembered from the session.

The Lancashire Water Safety Partnership (LWSP), with LFRS taking the lead, was established in 2022 to bring together key stakeholders to help shape, develop and promote water safety across the whole of Lancashire. The aims of the Lancs WSP: Reduce the number of drownings in Lancashire; Enhance the safety of residents and visitors around water when they are in Lancashire; and enhance the safety of residents of Lancashire around water wherever they are. These aims were achieved by effective use of data, sharing learning, and working together.

The way forward for the LWSP would be to continue to support landowners who wished to install Water Safety Boards at identified risk locations, either historical or perceived. It would continue to promote joint Comms, messaging, and activity regarding water (and similar, such as ice and flooding) risk at appropriate times of the year. The LWSP would also improve the data collection and analysis of water related incidents by gathering more accurate information where it was available and permissible to do. It would involve close cooperation from those agencies that attended and reported on incidents such as the Police, RNLI, and Coastguard as well as the Coroner's office for fatalities. This should enable improved targeting for prevention.

Members were informed that two initiatives took place over the summer. One of the initiatives was the displaying of water safety and wildfire messages on digital screens at EG garage forecourts across Lancashire. The Service was won runner up at the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Prevention Awards for the water safety initiative and won the award for Addressing Health Inequalities in the BME community for work on the Regional Council of Mosques and Madrassa Water Safety Initiative. The initiative had since been shared with mosque councils across Greater Manchester, Cumbria, Bolton, and West Yorkshire which was benefited the Service when people from those areas travelled into Lancashire. PSO Paul Slee stressed that innovative ideas for initiatives were in development.

Members congratulated the Service and officers on the awards and for their excellent work.

In response to a question from the Chair regarding the right course of action for people to take if they were trapped on top of their vehicle in water, the ACFO explained that people did not realise that flood water could easily lift vehicles and the roof a vehicle was not the safest place to be with swift moving water. PSO

Paul Slee added that those with electric vehicles were sometimes unable to get out of their car due to water causing an electrical fault. The best course of action was not entering the water and find an alternative route. Some areas prone to flooding which posed a danger to motorists were flagged with warning signs.

County Councillor A Riggott stated that his perception was that water safety concerns were primarily seen during the summer months, although he felt it was an issue year-round and there did not seem to be coordinated messages with the Fire Service and Local Authorities being promoted to residents. PSO Paul Slee explained that the media would highlight high profile cases which would then gain momentum on social media and influence what the public saw. The ACFO advise that sadly, there had been losses of life in the last few years due to children playing on the ice. The Service used an underwater drone which was effective in searching in water searches. Campaigns were pushed out to the public although they were not always promoted through the press. PSO Paul Slee added that data collected from previous incidents helped inform future safety messaging, and that there had been a major push on ice safety in the previous year.

The Chair inquired about the number of WSBs (Water Safety Boards) situated in Lancashire. PSO Paul Slee responded that there were 26 positioned near bodies of water in the area, with an additional 5 or 6 expected to be installed. The Chair then requested, and it was agreed, that the locations of the WSBs would be shared with Members for promotion to residents.

County Councillor A Riggott asked if WSBs were the recommended approach for water emergencies instead of lifebuoy rings that were used by management groups at retention ponds in Buckshaw Village. PSO Paul Slee advised that nationally and from the perspective of the Service, it was suggested to transition away from lifebuoy rings as they were difficult to use effectively and to use WSBs as they were more practical.

County Councillor A Riggott suggested engaging with stakeholders to list a 'What 3 Words' location reference code on water safety aids in local areas. PSO Paul Slee advised that 'What 3 Words' covered 3 metres squared and had to be checked to ensure the words were appropriate and easy to read so the location may possibly need to be adjusted where necessary.

In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow as to the contents of the WSB, PSO Paul Slee clarified that the box contained a 20-metre throw line bag that was not attached to anything, a whistle and it was anticipated a blanket may be included. Some WSBs were located a very short distance from the risk area where they could be seen by the public so an attached throwline would not be suitable.

**Resolved:** - That the content of the presentation be noted.

20-25/26 **North West Fire Control Q2 Performance Presentation**

The Chair welcomed Kellie Matthews, Senior Operations Manager, North West Fire Control (NWFC) thanked the Members that visited NWFC in October. The Members were given valuable information, had a demonstration of operations at

the centre, and staff appreciated them taking time to visit.

Members were provided with a presentation detailing the performance of NWFC during quarter 2 (July – September 2025). Members noted that the full report to accompany the presentation would be circulated outside of the meeting.

Calls for LFRS equated to 25% of the total calls for all 4 services (LFRS, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, and Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service).

### **Q2 Performance Report Highlights**

- Average mobilisation time to fire related incidents 85 seconds
- Significant improvement in emergency call answer time (2.2 seconds)
- Absence at lowest level in 3 years
- Increase in Control Room competency levels
- Workforce investment improving retention with zero leavers reported in Q2
- Increase year on year in participating and facilitating exercises

### **Number of Emergency Calls**

NWFC received 34,471 emergency calls in quarter 2 compared to 32,373 for the same quarter of 2024/25 which represented a year-on-year increase. There had been an increase to the average call duration to 132 seconds with an average mobilisation time to fire related incidents of 85 seconds. There had also been a decrease in emergency call volumes from Q1 to Q2 2025.

### **Incoming Admin Calls**

NWFC had received a decrease in the number of incoming admin calls compared to Q1. Continuous monitoring had taken place throughout 2025/2026 to monitor the greater time commitment on dealing with incoming admin calls and the impact on Control Room Operator Availability.

Admin calls included crews and officers contacting NWFC for either guidance, or to offer advice such as notification of missing equipment, defective resources, liaising with NWFC regarding exercises or resources availability.

### **Outgoing Admin Calls**

There had been a decrease in calls from Q1 to Q2 reflective of the decrease in emergency calls but there had been an increase in the volume of calls year on year. There would be a spike in the number of calls as the number of incidents spiked. The call duration remained consistent.

### **Incoming Requests to Speak**

Incoming requests to speak were when crews had been mobilised to an incident

and were communicating with Control Room Operators to share information regarding an incident or to request additional resources. NWFC had received 38,281 transmissions with an average duration for each Request to Speak of 69 seconds. This was equivalent to 733 Control Room Officer hours workload in Q2 and 1/3 of the Control Room, Work activity for Q2. Fire and Rescue Services confirmed that there had been an increase in information passed via radio which had been reflective of operational requirements. NWFC would continue to monitor this. These figures did not include outgoing requests to speak.

### **Average Time to Answer Emergency Calls**

The average time to answer emergency calls was 6.7 seconds which was the best performance since Q1 2024/25, despite a year-on-year increase in emergency calls. The current target was 5 seconds which NWFC was aiming to achieve. Within the last year, a number of new staff members had been recruited and were in training to gain competency levels which would improve call answer times.

### **Call Challenge Non-Mobilisation**

These were any calls where Control Room Operators (CRO) asked additional questions provided by Fire and Rescue Services in order to determine if a response was required.

In quarter 2, 48% of incidents (11799) resulted in no mobilisation following ECM call challenge which avoided unnecessary appliance deployment and helped protect frontline availability for other emergencies. It also allowed increased capacity for operational fire crews to complete additional work. Examples of these incident types were Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA), animal rescues, and the North West Ambulance (NWAS) gaining entry. AFA and NWAS Gaining Entry related to 98% of the incidents. There was no direct financial saving, however, the operational value was equivalent to £653k+. Where needed, calls could be signposted to other, relevant agencies.

### **Shifts Covered**

No shifts had fallen below critical or essential staffing thresholds during the quarter. This was consistent with previous year on year figures that highlighted trends over summer periods where annual leave blocked overlap and less staff availability for resilience. In terms of competency, 70% of CROs were rated "proficient level". Performance Management with mentoring staff was currently underway as a priority to support development through competency stages.

### **Skill Level of Supervisors**

The competency levels of supervisors remained high and stable. There was a decrease which was apportioned to the appointment of the Head of Operations and secondments of two development opportunities from Control to Operations

Managers in the Organisational Improvement Team. Succession planning discussions were in place throughout the appraisal process to support staffing projections to maintain skills sets.

### **Absence**

Staff absences were at the lowest year on year average over the last 3 years at 2.67 shifts lost per person which was an improvement from Q2 of the previous year. Mental health remained at 42% of the overall absence. Business Support identified the increase and were looking into it with continued staff wellbeing support being a high priority. Support in place for staff included Health Assured, Occupational Health, online support, counselling support, TRiM, and the support of the Fire and Rescue Services. A Wellbeing Team had recently been established who supported teams in Great Manchester following the recent Synagogue incident and another incident where firefighters were injured.

### **Mobilising Enquiries**

There were only 3 NWFC attributed causes on Q1. There were 22 enquiries which was an average of 1 incident per 11,490 calls which was 0.01% and high reliability. Continuous learning was embedded through investigations and debriefs. All training was aligned to national operational guidance.

### **Exercises and Debriefs**

There was an increase in participation and facilitated exercise from previous Q1. There had been an increase in participation and facilitated exercises year on year and there was continued support with debriefs. There had been simulated incidents and high-rise evacuations exercises which would be managed as if they were live incidents utilising crews and resources. Those exercises were really beneficial to support learning and the gaining of experience of operators. It also helped to develop ways of working which were fed back to Governance groups at NWFC and the FRSs.

In response to a question from the Chair regarding the length of time NWFC had worked with LFRS and the annual cost to LFRS of providing the service, K Matthews confirmed that LFRS had worked with NWFC for 12 years and she would find out the cost to LFRS and circulate the response. The cost was apportioned to each FRS based on operational activity. The DCFO advised that LFRS made up approx. 25%, Manchester approx. 50%, Cheshire approx. 15%, and Cumbria approx. 10%.

The Chair asked if the information in the presentation could be broken down from the North West to Lancashire. K Matthews replied that there would be difficulties with the call volumes as the majority were from mobile phones or agencies outside of the region and the data was based on incoming calls, however, incident data could be provided. She was happy to take forward any suggestions and provide an appendix to the report. Additionally, for future meetings, information

	<p>could be provided which linked into items on the agenda. NWFC also informed LFRS of any valuable information from the other FRSs that could have an impact or affect resources.</p> <p>The DCFO clarified that the background to NWFC came from the termination of an expensive government-led regional control project. An incentive was offered to Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) in the region to collaborate. The government was subsidising the NWFC building in Warrington until 2032. Each of the four FRSs had achieved efficiencies through collaboration, which was acknowledged by HMICFRS as a model of good practice.</p> <p>K Matthews highlighted that NWFC recently hosted HMICFRS as part of Cheshire’s inspection and were scheduled for Manchester in September. The Inspectors had commended how the operators worked and how efficiently they adapted to the demands of incidents which was unique to the North West. NWFC was pleased with the positive feedback.</p> <p>The Chair thanked K Matthews for her informative presentation.</p> <p><b>Resolved:-</b> That the content of the presentation be noted.</p>
21-25/26	<p><b>Dynamic Resource Management</b></p>
	<p>The report provided an overview of Dynamic Resource Management (DRM) that had recently been implemented within Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS).</p> <p>LFRS had robust systems in place to monitor, manage, and dynamically deploy fire engines and firefighters to respond to emergencies across Lancashire. There were 58 fire engines and a number of specialist appliances in the county, however some were often unavailable due to many reasons: ongoing incidents; training; maintenance, leave or sickness absence; unavailability of on-call staff; and other operational reasons.</p> <p>When there was a crewing shortage, steps were taken to keep a fire engine or specialist appliance available, by bringing in firefighters from other stations (this was called detaching) or on overtime. With improved technology and access to more comprehensive data, the Service now had a greater understanding of fire risk across Lancashire. As a result, that approach had been changed to ensure sufficient resources were available in the areas that needed them and reduce unnecessary overtime.</p> <p>Firefighters who crewed a second fire engine could be detached to maintain the availability of a first fire engine somewhere else, making that fire engine temporarily unavailable. This only occurred when the first fire engine was available as well as other fire engines in the area and this ensured that the Service maintained a balanced level of fire cover across the county.</p> <p>Dynamic resource management had introduced smarter and more efficient deployment of firefighters based on county-wide risk and was used for advance planning. There were 39 fire stations across Lancashire: 22 of these had at least</p>

one wholetime crewed fire engine and 17 had at least one on-call fire engine. Additional wholetime, day-crewed or on-call fire engines were also available at some of those stations which meant they had two fire engines.

There were four fire stations with two wholetime crewed fire engines in the county: Blackburn, Blackpool, Burnley, and Preston. All four also had other fire stations close by, with additional fire engines ready to respond. Previous policy was that when one of the two fire engines at the four stations with two wholetime engines was unavailable due to training or maintenance, it was not replaced or backfilled. However, if one was unavailable due to a crewing shortage (for example, due to leave or sickness) it was kept available by bringing in firefighters from other stations (this was called detached duties), or on overtime once detached duty options had been exhausted.

On 1 July 2025, the Service changed this approach to ensure sufficient resources were available to cover all risk areas across the county, using the latest technology and data. This provides the most effective and efficient use of resources for all communities across Lancashire. On some occasions, this also reduces costs through overtime requirements. For example, firefighters at the four stations which had two wholetime fire engines could be detached, making the second engine temporarily unavailable, to maintain availability of a first fire engine somewhere else in the county. This was a methodical and strategic decision that ensure that the Service maintained a balanced, risk-based level of fire cover across the whole of Lancashire.

Before detaching firefighters from a station with two fire engines and making one temporarily unavailable, the first fire engine must be available as well as other fire engines in the area. The Service ensured a fire engine was available at every wholetime station in the county as a minimum. Detachments were always used where possible before overtime, although overtime was still required on some occasions.

Dynamic resource management was underpinned by a Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT) which continuously assessed community risk and fire engine availability in real-time. This software provided officers and control room operators at North West Fire Control (NWFC) with visual data in real-time to make decisions on how best to deploy resources. The Service could see at any given time where live incidents were located, which fire engines were attending, which fire engines were available, and which were temporarily offline for training, maintenance, or crewing.

The position changed all the time as incidents occurred and crews attended, so the DCT enabled us to respond quickly to a changing picture of risk and demand, positioning firefighters and fire engines in precisely the locations they were needed. This model of 'dynamic cover' had replaced a static model of pre-arranged fire engine moves which did not take live incidents and availability of other resources into account. It allowed us to respond flexibly to changing circumstances while continuing to meet response standards.

LFRS' response standards were among the fastest in the country for building fires and critical special service calls. The Service had robust, data intelligent systems in place to monitor, manage, and dynamically deploy fire engines and firefighters

to respond to emergencies across Lancashire.

The Service's mobilising systems know the exact location of every fire engine, based on automatic vehicle locations systems, so that the nearest and quickest fire engine was sent to all critical incidents. LFRS were committed to ensuring that every community in Lancashire received a fast and effective emergency response.

LFRS had undertaken a three-month initial evaluation of DRM, with the full evaluation in Appendix 1. Since 1 July 2025, DRM had been used a total of 124 times in quarter 2 (Q2). This represented that DRM had been enacted 17% of available shifts across the four stations. Critical fire response times at DRM stations had increased by 6 seconds in Q2 2025 compared with Q2 in 2024, whereas response times across all stations over the same period had increased by 20 seconds, highlighting that DRM had not had detrimental impacts on response times.

Critical special service call response times at DRM stations had increased by 52 seconds in Q2 2025 compared with Q2 2024, whereas response times across all stations over the same period had increased by 11 seconds. Whilst this was a higher increase than overall, response times remained substantially under the 13-minute average response time target, and Key Performance Indicator demonstrated that performance levels continued to be met since the introduction of DRM.

The average number of Wholetime fire engines available had reduced by one from 1 July 2025, which has been offset by an increase in On-Call fire engine availability over the same period. Combined availability had resulted in LFRS maintaining an average of 48 fire engines available at any one time since DRM had been instigated, which was higher than the average availability over the same period last year.

The total cost of overtime shifts across Q2 2025 was £24,166. For the same period in 2024, the overtime bill was £289,342, this equated to a saving of £265,175. This figure includes on-costs (such as national insurance) and was for overtime shifts directly related to maintaining fire engine availability. To enable direct comparison, one pay figure had been used (2025), therefore the 2024 cost would be slightly over reported. The numbers of detachments in Q2 2025 rose by 19% from 1197 in 2024, to 1420 in 2025. In Q2 2025 the cost of detachments was £11,200, in 2024 the cost of detachments in Q2 was £10,000 (equivalent including pay rise), representing a 12% increase in 2025.

Enacting DRM and temporarily removing a resource from a two-pump station for a shift was anticipated to reduce the available time to complete prevention and protection activity. Overall, LFRS operational crews carried out 20% less Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSC) in Q2 2025 compared with Q2 2024, and 14% less Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) over the same period. Stations where DRM occurred had experienced a similar drop in Business Fire Safety Check (BFSC) numbers but a higher drop in Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) numbers (-28%).

It was also anticipated that enacting DRM would impact the activity at neighbouring stations due to an increase in mobilisations. Whilst mobilisation

numbers had increased for some surrounding fire engines, activity levels remained within tolerable levels, and most were within standard deviation. We had also seen a similar drop in BFSC and HFSC at those neighbouring stations aligned to increased operational activity.

DRM had provided efficiency savings whilst maintaining excellent operational response performance within the standards set by Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The Chair asked a question regarding the impact on the Service provided by reducing overtime. The ACFO explained that the Service had not observed a significant impact on response times as it was approx. 20 seconds across the whole of the county. Resources were placed in areas of risk.

In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow, it was noted that whilst Trade Unions had raised some concerns over some aspects of the DRM, they also acknowledged the need for the Service to make efficiencies. The Service assured that the efficiencies could be managed through the DRM, ensuring that standards were maintained in a way that was proportionate to risk.

County Councillor J Tetlow recognised the savings made thus far.

**Resolved:-** That the Performance Committee noted the report and evaluation.

22-25/26 **England and Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service Incident Statistics 2015-2025**

The report provided a comparative analysis of Fire and Rescue incident statistics for Lancashire and England, covering the period from July 2015 to June 2025.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) attended a total of 18,114 incidents in the year ending June 2025, a 7.1% increase from the previous year (16,910 incidents) and a 33.8% increase over ten years. England saw a 5.7% increase over one year and a 25.0% increase over ten years.

Incident Types (2025):-

- Fires: 30.4% of Lancashire's incidents (higher than England's 26.4%).
- False Alarms: 40.3% in Lancashire (slightly above England's 39.8%).
- Non-Fire Incidents: 29.2% in Lancashire (below England's 33.8%).

Over the decade, Lancashire's fires as a proportion of incidents fell from 37.1% to 30.4%, while false alarms dropped from 44.7% to 40. Non-fire incidents rose sharply, from 18.2% to 29.2%.

The dry summer of 2025 led to an increase in secondary fires in both Lancashire and England.

Lancashire attended 5,515 fires in 2025, up 33.6% from the previous year. Primary fires increased slightly year-on-year but decreased over ten years. Secondary fires saw a significant rise (58.9% over one year, 30.3% over ten years).

	<p>The numbers of false alarms had decreased in Lancashire over the past two years, from 8,774 in 2023 to 7,308 in 2025. Despite fluctuations, false alarms remained a substantial part of activity.</p> <p>Non-fire incidents had grown steadily, with an 18.8% increase over five years and a 114.2% increase over ten years.</p> <p>Lancashire’s incident profile broadly mirrored national trends, with some local differences, particularly a lower proportion of non-fire incidents compared to England. The increase in secondary fires during dry periods highlighted the impact of weather on operational demand. The shift in incident types over time suggested evolving challenges for resource allocation and community risk management.</p> <p>County Councillor G Mirfin inquired about the role of weather forecasting in relation to operational demand and expressed scepticism over the accuracy of some weather warnings. The ACFO explained that when extreme weather was expected, early warnings were shared through various partners, including the Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF), local wildfire Tactical Advisers, and national resilience networks. A score was generated based on the information received, which then helped determine the Service’s operational status. Additionally, the DCFO advised that the Service received timely updates from the Met Office which enabled preparation for response. It was highlighted that many incidents were influenced by weather and climate conditions.</p> <p><b>Resolved:-</b> That the Performance Committee noted the comparative report as a benchmark of incident response activity for the ten-year period July 2015 to June 2025.</p>
23-25/26	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on <b>11 March 2026</b> at 1000 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.</p> <p>Further meeting dates were noted for 08 July 2026 and agreed for 09 September 2026.</p>

**LFRS HQ  
Fulwood**

**M Nolan  
Clerk to CFA**

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 23 February 2026

### Proceedings of Audit Committee held 11 December 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 11 December 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 11 December 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

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## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Audit Committee

Thursday, 11 December 2025, at 10.30 am in the Main Conference Room,  
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

### Minutes

<b>Present:</b>	
<b>Councillors</b>	
J Ash	
P Buckley	
M Clifford (Chair)	
J Hugo (Vice-Chair)	
L Hutchinson	
<b>Officers</b>	
S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS) A Latham, Deputy Head of Finance (LFRS) D Howell, Legal Services & Standards Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer (LFRS) S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS)	
<b>In attendance</b>	
L Luddington, External Audit, Grant Thornton C Wallace, External Audit, Grant Thornton R Colclough, External Audit, Grant Thornton L Rix, Internal Audit, Lancashire County Council K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union	
15-25/26	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
	Apologies were received from County Councillors S Asghar and R Walsh.
16-25/26	<b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests</b>
	None received.
17-25/26	<b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b>
	<b>Resolved:</b> - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 16 July 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
18-25/26	<b>Statement of Accounts</b>

The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) gave thanks to the External Auditors, Internal Auditors, and the Finance Team for all their work on the process of the Statement of Accounts.

The report presented the Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2025 which included the Authority's 25% share of the North West Fire Control (NWFC) accounts. Its purpose was to give electors, local taxpayers, Fire Authority Member, employees, and other interested parties clear information about the Fire Authority's finances.

The Committee considered the Statement of Accounts as presented.

The aim was to provide information on:

- The cost of providing Fire Authority services in the financial year 2024/25.
- How these services were paid for.
- What assets the Fire Authority owned at the end of the financial year.
- What was owed, to and by, the Fire Authority at the end of the financial year.

The narrative report provided a guide to the most important matters which were included in the Statement of Accounts. The Statement of Accounts had been prepared in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as amended by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021 and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

The Statement of Accounts contained: -

**Statement on Annual Governance Arrangements** – Set out the Authority's responsibilities regarding the system of internal control on corporate governance.

**Independent Auditor's Report to Members of Lancashire Combined Fire Authority** – The Auditor's report to the CFA on the accounts for 2024/25, which were set out in the agenda pack.

**Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts** – Set out the responsibilities of the Authority and the Treasurer regarding the statement of accounts.

**Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement** – The Statement showed the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. The Fire Authority raised taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations; this could be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position was shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

**Movement in Reserves Statement** – This statement showed the movement in year on the different reserves held by the Fire Authority analysed between usable and other reserves. The surplus or deficit on the Provision of Services line showed the true economic cost of providing the Fire Authority's services, more details of which were shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

**Balance Sheet** – This showed information on the financial position of the Fire Authority as at the 31 March 2025, which included the level of balances and reserves at the Fire Authority's disposal, its long-term indebtedness and the value of the assets held by the Fire Authority.

**Cash Flow Statement** – This showed the cash and cash equivalent movements in and out of the Fire Authority due to transactions with third parties for revenue and capital purposes.

**Fire Fighters Pension Fund Account and Net Assets Statement** – This presented the financial position of the fire fighters pension fund account, which showed whether the Authority owed, or was owed, money by the Government in order to balance the account, together with details of its net assets.

Members noted that the net revenue position showed an underspend of £735,000.

The chart on page 25 of the agenda pack illustrated that employee costs accounted for the majority of the expenditure and approximately half of the income came from Council Tax.

It was stated on Page 26 of the agenda pack that the Authority's general fund balance at the start of the year was £5.66m. Following a review of reserves during the year and the transfer of the underspend the reserve balance at the end of the year was £6.56m. The Reconciliation table in the report summarised the key adjustments with adjustments for Capital Purposes and the net change for Pension Adjustments.

The DoCS explained a material change to be made within the Reserves statement with the Capital Funding Reserve to be moved into the Earmarked Reserves.

The Authority also held an additional £10.68m of earmarked revenue reserves and £18.33m of capital reserves and receipts. The Capital reserves and receipts were fully utilised within the medium-term financial strategy. Over half of the earmarked reserves related to the Authority's two Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes, whereby monies were set aside in the early years of the scheme to meet future costs, thus easing the impact of inflationary pressures.

Page 27 of the agenda pack explained that the Authority's Total net liabilities had reduced from £503.0m to £435.2m mainly because of the change in actuarial assumptions of the uniformed firefighters pension scheme. The reduction in the liability was £60m and £50m of this was due to a gain due to changes in financial assumptions; essentially reflecting increasing assumptions about inflation and interest rates compared to the previous year. The net liability reflected the Authority's compliance with International Accounting Standards and in particular the requirement to show the full pensions liability in the accounts. Whilst the liability on the Local Government Pension Scheme was funded the Fire-fighters Pension Scheme was unfunded, there are no assets from which future liabilities would be paid, and hence the Authority's overall Fire-fighters pension liability of (£588m) was extremely large. If this liability was excluded the Authority's Total Net Assets would be £153m.

	<p>Long-term assets had increased slightly in value to £130m from £128m, reflecting the investment in the services asset base and the impact of revaluations.</p> <p>In terms of future financial plans, the financial sustainability of the Authority was addressed in February 2025 as part of setting the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2025/26. Given economic uncertainty, the potential impact of the Fair Funding Review and potential changes to local retention of Business rates, it was extremely difficult to anticipate what funding would look like beyond the existing settlement, hence for the purpose of medium-term financial strategy it had been assumed that the funding would increase broadly in line with inflation. It was on that basis that the Service had set a balanced budget in future years, allowing for council tax increases in line with forecast inflation.</p> <p>The Chair echoed the sentiments of the DoCS in thanking the Finance Team and internal and external Auditors for all their hard work on behalf of the Audit Committee.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor P Buckley in relation to the pension liabilities to date in this financial year, the DoCS's explained that this was not something that the service monitored and an annual assessment was completed by Government Actuary's Department (GAD) each year with consideration given to a number of variants including the economy and changes in life expectancy. County Councillor P Buckley asked a further question in relation to what levels for concern were, the DoCS's explained that this was considered by the national scheme when contribution rates were set, with all fire authorities in the same position.</p> <p>The Chair suggested that all members of the Audit Committee would benefit from some training to ensure they were able to provide an appropriate level of scrutiny. This was unanimously agreed by the committee members and the DoCS agreed that opportunities could be explored.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Committee: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) approved the Statement of Accounts and authorised the Audit Committee Chair and the Director of Corporate Services to sign them; and</li> <li>ii) approved any non-material amendments post Committee.</li> </ul>
19-25/26	<b>External Audit - Letter of Representation</b>
	<p>As part of the year-end process, the Authority was required to sign a letter of representation. This letter confirmed that the Authority had disclosed all relevant information in its accounts for the year in question and that all issues which should have been brought to the attention of the auditors had been.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the wording of point 13 of the letter contained within the agenda pack would be amended from 'there are no prior period errors to bring to your attention' to outline that the prior periods adjustments included in the notes were complete.</p>

	<p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Audit Committee authorised the signing of the letter by the Chair of the Committee.</p>
20-25/26	<p><b>External Audit - Audit Findings Report</b></p> <p>Under the Statutory Code of Audit Practice for Local Government bodies, the Authority's external auditors, Grant Thornton, were required to issue a report to those charged with governance that summarised the conclusions from their audit work.</p> <p>The External Audit Team thanked the Finance Team for their support during the Audit.</p> <p>The external auditor had completed the majority of work required under the Code but could not formally conclude the audit and issue the audit certificate until confirmation from the National Audit Office the audit of the Whole of Government Accounts was complete for the year ended 31 March 2025 had been received. The auditors had stated that they were satisfied that this work did not have a material effect on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.</p> <p>It was noted that a new audit risk of 'Implementation of IFRS 16' has been added as shown on page 123 of the agenda pack. Additionally, two low level management recommendations had been identified on page 143 of the agenda pack relating to asset lives and the fixed asset register.</p> <p>The Chair asked a question in relation to the management recommendation in relation to asset lives, Curtis Wallace, external audit, explained that two vehicles were identified as being outside of the upper limit for the life of vehicles, however this had been justified, and external audit were satisfied that this was reasonable.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Committee noted and endorsed the updated Audit Findings Report.</p>
21-25/26	<p><b>Internal Audit Monitoring Report</b></p> <p>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 01 April 2025 to 28 November 2025 was presented by Laura Rix, Senior Auditor.</p> <p>To date, 32 days had been spent this financial year on completion of the 2025/26 plan, equating to 46% of the total planned audit activity of 70 days. The table in the report showed the current status of all audit work.</p> <p>Members were informed that work had now commenced on VAT and Procurement.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor L Hutchinson in relation to the outstanding audit reviews, Laura Rix confirmed that VAT and Procurement should be completed by January 2026 and Treasury Management should commence in February/ March 2026.</p>

In response to a question from the Chair in relation to the section on other components of the audit plan showing as ongoing, Laura Rix confirmed that the team were always working on these aspects but the wording could be amended if required.

In response to a further question from the Chair in relation to the internal audit progress being at 46%, Laura Rix confirmed that work was on track to be completed with quarters 3 and 4 often the busiest. She explained that since the report had been published a further 10 days work had been completed.

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

22-25/26 **Risk Management**

The Director of Corporate Services presented the report to Members.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) continued to strengthen its approach to organisational risk, aligning policy and practice with ISO 31000:2018 and National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) sector guidance. Risk management remained embedded within quarterly Executive Board and Corporate Performance Board discussions, enabling ongoing scrutiny, targeted mitigation, and informed decision-making. The updated Corporate Risk Matrix and summary register included at Appendix A of the agenda pack reflected a stable overall risk position, with movements driven predominantly by organisational change, external environment, and developments in national fire sector context.

During this period, an internal audit of the Service's risk management framework was completed, providing a reasonable level of assurance with no high-priority recommendations. Three recommendations were agreed, focusing on enhancing training, improving consistency in action setting and review, and standardising risk reporting. Work was underway to address these areas, with implementation planned by April 2026 as part of the wider maturity trajectory.

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

- Loss of Funding (including the Fair Funding Review)
- Retention and Recruitment of On-Call Staff
- Mobilising System Replacement

It was noted that the description for item 12b was missing from the table, the DoCS's confirmed that he would confirm the details of this and circulate to the committees members.

In response to a question from County Councillor P Buckley in relation to the risk of local government reorganisation, the DoCS confirmed that this had been discussed by the Executive Board Team and was not deemed as a corporate risk for the service at present but would continue to be monitored.

**Resolved:** - That the Committee: -

- i) Endorsed LFRS's risk management arrangements: and

	<p>ii) Noted the latest position reflected in the Corporate Risk Matrix and Register.</p>
23-25/26	<p><b>External Auditors Annual Report</b></p> <p>Under the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice, the external auditors were required to consider whether the Service had in place, proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources.</p> <p>The audit was substantially complete, and the auditors expected to issue an unqualified audit opinion following the Audit Committee meeting.</p> <p>The review of value for money arrangement covered the 3 areas of: i) financial sustainability; ii) governance and iii) improving economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.</p> <p>The were two improvement recommendations raised in 2024/25, they were;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Authority and Audit Committee should liaise with the Internal Audit provider to agree the level of detail it requires to gain assurance that Internal Audit Recommendations are implemented in accordance with agreed actions. It is recommended that this includes details of the Internal Audit recommendation, managements' response and progress with implementation; including timelines for completion and confirmation of those actions that have been completed and those which are overdue. Any revisions or extensions should be approved detailing any ongoing risk exposure to the Authority.</li> <li>2. The Authority should take action to review policies and procedures where this is identified as being overdue. Following review, policies and procedures should be approved by the Authority or appropriate Committee, even where no changes have been made.</li> </ol> <p>Although LFRS had received it's His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) results outside of the audit period, it was noted that LFRS was judged to be "outstanding" in six areas and "good" in all others.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Committee noted the management comments and endorsed the content of the report as presented.</p>
24-25/26	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on <b>26 March 2026</b> at 10:00 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.</p> <p>Further meeting dates were noted for 30 June 2026 and agreed for 01 October 2026.</p> <p>County Councillor P Buckley asked if future meeting dates for 2027 could be</p>

	published, it was confirmed that the 2027 meeting dates for all committees were in the process of being agreed and would be published as soon as they were confirmed.
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**M Nolan**  
**Clerk to CFA**

**LFRS HQ**  
**Fulwood**

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 23 February 2026

### Proceedings of Planning Committee held 2 February 2026

(Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information:

Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager - Tel: 01772 866720

#### **Executive Summary**

The proceedings of Planning Committee meeting held 2 February 2026.

#### **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 2 February 2026.

#### **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

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## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee

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

### Minutes

<b>Present:</b>	
<b>Councillors</b>	
N Alderson	
U Arif	
S Asghar (Vice-Chair)	
J Ash	
G Baker	
I Duxbury (Chair)	
J Hugo	
F Jackson	

<b>Officers</b>
S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) S Pink, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) S Collinson, Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement (LFRS) T Powell, Area Manager, Head of Service Improvement (LFRS) D Howell, Legal Services and Standards Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer (LFRS) S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)

20-25/26	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
	Apologies were received from County Councillors L Hutchinson and E Worthington.
21-25/26	<b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests</b>
	None received.
22-25/26	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>
	The minutes of the previous meeting were moved by County Councillor J Ash and seconded by Councillor G Baker.  <b>Resolved:</b> That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 17 November 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

23-25/26	<p><b>Consultation Strategy - Annual Review</b></p>
	<p>The Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement (ADoCaE) presented the Consultation Strategy report. The Authority had a consultation strategy which provided a framework through which it could seek public opinion on matters such as its services, council tax precept, and proposals for changes that impact on communities.</p> <p>The strategy had been reviewed to ensure that it continued to meet statutory requirements; incorporated good practice; and provided the public and stakeholders with timely opportunity to influence development of their fire and rescue service.</p> <p>The review concluded that the strategy continued to be legally compliant and in line with good practice.</p> <p>The following amendments had been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 4 had been added to explicitly state the legal principles which governed consultation.</li> <li>• In section 5, a paragraph had been added to provide further clarity about the approach to determining whether consultation would take place.</li> <li>• In section 7, service users / those most at risk of fires and other emergencies had been added as a distinct stakeholder in the list of potential stakeholders.</li> <li>• In section 8, reference had been made to the information provided in consultations being available, accessible, and interpretable for consultees.</li> </ul> <p>The planning committee had 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 was proposed that next year, the strategy would be aligned with the new community risk management plan which would cover the period 2027-2032 and would only be brought back for review within that five-year period if a material change was required.</p> <p>The report was moved by Councillor J Hugo and seconded by Councillor G Baker.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the consultation strategy and approved the proposal to create a five-year strategy next year, aligned with the next community risk management plan.</p>
24-25/26	<p><b>Blue Light Collaboration Board Update</b></p>
	<p>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). He explained that it was proposed that this be the final update brought to Planning Committee as the same content was being reported to Performance Committee. The workstreams were being managed effectively through both the Strategic and Tactical Boards and were contributing towards improving outcomes, providing better value for money, reducing demand, and reducing inequalities within communities.</p>

### **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.

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

The group was also continuing to progress a cross-service coaching and mentoring network where people with similar roles at a comparable level were 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 was to understand and align the health and wellbeing offerings across Blue Light organisations and explore joint opportunities to support staff. It was led by LFRS. It was recognised that there were 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 could be optimised.

The group's initial step was to share policies and procedures for best practice and learning. Work planned for the group included 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 were 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 aimed 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 had improved operational efficiency and fostered stronger inter-service relationships, ultimately benefiting Lancashire communities.

The updated Blue Light Collaboration Project Initiation Document continued to provide 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 continued to consider system knowledge exchange, shared procurement specifications, and joint supplier frameworks.

Fleet had now been added as part of the group and had started work to explore

the opportunities around joint servicing of vehicles across the blue light services. The group were also assessing the viability of sharing the use of vehicle maintenance unit (VMU) facilities in cases of high demand or business continuity. Work had already been carried out to reduce the number of notices of intended prosecution (NIPs) sent to blue light partner agencies, where appropriate. Further workstreams would be identified as the group matured such as electric vehicles and supporting infrastructure, collisions and driver management.

### **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. While this model had been successful in parts of the UK, the steer was now to phase out EMR in favour of supporting the CFR volunteer framework.

In Lancashire, the CFR workstream enabled LFRS staff volunteers to respond to life-threatening emergencies from their workplace. Since April 2025, nearly 300 incidents had 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 were currently at the point of developing phase 3. Stations had been identified to align with NNAS data indicating greatest demand for CFR and where implementation of the scheme would maximise the positive impact.

### **Recruitment**

Recruitment was the most recent subgroup to be set up and was still in its infancy. This group was 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 considering cost saving collaboration through shared recruitment events and material.

### **Evaluation**

Through evaluation, LFRS had considered the value and benefits of several workstreams and had considered how the BLCB contributed to LFRS's 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 being planning to build on this success. CFR continued to be evaluated as part of the delivery framework.

In response to a question from County Councillor J Ash in relation to the rank of coaching and mentoring, the DCFO explained that he understood coaching and mentoring would take place from supervisory level upwards with reverse mentoring also taking place, this was being led by HR.

The report was moved by County Councillor J Ash and seconded by Councillor J Hugo.

	<p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Planning Committee noted the report and agreed for this to be the last update into Planning Committee due to the same content being reported into Performance Committee.</p>
25-25/26	<p><b>His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Update</b></p>
	<p>Area Manager (AM) T Powell presented the report to Members regarding His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) activity.</p> <p><b>HMICFRS 2025-27 Inspection:</b>  The 2025-27 HMICFRS inspection process was well underway; there was a greater focus on governance arrangements and their effects on services. HMICFRS would not evaluate the governing authority itself; instead, they would assess how CFA governance directly influences Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS). The people assessment would consider whether governance and oversight frameworks promoted a positive organisational culture, as well as whether established code of conduct standards effectively supported workforce health and well-being. Leadership at all levels, values and culture, and a more detailed review of major incident preparedness would also be examined by HMICFRS. HMICFRS planned 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 had now been published: Phase 1 would include inspections of 14 FRSs, and Phase 2 would cover another 15, making 29 in total. LFRS would be included in Phase 3, with dates yet to be confirmed.</p> <p><b>Changes at the Inspectorate:</b>  His Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) Sir Andy Cooke would leave office in March 2026, HMICFRS had assured the sector that the inspection programme would continue without disruption during the process to appoint his successor.</p> <p><b>Digital and Cyber Thematic Inspection:</b>  His Majesty's Inspector (HMI) Michelle Skeer wrote to all Chief Constables and Chief Fire Officers to announce that the HMICFRS would be conducting a joint thematic inspection examining police forces' and FRSs' response to increasing areas of cybersecurity risk. Three FRSs had 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 was a thematic inspection, the evidence would be used to inform the HMICFRS's understanding of the management of cybersecurity in FRS's generally. The HMICFRS would not be publishing reports on individual services or making graded judgments but would highlight positive practice when identified.</p> <p><b>National HMICFRS Report Themes:</b></p>

The Organisational Assurance Team would continue to monitor national patterns and insights from all HMICFRS reports, adding essential findings to the theme tracker. The tracker would provide the Executive Board, Service Management Team (SMT), and Department Heads with a “real-time” overview of sector-wide key themes that were emerging from the HMICFRS inspections. The Organisational Assurance Team were anticipating the first reports to be published around April 2026 having been delayed from February.

**Characteristics of good:**

The HMICFRS had updated the characteristics of good performance. These characteristics described the levels of performance a Fire and Rescue Service needed to achieve to be graded ‘good’. They helped the HMICFRS to make consistent assessments across all services and show services what they were being graded against.

**Round 3 Area for Improvement (AFI):**

The Service received one AFI in the report concerning Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs). The service should make sure it had robust processes in place to carry out Equality Impact Assessments and review any actions agreed as a result.

**AFI Update:**

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

**Forward Look:**

HMICFRS required quarterly updates on progress against this AFI through their online portal, and progress would 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 had identified 13 actions from these suggestions, which they would monitor and track.

The Organisational Assurance Team had conducted engagement sessions with a number of departments to review the areas highlighted within the report and clarify expectations for future actions. 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, the services HMICFRS SLL, conducted a session with the Organisational Assurance Team on 26 November 2026, to highlight the changes and expectations regarding the 2025-2027 inspection. A presentation had been prepared to capture some of this essential information. This had been forwarded to the SMT along with a copy of the updated characteristics of good. Phil Innis had also attended the SMT Development Day on 29 January 2026.

	<p>In response to a question from Councillor J Hugo in relation to the three areas taking part in the Digital and Cyber Thematic Inspection, AM Powell confirmed that this had not been announced but it was anticipated it would be a range of different geographic areas and governance models, he would provide an update at the next meeting. The DCFO added that the service had engaged with the HMICFRS team in relation to a Digital and Cyber Inspection last week and the service appeared to be in a strong position.</p> <p>Councillor J Hugo asked a further question relating to the improvements made to the EIAs, AM Powell confirmed that the detail of the improvements made could be shared.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Planning Committee noted the report.</p>
26-25/26	<p><b>Council tax precept consultation</b></p>
	<p>The Assistant Director of Communication and Engagement (ADoCaE) presented the report to Members regarding the services Council tax precept consultation.</p> <p>A consultation plan was being implemented to consult the public on Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's (LFRS's) council tax precept for the year ahead. The consultation aimed to understand levels of support for a proposed increase in 2026-27 which equated to £5 per year (on a Band D property).</p> <p>An online consultation was launched on 11 December 2025 at <a href="http://www.lancsfireandrescue.org.uk/budget">www.lancsfireandrescue.org.uk/budget</a>.</p> <p>Stakeholders from organisations including local authorities, town and parish councils, and community groups had been invited to take part in the consultation, along with approximately 100,000 subscribers to the Service's In The Know email newsletter. It was also being publicised in news outlets, on social media platforms and through internal communication channels within the organisation.</p> <p>In a mid-point review on 15 January 2026, there had been 934 responses, on 2 February 2026 there had been 962 responses. Of the 962 responses to date, 76% supported the proposal and 18% did not support the proposal.</p> <p>The consultation closed at 5pm on Wednesday 4 February 2026. A full report would be provided to the Authority as an appendix to the budget report at its budget meeting on Monday 23 February 2026.</p> <p>Approval to undertake the annual budget consultation was 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.</p> <p>County Councillor U Arif commented that 962 seemed a low number of responses, the ADoCaE explained that this was a higher response rate than last year, with feedback received that a £5 increase was lower than increases for other services which resulted in fewer respondents. Additionally, service users were more likely to respond to the consultation and the service had a smaller number of</p>

	<p>service users than other services.</p> <p>In response to a question from Councillor F Jackson in relation to the reasons for respondents not supporting the increase, the ADoCaE explained that this information was not available at present but would be included in the budget report at the authority's budget meeting on Monday 23 February 2026.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Planning Committee noted the report.</p>
27-25/26	<b>Annual Service Plan 2026/2027</b>
	<p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) presented a report on the Service's Annual Service Plan (ASP) 2026/27.</p> <p>The ASP continued to provide Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) with the platform to highlight the priority activities and projects the Service intended to deliver over the coming year; leading improvements and innovation in the sector with some of the best firefighting equipment in the country and a highly skilled and motivated workforce.</p> <p>The ASP was built around the Service's 5 corporate priorities as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). As in previous years, detailed under each corporate priority was a series of priority activities and projects with a brief description of each item to give further clarity and context, these were: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service headquarters and leadership and development centre masterplan</li> <li>• Upgrade fire station facilities</li> <li>• Invest in firefighter safety</li> <li>• Create more efficient people processes</li> <li>• Improve how the service assesses the impact of its decisions</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Preventing fire and other emergencies from happening; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review how prevention services were delivered</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Protecting people and property when fires happen; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt services to support new safety measures and increase efficiency</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Responding to fire and other emergencies quickly and competently; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on availability, preparedness, and operational competence</li> <li>• Strengthen on-call fire engine availability</li> <li>• Review specialist appliances</li> <li>• Invest in fleet and equipment</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>Members noted a proposed amendment under the review specialist appliance section on page 46 of the agenda pack, to broaden the review from aerial appliances and water rescue resources to all specialist assets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead drone modernisation in fire and rescue</li> </ul>

The DCFO explained that the services Drone Manager was also the Drone Lead for the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). As the national fire and rescue service lead for drones, the Service had received a grant and was a partner in a project to ensure emergency services were included in future changes to UK airspace. Modernisation included using drones to take aerial imagery from the incident ground prior to arrival of fire engines, the 'drone in a box' concept which negated the need for a human operator, and heavy lifting drones. The services participation would keep it at the forefront of innovation, development, and operations.

- 5. Delivering value for money in how we use our resources;
  - Increase operational competence to strengthen resilience
  - Drive efficiencies through digital innovation
  - Maximise productivity and efficiency

In response to a question from Councillor J Hugo in relation to collaboration with other services in relation to specialist assets, the DCFO explained that national arrangements were in place under the NFCC but each service must assess its risk and have sufficient provisions to meet this risk. He explained that services supported each other, with Lancashire a lead for things like fire dogs, providing support to other services with recharge arrangements in place. Additionally, services reviewed training arrangements and collaborated to ensure all training resources were available to all services, citing an example of high rise training with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service. The service also worked with the Environment Agency to provide resources to stop pollution at incidents. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) added that various services would be visiting Lancashire following the services outstanding HMICFRS report, where the service would share best practice. She explained that the service was always looking to improve and researched best practice across the country before making decisions, recently this had included for the procurement of 4x4 type fire engines. Lancashire's Chief Fire Officer was the national lead for wildfires and was developing the introduction of wildfire assets across the country. AM Powell added that there were a number of internal groups in relation to equipment and regional procurement that contributed to collaboration and efficiency within the region.

County Councillor U Arif remarked that the drone technology was very impressive and the service was getting ahead of the curve. The ACFO added that the use of drones and the services' robot reduced the risk to firefighters and fire dogs by allowing access to areas whilst crews maintained a safe distance from the incident.

The report was moved by Councillor J Hugo and seconded by County Councillor U Arif.

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

28-25/26 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on **Monday 13 July 2026** at 10:00 hours in the main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service

	Headquarters, Fulwood.
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	Further meeting dates were noted for 16 November 2026 and 8 March 2027.
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**M Nolan**  
**Clerk to CFA**

**LFRS HQ**  
**Fulwood**

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 23 February 2026

### Annual Statement of Assurance 2024-2025

(Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information – Jon Charters – Chief Fire Officer

Tel: 01772 866800

#### Executive Summary

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018) sets out the Government's high-level expectations, priorities and objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA's) in England. Included within the framework is the requirement that all FRA's must provide assurance on financial, governance and operational matters.

The attached Annual Statement of Assurance (appendix 1) aims to provide the required accountability and transparency to our communities and the Government that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) continues to deliver efficient, effective, value for money services.

This statement sits alongside our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), Statement of Accounts, the Annual Governance Statement, the Annual Service Plan and Annual Service Report. It details what measures are in place to assure that the Combined Fire Authority's performance is efficient, economic and effective and provides further evidence that LFRS continues to deliver under the expectations detailed within both the National Framework and our own Risk Management Plan.

#### Recommendation(s)

The Authority is asked to approve the Annual Statement of Assurance 2024-2025 as presented and approve the signing of this by the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer.

#### Information

The attached Annual Statement of Assurance 2024-2025 provides assurance in three core areas:

- Financial Assurance
- Assurance on Governance
- Operational Assurance

"The statement sets out how we demonstrate assurance in these areas, culminating in the following declaration: -

The Chair of Lancashire Combined Fire Authority and Chief Fire Officer of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service are satisfied that the Authority's financial, governance and

operational assurance arrangements are adequate and operating effectively and meet the requirements detailed within the Fire and Rescue National Framework.”

**Business risk**

None arising from this report.

**Sustainability or Environmental Impact**

None arising from this report.

**Equality and Diversity Implications**

None arising from this report.

**Data Protection (GDPR)**

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

**HR implications**

None arising from this report.

**Financial implications**

None arising from this report.

**Legal implications**

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018) sets out a requirement for fire and rescue authorities to publish Statements of Assurance annually. The Statement of Assurance will be used as a source of information on which to base the Secretary of State’s biennial report under section 25 of the Fire and Rescue Act 2004.

**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

# Annual Statement of Assurance 2024-25

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## Introduction

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018) provides overall strategic direction to English Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA). It sets out the Government's priorities and objectives and places a requirement on all FRA's to provide assurance to their communities and to Government on financial, governance and operational matters.

This Statement of Assurance aims to provide the necessary accountability and transparency to the people of Lancashire and evidence that their Fire and Rescue Service continues to deliver under the expectations detailed within both the National Framework and our own Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

This statement sits alongside our CRMP, Statement of Accounts, the Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Service Plan and Annual Service Report. It details what measures are in place to assure that the Combined Fire Authority's performance is efficient, economic, and effective.

## The County of Lancashire

Lancashire comprises of 14 districts, 12 of which are within the Lancashire County Council area (Burnley, Chorley, Fylde, Hyndburn, Lancaster, Pendle, Preston, Ribble Valley, Rossendale, South Ribble, West Lancashire, and Wyre) and 2 unitary authorities of Blackpool and Blackburn-with-Darwen. The area is home to a resident population of circa 1.53 million people (Census 2021) and is one of the most populated and urbanised shire counties within Great Britain, with a legacy of historical, industrial heritage.

Lancashire covers just over 3,000 square kilometres including 123 kilometres of coastline stretching from Morecambe Bay in the north of the county, down to the sands of West Lancashire in the south. The County has an extensive motorway network, port facilities, nuclear installations and airports and is home to a diverse demographic, with just over 20% of our population being over retirement age and 10% representing Black Minority Ethnic (BME) communities.

The County is bordered by Cumbria to the north and North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, and Merseyside moving from east to south. The major conurbations are Lancaster, Preston, Burnley, Blackburn, Accrington, Chorley, and the seasonal town of Blackpool which receives around 18 million visitors per year.

## **Governance**

### **Lancashire Combined Fire Authority**

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority (CFA) is made up of 25 elected councillors drawn from Lancashire County Council (19) and the unitary authorities of Blackburn-with-Darwen (3) and Blackpool (3). The CFA is responsible under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 for providing a Fire and Rescue Service in Lancashire. This involves the provision, training and equipping of our staff to undertake firefighting operations, fire safety work, rescue of persons from road traffic collisions and preparing for our response to other emergency situations. The CFA is the body legally responsible for enforcing the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and is a designated Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

The CFA ensures that the work of the Fire and Rescue Service is efficient, effective and provides value for money. To achieve this, they operate under a framework of five full meetings each year which are supplemented by a number of smaller committees focusing upon Planning, Performance, Resources, Audit and Appeals.

Further information on the afore-mentioned committees is accessible via our website at <https://cfa.lancsfireandrescue.org.uk/>

### **Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS)**

LFRS is the service provider on behalf of the CFA. We currently operate from 39 locations (with 58 front-line fire engines and a fleet of specialist vehicles), a specialist Urban Search and Rescue unit, Service Headquarters in Fulwood and our Leadership and Development Centre in Euxton, Chorley. LFRS staff deliver an

extensive range of prevention, protection, and emergency response services throughout Lancashire.

To deliver these services, we employ circa 900 operational staff in a wide variety of roles using a variety of shift systems; Whole-time, On-Call, Flexible Day Crewed, Day Crewing Plus and Day Duty.

Our Mobilising and Control Centre moved to North West Fire Control (NWFC), Warrington in 2014. We work collaboratively with Cumbria, Greater Manchester and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Services.



Figure 1 - Service Delivery Areas and Fire Station locations

## Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)

Our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) is a public facing document covering the period 2022-27. This plan is in place to provide the opportunity for LFRS to demonstrate how, we as an organisation, identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks and challenges that could affect our communities over the 5-year period and how we plan to mitigate such risks or reduce their potential impact.

Key to the successful identification and management of risk is our ability to maintain a clear and current understanding of the present and future threats to Lancashire's communities. Risk in Lancashire remains dynamic, constantly changing and differs between districts, which requires varying preventative activities. As a result, no single activity to reduce risk is adequate in all circumstances and a mix of prevention, protection and response activities delivered by a range of organisations is needed to reduce the likelihood of the risk event occurring or to lessen its consequences. This depth of understanding underpins everything we do, driving our governance and planning arrangements; our findings are published within the [Strategic Assessment of Risk](#).

### Planning and Performance

To meet the requirements of the CRMP the Service reviews its priorities and targets annually, this supports continual improvement and provides the opportunity to ensure that we undertake activities dependent on the requirements of our environment. Our corporate planning process has been developed to provide a rigorous yet flexible process that allows the Service to assess and respond to opportunities and threats as and when they emerge. Whilst the CRMP is in place to set out the strategic direction of the Service in the medium term, the Service also has in place a forward-looking [Annual Service Plan](#) which clearly sets out what we will deliver over the coming 12 months, this is complemented by the [Annual Service Report](#) which reflects our achievement against those objectives at the year end.

In addition to this on a quarterly basis, we produce a performance management report known as '[Measuring Progress](#)'. The content of this report is considered at

Senior Management Team meetings and by the Performance Committee of the CFA. LFRS is open and transparent and ensures performance information is routinely made available on its website for any stakeholders, including communities, to scrutinise.

### **Consultation**

External and internal consultation is an essential part of the development of the CRMP and subsequent reviews, and as such we have a clearly defined [Consultation Strategy](#). We use a variety of methods for engaging with community members and for every consultation exercise completed, a summary report is provided to the relevant committee of the CFA. This process ensures that key stakeholders are consulted, involved, and informed of the proposals to ensure that their input is considered within the final plans.

### **Community Risk Management**

Our approach to integrated risk management is supported by the use of modelling. The Office of National Statistics categorises every part of the UK into a small neighbourhood called a Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA). There are currently 941 LSOA's in Lancashire, each containing an average of 1,500 people. We use information about where fires have taken place in the past and combine this with various social deprivation data to give each area a risk grade.

The information is then used to identify geographic areas at higher risk where a combination of Prevention, Protection and Response activities can have the greatest impact.

This is utilised alongside the provision of tailored Safe and Well visits or Home Fire Safety Check service (HFSC) which is geared towards occupant risk and importantly, to those in greatest need and at greatest risk of fire.

We update the risk model on a regular basis and use the outcomes to direct and re-prioritise our activities. Risk reduction progress over the last 10 years is depicted in the table below.

	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Overall Score
	SOA Count	SOA Count	SOA Count	SOA Count	Risk Score Change
2016	32	76	314	519	32,990
2017	25	74	321	521	32,398
2018	22	74	321	524	32,114
2019	21	68	310	542	31,816
2020	23	74	324	520	32,448
2021	21	61	338	521	31,862
2022	25	47	333	536	31,576
2023	15	59	331	536	31,170
2024	11	54	340	536	30,750
2025	12	51	333	545	30,532
Overall change	<b>-62.5%</b>	<b>-32.9%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>-7.5%</b>
	Overall reduction in very high risk SOAs	Overall reduction in high risk SOAs	Overall increase in medium risk SOAs	Overall increase in low risk SOAs	Overall reduction in risk score

Figure 2 - Changes in Fire Risk 2016-2025

\* Previous comparisons have been made to the 2010 data which shows even larger reductions in very high risk SOAs (-82%), high risk SOAs (-54%) and the overall risk score (-16%). A slightly smaller increase in medium SOAs is also seen (10%) along with a larger increase in low risk SOAs (19%).

## Assurance on Governance

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the CFA to publish an Annual Governance Statement along with the Authority's financial statements, following a review of the effectiveness of the internal controls in place. It sets out the key elements of the Authority's governance framework, how these have been evaluated, the outcome of the assessment of effectiveness and any areas for improvement.

The Audit Committee has previously approved and adopted 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 defines corporate governance as the way an authority

ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest, and accountable manner.

Included within the Code are the following core principles: -

1. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
2. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
3. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits
4. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
5. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
6. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
7. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

The code also sets out the principles which support each of these core elements, as well as how the Authority will address each of these.

The Audit Committee also receives regular reports from Internal Audit, work which is undertaken by Lancashire County Council. The Internal Audit Service is an assurance function designed to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes. Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) require the Head of Internal Audit to provide an opinion on the frameworks of governance, risk management and control of Lancashire Combined Fire Authority and a written report to those charged with governance, timed to support the annual governance statement. On the basis of the programme of work for the year, the Head of Internal Audit provided substantial assurance regarding the adequacy of design and effectiveness in operation of the organisation's frameworks of governance, risk management and control.

The Authority has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The 2024/25 review was supported and informed by the work of both internal and external audit. This self-assessment formed the basis of the Authority's Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 which concluded that Lancashire Combined Fire Authority and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service has in place a satisfactory system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of its functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

Under the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice, the external auditor considers whether the Service has put in place arrangements to secure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources and specifically reports on whether the Authority has proper governance arrangements in place. On 11th December 2025 the external auditor reported to the Audit Committee that the Authority has established governance arrangements, with clear structures and processes supporting effective decision-making, risk management, oversight of internal controls, financial sustainability, performance and standards of behaviour. Appropriate arrangements are in place to prevent and detect fraud. The external auditors work did not identify any evidence of significant weakness within the arrangements in place.

### **Financial Assurance**

All local authority accounts are required to adopt 'proper accounting practice' based on either statutory requirements or the code of practice on local authority accounting. These specify the principles and practices of accounting required to prepare a Statement of Accounts that 'present a true and fair view'.

The Treasurer to the CFA provides publicly available annual accounts which are approved by the Audit Committee.

An independent audit of the accounts is undertaken by an external auditing body, Grant Thornton. The external auditor undertakes a review of the accounts and forms an overall opinion which is published each year. The audit for 2024/25 was

conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing and applicable law and provided the following opinions –

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- Give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority as at 31 March 2025 and of its expenditure and income for the year ended;
- Have been properly prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority in the United Kingdom 2024/25; and
- Have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

## Organisational Assurance

### HMICFRS Inspection

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services' (HMICFRS) assessment examines the service's effectiveness, efficiency and how well it looks after its people. It is designed to give the public information about how their local fire and rescue service is performing in several important areas, in a way that is comparable with other services across England.

LFRS was in the first tranche of fire and rescue services to be inspected by HMICFRS in 2018. LFRS was rated as 'outstanding' for promoting its values and culture. In all other areas, the Service was rated as 'good' with no areas that 'require improvement' in any of the 11 categories that were assessed.

Following the 2018 inspection, LFRS was reassessed in 2021/22 and once again received an 'outstanding' rating for its culture and values. In all other ten categories, the service was rated 'good' with no areas identified as 'require improvement'.

In the most recent inspection, carried out in 2025 Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service received the best ratings of any fire and rescue service in England. We achieved an unprecedented six 'Outstanding' and five 'Good' ratings across all 11

inspection areas. We are the only service in the country to be rated no lower than Good in any area.

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 inspectors recognised our commitment to continuous improvement, our collaborative approach with partners, and our ability to adapt to new challenges and legislation. They also praised our leadership, our culture of learning, and our focus on wellbeing and fairness. A full copy of the most recent HMICFRS inspection report can be found on our [website](#).

LFRS is next due to be inspected again during 2027.

### **Operational Assurance**

The National Framework outlines the requirement placed upon Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) to provide assurance on operational matters which are determined locally by them in partnership with their local communities, citizens, businesses, and others.

FRA's function within a clearly defined statutory and policy framework of which the key legislative documents defining these responsibilities are:

- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007
- Localism Act 2011
- Policing and Crime Act 2017
- Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022

This section aims to provide assurance that our service is delivered in line with our statutory responsibilities and with due regard to the expectations set out in our CRMP including cross-border, multi-authority, and national incident arrangements. The key components, known as pillars, for operational assurance are as follows:

1. **Operational Preparedness Assurance** - This is the 'before' aspect of the assurance framework delivered through station-based assurance visits which focus on core work that is aligned to reducing risk and our capability to respond effectively and efficiently when the need arises.
2. **Operational Response Assurance** - This is the 'during' aspect of the assurance framework, which is delivered through assurance monitoring during the response phase of an incident or exercise.
3. **Operational Learning** - This is the 'after' aspect of the assurance framework, which is delivered through our debrief systems and by learning from safety events in LFRS, other Fire and Rescue Services, NFCC Organisational Learning (OL), and Joint Organisational Learning (JOL).

The data and findings from these are analysed with key learning provided for staff in a quarterly report to support improvement, and items meeting the criteria are reported to OL and/or JOL. Additionally, themes are considered for inclusion in training programmes.

## Prevention and Protection

Our Prevention and Protection strategies set out how we will continue to evolve and improve the way we educate, support and, where appropriate, enforce to stop incidents occurring and protect life. Our interventions continue to evolve in line with changing societal risk, and are shaped by data, intelligence, and equality impact assessment.

Our person-centred Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) service continues to include Safe and Well interventions including, where appropriate, falls risk assessments, alcohol, and mental health advice. LFRS remains focussed on identifying those most at risk from fire and continues to refine thematic campaigns and referral generation approaches to achieve this. In addition to delivering our role within Community Safety Partnerships our District based teams work with multi-disciplinary teams to ensure that the fire risk component of complex cases is recognised.

Education continues to be a priority and the Service has fire, water and road safety packages tailored for all Key Stages of education. The Service runs and supports a wide range of campaigns for all road users based on the National Police Chiefs Council campaign calendar whilst also taking an active role in the Lancashire Water Safety Partnership.

We continue to provide the Kings Trust Team program and have Fire Cadet Units at a range of locations across Lancashire, complemented by a range of other youth engagement activities tailored to local need.

Our Incident Intelligence Team continues to investigate fires, gathering evidence to assist arson investigations, and intelligence to drive the continual development of prevention activities which keep pace with the perpetually evolving nature of risk in our society.

The Grenfell Tragedy in 2017, and the resultant public enquiries and technical reviews, has initiated the most far reaching and fundamental changes to Building Regulations and Fire Safety legislation seen in decades. To support change LFRS

has invested in transformation to ensure it is well placed to meet future challenges. 2023 saw the Service become a joint regulator with the Health and Safety Executive and Building Controls at all stages of the design, construction, occupation, and operation of Higher Risk Residential Buildings.

Whilst this increased focus on the safety of residential buildings is welcome, such buildings make up only a proportion of Lancashire's built environment. The Service will continue to utilise a risk-based approach to identify the wider range of premises at risk from fire and undertake fire safety interventions to assure compliance. Support to business and commerce continues to remain a priority and we will maintain the ability to enforce and indeed prosecute where fire safety law has been ignored or flouted. Business support will continue to be provided by our Business Safety Advisors, campaign activity and website support, and we will continue to contribute to the principles of better regulation through our Primary Authority Schemes.

Whilst specialist and highly skilled Fire Safety Inspectors will undertake 'audits' we have increased our ability to 'check' compliance through our Business Fire Safety Check service which is undertaken by our Operational Crews. These visits evaluate simple measures linked to effective fire safety management and provide an opportunity to collect risk information and provide arson risk reduction advice.

### **Mutual Aid Agreements**

The National Framework states that Fire and Rescue Authorities must make provision to respond to incidents such as fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies within their area and in other areas in line with mutual aid agreements. LFRS maintain mutual agreements for reinforcements with our five bordering Fire and Rescue Authorities - Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, North Yorkshire, and West Yorkshire. These agreements are periodically reviewed to maintain currency and provide optimal response arrangements.

## **National Resilience**

For the purposes of this document, National Resilience (NR) is defined as the capacity and capability of Fire and Rescue Authorities to work together and with other Category 1 and 2 responders to deliver a sustained, effective response to major incidents, emergencies, and disruptive challenges, such as (but not limited to) those identified in the National Risk Register of Civil Emergencies. It refers to risks that need to be planned for on a strategic, national basis because their impacts and consequences would be of such scale and / or complexity that local resources would be insufficient, even when considering mutual aid arrangements.

LFRS is a signatory to the National Mutual Aid protocol and has deployed assets to major incidents outside the region. The costs of such mobilisations are borne by the FRA within whose area the incident occurs and are therefore re-claimed by LFRS.

We remain subject to the NR audit processes which test the various aspects of our NR capabilities. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service assumed the lead authority role for National Resilience on behalf of the Home Office in 2016. This includes taking responsibility for assurance, training, long-term capability management and Fire Control with regard to National resilience.

## **Business Continuity**

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is a core element of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's corporate risk management framework and supports compliance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, including the requirement to plan for periods of industrial action.

The Service operates a structured BCM framework aligned to the Business Continuity Institute's Good Practice Guidelines and the principles of ISO 22301. This framework enables the identification and prioritisation of critical activities, assessment of risks to service continuity, and the development, testing and maintenance of proportionate continuity plans. Clear arrangements are in place for plan invocation, governance, training and accountability.

During the year, BCM arrangements continued to evolve in response to an increasingly complex risk environment, with greater emphasis on organisational resilience, system dependencies, workforce availability and alignment with wider risk management and emergency planning activity.

The Service's BCM arrangements were subject to internal audit during the year and received a Substantial Assurance opinion, providing confidence that controls are well designed and operating effectively. Plans are reviewed and exercised at least annually, with learning incorporated to ensure arrangements remain current and effective.

Overall, the Service remains confident that its BCM arrangements are robust, compliant with statutory requirements, and capable of supporting the continuity of critical functions during periods of disruption.

### **Safety, Health, and Environment**

The Combined Fire Authority meets regularly to provide strategic political leadership to the Service. The Authority has overall responsibility for the effective governance of Safety, Health, and Environment (SHE), including:

- Agreeing the SHE Policy which outlines their commitments and ensuring adequate resources are available for the establishment, ongoing implementation and control of a Safety, Health, Environment and Wellbeing (SHE) Management System.
- Providing a clear direction for the Executive Board and Senior Management Team to establish policies and manage safety, health and environmental responsibilities effectively.
- Consideration of local and national issues which impact on Safety, Health, Environment and Wellbeing within the Service.
- Monitoring performance through receipt of the Annual SHE Report, to provide governance and assurance that an effective SHE Management System is operational within LFRS.

Our health and safety arrangements are based on the model Plan, Do, Check, Act set out in the Health and Safety Executive publication HS(G)65 – Successful Health and Safety Management and written and implemented to the International Standard for Health and Safety Management Systems, ISO 45001:2018. The environmental aspects of the management system are written and implemented to the International Standard ISO 14001:2015.

External Certification for both standards has been in place since 2011 with re-certification taking place every 3 years followed by annual surveillance audits. The last successful audit took place in 2025, where certification was extended by the external audit team. As part of the audit process, the auditors visit a range of stations and departments and examined the 'Full provision of fire, rescue and supporting services across Lancashire' delivered by the Combined Fire Authority from a health and safety, wellbeing and environmental perspective.

We have procedures in place to report and investigate safety events, both events which have resulted in an injury to an individual or 'near miss' events which had the potential to cause harm. These processes allow us to identify areas where improvements to our arrangements can be made.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer has director level responsibility for health, safety, wellbeing and environmental compliance. They chair our internal group, the Health, Safety and Environment Advisory Group which meets quarterly to monitor and review our compliance, undertake horizon changes for changes to legislation and guidance and identify corrective actions to improve our performance. We also have arrangements in place for consultation on health and safety issues with the representative bodies, ensuring we have a collaborative approach to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff.

Each year a performance review of Safety, Health and Environment is carried out and reported to the Combined Fire Authority in the Annual SHE Report. Part of business-as-usual is the review of policies, procedures, support for staff wellbeing and guidance to ensure that we continue to meet our legal obligations in respect of safety, health and environment and we validate this by a system of internal and external audits.

To ensure continuous improvement is made across safety, health, environment and wellbeing, we have developed aspirational 5-year delivery plans, supported by objectives and actions each year to assist in delivering future improvements.

### **Leadership and Development**

The Leadership and Development Department works in conjunction with other departments within the Service, such as Human Resources and the Safety, Health, and Environment Department, to provide training and development for all members of staff. This includes corporate induction, health and safety, data protection, and safeguarding, to ensure compliance, reduce risk, and maintain competence within each role.

As defined in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, FRAs have a duty to secure the provision of training for personnel in relation to fighting fires, road traffic collisions (RTCs) and emergencies other than fires and RTCs. To comply with the elements of fighting fires and RTCs, the Service provides training in:

- Breathing apparatus and fire behaviour
- Incident command
- Blue light driving
- RTC
- Trauma care
- Firefighter core skills.

In relation to emergencies other than fires and RTCs, our CRMP identifies emergency special services to include flooding and water rescue incidents, wildfires, animal rescue, rope rescue, hazardous materials/spills and assisting other agencies.

Training programmes are designed to align with organisational requirements, prioritising the safety and competency of personnel in delivering prevention, protection, and response services.

The Leadership and Development Centre supports continual learning and organisational development. Training programmes are designed using insights

gained from Joint Operational Learning, National Operational Learning, internal operational and organisational reviews, and reports on significant national events. Ongoing development and maintenance of competence is a key focus, and this is facilitated through a robust maintenance of skills programme linked to an e-learning system, which is continually updated. Programmes are tailored to each role and responsibility, with a particular focus on leadership development across the Service.

Trainers are selected and developed across a diverse range of specialisms, from the intricacies of boat handling and rope rescue to the complexities of mounting a successful fire safety prosecution. Where necessary, support is commissioned from specialist providers.

## Assurance Declaration

The Chair of Lancashire Combined Fire Authority and Chief Fire Officer of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service are satisfied that the Authority's financial, governance and operational assurance arrangements are adequate and operating effectively and meet the requirements detailed within the Fire and Rescue National Framework.

Jon Charters - Chief Fire Officer

Ged Mirfin – CFA Chair

Date:

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 23 February 2026

### Matters of Governance in relation to the dismissal and appeals of statutory officers

(Appendix A and B refers)

Contact for further information – Liz Sandiford Director People and Development  
Tel: 01772 866987

#### Executive Summary

The report outlines matter of governance related to the appeals and dismissals of statutory officers within Lancashire Combined Fire Authority.

In line with statutory requirements, clear processes must be established for the management of key statutory roles, namely, the Head of Paid Service (Chief Fire Officer), Section 151 Chief Finance Officer (Director of Corporate Services) and Clerk and Monitoring Officer. The importance of having robust and transparent procedures is underlined by recent national events highlighting the pressures and scrutiny associated with these senior posts and the risks of inadequate support or oversight.

The recommendations seek to strengthen governance arrangements and provide greater clarity and support for those holding statutory office.

#### Recommendation

The Combined Fire Authority is asked to consider the following proposals:

- The implementation of a new Disciplinary Procedure for dealing with matters of misconduct relating to Statutory Officers and agreeing that matters relating to other Executive Board members will be dealt with under Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) Disciplinary and Grievance procedures.
- An amendment to the Appeals Committee Terms of Reference as detailed within the report.
- Amendments to be discussed with the Independent Persons in relation to their contracts to allow them to be involved in disciplinary matters for Statutory Officers.

#### 1. Information

There are essentially three Statutory Officers who must, by law, be formally designated by a Local Authority or Fire Authority. These statutory officers are the Head of Paid Service - within LFRS, this is the Chief Fire Officer - the Section 151 Chief Finance Officer (Director of Corporate Services in LFRS) and the Clerk and Monitoring Officer. There are clear rules in terms of maintaining impartiality between Members and Officers and a distinction between the role of the Head of Paid Service and Members in terms of operational and strategic oversight.

The roles of these statutory officers are distinct from those of other members of the Executive Board. Furthermore, following the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection into governance, it is essential to have clear processes in place for managing dismissals and addressing issues of concern. The Local Authority (Standing Orders) Regulations (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 do not apply, but most authorities have used these regulations in developing their arrangements, as there are special protections which apply to statutory officers.

When developing the new arrangements, there is also a need to consider the current Scheme of Delegation, the contracts, and the terms and conditions of employment of the officers affected by the proposals. Whilst these regulations do not directly apply many Services consider the Local Authorities Standing Orders Regulations and Amendment Regulations 2015 in developing their approach.

Currently, there is no defined procedure or process for dealing with matters of misconduct or allegations against Directors of the Fire Authority, including those against Statutory Officers within LFRS. The responsibilities and nature of senior public roles mean that individuals can be exposed to different types of challenges, including potential public scrutiny and pressure, which some may interpret or perceive as harassment. Challenge and scrutiny are key parts of our democracy and the decision-making process, but challenge and scrutiny should be constructive. There is an important line that should not be crossed—between legitimate challenge and abuse. It is recognised by the Local Government Association and National Fire Chiefs Council that officers can be subject to deliberate attempts to negatively impact a person's standing or damage their reputation, usually through discrediting tactics, sometimes in a sustained and organised way. These organisations recognise the negative impact abuse and harassment can have on individuals. Harassment can lead to various negative consequences for the individual, including psychological and physical health problems. The relatively recent death by suicide of a Chief Fire Officer, who was subject to an investigation, demonstrates the devastating impact this scrutiny can have.

The establishment of defined procedures ensures matters are dealt with in a proportionate, fair and transparent way.

## **2. Matters of Concern**

A set of regulations governing the procedural protections for statutory officers in disciplinary situations was introduced in 2001 and amended in 2015 – but as amendments to nationally negotiated contracts for Chief Executives setting out the procedures to be adopted were only made in October 2016, and amendments for Chief Finance and Monitoring Officers in August 2017, many Authorities delayed reviewing their arrangements and a review was not undertaken within LFRS. There is currently no defined procedure/process for dealing with matters of misconduct, or allegations against Directors of the Fire Authority including those against Statutory Officers.

New arrangements need to be developed. It is proposed that matters of misconduct, relating to Directors of the Fire Authority, other than the Statutory Officers, will be dealt with under the Service's Disciplinary Procedure which clearly explains the process to be followed and the support which should be in place. An additional procedure will be established for dealing with matters relating to statutory officers, who have additional provisions relating to dismissal due to their statutory protection. These provisions require approval from the full Fire Authority and will include the involvement of an

independent third-party in any proposed disciplinary investigations. The disciplinary procedure for dealing with issues of misconduct relating to statutory officers is attached at Appendix A.

### **3. Appeals**

Further to the review of the Complaints Procedure by the Fire Authority 28 September 2010, as detailed in anecdotal non-constitutional operating procedures relating to the Appeals Committee October 2024, the role of the Appeals Committee was updated to remove reference to stage 3 complaints, but further to an administrative oversight the Terms of Reference was not updated. It is proposed to address this omission. In addition, it is proposed to amend the Appeals Committee Terms of Reference in accordance with the new arrangements for dealing with issues of concern raised against Directors including Statutory Officers from:

Appeals against dismissal of staff at Director level.

to

Appeals against action short of dismissal against the Chief Fire Officer, Director of Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer) and the Clerk and Monitoring Officer.  
Appeals against dismissal of Director level officers accountable to the Chief Fire Officer, excluding Director of Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer) and the Clerk and Monitoring Officer.

Full details are attached at Appendix B.

### **Business risk**

There is no business risk arising from the report.

### **Sustainability or Environmental Impact**

There is no sustainability or environmental impact arising from the report.

### **Equality and diversity implications**

The establishment of a clearly defined procedural arrangements to deal with matters of concern relating to Executive Officers ensures that the principles of transparency are applied and allows for the consistent application of processes fairly.

### **HR implications**

The National Joint Council's Scheme of Conditions of Service for Brigade Managers within UK Fire and Rescue Services (Gold Book) and the Joint Negotiating Council (JNC) for Local Authority Chief Officers Handbook have been used in the development of the procedures for dealing with statutory officers' misconduct.

Whilst the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2015 do not apply to Fire Authorities, the new arrangements have been developed with the requirements of the regulations in mind. The regulations require that following should apply in within a Council:

- The dismissal of the Head of the Paid Service, Section 151 Officer or Monitoring Officer, who can now only be dismissed with the approval of a resolution of full Council.
- When considering any such dismissal, full Council must consider the advice, view or recommendations of a panel; the panel must be an advisory committee (i.e. a committee without decision making powers) and the membership of the Panel must include at least two 'independent persons'; the Council must appoint 'independent persons' to the panel.

At present the Fire Authority has two independent persons. This will be a new role for the independent persons; their role is currently focused on dealing with the code of conduct for members. This will require an updating of their contract.

Additional training may be required for the independent persons, a training needs analysis will be undertaken.

### **Financial implications**

There are no financial implications arising from the report.

### **Legal implications**

It is a legal requirement for local authorities in England and Wales to have a specific procedure for disciplinary and dismissing statutory officers. Failure to follow specific legally mandated processes can result in unfair dismissal and breach of contract claims.

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

### **List of background papers**

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate:

## Appendix A

### Management Guidance - Dealing with allegations against Directors

#### 1. Background

1.1 Allegations against Directors will be dealt with in accordance with the Service's Disciplinary Procedure as determined by the Chief Fire Officer except where the matters relate to a statutory officer in terms of the Chief Fire Officer, the Director of Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer), or the Clerk and Monitoring Officer then the following procedures will apply. This guidance and procedure only apply to employees of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.

1.2 The following principles will apply in relation to any allegation made against any Director.

- I. Directors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of behaviour in public life and consistently demonstrate the personal qualities and attributes expected of a Brigade Manager.
- II. The Service ascribes to a set of core values and the National Core Code of Ethics and these shape the relationship between Officers and their employers.
- III. However, Principal/Executive Officers, due to the visibility of their role, can be subject to vexatious allegations, smear campaigns and complaints. It is recognised that, once formal disciplinary procedures have been instituted against a Director, experience shows that the inevitable high-profile element of the case can make it more difficult for normal working relationships to be resumed.
- IV. Where concerns are expressed in relation to conduct or behaviour, the process followed will ensure fair and reasonable treatment, with all parties involved being dealt with in a fair and honest manner.
- V. In applying Disciplinary Procedures LFRS will give due regard to the LFRS Disciplinary Procedure/Disciplinary Procedure for Statutory Officers and abide by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures.
- VI. All matters will be dealt with confidentiality; matters will not be discussed on social media and in the public domain.
- VII. It is recognised that the Service has an obligation to conclude issues in a timely and efficient manner.
- VIII. All parties will conduct themselves professionally.
- IX. Suspension of any Director will only be considered if it is a last resort and necessary in the best interests of the investigation, including any business critical or safeguarding concerns, or for securing or preserving evidence, and

any other measures/options will be explored first. The LFRS suspension risk assessment will be completed prior to activating any suspension, recording the decision/reason for the suspension. In relation to any safeguarding issues, the LFRS safeguarding risk assessment will be completed and the Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Officer may be informed (LADO). Where an employee is suspended, they will receive full pay throughout the period of the suspension unless they commence sickness absence in which case their pay will be in accordance with their sick pay scheme. If the individual is still suspended at the commencement of reduced sick pay, then the authority will consider continuing to pay the individual the full rate of pay.

- X. The provision of appropriate welfare arrangements must be considered when applying investigative or disciplinary procedures to Directors. This includes but is not limited to:
- Referral to Occupational Health.
  - Appointment of a welfare officer – this may be internal or external.
  - An internal point of contact whose role is to keep the officer regularly updated on progress of the investigation and/or next steps.
  - Signposting to Employee Assistance.
  - Safeguarding.
  - Consideration of the involvement of the Chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

## **2. Disciplinary Procedure for Statutory Officers**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This procedure outlines the process to be followed when dealing with disciplinary matters for Statutory Officers in Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service to provide a fair and consistent process specifically for dealing with disciplinary action, the use of suspension, carrying out investigations, dismissals and appeals for the post-holders who hold the office of Head of Paid Service (Chief Fire Officer), Clerk and Monitoring Officer and Section 151 (Director of Corporate Services) referred to as Statutory Officers. This procedure only applies to employees of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.

The following has been considered in the development of these procedures:

- The Local Authorities (Standing Orders (England) Regulations 2015 amended. The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulation 2001 regarding the disciplinary procedure for statutory positions within Authorities.
- The JNC has issued a revised edition of the National Salary Framework and Conditions of Service Handbook for Local Authorities' Chief Executives. The included Model Disciplinary Procedure (England and Wales) forms the basis of this procedure (applies to S151 and Monitoring Officer).

## **2.2 Disciplinary Action**

- 2.2(i) The disciplinary action in relation to this process includes any action occasioned by alleged misconduct or poor performance which, if proven, would be recorded on the Statutory Officer's personal file. This includes any proposals for dismissals of the Statutory Officer for any reason other than redundancy, permanent ill health or infirmity of body where another more appropriate procedure may be invoked.
- 2.2 (ii) Where an allegation is made in respect of a Statutory Officer which could constitute either misconduct or gross misconduct, then the Fire Authority may initiate this disciplinary procedure.
- 2.2 (iii) If the employee raises a grievance during the disciplinary procedure, the employer can pause the disciplinary investigation/hearing and deal with the grievance first. It may be appropriate to deal with both at the same time if the grievance and the disciplinary case are related.

## **2.3 Right to be accompanied**

- 2.3(i) The Statutory Officer will have the opportunity to be accompanied by their trade union representative or some other person of their choice (at their own cost), excluding, in exceptional circumstances, where there is a need to suspend the Statutory Officer in an emergency.
- 2.3(ii) The statutory right to be accompanied applies only to hearings where disciplinary action may be taken or confirmed. Whilst every effort will be made to agree suitable dates the unavailability of a representative cannot unduly delay the procedure. In this procedure the statutory right to be accompanied would arise as follows:
- Where the Investigation and Disciplinary Committee (IDC) considers the report of the Independent Investigator (II) and provides the Statutory Officer with the opportunity to state their case before making its decision.
  - During any appeal against the decision taken by the IDC for action short of dismissal.
  - At a Fire Authority Meeting considering a recommendation for dismissal which also fulfils the requirement relating to a right of appeal.
- 2.3(iii) At any of these detailed stages the Statutory Officer, where the representative is unavailable, will have the right to postpone the meeting for a period of up to ten calendar days.
- 2.3(iv) If the Statutory Officer representative is unable to attend within that period the Fire Authority has the right to proceed with the hearing without further delay, although reasonable consideration should be given to arranging an alternative date.

## **2.4 Suspension**

- 2.4(i) The Chief Fire Officer (CFO), in consultation with the Chair of the Authority or, in his/her absence, the Vice Chair holds the delegated power to suspend the Director of Corporate Services and the Clerk and Monitoring Officer immediately in an emergency. The Chair and any Leaders of other political groups will be advised that a Statutory Officer has been suspended on emergency grounds.
- 2.4(ii) Where there is a consideration to suspend the CFO, an Investigation and Disciplinary Committee (IDC) will be established and the facts considered.
- 2.4(iii) Suspension will not take place until paragraph 1.2 (ix) has been applied.

## **2.5 Informal fact finding**

- 2.5(i) This procedure will allow for an initial fact finding or preliminary investigation to be undertaken. The purpose of the initial fact finding, or preliminary investigation is to determine if a potential question of discipline exists and, if it does, whether it could not be resolved by a quiet word, informally (e.g. through an unrecorded informal warning).
- 2.5(ii) However, it will depend upon the seriousness of the situation. The working context will also be considered, for example a challenging period for employees or communities such as, industrial action, changes to service delivery. The potential for a vexatious complainant, and or smear campaign will also be considered. Advice can be provided by the CFO, the Monitoring Officer, the Legal Services and Standards Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer and the Director People and Development, as applicable and depending on the circumstances of the case. Records should be kept of allegations and preliminary investigations.
- 2.5(iii) On receiving the initial fact-finding report, the Clerk and Monitoring Officer, or Deputy Monitoring Officer and, if the matter relates to the Clerk and Monitoring Officer, the CFO (in consultation with the independent person) will determine whether a case should be referred to the IDC. The IDC will comprise a group of five members politically constituted with the Chair usually being the Chair of the Fire Authority.

## **2.6 Informal Stage**

- 2.6(i) If an allegation/other issue raised against a Statutory Officer is considered to require a full investigation, the following process will apply.
- The Clerk and Monitoring Officer, or their deputy will receive and refer the allegation/issue to the IDC. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer or their deputy will act as Clerk to the IDC providing necessary procedural and administrative support including noting the meetings accordingly. The IDC will decide when receiving the initial allegation, the appropriate person to assist them with information gathering that may be required at this initial stage. This may be the Clerk and Monitoring Officer, or their deputy, or another appropriate person as determined by the IDC.

- Where the allegation/issue relates to the Clerk and Monitoring Officer then the CFO will nominate an appropriate person to be responsible for the receiving and referring the allegation/issue to the IDC. In such circumstances the Deputy Monitoring Officer will provide procedural and administrative support to the IDC as necessary. The IDC will decide, when receiving the initial allegation, the appropriate person to assist them with the information gathering at this stage. This may be the Deputy Monitoring Officer, or another appropriate officer as determined by the IDC.
- The IDC will, as soon as is practicable, inform the Statutory Officer in writing of the allegation or other issues under investigation and will also provide, as soon as is practicable, him/her with any evidence the IDC is to consider. This includes the right to hear any oral evidence that may be presented.
- The Statutory Officer will be invited to put forward written representations and provide any evidence, including evidence from any witnesses they wish the IDC to consider. The IDC will also provide the opportunity for the Statutory Officer to make oral representations direct to the IDC. The IDC, having considered the allegation or other issues, supporting evidence, written and/or oral representations of the Statutory Person and report (oral or written) prepared by the information gatherer, will decide whether the allegation/issues considered:
  - Require no further action
  - Can be resolved via issue of an unrecorded oral warning
  - Should be referred to an Independent Investigator.

2.6(ii) In determining whether an allegation of misconduct by a Statutory Officer should be investigated in accordance with the Authority's approved procedures, it may be decided to take no action if one or more of the following applies:

- insufficient information has been provided on which to base a decision on whether the allegation should be investigated.
- the allegation appears to be simply malicious or "tit-for-tat"
- the allegation is deemed vexatious.
- Based on the evidence, the allegation is unfounded, by reference to a cursory examination of the facts on a balance of probability.

2.6(iii) Where an informal/unrecorded oral warning is to be issued the Clerk and Monitoring Officer, (the Deputy Monitoring Officer, for issues involving the Clerk and Monitoring Officer), will make necessary arrangements for the Statutory Person to attend a planned meeting of the IDC.

The threshold test for the appointment of an Independent Investigator is where the IDC considers:

- there is sufficient evidence in support of the allegation to require further investigation.
- should the allegations be upheld it would lead to either dismissal or another formal sanction that would be recorded on the Relevant Officers file.

2.6(iv) The IDC will aim to advise the Statutory Officer in writing of its decision within a maximum period of two months, following initial submission of the allegation/complaint to the IDC. In exceptional cases where the IDC anticipates further time is necessary beyond two months the Statutory Officer will be notified of this.

2.6(v) The IDC will request officer support, when required, to ensure the formal stages can progress procedurally as necessary. This may involve the Clerk and Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer, Director of People and Development, members of Democratic Services and/or relevant deputies as appropriate to ensure the procedure can progress in a timely manner.

## **2.7 Formal Stage**

### **2.7(i) Independent Investigator**

- The IDC are responsible for the appointment of an Independent Investigator (II). This may be from the nationally maintained list, Northwest Employers, a suitably qualified and trained investigator, or a Fire Sector expert. The IDC will be provided with three names which will then be provided to the Statutory Officer who is subject to the complaint. The Statutory Officer will be invited to select one of the names and may only discount names where a genuine conflict of interest exists. If the Statutory Officer has not agreed a name within 14 days, the IDC will select the Investigator from the names provided.
- The IDC will be responsible for ensuring the Independent Investigator is provided with terms of reference for their role and has sufficient facilities, support, access to information and officers, and is appropriately remunerated for this role.
- Once appointed, the Independent Investigator should carry out a thorough investigation in line with the ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievances to gather evidence and establish the facts promptly, ensuring a written record is made at all stages for later reference.
- Where the Statutory Officers is to be interviewed by the Independent Investigator as part of an investigation they will be advised of the purpose of the meeting in advance. When making these arrangements this should not frustrate or delay the investigation.
- The Relevant Officer and/or his Representative will be given the opportunity to present their case and any relevant evidence to the Independent Investigator. Any technical expertise or witnesses relevant to the case will also be made available where necessary.
- Notes of any interviews taken as part of the investigation process should be treated as confidential and also treated with discretion. However, those taking part in the process should be advised that any records, notes and statements or interviews, taken as part of the process, may be shared as appropriate, if assessed as relevant information to be considered within the context of this policy and procedure.

- Having investigated and established the facts, the II will refer the completed investigation report and evidence gathered, including any recommendations with rationale as to the way forward, to the IDC via either the Clerk and Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer, or other appropriate officer as pre-determined by the IDC.

### **2.7(ii) Consideration and decision of the IDC**

- The IDC will consider the report of the Independent Investigator and the recommendations made during a Formal Disciplinary Hearing conducted in accordance with the ACAS Code of Practice and its supporting Guidance, before deciding on the course of action to take.
- During the Hearing the Statutory Officer will be provided with the opportunity to make representations or provide mitigating circumstances at the hearing and may be accompanied. The Statutory Officer will have the opportunity to challenge the recommendations of the Independent Investigator and question any witnesses.

### **2.7(iii) Recommendation of the IDC**

- Following the Formal Hearing the IDC will make a recommendation as follows:
  - No case to answer
  - Disciplinary action short of dismissal
  - Dismissal
- Where there is no case to answer the IDC will advise the Statutory Officer, in writing, of their decision confirming the ending of any suspension, if required.
- In such instances appropriate communication can be prepared in consultation with the Statutory Officer to ensure as far as possible that there is no damage to their reputation.

### **2.7(iv) Disciplinary Action Short of Dismissal**

The IDC when recommending disciplinary action short of dismissal, will be responsible for taking the action and imposing any appropriate penalty. There is no requirement for full Authority to approve action short of dismissal. The actions short of dismissal available to the IDC are as follows:

Issue a written warning;

- Either a verbal warning valid for 6 months from the date of issue
- Or a written warning valid for 12 months from the date of issue
- Or issue a final written warning valid for 18 months from the day of issue

The IDC will communicate its decision to the Statutory Officer in writing outlining the rationale for the decision. The Statutory Officer will have the right to appeal

disciplinary action short of dismissal to the Appeals Committee of the Fire Authority.

## **2.8 Recommendation for Dismissal**

Where the IDC decision is to recommend dismissal, the Statutory Officers must be notified in writing of the recommendation and advised that this recommendation will be sent to the Independent Panel, along with copies of the Independent Investigators report. The Statutory Officer must be advised of the option to submit written representation to the Independent Panel.

## **2.9 The Independent Panel**

- The Independent Panel (IP) is an advisory committee appointed by the Fire Authority that consists of two independent persons appointed under S28 (7) of the Localism Act 2011 established for the purpose of advising the Fire Authority on matters relating to the dismissal of the statutory officers. Guidance issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) recommends that the Independent Panel should consist of Independent Persons only. This approach is consistent with the JNC for Local Authority Chief Executives Model Disciplinary procedures.
- The IP will be responsible for considering any recommendation from the IDC to dismiss a Statutory Officer and will consider both the IDC decision report along with the report from the Independent Investigator. The IP meeting is not a re-hearing, and witnesses will not be called. The Statutory Officer however should be present at the meeting of the IP, and the IDC should be represented by a nominated person.
- The Statutory Officer will be entitled to submit written representations for consideration by the IP as well as being afforded the opportunity to make oral representations at the meeting of the IP. The nominated representative of the IDC will be invited to respond to any of the points made by the Statutory Officer during the meeting. Both parties may be questioned as necessary by the IP.
- The Independent Panel will consider the IDC recommendations, the submission of the statutory officer and the report of the Independent Investigator and make their recommendations in a report for Full Fire Authority. The report of the IP will outline a clear rationale if they disagree with the recommendation of the IDC to dismiss. The Panel may give advice, express its views and make its own recommendations before the Fire Authority to consider whether to approve a proposal to dismiss a Statutory Officer.
- The Panel may have access to external legal and professional advice as necessary.

## **2.10 Full Authority**

- A report will be submitted to Full Fire Authority by the Clerk and Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer or another appropriate officer as necessary which includes:

- The recommendation of the IDC
  - The Independent Investigators Report
  - The comments made on the recommendation for dismissal from the Independent Panel.
- The Full Fire Authority will consider the recommendation to dismiss the Statutory Officer. The meeting will not be a re-hearing, and witnesses will not be called. However, the Statutory Officer will be invited to attend this meeting and given the opportunity to address the Fire Authority. The Independent Investigator may also be invited to attend to provide clarification if required.
  - Following full consideration, the Fire Authority should either confirm or reject the recommendation to dismiss. It is a statutory requirement that the Full Fire Authority must take into account any advice, views or recommendations of the Independent Panel when they are considering the proposed dismissal of a Statutory Officer and before dismissal (with or without notice) is confirmed to them.
  - The Fire Authority will vote on whether to dismiss (majority vote) and their decision will be final.
  - If rejecting the recommendation, the Fire Authority may elect to impose a lesser disciplinary sanction or take no further action.
  - If the recommendation is confirmed the Statutory Person will be notified in writing.
  - An interlude is required of at least 20 working days between the Independent Panel and the full Fire Authority meeting.

## **2.11 Appeals**

### **2.11(i) Appeals against disciplinary action short of dismissal**

- The Statutory Officer has the right to appeal against action short of dismissal to the Appeals Committee. The Statutory Officer must appeal within seven calendar days of receiving the notice of the sanction and the outcome of the Hearing. The notice of any appeal must be in writing and should clearly specify one or more of the grounds of appeal such as:
  - There was a defect in the procedure
  - The II report being inaccurate or incomplete.
  - The issue is not proven on the balance of probabilities
  - The disciplinary sanction was too severe
  - New evidence has come to light since the hearing which will have an impact on the decision.
- The Appeals Committee will consider the report of the II and any other relevant information considered by the IDC. The Statutory Officer will have the opportunity to appear at the meeting of the Appeals Committee and present their case.

- The Appeals Committee will consider all matters before deciding as to whether to:
  - Reject the appeal and confirm the IDC's decision
  - To allow the appeal in part and impose alternative action short of dismissal
  - To allow the appeal and take no further action against the relevant Officer
- The decision of the Appeals Committee is final.

### **2.11(ii) Appeals Against Dismissal**

- The ACAS Code of Practice requires that an employee who is dismissed is provided with the opportunity to appeal against the decision.
- The whole Fire Authority should approve a dismissal before notice of dismissal is issued, there may be some concerns about the ability to offer a fair appeal if the whole of the Authority is familiar with the issues and already taken the provisional decision to dismiss.
- All information will be provided to all Fire Authority members in line with statutory requirements providing an opportunity for members to raise objections.
- The Statutory Officer will have the option to make written representations in advance to the Authority and attend the meeting to make oral representations before the decision is taken on the recommendation to dismiss. Those representations constitute the Relevant Officers final right of appeal.

## Appendix B

### Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

#### Appeals Committee outline Terms of Reference

The Appeals Committee meets only when required. Political balance rules and regulations apply.

The Appeals Committee's core function is to hear and determine final stage internal appeals against grievances, high level disciplinary matters where the final sanction has involved dismissal, or final internal stage complaints by members of the public, specifically:

- Unresolved grievances against the Chief Fire Officer;
- ~~Stage 3 Complaints by members of the Public who are dissatisfied with the manner in which the LFRS has performed;~~
- ~~Appeals against dismissal of staff at Director level.~~
- Appeals against action short of dismissal against the Chief Fire Officer, Director of Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer) and the Clerk and Monitoring Officer. Appeals against dismissal of those officers accountable to the Chief Fire Officer, excluding Director of Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer) and the Clerk and Monitoring Officer.

It is preferable, although not essential, that members of the Committee have some background knowledge in business or people management or within a trade union.

It is also recommended that members of the Committee attend appropriate training where possible.

The Appeals Committee will only be quorate and therefore constitutionally able to conduct business and make decisions if there are at least 3 members present. Should the Committee be inquorate it shall stand temporarily adjourned for 30 minutes and if, thereafter, there is still not a quorum the meeting shall stand finally adjourned. At the point of adjournment, or subsequently, the Chair may agree arrangements for the meeting to be reconvened.

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## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 23 February 2026

### 2026/27 Budget

(Appendices A, B, C, D, E and F refer)

Contact for further information: Steven Brown - Director of Corporate Services

Tel: 01772 866804

#### Executive Summary

The purpose of this paper is to allow the Members to agree the 2026/27 Council Tax Precept and Budget, and to approve the associated documents, including;

- The five-year Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- The Capital Strategy (including the ten-year capital programme).
- The Reserves Strategy.
- The Treasury Management Strategy.
- Pay Policy Statement.

#### Recommendation

The Authority is requested to:

- Agree the 2026/27 budget, including the Net Budget Requirement of £80.5 million (as set out in Table 2 paragraph 16) which takes account of adjustments set out and detailed in Appendix A.
- Agree the proposed Council Tax increase of £5 for a Band D Council tax precept of £94.73 for 2026/27.
- Agree the levels of Council Tax precept set out in Table 3, paragraph 21.
- Approve the capital programme and associated funding for 2026/27 set out in table 5, paragraph 28;
- Approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy set out in Appendix A;
- Approve the Capital Strategy set out in Appendix B;
- Approve the Reserves Strategy set out in Appendix C;
- Approve the Treasury Management Strategy in Appendix D, this includes the Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision;
- Note the results of the Council Tax Precept Consultation set out in paragraph 23 and Appendix E; and
- Note the Statement of Robustness of Estimates set out in paragraph 40.
- Approve the Pay Policy Statement in Appendix F.

#### Information

1. The Authority is required to set a balanced budget and council tax precept for the next financial year by 1 March 2026. This paper presents the necessary information in a single report to ensure the Authority:
  - Considers the link between capital investment decisions and the revenue implications.
  - Considers the results of the Council Tax Precept Consultation.

- Considers the Treasury Management implications of revenue and capital decisions.
  - Provides value for money.
  - Reflects best practice.
  - Ensures consistency between financial planning and pay policy.
2. The Budget and associated documents in this report form our financial strategies, they are part of our strategic planning activity and governance framework which sets out the direction of the Service and how we will achieve our aim of making Lancashire safer. These financial strategies are one of six core strategies that set out how we will provide services in line with the following priorities in our five-year Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP):
- Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer.
  - Preventing fires and other emergencies from happening.
  - Protecting people and properties when fires happen.
  - Responding to fires and other emergencies quickly and competently.
  - Delivering value for money in how we use our resources.

### **Service Review**

3. The government's Fire and Rescue National Framework for England requires each fire and rescue service to 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.
4. The CRMP considers the way we operate, and evolve as risks to public safety change, it is our job to make sure we are equipped to deal with changing risk and demand by adapting our services and skills to prevent, protect and respond effectively. At the same time, we must address operational and financial challenges so that we can continue to deliver high standards of services across Lancashire in the most efficient way.
5. In January the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) approved the 'Community Risk Management Plan Pre-Consultation'. As set out in the January CFA report the development of the CRMP will include a Service Review and develop options for how services are delivered in the future. This will enable the scope and timing of some of our major projects to be finalised, such as the new Preston and Fulwood Stations, new Stores and combined Headquarters and Training Facility.

### **Financial Context**

6. At the time of writing, UK inflation (CPI) stands at 3.4% following a slight rise in December 2025. Looking ahead, leading public-sector forecasters, including the Office of Budget Responsibility and Bank of England, expect inflation to continue easing through 2026, moving closer to over 2% by the end of the year. Economic growth is forecast to remain modest but steady at around 1.2–1.4%, broadly in line with long-term trend levels. Overall, 2026 is expected to bring gradually

improving conditions, with lower inflation helping stabilise household finances despite continuing subdued economic growth.

7. Nationally, the Fire and Rescue Service continues to face significant financial pressures driven by funding pressures, rising legislative requirements, environmental and societal changes, persistent inflationary pressures, particularly affecting major capital projects, and above-inflation pay awards, alongside increasingly complex demands on resources.

## **Funding**

8. Funding for the fire sector has changed in the last 15 years. The 2008 banking crisis was followed by a period of austerity in the sector. As government grants fell sharply after 2010, the fire and rescue sector was forced to adapt through a combination of workforce, operational, and financial measures. Nationally, firefighter numbers were reduced significantly, with England losing around 25% of its wholtime firefighters since 2008. In addition, latest comparison figures for On-call firefighter (full time equivalent) numbers show a decline from 10,768 in March 2014 to 7,967 in March 2024, representing a 26% reduction across England. Changes to the funding methodology during this period also meant that changes in the economy, that impact on benefits claimant numbers or business rates, now impact on funding levels.
9. Funding for capital schemes has also changed over this period, with the sector now almost exclusively funding new capital schemes from local sources of funding such as revenue contributions, reserves, capital receipts and borrowing (that is repaid from revenue budgets). During this period the Service has funded its capital schemes primarily from revenue resources and has not utilised any borrowing, unlike most of the fire and rescue services.

## **Fair Funding Review**

10. In June of 2025 the Spending Review set out government departmental budgets for the next three years, confirmed a full reset of business rates baselines from April 2026 and a review of the Funding Formula which allocates funding amongst each fire authority; the Fair Funding Review (FFR) consultation, launched with the spending review, updated the funding formula for the first time since 2013. Initial assessments undertaken on behalf of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) identified cuts for the sector and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS); estimated at between £3 million and £4 million were modelled.
11. All Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) resource to risk which is driven by a range of other risks, most notably deprivation. Unfortunately, the new funding review, rather than increasing funding to match increasing risk, is mainly being redistributed towards areas with higher population growth. There is a perversity in the result, LFRS is experiencing cuts in its share of funding and yet has one of the highest levels of deprivation. If the funding formula continues at this level, revenue resources will continue to decline.
12. Following a period of significant lobbying both nationally and locally through MPs, locally elected members and the Fire Brigades Union, Government protections were put in place to ensure no FRS lost funding providing a Council Tax increase of £5 is agreed by the respective authorities for each of the next 3 years; note the

£5 precept in each year 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 has been assumed in the MTFs. There was also a promise of a fundamental review of the funding formula for the next Spending Review, effective from April 2029. Whilst the £5 precept flexibility is welcome; it is unfortunately offsetting Government grant cuts rather than an opportunity to invest in the Service.

### **Settlement**

13. The Provisional Settlement announced in mid-December 2025 provided estimated funding levels for the next three years from 2026/27. Revenue funding levels in the provisional settlement, alongside local planning assumptions suggest that funding levels will be broadly in line with the previously set MTFs for 2026/27; an increase of circa 3%. Whilst this is an improvement compared to earlier planning assumptions, due to higher than budgeted inflation in 2025, 3.8% actual in September compared to 2% assumed in the MTFs, the settlement will represent a real term cut. Unfortunately, no capital grant funding was provided again for in the provisional settlement despite continuous lobbying from the sector.
14. The only change in the Final Settlement announced on the 9 February included protection funding; LFRS was one of a few fire services receiving this funding due to the cut in its share of funding, this totalled just £0.150 million in 2026/27 only and will be earmarked to meet potential in year pressures and future deficits.

### **Council Taxbase**

15. Council Tax income is based on the precept approved by the Authority and the estimated taxbase; this is the number of Band D equivalent properties in the area. Factors influencing the taxbase include changes to property numbers, collection rates in each local authority, local authority discounts and changes in benefit claimants. The estimated taxbase for 2026/27 increased by 0.83% compared with an average of 1.54% over the previous three years, consequently having another negative impact on the Authority's funding. If the taxbase continues at this level, below the national average, the Authority's revenue resources will continue to decline. Table 3 paragraph 21 sets out the taxbase and proposed Council Tax precept for 2026/27.

### **Proposed Revenue Budget 2026/27**

16. The 2026/27 budget proposals are based on the latest funding assumptions set out in this report and a maximum increase in the council tax precept allowed of £5 at Band D, this is assumed to give total Council Tax funding of £45.1 million.
17. The proportion of the budget that is now funded by Council Tax has increased again as the percentage of funding from other sources such as government grants reduces.
18. The net expenditure budget takes account of general inflation, assumed pay awards, previous commitments, required permanent and one-off increases and decreases in resources to give a net budget requirement of £80.5 million. The following table sets out the proposed 2026/27 budget and subsequent paragraphs set out the key changes underpinning the net budget requirement:

<b>Table 2 – Budget Proposals 2026/27</b>		<b>£ million</b>
<b>Budget</b>	Base Budget*	77.511
	Inflation	3.176
	Commitments	1.305
	Permanent increases in Resourcing	0.571
	One-off items	(0.194)
	Permanent decreases in Resourcing	(1.844)
	<b>Proposed Net Budget Requirement</b>	<b>80.525</b>
<b>Funding</b>	Council Tax	45.064
	Business Rates	15.481
	Revenue Support Grant	19.980
	<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>80.525</b>

Precept (Council Tax – Band D) per annum	<b>£94.73</b>
Precept (Council Tax – Band D) per week	<b>£1.82</b>
Increase from 2025/26 Band D of £89.73	<b>£5.00</b>
Increase per week Band D	<b>10p</b>

19. As the table shows, this proposal delivers a balanced budget as required by law. The £5 increase equates to a 5.57% increase in the council tax precept, if the precept is reduced additional savings would be required, for example, a reduction of 1% would reduce funding by £0.4 million which equates to a loss of £4 million in funding over 10 years.
20. The main elements that make up the Proposed Budget Requirement for 2026/27 are set out below and detailed in the MTFs in Appendix A:
- Economic changes
    - Pay - An allowance of 4% for pay awards in 2026/27 has been included with 2% thereafter. If pay awards are higher than assumed they will need to be met from reserves or in year savings in 2026/27 with additional savings made in future years. Each 1% increase results in an additional £0.5 million and £0.1 million for Grey book and Green book staff respectively.
    - Inflation – Non-pay budgets have been increased by 3.8% in line with CPI and 2% thereafter. Specific increases in price inflation for known areas have been assumed.
    - Interest earned – The interest earned on cash balances in the MTFs is updated to reflect the amended use of reserves and gradual reduction in interest rates. The budget in 2026/27 is £1.4 million and then reduce over the period of the MTFs to £0.2 million by 2030/31.
  - Commitments – These reflect the impact of previous decisions that have a financial consequence in 2026/27 or are due to policy, legal or regulatory changes. The main adjustment in 2026/27 relates to a planned £1 million increase in revenue funding for the capital programme from £2.5 million to £3.5 million. Whilst a comprehensive review of the Capital programme has taken place, and asset life extended where possible, significant inflationary pressures for vehicles, property and ICT means that without dedicated

central Government capital grants, revenue to capital contributions must increase.

- Permanent increases in Resourcing – An increase of £0.5 million is required in 2026/27 to reflect the loss of the National Insurance grant; Government have confirmed this has been rolled into Grants now.
- Permanent decreases in Resourcing - In 2026/27 £1.8 million of savings will be realised from optimising crewing arrangements; reducing wholetime crewing levels from 13 to 12 (on 2 pump Wholetime, Flexible Day Crewed and Day Crewing Plus stations [excluding Urban Search and Rescue units]) as the next step in meeting financial challenges, improving efficiency, and aligning Lancashire with sector- equivalent crewing models. This will result in the reduction of the grey book establishment from 636 to 608. The £0.5 million overtime savings realised in 2025/26 from Dynamic Resourcing is built into the base budget and thus assumed to continue.

### Council Tax Precept

21. Council Tax funding is based on the estimated taxbase (Band D equivalents) provided by each local authority. Compared to 2025/26, the overall taxbase has increased by 0.83% (3,912 properties), last year the increase was 1.43%. The following table shows the number of Band D equivalents and proposed precept for each local authority based on the band D precept increase of £5.

<b>Table 3 – Proposed Precepts 2026/27</b>	<b>Number of Band D Equivalents</b>	<b>Precept on Collection Fund</b>
Burnley Borough Council	24,497.00	2,320,601
Chorley Borough Council	39,157.93	3,709,431
Fylde Borough Council	33,067.00	3,132,437
Hyndburn Borough Council	22,183.00	2,101,396
Lancaster City Council	43,832.69	4,152,271
Pendle Borough Council	25,164.44	2,383,827
Preston City Council	45,222.90	4,283,965
Ribble Valley Borough Council	25,853.00	2,449,055
Rosendale Borough Council	21,350.00	2,022,486
South Ribble Borough Council	38,816.17	3,677,056
West Lancashire District Council	38,756.88	3,671,439
Wyre Borough Council	40,088.94	3,797,625
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	38,246.03	3,623,046
Blackpool Council	39,477.00	3,739,656
<b>Total</b>	<b>475,712.98</b>	<b>45,064,291</b>

<b>Band</b>	<b>Proposed 2026/27 £</b>	<b>Actual 2025/26 £</b>	<b>Change per year £</b>	<b>Change per week £</b>
A	63.15	59.82	3.33	0.06
B	73.68	69.79	3.89	0.07
C	84.20	79.76	4.44	0.09
D	94.73	89.73	5.00	0.10
E	115.78	109.67	6.11	0.12
F	136.83	129.61	7.22	0.14
G	157.88	149.55	8.33	0.16
H	189.46	179.46	10.00	0.19

22. The increase for a Band D property per year is £5; that is 10 pence per week. The precept received from each collection authority is adjusted to reflect any surplus or deficit on the collection fund. This year there is a small surplus of £0.294 million which will be earmarked to meet in year pressures and future deficits on the collection fund. The MTFs includes the adjusted precept from each collection authority.

### **Council Tax Precept Consultation**

23. The legal requirements for council tax increases are primarily governed by the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011. A consultation with the public was launched on 11 December 2025 for a £5 increase in the council tax precept for the year ahead. The consultation ended at 5pm on 4 February 2026 and the results are set out in Appendix E along with the response from the Fire Brigade Union to the budget.
24. 970 responses were received, 75% supported the increase in the precept, 6% neither supported nor opposed the increase and 18% did not support the increase. Less than 1% responded with 'Don't know'.

### **Medium Term Financial Strategy**

25. The purpose of the MTFs is to provide the Authority, staff, the public and other stakeholders with information on the financial outlook and the estimated available funding over the next five years. It considers future estimates on funding and potential high-level revenue and capital expenditure over the period. A summary of the MTFs Revenue budget is set out below:

<b>Table 4 – Revenue MTFS £ million</b>	<b>26/27 £ million</b>	<b>27/28 £ million</b>	<b>28/29 £ million</b>	<b>29/30 £ million</b>	<b>30/31 £ million</b>
<b>Base Budget</b>	<b>77.511</b>	<b>80.525</b>	<b>82.804</b>	<b>84.999</b>	<b>87.351</b>
Add:					
Inflation	3.176	2.162	2.027	2.046	2.013
Commitments	1.305	0.817	0.157	(0.026)	(0.096)
Increases in Resourcing	0.571	0.143	0.932	1.507	1.553
One-off items	(0.194)	0.158	0.079	(0.175)	(0.050)
Decreases in Resourcing	(1.844)	(1.000)	(1.000)	(1.000)	(1.000)
<b>Net Budget</b>	<b>80.525</b>	<b>82.804</b>	<b>84.999</b>	<b>87.351</b>	<b>89.770</b>
Council Tax	(45.064)	(48.036)	(51.075)	(52.747)	(54.475)
Business Rates	(15.481)	(15.843)	(16.169)	(16.493)	(16.822)
Revenue Support Grant	(19.980)	(18.925)	(17.755)	(18.111)	(18.473)
<b>Funding</b>	<b>(80.525)</b>	<b>(82.804)</b>	<b>(84.999)</b>	<b>(87.351)</b>	<b>(89.770)</b>

Note that Council Tax increases are assumed at £5 in 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 and 2% thereafter.

26. Some of the key financial assumptions and estimates over the period of the MTFS are set out below:

- Inflation – The pay awards for 2026/27 are estimated at 4% then 2% thereafter. Non-pay budgets have increased by the September Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) CPI figures; 3.8% in 2026/27 and 2% thereafter. Income earned on investments is expected to reduce as cash balances reduce and interest rates reduce from 3.7% to 3% over the period of the MTFS.
- Commitments – The MTFS includes for increases in revenue contributions to Capital, rising from £3.500 million in 2026/27 to £4.592 million by 2029/30, thus ensuring the capital programme is financially sustainable in the long term.
- Increases in Resourcing - The 2026/27 increase reflects the loss of the National Insurance grant; Government have confirmed this has been rolled into Grants now. Increases thereafter relate to borrowing repayment and interest costs to fund the major projects in the capital programme; by the end of the MTFS total interest and repayment costs are forecast at £4.1 million per annum.
- Decreases in Resourcing – These are required to balance the budget. In 2026/27 £1.8 million of savings will be realised from the optimising crewing changes; reducing wholtime crewing levels from 13 to 12 (on 2 pump Wholtime, Flexible Day Crewed and Day Crewing Plus stations (excluding USAR units) as the next step in meeting financial challenges, improving efficiency, and aligning Lancashire with sector-equivalent crewing models. New savings are required from 2027/28 of £1 million per annum, each year through to 2030/31, so by 2030/31 cumulatively £4 million of recurring new savings will be required to balance the budget.
- Funding – Detailed assumptions are included in the MTFS, in broad terms the funding is expected to increase between 2% to 3% however, the outcome of the next spending review and review of the funding formula is

likely to impact on these assumptions which is expected to be determined during late 2028. This year there is a small surplus on the business rates collection fund of £0.151 million which will be earmarked to meet in year pressures and future deficits on the collection fund.

27. The key variables within the budget are inflation assumptions, in particular pay awards, and funding levels. The MTFS in Appendix A considers a range of risks and scenarios that impact on the MTFS. The analysis shows that whilst the general reserve is sufficient to meet all the worst-case risks in the next three years, with reliance on earmarked reserves, major structural changes would be required alongside government support beyond year three of the MTFS.

## Capital Strategy

28. In addition to the revenue budgets a programme of capital investment is proposed from 2026/27, this is set out in detail in the Capital Strategy in Appendix B. The purpose of the Strategy is to provide the Authority, staff, the public and other stakeholders with information on the Capital plans. Capital plans need to be affordable, prudent and sustainable and treasury management decisions taken in accordance with good professional practice and in full understanding of the risks involved. A summary of the capital programme and funding is set out below:

<b>Table 5 – Capital Programme</b>	<b>2026/27 £ million</b>	<b>2027/28 £ million</b>	<b>2028/29 £ million</b>	<b>2029/30 £ million</b>	<b>2030/31 £ million</b>
Vehicles	4.046	2.933	2.650	3.455	2.338
Operational Equipment	1.753	0.174	0.123	0.523	0.109
Buildings	1.066	5.600	14.600	18.500	18.500
ICT	2.376	1.200	0.333	0.723	1.853
Inflation	0.000	0.106	0.166	0.349	0.437
	<b>9.241</b>	<b>10.012</b>	<b>17.873</b>	<b>23.550</b>	<b>23.236</b>
<b>Funding</b>					
Revenue Contributions	3.500	4.500	4.500	4.569	4.592
Capital Reserve	5.741	0.912	(0.227)	1.481	1.144
Capital Receipts	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Borrowing	0.000	4.600	13.600	17.500	17.500
	<b>9.241</b>	<b>10.012</b>	<b>17.873</b>	<b>23.550</b>	<b>23.236</b>

29. The 2025/26 five-year capital programme approved by the Authority in February 2025 included four major projects; Leadership and Development Centre Training Facilities (£18 million), Headquarters and Stores relocation (£18 million), Fulwood replacement station (£7 million) and Preston replacement station (£10 million). The focus during 2025/26 has been to obtain planning approval for the Chorley Masterplan. Due to new Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) planning legislation requirements, additional studies, which can only be undertaken during Spring, and changes to the designs are required. The result is that the masterplan has been delayed by approximately one year with planning approval now sought in late summer / early autumn 2026.
30. Progress with the Leadership and Development Centre Training Facilities will continue in tandem with the masterplan application to ensure development is not unduly delayed. The Preston, Fulwood and Headquarters and Stores relocation

projects have been programmed for years four and five of the capital programme so the scope can be considered as part of refreshed CRMP and supporting the Service Review during 2026.

31. A summary of the major projects is reflected in the updated 2026/27 10-year capital programme, these include:
  - Leadership and Development Centre Training Facilities – A modern and progressive service requires high quality facilities to help in the initial training and ongoing maintenance of competency requirements across a broad spectrum of operational activities. The existing facilities were reviewed alongside more modern facilities in the region. The review identified that greater investment is required to meet our requirements and an estimate of £18 million is included in the programme between 2027/28 and 2028/29.
  - The following major projects are programmed for 2029/30 to 2030/31, however the scope and timing of these major schemes will be considered as part of the CRMP and Service Review that is due to be consulted on and finalised in early 2027.
    - The Preston replacement station is the busiest station in Lancashire and is in a very poor condition, the budget is £10 million.
    - The Headquarters and Stores relocation project combines the Headquarters and Training Facility and relocates the Stores at the Leadership and Development Centre, replacing the current Headquarters at Fulwood and office / training / catering space in Lancaster House (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) which requires a resolution). The budget is £18 million.
    - The relocation of Headquarters necessitates the need to invest in a new station to replace Fulwood either on the existing site or at an alternative location. The budget is £7 million.
32. To fund the Capital Programme table four shows that in addition to utilising the Capital Reserve and revenue contributions, also £51.2 million of borrowing is required to fund the major schemes. The long-term revenue costs of this borrowing is £4.1 million per annum, this will need to be met from revenue resources. The scope and timing of these major projects will be considered as part of the CRMP and Service Review.
33. Following the capital investment set out above the Authority's reserves and borrowing levels would be commensurate with similar sized fire services based on current levels across services.

### **Reserves Strategy**

34. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 places a requirement on the Section 151 Officer to formally report on the adequacy of the reserves. The Director of Corporate Services assesses this in the context of the strategic, operational and financial risks and opportunities facing the Authority.
35. While holding reserves is a recognised and recommended financial management tool, the levels of such reserves must remain prudent, appropriate to the level of risk and opportunity and not excessive. This is set out within the Reserves

Strategy attached at Appendix C, which includes details of the reserves held and their proposed usage over the next five years.

36. It is good practice for an Authority to review its reserves on a regular basis to consider each reserve. This is to ensure that the level is both prudent and adequate for the current climate, but not excessive. A review has been undertaken based on historical analysis and the current environment and future forecasts; this review has not resulted in any material change.
37. The General Reserve exists to one off cover unforeseen risks and expenditure that may be incurred outside of planned budgets such as major flooding or wildfire events or costs associated with Industrial Action, the General Reserve may not be used to offset annual revenue budget pressures. The minimum level of General Reserve advised by the Treasurer for the 2025/26 budget was £3.85 million. A generally accepted level is one that is equivalent to 5% of the net revenue budget but that must be considered alongside specific Authority risks; 5% of the net revenue budget is approximately £4 million. Considering the risks facing the Authority the Treasurer recommends increasing the minimum level for 2026/27 to £4 million. The level of the General Reserve estimated at 1 April 2025 is estimated at £6 million, this is above the minimum level of General Reserve recommended. Over the period of the MTFS the level of the General Reserve remains above this minimum level.

### **Treasury Management**

38. Treasury Management covers the cashflow, investment and borrowing activities together with the impact of budgetary decisions on such activities. The Treasury Management Strategy is included as Appendix D to this report, it is comprised of four main elements:
  - Capital Expenditure Plans and Prudential Indicators.
  - Borrowing Strategy and Prudential Limits.
  - Annual Investment Strategy.
  - Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement.
39. The Strategy reflects the revenue and capital estimates contained in the MTFS and Capital Strategy within this report. Treasury Management in the public sector is heavily regulated and transparency with the Authority on its activities is paramount. The Resources Committee oversee Treasury activities, but it is a legal requirement that the Authority approve the Strategy.

### **Statement of Robustness of Estimates**

40. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 places a requirement on the “Chief Finance Officer” of an Authority to report on the robustness of the estimates used in preparing the budget. There is then a requirement for the Authority to have regard to the report of the Chief Finance Officer when making decisions on its budget. At Lancashire Fire Authority, the Chief Finance Officer is the Director of Corporate Services.

41. The statutory requirement is reinforced by the Prudential Code, which requires authorities to have regard to affordability when considering recommendations about future capital programmes.
42. The Authority has a medium term planning process that takes account of service demands and the financial scenario covering a 5-year period to 2031. The aim of the Medium Term Financial Strategy is to provide a realistic and sustainable plan that reflects the Authority's priorities and anticipates the future impact of current decisions. Alongside this, future capital programmes are planned taking into account forecast Government funding, borrowing limits and council tax.
43. For 2026/27, full consideration of these issues had led to:
  - Policy and expenditure proposals that reflect the Local Government Finance Settlement together with the on-going revenue impact of new capital projects, whilst recognising the outstanding issues and uncertainties.
  - A proposed capital financing budget based on the 2026/27 capital programme.
44. In assessing the robustness of the 2026/27 proposals and the estimates on which they are based, the Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) has been assured that:
  - The budget proposals are based on the advice of service managers (supported by finance staff) or are based upon or supported by information that the DoCS considers reasonable to accept.
  - The budget proposals have been fully reviewed and endorsed by the Executive Board and the implications on performance, if any, have been identified and assessed.
  - The proposed budget provides for all known future developments either within the revenue budget itself or as part of the Reserves Strategy.
45. When using estimates in preparing the budget every effort is taken to ensure that they take into account the most up to-date data. There is, however, always the potential for the actual impact to vary from the estimates used in setting the budget, particularly as a result of:
  - Variations in the rate of price inflation, pay awards and pension increases;
  - Service financial performance (such as variances on budgets);
  - Ability to deliver policy proposals and/or achieve projected savings; and
  - Unforeseen additional operational demands and activities.
46. The potential for unanticipated events to occur that may impact on the budget, reinforce the importance of prudent financial management including:
  - Promoting a robust approach to financial management requiring budget holders to monitor expenditure against budget and to take early action in reporting and responding to projected variances;

- Regular reporting of the projected budgetary outturn supplemented by exception reports to prompt remedial action if necessary; and
  - Maintaining an appropriate and proportionate contingency, as part of the General Reserve, to cushion the impact of unexpected events and emergencies.
47. Based on the advice and assurance set out above and the process by which the budget has been constructed, the Director of Corporate Services is satisfied that the estimates are robust and can be relied upon for approval as part of the proposed budget.

### **Pay Policy Statement**

48. In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 a pay policy statement for 2026/27 has been prepared. The pay policy publishes data on senior salaries and the structure of the workforce and demonstrates the principles of transparency. The pay policy statement sets out the Authority's policies for the financial year relating to:
- The remuneration of its chief officers.
  - The remuneration of its lowest paid employees.
  - The relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and that of other employees who are not chief officers.
49. The statement is included in Appendix F:
- The level and elements of remuneration for each chief officer.
  - Remuneration range for chief officers on recruitment.
  - Methodology for increases and additions to remuneration for each chief officer.
  - The use of performance-related pay for chief officers.
  - The use of bonuses for chief officers.
  - The approach to the payment of chief officers on their ceasing to hold office under, or be employed by, the authority.
  - The publication of and access to information relating to the remuneration of chief officers.
50. It also includes the Authority's policies for the financial year relating to other terms and conditions applying to its chief officers.

### **Financial Implications**

51. These are set out in the report.

### **Legal Implications**

52. The Authority is required to approve a balanced budget and set its precept charge on the council tax by 1 March 2026.

### **Business Risk Implications**

53. The final approved budget forms a key element of the Authority's risk management process, as it is designed to minimise any financial risks which the Authority may face.

### **Environmental Impact**

54. This is a strategic report that does not contain detailed proposals that have any environmental implications. A particular proposal may have such implications but will be identified as each is assessed.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

55. This is a strategic report that does not contain detailed proposals that have any equality and diversity implications. a particular proposal may have such implications but will be identified as each is assessed.

### **Human Resource Implications**

56. Future appointments to the Authority's chief officer positions have to be made in compliance with the pay policy statement, which potentially reduces flexibility. Although the document has been produced in line with the requirements of the Act and accompanying guidance, the Authority's employment obligations are not superseded by the Act's requirements and have to be considered.

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

### **List of background papers**

Paper: 2025/26 Budget  
Date: 17 February 2025  
Contact: Steven Brown

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

Appendix A: The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)  
Appendix B: The Capital Strategy  
Appendix C: The Reserves Strategy  
Appendix D: The Treasury Management Strategy  
Appendix E: Council Tax Precept Consultation  
Appendix F: Pay Policy Statement

## Medium Term Financial Strategy

### Introduction

1. The purpose of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is to provide the Authority, staff, the public and other stakeholders with information on the financial outlook and the estimated available funding over the next five years. The MTFS takes into account future high level, potential revenue and capital expenditure over the period based upon current known information and estimates.
2. The MTFS forms part of our financial strategies, they are part of our strategic planning activity and governance framework which sets out the direction of the Service and how we will achieve our aim of making Lancashire safer. These financial strategies are one of six core strategies that set out how we will provide services in line with the following priorities in our five-year Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP):
  - Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer.
  - Preventing fires and other emergencies from happening.
  - Protecting people and properties when fires happen.
  - Responding to fires and other emergencies quickly and competently.
  - Delivering value for money in how we use our resources.

### The Budget Strategy

3. The purpose of the budget strategy is to provide a basis for determining:
  - The level of funding available in the future to deliver national and local priorities.
  - The future demands upon the revenue budget.
  - The impact of external factors.
  - The financial implications of collaborations and partnerships.
  - The amount of capital investment which is required to achieve corporate objectives.
  - The revenue consequences of such capital investment.
  - The future reserve levels.
  - The impact of additional demands on the level of council tax that is required.
  - The potential impact of the main financial risks facing the organisation.
4. The above helps to establish the anticipated level of funding and demands on finances over the MTFS period enabling strategic financial planning processes

to address the challenges and outcomes. The following sets out the key principles for that planning process:

- Ensure that plans contribute to improved outcomes in support of set priorities within the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).
- Set a comprehensive, timely, balanced and realistic budget.
- Take into account pay and price inflation and achievability of savings.
- Ensure compliance with the approved capital strategy.
- Ensure compliance with the approved reserves strategy.
- Ensure compliance with the approved treasury management strategy.
- Raise awareness of and communicate key financial messages both internally and externally.
- Ensure budgets set are affordable and do not jeopardise financial stability either in the short or long term.
- Demonstrate that all spending plans achieve value for money.
- Agree spending only when the necessary funding is identified and approved.
- Seek external funding wherever it can be used in a sustainable manner that does not lead to unforeseen costs.
- Publicise significant budget proposals and where appropriate consult with key stakeholders.

### **Financial Scenario**

5. It is imperative that the MTFs takes account of the local, regional, national and global economies. This provides a basis for the estimates and assumptions used.
6. The Authority receives its main funding from three sources – Government grants, business rates and local council tax (known as a precept). Council Tax and Business Rates represents 75% of our funding.
7. Funding for the fire sector has changed in the last 15 years. The 2008 banking crisis was followed by a period of austerity in the sector. As government grants fell sharply after 2010, the fire and rescue sector was forced to adapt through a combination of workforce, operational, and financial measures. Nationally, firefighter numbers were reduced significantly, with England losing around 25% of its wholtime firefighters since 2008. In addition, latest comparison figures for On-call firefighter (full time equivalent) numbers show a decline from 10,768 in March 2014 to 7,967 in March 2024, representing a 26% reduction across England. Changes to the funding methodology during this period also meant that changes in the economy, that impact on benefits claimant numbers or business rates, now impact on funding levels.

8. Funding for capital schemes has also changed over this period, with the sector now almost exclusively funding new capital schemes from local sources of funding such as revenue contributions, reserves, capital receipts and borrowing (that is repaid from revenue budgets). During this period Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) has funded its capital schemes primarily from revenue resources and has not utilised any borrowing, unlike most of the fire and rescue services.

### **Fair Funding Review**

9. In June of 2025 the Spending Review set out government budgets for the next three years, confirmed a full reset of business rates baselines from April 2026 and a review of the Funding Formula which allocates funding amongst each fire authority; the Fair Funding Review (FFR) consultation, launched with the spending review, updated the funding formula for the first time since 2013. Initial assessments undertaken on behalf of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) identified cuts for the sector and within those significant cuts for LFRS; between £3 million and £4 million were modelled.
10. All Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) resource to risk which is driven by a range of other risks, most notably deprivation. Yet the new funding review, rather than increasing funding to match increasing risk, proposed to simply redistribute funding towards areas with higher population growth. There is a perversity in the result, LFRS potentially experiencing one of the largest cuts in its share of funding and yet with some of the highest levels of deprivation.
11. Following a period of significant lobbying both nationally and locally through MPs, locally elected members and the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), Government protections were put in place to ensure no FRS lost funding providing a Council Tax increase of £5 is agreed by the respective authorities for each of the next 3 years; note the £5 precept in each year 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 has been assumed in the MTFS. There was also a promise of a fundamental review of the funding formula for the next Spending Review, effective from April 2029.
12. Whilst the £5 precept flexibility is welcome and recognises the need in the sector, it is unfortunately offsetting Government grant cuts rather than an opportunity to invest in the Service.

### **Provisional Settlement**

13. The Provisional Settlement announced in mid-December 2025 provided estimated funding levels for the next three years from 2026/27. Revenue funding levels in the provisional settlement, alongside local planning assumptions suggest that funding levels will be broadly in line with the previously set MTFS for 2026/27; an increase of circa 3%. Whilst this is an improvement compared to earlier Spending Review planning assumptions, due to higher than budgeted inflation in 2025, 3.8% actual in September compared to 2% assumed in the MTFS, the settlement will represent a real term cut.

Unfortunately, no capital grant funding was provided again for in the provisional settlement.

### Council Taxbase

14. Council Tax income is based on the precept approved by the Authority and the estimated taxbase; this is the number of Band D equivalent properties in the area. Factors influencing the taxbase include changes to property numbers, collection rates in each local authority, local authority discounts and changes in benefit claimants. The estimated taxbase for 2026/27 increased by 0.83% compared with an average of 1.54% over the previous three years, consequently having another negative impact on the Authority's funding. If the taxbase continues at this level, below the national average, the Authority's revenue resources will continue to decline.
15. The 2026/27 budget proposals are based on the latest funding assumptions set out in this report and a maximum increase in the council tax precept allowed of £5 at Band D, this is assumed to give Total Council Tax Funding of £45 million. The net expenditure budget takes account of general inflation, assumed pay awards, previous commitments, required permanent and one-off increases and decreases in resources to give a net budget requirement of £80.5 million. In 2026/27 there is a small surplus of £0.294 million which will be earmarked to meet in year pressures and future deficits on the collection fund. Appendix 3 includes the adjusted precept from each collection authority.
16. The proportion of the budget that is now funded by Council Tax has increased again as the percentage of funding from other sources such as government grants reduces.

### MTFS Key Financial Assumptions

17. Some of the key financial assumptions and estimates in the five year MTFS are set out below:

Key Assumptions	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31
Uniform Pay Award (Apr - Jun)	3.2%	4%	2%	2%	3%
Uniform Pay Award (Jul - Mar)	4%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Non-uniform Pay Award	4%	2%	2%	2%	2%
General inflation	3.8%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Establishment (after reduction of 28 posts reducing wholtime crewing levels from 13 to 12)	608	608	608	608	608
Council Taxbase percentage increase	0.83%	1.25%	1.25%	1.25%	1.25%
Council Tax Precept increase £	£5	£5	£5	£2.09	£2.14
Council Tax precept percentage increase	5.57%	5.28%	5.01%	2.00%	2.00%

- Inflation – The pay awards for 2026/27 are estimated at 4% then 2% thereafter. Non-pay budgets have increased by the September Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) Consumer Price Index (CPI) figures; 3.8% in 2026/27 and 2% thereafter. Income earned on investments is expected to reduce as cash balances reduce and interest rates reduce from 3.7% to 3% over the period of the MTFS.
  - Commitments – The MTFS includes for increases in revenue contributions to Capital, rising from £3.500 million in 2026/27 to £4.592 million by 2029/30, thus ensuring the capital programme is financially sustainable in the long term. Whilst a comprehensive review of the Capital programme has taken place, and asset life extended where possible, significant inflationary pressures for vehicles, property and ICT means that without dedicated central government capital grants, revenue to capital contributions must increase.
  - Increases in Resourcing - The 2026/27 increase reflects the loss of the National Insurance grant; Government have confirmed this has been rolled into Grants now. Increases thereafter relate to borrowing repayment and interest costs to fund the major projects in the capital programme; by the end of the capital programme total borrowing costs are forecast at £4.1 million per annum.
  - Decreases in Resourcing - are required to balance the budget. In 2026/27 £1.8 million of savings will be realised from the optimising crewing changes; reducing wholetime crewing levels from 13 to 12 (on 2 pump Wholetime, Flexible Day Crewed and Day Crewing Plus stations [excluding Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) units]) as the next step in meeting financial challenges, improving efficiency, and aligning Lancashire with sector-equivalent crewing models. New savings are required from 2027/28 of £1 million per annum, each year through to 2030/31; so by 2030/31 cumulatively £4 million of recurring savings will be required to balance the budget.
  - Funding – Detailed assumptions are included in the MTFS, in broad terms the funding is expected to increase between 2% to 3% however, the outcome of the next spending review and review of the funding formula is likely to impact on these assumptions which is expected to be determined during late 2028. This year there is a small surplus on the business rates collection fund of £0.151 million which will be earmarked to meet in year pressures and future deficits on the collection fund.
18. The summary MTFS is set out below and in more detail in Appendix 1 and 2 of this report.

Revenue MTFS	26/27 £ million	27/28 £ million	28/29 £ million	29/30 £ million	30/31 £ million
Base Budget	<b>77.511</b>	<b>80.525</b>	<b>82.804</b>	<b>84.999</b>	<b>87.351</b>
Add:					
Inflation	3.176	2.162	2.027	2.046	2.013
Commitments	1.305	0.817	0.157	(0.026)	(0.096)
Increases in Resourcing	0.571	0.143	0.932	1.507	1.553
One-off items	(0.194)	0.158	0.079	(0.175)	(0.050)
Decreases in Resourcing	(1.844)	(1.000)	(1.000)	(1.000)	(1.000)
<b>Net Budget</b>	<b>80.525</b>	<b>82.804</b>	<b>84.999</b>	<b>87.351</b>	<b>89.770</b>
Council Tax	(45.064)	(48.036)	(51.075)	(52.747)	(54.475)
Business Rates	(15.481)	(15.843)	(16.169)	(16.493)	(16.822)
Revenue Support Grant	(19.980)	(18.925)	(17.755)	(18.111)	(18.473)
<b>Funding</b>	<b>(80.525)</b>	<b>(82.804)</b>	<b>(84.999)</b>	<b>(87.351)</b>	<b>(89.770)</b>

19. The MTFS is aligned to our CRMP, we review all our activities alongside the CRMP to ensure our resources support delivery of the CRMP priorities. An indicative overview of our budget alongside the CRMP priorities is set out below:

CRMP Priorities	%
Responding to fires and other emergencies	73
Preventing fires	12
Protecting people and property	9
Valuing our people	6
	<b>100</b>

20. We do not allocate any of our activities specifically to delivering value for money as we aim to achieve this priority in everything we do as a service.

### MTFS Risks and Scenarios

21. The following significant financial risks have been identified and assessed by the Director of Corporate Services, and he feels these are adequately covered within the budget estimates presented or within the level of reserves currently held:
- Reduction in Business Rate funding following the reset of business rates due in 2026/27.
  - Adverse impact for the Fire Sector following the three-year Spending Review that is due for completion in late 2028.
  - Adverse impact for LFRS following the review of the Funding Formula.
  - Non delivery of savings required in the MTFS.
  - Changes to the Business Rates Retention Scheme.
  - Adverse changes because of the implementation of the Fair Funding Review.
  - Reduction in Council Tax funding.

- Higher than anticipated inflation.
- Larger increases in pension costs.
- Significant changes to retirement profiles.
- Increase in demand led pressures.
- Higher insurance claims.
- Higher interest rates assumed for borrowing.

22. The key budget risks are quantified below in a worst case scenario:

<b>Budget Scenarios</b>	<b>26/27 £ million</b>	<b>27/28 £ million</b>	<b>28/29 £ million</b>	<b>29/30 £ million</b>	<b>30/31 £ million</b>
<b>General Reserve</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>(1.8)</b>
Quantified major risks					
- 1% higher pay award	(0.5)	(0.6)	(0.6)	(0.6)	(0.6)
1 year delay in delivery of savings	0.0	(1.0)	(1.0)	(1.0)	(1.0)
2% increase in borrowing rates	0.0	(0.1)	(0.3)	(0.7)	(1.0)
- 5% reduction in funding following Spending review and review of funding formula (assume phased in over 3 years)	0.0	0.0	0.0	(1.5)	(3.0)
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>(0.5)</b>	<b>(1.7)</b>	<b>(1.9)</b>	<b>(3.7)</b>	<b>(5.5)</b>
<b>Revised General Fund Balance</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>(1.8)</b>	<b>(7.3)</b>

23. The analysis shows that whilst the general reserve is sufficient to meet all the worst-case risks in the next three years, with reliance on earmarked reserves, major structural changes would be required alongside government support beyond year three of the MTFs.

### **Indicative Capital Programme**

24. The Authority has a ten year capital programme, from 2026/27 to 2035/36. This reflects the Authority's capital aspirations in the Fleet, Estates and ICT strategies. The first five years of the strategy are set out below. Work is ongoing to refine the later years of the programme (from years 6 to 10), with detailed condition surveys across our estate.
25. The table below shows the Authority's first five years of the Capital Programme and how it is anticipated that it will be funded.

<b>Capital Programme</b>	<b>2026/27 £ million</b>	<b>2027/28 £ million</b>	<b>2028/29 £ million</b>	<b>2029/30 £ million</b>	<b>2030/31 £ million</b>
Vehicles	4.046	2.933	2.650	3.455	2.338
Operational Equipment	1.753	0.174	0.123	0.523	0.109
Buildings	1.066	5.600	14.600	18.500	18.500
ICT	2.376	1.200	0.333	0.723	1.853
Inflation	0.000	0.106	0.166	0.349	0.437
	<b>9.241</b>	<b>10.012</b>	<b>17.873</b>	<b>23.550</b>	<b>23.236</b>
<b>Funding</b>					
Revenue Contributions	3.500	4.500	4.500	4.569	4.592
Capital Reserve	5.741	0.912	(0.227)	1.481	1.144
Capital Receipts	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Borrowing	0.000	4.600	13.600	17.500	17.500
	<b>9.241</b>	<b>10.012</b>	<b>17.873</b>	<b>23.550</b>	<b>23.236</b>

26. Full details of the 10 year capital programme and its associated funding are included in the Capital Strategy. In addition, given the above funding proposals includes borrowing, the impact of this is discussed in more detail within the Treasury Management Strategy.

### Analysis of Budget

	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million
<b>Starting Base Budget from previous year</b>	<b>77.511</b>	<b>80.525</b>	<b>82.804</b>	<b>84.999</b>	<b>87.351</b>
Unfunded pay award from previous year	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Uniform Pay Award (April - June)	0.374	0.509	0.260	0.267	0.271
Uniform Pay Award (July - March)	1.527	0.790	0.809	0.823	0.838
Non-uniform Pay Award	0.444	0.227	0.232	0.237	0.241
General inflation	0.583	0.271	0.491	0.319	0.436
Investment income changes	0.149	0.364	0.235	0.400	0.226
Vacancy Factor Adjustments	0.191	(0.061)	0.157	(0.095)	(0.120)
Other Commitments	0.114	(0.122)	(0.000)	(0.000)	0.000
Revenue Contributions to Capital	1.000	1.000	0.000	0.069	0.024
Capital Financing Costs	0.000	0.143	0.932	1.507	1.553
Other growth items	0.571	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
One off pressures	(0.194)	0.158	0.079	(0.175)	(0.050)
Savings	(1.844)	(1.000)	(1.000)	(1.000)	(1.000)
<b>Final Base Budget</b>	<b>80.525</b>	<b>82.804</b>	<b>84.999</b>	<b>87.351</b>	<b>89.770</b>

### Analysis of Revenue Budget by Service Area

	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	£ million				
Service Delivery	45.129	46.176	47.286	48.182	49.270
Leadership and Development	4.839	4.890	5.126	5.165	5.116
Digital, Data and Technology (DDAT)	4.630	4.721	4.813	4.907	5.002
Prevention and Protection	4.192	4.298	4.389	4.481	4.576
Fleet and Engineering Services	3.790	3.868	3.945	4.024	4.104
Property	3.450	3.519	3.589	3.661	3.734
Service Development	2.744	2.807	2.863	2.920	2.978
Control	2.378	2.426	2.474	2.524	2.574
Overheads	2.113	2.758	3.035	3.867	4.652
Pensions	1.507	1.531	1.555	1.580	1.606
Finance and Procurement	1.340	1.364	1.389	1.415	1.441
Executive	1.256	1.285	1.310	1.336	1.363
Human Resources	1.095	1.117	1.139	1.162	1.185
Administration	0.798	0.814	0.830	0.847	0.864
Corporate Communications and Democratic Services	0.507	0.459	0.468	0.477	0.486
Occupational Health	0.390	0.397	0.405	0.413	0.422
Safety, Health and Environment	0.343	0.350	0.357	0.364	0.371
Special Projects	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.026	0.026
<b>Total</b>	<b>80.525</b>	<b>82.804</b>	<b>84.999</b>	<b>87.351</b>	<b>89.770</b>

**Precept on Collection Fund**

	<b>Number of Band D Equivalents</b>	<b>Precept on Collection Fund</b>	<b>Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Burnley Borough Council	24,497.00	2,320,601	1,234	2,321,835
Chorley Borough Council	39,157.93	3,709,431	(9,567)	3,699,864
Fylde Borough Council	33,067.00	3,132,437	2,752	3,135,189
Hyndburn Borough Council	22,183.00	2,101,396	16,707	2,118,103
Lancaster City Council	43,832.69	4,152,271	8,945	4,161,215
Pendle Borough Council	25,164.44	2,383,827	137,107	2,520,934
Preston City Council	45,222.90	4,283,965	(6,524)	4,277,441
Ribble Valley Borough Council	25,853.00	2,449,055	18,254	2,467,309
Rossendale Borough Council	21,350.00	2,022,486	17,328	2,039,814
South Ribble Borough Council	38,816.17	3,677,056	30,938	3,707,994
West Lancashire District Council	38,756.88	3,671,439	(41,139)	3,630,300
Wyre Borough Council	40,088.94	3,797,625	73419	3,871,045
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	38,246.03	3,623,046	135,627	3,758,673
Blackpool Council	39,477.00	3,739,656	(90,562)	3,649,094
<b>Total</b>	<b>475,712.98</b>	<b>45,064,291</b>	<b>294,518</b>	<b>45,358,815</b>

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## Capital Strategy

### Introduction

1. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities establishes a framework that supports local strategic planning, asset management and appropriate options appraisal.
2. The objectives of the Code are to ensure that the capital plans of an organisation are affordable, prudent and sustainable and the treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice and in full understanding of the risks involved.

### Definition

3. To utilise the full extent of the Code and its framework, it is essential that there is a clear understanding of what capital expenditure is. Unless expenditure qualifies as capital it will normally fall outside the scope of the Code and its framework and be charged to revenue in the period in which the goods or services were received. If expenditure does qualify as capital, there are opportunities to finance such spend from any capital receipts held or to spread the cost over future years in line with the life of the asset(s) purchased/created.
4. In the main, expenditure must meet one or more of the following conditions for it to be classified as capital:
  - Spend results in the acquisition, construction or enhancement of an asset (tangible or intangible) in accordance with 'proper practices'.
  - Spend meets one of the definitions specified in regulations made under the 2003 Local Government Act.
  - The Secretary of State makes a direction that the expenditure can be treated as capital.

### Context

5. The capital expenditure plans are largely limited to replacing and upgrading essential operational assets (e.g. Estate Facilities, Vehicles, Equipment, Communications Infrastructure).
6. This Capital Strategy forms part of our financial strategies, these are one of six core strategies that set out how we will provide services in line with the following priorities in our five-year Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP):
  - Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer.
  - Preventing fires and other emergencies from happening.
  - Protecting people and properties when fires happen.
  - Responding to fires and other emergencies quickly and competently.

- Delivering value for money in how we use our resources.
7. The Authority is committed to having rolling medium term revenue and capital plans (summarised in a Medium Term Financial Strategy – MTFS) that extends for up to five years. The plans are drawn up, reassessed and extended annually and if required re-prioritised to enable the Authority to achieve its aims and objectives established in the CRMP.
  8. In the past, general capital grant funding was received each year from the Government, which helped to fund replacement of vehicles, IT, operational equipment and capital maintenance of buildings. This general capital grant funding ended in 2014/15. As a result, all capital investment since then has been funded from the Authority's own resources unless specific funding was available. No further government capital grant funding is anticipated going forward. The level of reserves currently held will not be sufficient to fund the proposed capital works over the medium term and borrowing will therefore be required going forward to meet the capital programme. Borrowing incurs on-going costs of interest payments and the funding that is set aside to repay the loan in due course.
  9. The Authority has not utilised borrowing to fund its capital programme and thus has one of the lowest levels of borrowing of all fire services in the country. However, the necessary investment in the estate cannot be delivered without borrowing.
  10. Key focuses of the Capital Programme plans, all aligned to achieving the Authority's priorities are:
    - To ensure the property estate remains fit for purpose, identifying opportunities to streamline assets and develop the estate infrastructure, maintaining core sites and improving core training facilities.
    - The replacement of other core assets where necessary, including, vehicles, operational equipment and communication infrastructure.
    - Development of improved capability.
    - To ensure provision is made for ICT to maintain and develop the existing infrastructure and invest in the core technologies required to provide innovative and efficient digital services, whilst at the same time ensuring all our systems are cyber secure, mitigating the threat of cyber crime.
    - Invest to Save Schemes.
  11. The plans must consider the constrained financial position of the Authority and the need to maximise both the available financial resources and the capacity that the Service must manage change projects.

### **Governance**

12. The annual budget setting process is an ongoing process managed by the Authority's Executive Board. Capital projects are considered by the Executive Board, they include a business case that identifies the organisational requirement, rationale, deliverables, benefits, links to the Authority's priorities and costs in terms of both capital investment and ongoing revenue consequences.
13. The delivery of capital projects is overseen by the Capital Projects Programme Board (CPPB) and reported to the Service Management Team – Corporate Programme Board (CPB). Capital budget monitoring reports are presented to the Resources Committee to monitor progress.
14. A Member Capital Projects Working Group has also been established to oversee the development and delivery of our major capital projects and progress is also reported to the Resources Committee that considers any slippage, variances and accelerated spend.
15. An updated MTF5 and Capital Strategy, including a recommended Capital Programme for the next year, is then presented to the Authority, providing views on affordability, potential funding issues and options.
16. To evaluate the success and outcomes of capital projects a post project review is carried out. The depth of this review is proportionate to the scale of the project and the benefits set out in the initial Project Initiation Documentation. This review focuses on the outcomes achieved, the extent to which the benefits claimed are being realised, the actual costs, both revenue and capital, and the impact of other funding and partnership working. This information can then be used to learn lessons and make any improvements during subsequent projects. The post project report is reviewed by the CPPB and escalated to the CPB if required.

### Funding Streams

17. Capital expenditure can be funded from a number of sources as set out below:
  - Government Grants – these are either general grants which can be used to fund any capital spend approved by the Authority or specific grants which can only be used to fund specific projects in line with any conditions placed with the grant. The Authority has not received an annual government capital grant allocation since 2014/15.
  - Capital Receipts – when an asset held by the Authority is sold, the proceeds are held in reserve to be used either to fund future capital expenditure or to repay debt. They cannot be used to fund revenue expenditure.
  - Reserves – funds can be set aside and held in earmarked reserves if known expenditure is to be incurred at a future date. These reserves can then be used to fund such expenditure be it capital or revenue. In terms of capital expenditure, it may be known that a specific asset may need replacing in 10 years and therefore funds are set-aside each year to build

up the reserve to fund the replacement. Details of the reserves held are found within the Authority's Reserves Strategy.

- External Contributions – these are funds or grants provided by external organisations such as collaboration partners or local authorities for specifically agreed capital expenditure.
- Borrowing – the Authority is permitted in law to take out loans or financing to fund capital expenditure. The Prudential Code sets out the requirements under which such borrowing must be undertaken including affordability, prudence and cost effectiveness. Any borrowing will incur costs for interest payable and the need to set-aside sufficient funds to repay the loan. These costs impact on the revenue budget.

### Capital Programme

18. The Authority has a ten-year capital programme, from 2026/27 to 2035/36. This reflects the Authority's capital aspirations in the Fleet, Estates and ICT strategies. The first five years of the strategy are more detailed, but work is ongoing to develop a more detailed ten year strategy, in particular with detailed condition and environmental surveys across our estate.
19. Table 1 shows the Authority's first five years of the Capital Programme and how it is anticipated that it will be funded. The detailed ten-year capital programme is set out in Appendix 1 of this paper.

£ million	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31
Vehicles	4.046	2.933	2.650	3.455	2.338
Operational Equipment	1.753	0.174	0.123	0.523	0.109
Buildings	1.066	5.600	14.600	18.500	18.500
ICT	2.376	1.200	0.333	0.723	1.853
Inflation	0.000	0.106	0.166	0.349	0.437
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.241</b>	<b>10.012</b>	<b>17.873</b>	<b>23.550</b>	<b>23.236</b>
<b>Funding</b>					
Revenue Contributions	3.500	4.500	4.500	4.569	4.592
Capital Reserve	5.741	0.912	(0.227)	1.481	1.144
Capital Receipts	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Grants	0.000	4.600	13.600	17.500	17.500
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.241</b>	<b>10.012</b>	<b>17.873</b>	<b>23.550</b>	<b>23.236</b>

**Table 1 - The Authority's first five years of the Capital Programme**

20. The 2025/26 five-year capital programme approved by the Authority in February 2025 included four major projects; Leadership and Development Centre Training Facilities (£18 million), Headquarters and Stores relocation (£18 million), Fulwood replacement station (£7 million) and Preston replacement station (£10 million). The focus during 2025/26 has been to obtain planning approval for the Chorley Masterplan. Due to new Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) planning legislation requirements additional studies, which can

only be undertaken during Spring, and changes to the designs are required. The result is that the masterplan has been delayed by approximately one year with planning approval now sought in late summer 2026.

21. Progress with the Leadership and Development Centre training facilities will continue in tandem with the masterplan application to ensure development is not unduly delayed. The Preston, Fulwood and Headquarters and Stores relocation projects have been programmed for years four and five of the capital programme so the scope can be considered as part of the Service Review during 2026.
22. A summary of the major projects is reflected in the updated 2026/27 10-year capital programme, these include:
  - Leadership and Development Centre Training Facilities – A modern and progressive service requires high quality facilities to help in the initial training and ongoing maintenance of competency requirements across a broad spectrum of operational activities. The existing facilities were reviewed alongside more modern facilities in the region. The review identified that greater investment is required to meet our requirements and an estimate of £18 million is included in the programme between 2027/28 and 2028/29.
  - The following major projects are programmed for 2029/30 to 2030/31, however the scope and timing of these major schemes will be considered as part of the Service Review that is due to be finalised in early 2027.
    - The Preston replacement project involves one of the busiest stations in Lancashire and which is in a very poor condition, the budget is £10 million.
    - The Headquarters and Stores relocation project combines the Headquarters and Training Facility and relocates the Stores at the Leadership and Development Centre, replacing the current Headquarters at Fulwood and office / training / catering space in Lancaster House. The budget is £18 million.
    - The relocation of Headquarters necessitates the need to invest in a new station to replace Fulwood either on the existing site or at an alternative location. The budget is £7 million.
23. To fund the Capital Programme table four shows that in addition to utilising the Capital Reserve and revenue contributions, also £51.2 million of new borrowing is required to fund the major schemes. The long-term revenue costs of this borrowing is £4.1 million per annum, this will need to be met from revenue resources. The scope and timing of these major projects will be considered as part of the Service Review.
24. Following the capital investment set out above the Authority's reserves and borrowing levels would be commensurate with similar sized fire services based on current levels across services.

### Affordability

25. Capital expenditure plans are a key driver of treasury management activity. The funding of such plans impacts on cash balances and borrowing requirements in the short and longer terms. The on-going consequences of these decisions have a direct impact on the annual revenue budget. As such, having regard to the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, the Authority sets and reviews several prudential indicators providing context for proposed capital expenditure plans: how they are to be funded, the impact on the organisation's finances; and their affordability in terms of the impact on revenue budgets.
26. Full details and commentary on the prudential indicators are found within the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27. Along with controls and limits relating to levels of capital expenditure and resulting borrowing requirements, these prudential indicators also include a specific affordability indicator, shown below, which provides an indication of the impact of the above capital expenditure plans and their financing proposals on the overall finances

### **Risk Management**

27. Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect the Authority's ability to achieve its desired outcomes and ability to execute its strategies successfully. Risk management is the process of identifying risks, evaluating their potential consequences, and determining the most effective methods of managing them and/or responding to them. It is both a means of minimising the costs and disruption to the organisation caused by undesired events and of ensuring that staff understand and appreciate the elements of risk in all their activities.
28. The aim is to reduce the frequency of adverse risk events occurring (where possible), minimise the severity of their consequences if they do occur, or to consider whether risk can be transferred to other parties. The corporate risk register sets out the key risks to the successful delivery of corporate aims and priorities and outlines the key controls and actions to mitigate and reduce risks or maximise opportunities.
29. To manage risk effectively, the risks associated with each capital project need to be systematically identified, analysed, influenced, and monitored. It is important to identify the appetite for risk for each scheme and for the capital programme, especially when investing in complex business change programmes. Where greater risks are identified as necessary to achieve desired outcomes, the organisation will seek to mitigate or manage those risks to a tolerable level. All key risks identified as part of the capital planning process are considered for inclusion in the corporate risk register.
30. The Treasurer will report on the deliverability, affordability and risk associated with this Capital Strategy and the associated capital programme. Where appropriate they will have access to specialised advice to enable them to reach their conclusions.

- **Credit Risk** - The risk that an organisation with which we have contracted to deliver capital projects becomes insolvent and cannot complete the agreed contract. We will ensure that robust due diligence procedures cover the appointment of partners and contractors relating to capital programme delivery. Where possible contingency plans will be identified at the outset.
- **Liquidity Risk** - This is the risk that the timing of any cash inflows from a project will be delayed, for example if other organisations do not make their contributions when agreed. There is also a risk that the cash inflows will be less than expected, for example due to the effects of inflation, interest rates or exchange rates. Our exposure to this risk will be monitored via the revenue and capital budget monitoring processes and mitigating actions taken promptly where appropriate.
- **Interest and Exchange Rate Risk** - This is the risk that interest rates or exchange rates will move in a way that has an adverse effect on the value of capital expenditure or the expected financial returns from a project. Rates will be reviewed as part of the on-going monitoring arrangements to identify such adverse effects. As far as possible our exposure to this risk will be mitigated via robust contract terms and when necessary, contract re-negotiations.
- **Inflation Risk** - This is the risk that rates of inflation will move in a way that has an adverse effect on the value of capital expenditure or the expected financial returns from a project. Rates of inflation will be reviewed as part of the ongoing monitoring arrangements to identify such adverse effects. As far as possible our exposure to this risk will be mitigated via robust contract terms and when necessary, contract re-negotiations.
- **Legal and Regulatory Risk** - This is the risk that changes in laws or regulation make a capital project more expensive or time consuming to complete, make it no longer cost effective or make it illegal or not advisable to complete. Before making capital investments, the Authority will understand the powers under which the investment is made. Forthcoming changes to relevant laws and regulations will be kept under review and factored into any capital bidding and programme monitoring processes.
- **Fraud, Error and Corruption** - This is the risk that financial losses will occur due to errors or fraudulent or corrupt activities. Officers involved in any of the processes around capital expenditure or funding are required to follow the agreed Code of Corporate Governance. Lancashire Combined Fire Authority has a strong ethical culture which is evidenced through its values, principles, and appropriate behaviour. This is supported by a Code of Ethics and detailed policies such as Anti-Fraud and Corruption and processes such as that in relation to declaration of interests.

### Future Actions

31. This Capital Strategy looks ahead over the next 10 years to 2036 and will be refined considering emerging and changing issues, circumstances and

priorities. Based on the current projections the capital programme is balanced, however there are a number of key assumptions, including:

- Funding uncertainty – unpredictable multi-year funding and budget pressures threaten long-term deliverability.
- Ageing estate and assets – deteriorating buildings and equipment increase operational and financial risk.
- Cost inflation and supply chain issues – rising construction and materials costs disrupt affordability and timelines.
- Technology obsolescence and integration risks – legacy systems, outdated software, and challenges integrating new digital platforms can disrupt operational effectiveness and delay capital project delivery.
- Limited delivery capacity – insufficient internal skills/resources and reliance on external partners can slow progress.
- Interdependencies with other programmes – estate, fleet, sustainability or digital programmes can impact sequencing and cost.
- Regulatory and community impacts – planning, environmental compliance, and local consultation requirements may delay projects .

## Capital Programme – 2026/27 – 2035/36

£ million	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	35/36	Total
<b>Vehicles</b>											
Aerial Ladder Platform											
Aerial Ladder Platform - midlife refurb		0.320	0.160								<b>0.480</b>
Fire appliance Type B	2.787	1.460	1.825	1.825	1.460	1.825	1.460	2.190	1.825	1.825	<b>18.482</b>
Fire appliance Type B - Driver Training Vehicle											
Training Appliance											
Fire appliance Type A	0.500	0.500									<b>1.000</b>
Water tower						0.750			0.750		<b>1.500</b>
All Terrain Vehicle							0.250				<b>0.250</b>
Mini Incident Command Unit				0.085							<b>0.085</b>
Foam Pod and Demountable PODs		0.225	0.225	0.450	0.225						<b>1.125</b>
Car - Small		0.070		0.140	0.070	0.105	0.070		0.070		<b>0.525</b>
Car - Medium		0.038	0.075	0.075		0.188	0.075		0.038	0.075	<b>0.563</b>
Car - Large		0.080							0.080		<b>0.160</b>
Car - Small Electric Vehicle				0.128	0.043						<b>0.170</b>
Car - Flexible Duty Officer	0.329	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.240	<b>2.489</b>
People Prime Mover	0.195										<b>0.195</b>

£ million	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	35/36	Total
Double Cab Van				0.038	0.075		0.150				<b>0.263</b>
Beavertail Collection Vehicle				0.175					0.175		<b>0.350</b>
Pick up			0.045	0.225			0.045				<b>0.315</b>
Telehandler	0.045										<b>0.045</b>
Forklift	0.040						0.040				<b>0.080</b>
Rescue Team Van	0.075								0.225	0.075	<b>0.375</b>
Mini bus			0.080							0.080	<b>0.160</b>
Welfare Unit											
Van - Catering Unit					0.075						<b>0.075</b>
Van - Dog Unit						0.080					<b>0.080</b>
Van - Large	0.075			0.075	0.150	0.150	0.225	0.075			<b>0.750</b>
Van - Small							0.055				<b>0.055</b>
Van - Large EV						0.065					<b>0.065</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>4.046</b>	<b>2.933</b>	<b>2.650</b>	<b>3.455</b>	<b>2.338</b>	<b>3.403</b>	<b>2.610</b>	<b>2.505</b>	<b>3.403</b>	<b>2.295</b>	<b>29.636</b>
<b>Operational Equipment</b>											
Light Portable Pumps							0.033				<b>0.033</b>
CCTV on appliances (future Firefighting)											
Thermal Imaging Cameras			0.016	0.404				0.016	0.404		<b>0.838</b>
Breathing Apparatus sets and telemetry	1.512										<b>1.512</b>
Breathing Apparatus compressor		0.023	0.068	0.068	0.023	0.090	0.023				<b>0.293</b>
Road Traffic Collision Cutting Equipment											
Ballistic Vest and Helmet										0.300	<b>0.300</b>

£ million	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	35/36	Total
Flow Meters and 22mm Hose Reels	0.102										<b>0.102</b>
High Volume Pump											
Drones and Underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle		0.099			0.030			0.060			<b>0.189</b>
Gym equipment											
General Replacement Equipment	0.025	0.030	0.028	0.025	0.029	0.026	0.030	0.028	0.025	0.029	<b>0.275</b>
Disposable Gastight Suits	0.024	0.009	0.012	0.026	0.027	0.012	0.027	0.034	0.009	0.004	<b>0.184</b>
Equipment Tracking system	0.035										<b>0.035</b>
Decontamination Unit	0.015										<b>0.015</b>
Inflatable Boat	0.027								0.027		<b>0.054</b>
Portable oxygen-delivery system (Oxy Booster)						0.033					<b>0.033</b>
Motorised rope-climbing device (Power Ascender)								0.012			<b>0.012</b>
Safety Shower	0.013	0.013				0.013					<b>0.039</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1.753</b>	<b>0.174</b>	<b>0.123</b>	<b>0.523</b>	<b>0.109</b>	<b>0.174</b>	<b>0.113</b>	<b>0.150</b>	<b>0.465</b>	<b>0.333</b>	<b>3.915</b>
<b>Buildings</b>											
Wylfa Training Prop	0.008										<b>0.008</b>
Blackpool Dormitory	0.030										<b>0.030</b>

£ million	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	35/36	Total
Drill tower replacements	0.028										<b>0.028</b>
Condition survey works (excludes Preston, Headquarters and Training Centre)	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	<b>5.000</b>
Property Improvement Works	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	<b>5.000</b>
Upgrade Preston facilities											
Replacement Preston Station				5.000	5.000						<b>10.000</b>
HQ / Stores relocation				9.000	9.000						<b>18.000</b>
Fulwood replacement				3.500	3.500						<b>7.000</b>
Training Centre Props		4.600	13.600								<b>18.200</b>
Stock condition and decarbonisation surveys											
Wider Estate Planned Maintenance and Improvement Works				(0.000)	(0.000)	0.000	0.000				<b>0.000</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1.066</b>	<b>5.600</b>	<b>14.600</b>	<b>18.500</b>	<b>18.500</b>	<b>1.000</b>	<b>1.000</b>	<b>1.000</b>	<b>1.000</b>	<b>1.000</b>	<b>63.266</b>
<b>Information and Communication Technology (ICT)</b>											
Protection and Prevention software											

£ million	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	35/36	Total
(CFMIS Replacement)											
Pooled Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (Miquest)	0.200										<b>0.200</b>
Stock System - Stores, Safety Health and Environment (SHE), Property	0.100										<b>0.100</b>
Asset Management upgrade - Transend	0.005										<b>0.005</b>
Storage Area Network (SAN)	0.290			0.100							<b>0.390</b>
Geographic Information System development	0.020										<b>0.020</b>
Wide Area Network telecommunications	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	<b>1.000</b>
WiFi					0.200						<b>0.200</b>
Firewall		0.050	0.050	0.250							<b>0.350</b>
Dynamic cover tool											
Incident Recording System	0.050										<b>0.050</b>
Airwave replacement											
Incident ground radios					0.300						<b>0.300</b>
Retained Duty System Alerters					0.150						<b>0.150</b>
Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) System		0.060		0.120							<b>0.180</b>

£ million	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	35/36	Total
Server replacement	0.150		0.080								<b>0.230</b>
Replacement Public Switched Telephone Network	0.070										<b>0.070</b>
Further digitisation of the appliances	0.095										<b>0.095</b>
North West Fire Control (NWFC) Computer Aided Design Capital Contribution	0.886										<b>0.886</b>
ICT Indicative Future Development and Replacement Budget					0.300	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	<b>5.300</b>
Service desk improvement	0.030										<b>0.030</b>
M365 and Azure	0.020										<b>0.020</b>
National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) digital and technology programmes											
Cyber Security	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050						<b>0.250</b>
Desktop Provision	0.080		0.053	0.053	0.053						<b>0.240</b>
Firefighting Robot											
MDT replacement		0.100			0.500						<b>0.600</b>
Primary UPS replacement (SHQ and LDC)	0.020	0.200									<b>0.220</b>
Appliance iPads				0.050				0.060			<b>0.110</b>

£ million	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	35/36	Total
Station end		0.600									<b>0.600</b>
Digital signage	0.090										<b>0.090</b>
SHQ, LDC and Station Teams rooms equipment	0.120										<b>0.120</b>
Desktop end user compute (EUC) refresh					0.200						<b>0.200</b>
Fallback phones		0.040									<b>0.040</b>
Subtotal	2.376	1.200	0.333	0.723	1.853	1.100	1.100	1.160	1.100	1.100	<b>12.046</b>
<b>total capital requirement</b>	<b>9.241</b>	<b>9.906</b>	<b>17.707</b>	<b>23.201</b>	<b>22.799</b>	<b>5.677</b>	<b>4.823</b>	<b>4.815</b>	<b>5.967</b>	<b>4.728</b>	<b>108.862</b>
Inflation at 2% on projects funded from revenue		0.106	0.166	0.349	0.437	0.799	0.608	0.716	1.024	0.922	<b>5.128</b>
<b>Total capital requirement (including inflation)</b>	<b>9.241</b>	<b>10.012</b>	<b>17.873</b>	<b>23.550</b>	<b>23.236</b>	<b>6.475</b>	<b>5.431</b>	<b>5.530</b>	<b>6.991</b>	<b>5.650</b>	<b>113.990</b>
<b>Funding</b>											
Revenue Contributions	3.500	4.500	4.500	4.569	4.592	4.730	4.872	5.018	5.168	5.323	<b>46.772</b>
Capital Reserves	5.741	0.912	(0.227)	1.481	1.144	1.746	0.560	0.513	1.823	0.327	<b>14.018</b>
Capital Grant											
Earmarked Reserves											
Capital Receipts						2.000					<b>2.000</b>
Unfunded											
Borrowing		4.600	13.600	17.500	17.500	(2.000)					<b>51.200</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>9.241</b>	<b>10.012</b>	<b>17.873</b>	<b>23.550</b>	<b>23.236</b>	<b>6.475</b>	<b>5.431</b>	<b>5.530</b>	<b>6.991</b>	<b>5.650</b>	<b>113.990</b>

Note: The 2026/27 capital programme includes slippage from the 2025/26 capital programme approved by the Resources Committee during the year and the following additional slippage items totalling £5.5 million due to timing delays: Vehicles and Equipment including Fire Appliance Type B of £1.7 million, Fire Appliance Type A of £0.5 million, Breathing Apparatus sets and telemetry of £0.8 million, ICT projects including Wide Area Network telecommunications of £0.5 million, NWFC Computer Aided Design Capital Contribution of £0.5 million and Storage Area Network of £0.3 million. These will be delivered in the first quarter of the 2026/27. The resulting revised capital programme for 2025/26 is £6.990 million.

## Reserves Strategy

### Background

1. The Local Government Act 1992 requires billing and precepting authorities to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.
2. In addition to the above requirement, Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 also requires the Treasurer (the Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) for the Authority) to present a report assessing the adequacy of the unallocated reserves (referred to as the General Reserve) in the context of threats and demands together with corporate and financial risks facing the organisation. The Authority needs to balance the necessity for reserves against the cost to council taxpayers and arrive at a level that is both prudent and adequate for the current climate, but not excessive.
3. The Reserves Strategy sets out the reserves held, their intended usage and the strategy for ensuring the funds are maintained at an appropriate level. Reserves are held for three main purposes:
  - To cover unforeseen risks and expenditure that may be incurred outside of planned budgets – known as a general reserve.
  - To set-aside funds for specific purposes, known or predicted pressures, or future liabilities – known as earmarked reserves.
  - To hold capital receipts from sale of assets, the use of which is restricted under legislation to the purchase of new assets, or the repayment of debt.
4. In addition to holding financial reserves, there are several safeguards in place that mitigate against the risk of local authorities over-committing themselves financially:
  - There is a legal requirement to set a balanced budget.
  - In accordance with the 1988 Local Government Finance Act, the Chief Finance Officer (DoCS for the Authority) must report if there is or is likely to be unlawful expenditure or an unbalanced budget. This would include situations where reserves have become seriously depleted, and it is forecast that expenditure will exceed resources.
  - The external auditor's responsibility to review and report on financial standing.
5. While it is primarily the responsibility of Members and the DoCS to maintain a sound financial position, the external auditors have a responsibility to review the arrangements in place to ensure that financial standing is soundly based. The work undertaken by external auditors will include a review of the level of reserves and the advice given to Members by the DoCS.
6. The Fire and Rescue National Framework (May 2018) includes the requirement that fire authorities "should establish a policy on reserves and

provisions in consultation with their Chief Finance Officer". It also requires that "fire authorities should publish their Reserves Strategy, including details of the current and future planned levels, the purpose for which each reserve is held and how each reserve supports the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

### **Determining the level of Reserves**

7. There is no statutory guidance on the "right" level of reserves. Guidance from The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) confirms that each authority should make, on the advice of the Treasurer, their own judgement based on relevant local circumstances and the potential issues/risks that may occur across the medium term.
8. In determining an appropriate level of reserves for the Authority the range of risks and issues that should be considered will include the following:
  - The possibility of additional savings being required in the future and the potential difficulty in delivering such savings. Future funding levels are clearer for the next three years following the spending review but the Fire Minister has committed to review the funding formula at the next spending review which adds increased uncertainty. Also, if increased demands or commitments outstrip funding, savings will be required.
  - The provision of cover for extraordinary or unforeseen events occurring. Given that the purpose of the fire and rescue service is to respond to emergency situations, there is always the potential for additional, unexpected and unbudgeted expenditure to occur.
  - The level of self-insurance that is carried to minimise insurance premiums: potential insurance liabilities can vary significantly across financial years. The levels of liabilities are difficult to forecast accurately, and it would not be appropriate to budget for peak levels of expenditure on self-insured liabilities.
  - The commitments falling on future years because of capital plans and proposals to improve/develop the assets held by the Authority. Having reserves would mitigate the impact on the revenue budget of borrowing and/or the need to make further revenue contributions to capital and would support projects and programmes that will improve the assets held by the Authority.

### **Purpose and Use of each Reserve**

9. The General Reserve and each Earmarked Reserve and its purpose is set out in Appendix 1; together these are known as the Usable Reserves. Each earmarked reserve has a set manager who is responsible for that reserve. Movement to and from reserves is in the first instance approved by the Authority as part of the annual budget.
10. Reporting of the level of reserves and forecast outturn will be provided as part of the quarterly budget updates submitted to the Resources Committee.

11. The Authority holds a Public Finance Initiative (PFI) reserve for each of its PFI accommodation schemes. Annual PFI Grants exceed the annual unitary charge in the earlier years of the contract and are set aside to part fund the unitary charge in the later years of the contract when the unitary charge exceeds the PFI grants.
12. It is good practice for an Authority to review its reserves on a regular basis to consider each reserve. This is to ensure that the level that is both prudent and adequate for the current climate, but not excessive. A review has been undertaken based on historical analysis and the current environment and future forecasts; this review has not resulted in any material change.

### **Overall Position**

13. The forecast balances on usable reserves are set out in Appendix 1. One of the key elements of the Reserves Strategy will be to use the earmarked Capital Reserves to support the Capital Strategy. The Capital Strategy anticipates utilising the capital reserve over the next two years.

## Usable Reserves

	Forecast	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
Reserve - Purpose	2025/26 £ million	2026/27 £ million	2027/28 £ million	2028/29 £ million	2029/30 £ million	2030/31 £ million
General Reserve - minimum level £4 million	6.018	6.018	5.824	5.789	6.025	5.930
<b>Earmarked Reserves</b>						
Capital Reserve - to fund capital expenditure	14.106	8.365	7.453	7.680	6.199	5.055
PFI Reserves - PFI Grants set aside to offset future charges	5.276	5.086	4.853	4.575	4.251	3.876
Budget Holders Reserves - enables budget holders to carry forward any surplus or deficit from one financial year to the next, within prescribed limits.	3.879	2.379	0.879	0.000	0.000	0.000
Insurance - The maximum insurance costs to the Authority are £0.7 million - together with the provision this reserve will meet 1 year's maximum claims.	0.442	0.442	0.442	0.442	0.442	0.442
Kings Trust - to manage funding timing differences and mitigate the risk of loss of funding in the short term.	0.823	0.623	0.423	0.323	0.223	0.223
Innovation Fund - to meet the costs of new initiatives / developments which improve service delivery of fire fighter safety subject to approval of the Executive Board.	0.806	0.506	0.206	0.106	0.006	0.000
Emerging pressures and future funding deficits – set aside from collection fund surplus / deficits and one off grants to offset future funding collection fund deficits and potentially emerging pressures.	0.595	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
<b>Total Usable Reserves</b>	<b>31.945</b>	<b>23.419</b>	<b>20.080</b>	<b>18.915</b>	<b>17.146</b>	<b>15.526</b>

## Treasury Management Strategy

### Information

Treasury Management is defined as “The management of the Authority’s investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”

The Local Government Act 2003 (the Act) and supporting Regulations requires the Authority to “have regard to” the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants (CIPFA) Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice to set Prudential and Treasury Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the Authority’s capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable. The Code also requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. The authority also adheres to investment guidance issued by the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

The definition of investments in the codes is wide ranging and includes non-treasury investments for example loans to third parties and the holding of property to make a profit. Where these are held a separate strategy is required. However, it is not considered that the Combined Fire Authority hold any such assets, and it does not propose to engage in any such investments in 2026/27.

### Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27

This Strategy Statement has been prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice. Accordingly, the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority's Treasury Management Strategy will be approved by the full Authority, and there will also be a mid-year, and a year-end outturn report presented to the Resources Committee. In addition, there will be monitoring and review reports to members in the event of any changes to Treasury Management policies or practices. The aim of these reporting arrangements is to ensure that those with ultimate responsibility for the treasury management function appreciate fully the implications of treasury management policies and activities, and that those implementing policies and executing transactions have properly fulfilled their responsibilities regarding delegation and reporting.

This Authority has adopted the following reporting arrangements in accordance with the requirements of the revised Code: -

Table 1 Treasury Management Reporting Arrangements

Area of Responsibility	Committee/ Officer	Frequency
Treasury Management Policy Statement – this is set out in Appendix 1	Resources Committee/Authority	Annually
Treasury Management Strategy / Annual Investment Strategy / Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy – scrutiny and approval	Resources Committee/ Authority	Annually before the start of the year

<b>Area of Responsibility</b>	<b>Committee/ Officer</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Treasury Management mid-year report	Resources Committee	Mid-year
Treasury Management Strategy / Annual Investment Strategy / MRP policy – updates or revisions at other times	Resources Committee	As required
Annual Treasury Management Outturn Report	Resources Committee/ Authority	Annually by 30 September after the end of the year
Treasury Management Monitoring Reports	Director of Corporate Services	Quarterly
Treasury Management Practices	Director of Corporate Services	Annually

The Treasury Management Strategy, covers the following aspects of the Treasury Management function:

- Prudential Indicators which will provide a controlling framework for the capital expenditure and treasury management activities of the Authority;
- Current Long-term debt and investments;
- Prospects for interest rates;
- The Borrowing Strategy;
- The Investment Strategy;
- Policy on borrowing in advance of need.

### **Setting the Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27**

In setting the treasury management strategy the following factors need to be considered as they may have a strong influence over the strategy adopted:

- Economic position and forecasts.
- Interest rate forecasts.
- The current structure of the investment and debt portfolio.
- Future Capital Programme and underlying cash forecasts.

### **Economic Background:**

The third quarter of 2025/26 saw: -

- A -0.1% month on month change in real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in October, leaving the economy no bigger than at the start of April.
- The 3-month year on year rate of average earnings growth, excluding bonuses, fell to 4.6% in October, having been as high as 5.5% earlier in the financial year.
- Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation fell sharply from 3.6% to 3.2% in November, with core CPI inflation easing to 3.2%.
- The Bank of England cut interest rates from 4.00% to 3.75% in December, after holding in November.
- The 10-year gilt yield fluctuated between 4.4% and 4.7%, ending the quarter at 4.5%.

In July real GDP was unchanged compared to July 2024, followed by a 0.1% increase in August compared to last August and a 0.1% decrease in September will have caused

some concern. October's disappointing 0.1% decrease in real GDP suggests that growth slowed to around 1.4% in 2025.

Prior to the November Budget, the public finances position looked weak. The £20.2 billion borrowed in September was slightly above the £20.1 billion forecast by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). For the year to date, the £99.8 billion borrowed is the second highest for the April to September period since records began in 1993, surpassed only by borrowing during the COVID-19 pandemic. The main drivers of the increased borrowing were higher debt interest costs, rising government running costs, and increased inflation-linked benefit payments, which outweighed the rise in tax and National Insurance contributions.

Following the 26 November Budget, the OBR calculated the net tightening in fiscal policy as £11.7 billion (0.3% of GDP) in 2029/30, smaller than the consensus forecast of £25 billion. It did downgrade productivity growth by 0.3%, from 1.3% to 1.0%, but a lot of that influence was offset by upgrades to its near-term wage and inflation forecasts. Accordingly, the OBR judged the Chancellor was going to achieve her objectives with £4.2 billion to spare. The Chancellor then chose to expand that headroom to £21.7 billion, up from £9.9 billion previously.

### Interest rate Forecast

The quarterly interest rate forecast to March 2027 can be seen in the table below: -

Table 2 Interest rate Forecast

Forecast	March 2026	June 2026	September 2026	December 2026	March 2027
Interest Rate	3.75%	3.50%	3.50%	3.25%	3.25%

The interest rate is forecasted to remain at 3.25% until March 2029.

### Current Treasury Portfolio Position

At the 31 December 2025 the debt and investments balances were: -

Table 3 Debt and Investments Balances

Debt	Principal £ million	%
Fixed rate loans from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)	(2.000)	100
Variable rate loans	-	-
<b>Total loans</b>	<b>(2.000)</b>	<b>100</b>

Investments	Principal £ million	%
Variable rate investments with The Debt Management Office (DMO)	8.000	19
Fixed rate investments	35.000	81
<b>Total investments</b>	<b>43.000</b>	<b>100</b>

The level of investments represents the Authority's cumulative surplus on the General Fund, the balances on other cash-backed earmarked reserves and a cash-flow balance

generated by a surplus of creditors over debtors and by grant receipts in advance of payments. There is a net investment figure of £41 million.

### **Borrowing and Investment Requirement**

In the medium-term the Authority borrows for capital purposes only. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The table below compares the estimated CFR to the debt which currently exists, this gives an indication of the borrowing required. It also shows the estimated resources available for investment. An option is to use these balances to finance the expenditure rather than investing, often referred to as internal borrowing. The table gives an indication of the minimum borrowing or investment requirement through the period.

The CFR forecast includes the impact of the latest forecast of the funding of the Capital Programme which currently assumes that there will be no borrowing until 2027/28. A voluntary MRP was made in 2019/20 to take the future loans element of the MRP to nil.

Table 4 Borrowing/Investment need

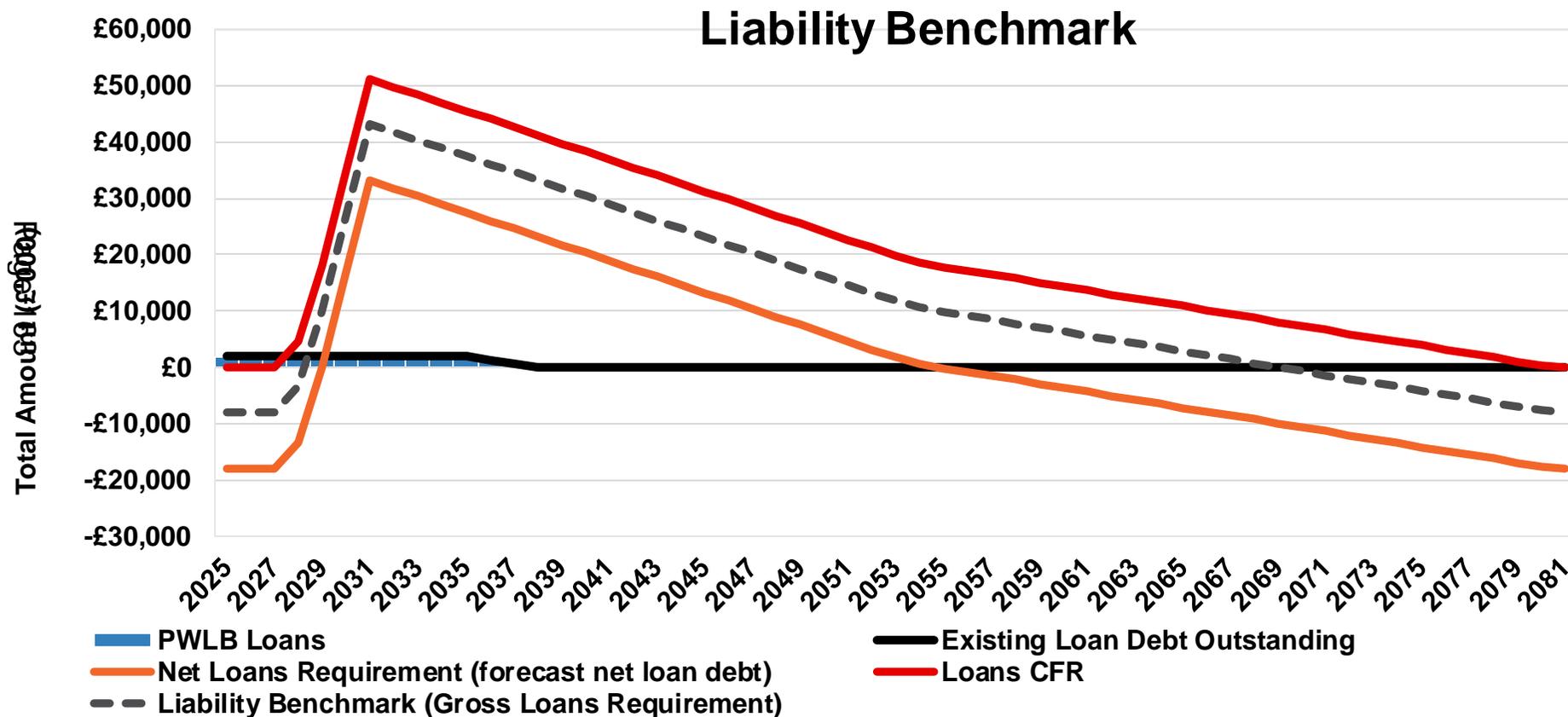
	<b>2024/25 £ million</b>	<b>2025/26 £ million</b>	<b>2026/27 £ million</b>	<b>2027/28 £ million</b>	<b>2028/29 £ million</b>
Capital Financing Requirement	12.542	11.875	11.154	14.952	27.590
Less long-term liabilities (PFI and finance leases)	(12.542)	(11.875)	(11.154)	(10.352)	(9.482)
Less external borrowing	(2.000)	(2.000)	(2.000)	(2.000)	(2.000)
<b>Borrowing requirement</b>	<b>(2.000)</b>	<b>(2.000)</b>	<b>(2.000)</b>	<b>2.600</b>	<b>16.108</b>
Reserves and working capital	(47.981)	(31.350)	(23.419)	(20.080)	(18.915)
Borrowing/(investment) need	(49.981)	(33.350)	(25.419)	(17.480)	(2.807)

The table above indicates that rather than having a need for borrowing it is estimated that the authority has an underlying need to invest until 2026/27 although the available balances are forecast to reduce. Based on the latest capital programme the authority will have a borrowing requirement in 2029/30.

Although the Authority does not have plans for new borrowing until 2027/28 it does hold £2.0 million of loans as part of its strategy for funding previous years' capital programmes.

**Liability benchmark**

The liability benchmark is an indicator required by the CIPFA Code. It looks to compare the Authority’s actual borrowing requirements against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark, which shows the minimum level of borrowing. This assumes the same forecasts as table 4, but that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £10 million at each year-end to maintain sufficient liquidity but minimise credit risk. In addition, it reflects the latest Capital Programme information which shows a borrowing requirement from 2027/28 onwards.



The benchmark shows that from 2027/28 there is likely to be a long-term requirement to borrow but that this does not necessarily have to be at the level of the loans CFR, which represents the maximum borrowing. The borrowing requirement is also reducing over time which may influence the length and type of borrowing to be taken.

### **Borrowing Strategy**

The draft Capital Programme implies there may be a requirement to use borrowing to fund the capital programme in the later years. At this stage it is unlikely that borrowing will be required in 2026/27. However, it is still best practice to approve a borrowing strategy and a policy on borrowing in advance of need. In considering a borrowing strategy the Authority needs to make provision to borrow short term to cover unexpected cash flow shortages or to cover any change in the financing of its Capital Programme.

In the past the Authority has raised all its long-term borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board, but if long term borrowing was required other sources of finance, such as local authority loans, and bank loans, would be investigated that may be available at more favourable rates.

Short-term borrowing if required would most likely be taken from other local authorities.

Therefore, the approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:

- Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)
- UK local authorities
- Any institution approved for investments
- Any other bank or building society authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority to operate in the UK
- UK public and private sector pension funds

### **Policy on Borrowing in Advance of Need**

In line with the Prudential Code the Authority will not borrow purely to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. However advance borrowing may be taken if it is considered that current rates are more favourable than future rates and that this advantage outweighs the cost of carrying advance borrowing. Any decision to borrow in advance will be considered carefully to ensure value for money can be demonstrated and that the Authority can ensure the security of such funds and relationships.

In determining whether borrowing will be undertaken in advance of need the authority will: -

- Ensure that there is a clear link between the capital programme and the maturity profile of the existing debt portfolio which supports the need to take funding in advance of need.
- Ensure the on-going revenue liabilities created, and the implications for future plans and budgets have been considered.
- Evaluate the economic and market factors that might influence the manner and timing of any decision to borrow.
- Consider the merits and demerits of alternative forms of funding.
- Consider the alternative interest rate bases available, the most appropriate periods to fund and repayment profiles to use.

## Debt Restructuring

The Authority's debt has arisen because of prior years' capital investment decisions. It has not taken any new borrowing out since 2007 as it has been utilising cash balances to pay off debt as it matures, or when deemed appropriate with the authority making early payment of debt. The anticipated holding of debt at 31 March 2026 is £2.0 million. All the debt is from the PWLB and is all at fixed rates of interest and is repayable on maturity. Table 5 shows the maturity profile and interest rate applicable on these: -

Table 5 Outstanding Loans

Loan Amount	Maturity Date	Interest rate
£650,000	December 2035	4.49%
£650,000	June 2036	4.49%
£700,000	June 2037	4.48%

(Note, this debt was taken out in 2007 when the base rate was 5.75% and when the Authority was earning 5.84% return on its investments.)

If the loans were to be repaid early there would be an early repayment (premium) charge. At 31 December the Authority would have to pay a premium of £8200 across the three loans if the Authority were to repay early. Therefore, it is not beneficial for the Authority to repay the loans currently. With the Authority planning to borrow to fund its capital programme in 2027/28 it is beneficial to keep the current loans as the interest rate is likely to be less than taking out new loans.

## Investment Strategy

At 31 December 2025 the Authority held £43 million invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus existing balances and reserves. During the year the Authority's investment balance has ranged between £30 million and £60 million. The variation arises principally due to the timing of the receipt of government grants. It is anticipated that there will be reduced cash levels in the forthcoming year, due to a drawdown in reserves to finance capital expenditure.

Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require 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. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.

Therefore, in line with the guidance the Treasury Management Strategy is developed to ensure the Fire Authority will only use very high-quality counterparties for investments.

The Authority may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparties in the table below, subject to the cash and time limits shown.

Table 6 Investment Counterparties

Counterparty	Cash Limit	Time Limit
Banks and other organisations and securities whose lowest published long-term credit rating from Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor's is a minimum of AA-	£5 million each	5 years
Call accounts with banks and other organisations with minimum A- credit rating	£10 million	Next day
Call account with the Debt Management Office	Unlimited	Next day
UK Central Government (irrespective of credit rating)	Unlimited	50 years
UK Local Authorities (irrespective of credit rating)	£5 million each	10 years
Secured bond funds AA rating and Weighted Average Life (WAL) not more than three years	£5 million each	N/A
Secured bond funds AAA rated and WAL not more than five years	£5 million each	N/A

Allowable bond funds are defined by credit rating and Weighted Average Life (WAL). Investing in senior secured bonds backed by collateral provides a protection against bail-in. Although the average life of the securities within the fund will be either 3 or 5 years, funds can be redeemed within 2 days of request but in general these should be seen as longer-term investments.

The Authority currently has access to an account with the Debt Management Office, which pays slightly lower than bank base rate, this is 3.71% at 31 December. Each working day the balance on the Authority's current account is invested to ensure that the interest received on surplus balances is maximised.

Regarding the risk of investing with another local authority, only a few authorities have their own credit rating, but those that do are the same or one notch below the UK Government reflecting the fact that they are quasi-Government institutions. Overall, credit ratings are seen as unnecessary by the sector because the statutory and prudential framework within which the authorities operate is amongst the strongest in the world. In addition, any lender to a local authority has protection, under statute, by way of a first charge on the revenues of that authority. No local authority has ever defaulted to date, and this also may be an indication of security. However, when the UK credit rating by the rating agencies has been downgraded those local authorities with a rating saw a reduction in their ratings. Therefore, consideration has been given to reducing the risk associated with the investment with other local authorities.

Table 7 Investment Limits with Local Authorities

Investment Period	Maximum Individual Investment (£ million)	Maximum Total Investment (£ million)	Maximum Period
Up to 2 years	5	40	2 years
Over 2 years	5	25	10 years

In respect of banks taxpayers will no longer bail-out failed banks instead the required funds will be paid by equity investors and depositors. Local authorities' deposits will be at risk and consequently although currently available within the policy it is unlikely that long-term unsecured term deposits will be used at the present time.

All the Authority's fixed investments are with other local authorities. To enhance the interest earned the following investments are already impacting 2026/27: -

Table 8 Current Investments

Start Date	End Date	Principal	Rate	Interest 26/27
22/04/2025	21/04/2026	£5,000,000	4.50%	£12,329
30/04/2025	29/04/2026	£5,000,000	4.75%	£18,219
30/07/2025	29/07/2026	£5,000,000	4.15%	£67,651
29/09/2025	28/09/2026	£5,000,000	4.15%	£102,329
30/09/2025	29/09/2026	£5,000,000	4.25%	£105,377

The Authority has the below future deals which impact 2026/27 which have yet to commence.

Table 9 Future Investments

Start Date	End Date	Principal	Rate	Interest 26/27
04/02/2026	03/02/2027	£5,000,000	4.55%	£191,973

Consideration is given to fixing further investments if the maturity fits with estimated cash flows and the rate is attractive. This will continue to be reviewed. Suggested rates payable by other local authorities indicated:

Table 10 Indicative Interest Rates on Investments with other Local Authorities

Investment length	Interest Rates
3-month investment	4.15 – 4.25%
6-month investment	4.50 – 4.55%
12-month investment	4.30 – 4.45%
3-year investment	4.20 – 4.25%
4-year investment	4.10 - 4.20%

The overall combined interest earned on fixed and overnight DMO deposits as at 31 December 2025 is £1.671 million on an average balance of £48.716 million at an annualised rate of 4.55%. This is more than the benchmark 7-day Sterling Overnight Index Average (SONIA) rate which averages a yield of 4.14% over the same period.

In addition to the above the authority uses NatWest for its operational banking. Balances retained in NatWest are very low, usually less than £5,000. However, if required monies are retained at NatWest this would be in addition to the limits set out above.

### Minimum Revenue Provision

Under Local Authority Accounting arrangements, the Authority is required to set aside a sum of money each year to reduce the overall level of debt. This sum is known as the minimum revenue provision (MRP).

The Authority will assess their MRP for 2026/27 in accordance with guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 21(1A) of the Local Government Act 2003.

The Authority made a voluntary MRP in 2019/20 and it is anticipated that the MRP on loans will be nil in 2026/27, this will be the case until capital expenditure is financed by borrowing.

Whilst the Authority has no unsupported borrowing, nor has any plans to take out any unsupported borrowing in 2026/27 it is prudent to approve a policy relating to the MRP that would apply if circumstances change. As such in accordance with guidelines, the MRP on any future unsupported borrowing will be calculated using the Asset Life Method. This will be based on a straightforward straight-line calculation to set an equal charge to revenue over the estimated life of the asset. Estimated life periods will be determined under delegated powers. To the extent that expenditure is not on the creation of an asset and is of a type that is subject to estimated life periods that are referred to in the guidance, these periods will generally be adopted by the Authority. However, the Authority reserves the right to determine useful life periods and prudent MRP in exceptional circumstances where the recommendations of the guidance would not be appropriate.

As some types of capital expenditure incurred by the Authority are not capable of being related to an individual asset, asset lives will be assessed on a basis which most reasonably reflects the anticipated period of benefit that arises from the expenditure. Also, whatever type of expenditure is involved, it will be grouped together in a manner which reflects the nature of the main component of expenditure and will only be divided up in cases where there are two or more major components with substantially different useful economic lives.

Assets held under a PFI contract and finance leases form part of the Balance Sheet. This has increased the overall capital financing requirement and results in an MRP charge being required. The government guidance permits a prudent MRP to equate to the amount charged to revenue under the contract to repay the liability. In terms of the PFI schemes this charge forms part of the payment due to the PFI contractor.

### Revenue Budget

The capital financing budget currently shows that income received exceeds expenditure. This excludes the PFI and Finance lease payments, which are included in other budgets. Based on the Strategy outlined above then the proposed budget for capital financing are:

Table 11 Capital Financing Charges Included in Revenue Budget

	<b>2025/26</b> <b>£ million</b>	<b>2026/27</b> <b>£ million</b>	<b>2027/28</b> <b>£ million</b>	<b>2028/29</b> <b>£ million</b>
Interest payable	0.090	0.090	0.233	0.981
MRP	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.184
Interest receivable	(1.385)	(1.390)	(1.023)	(0.787)
Net budget	(1.295)	(1.300)	(0.790)	0.378

### Prudential Indicators for 2025/26 to 2028/29 in respect of the Combined Fire Authority's Treasury Management Activities

In accordance with its statutory duty and with the requirements of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance and the CIPFA Code for Treasury Management, the Combined Fire Authority produces each year a set of prudential indicators which regulate and control its treasury management activities.

The following table sets out the debt and investment-related indicators which provide the framework for the Authority's proposed borrowing and lending activities over the coming three years. These indicators will also be approved by members as part of the Capital Programme approval process along with other capital expenditure-related indicators but need to be reaffirmed and approved as part of this Treasury Management Strategy.

It should be noted that contained within the external debt limits, there are allowances for outstanding liabilities in respect of the PFI schemes and leases. Following implementation of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) 16 Leases more leases are likely to be included on the balance sheet and therefore will be included against the other long-term liabilities indicators.

## Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

**Table 12 Treasury Management Prudential Indicators**

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	£	£	£	£
	million	million	million	million
1. Adoption of the Revised CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (2011)			Adopted for all years	
2. <b>Authorised limit for external debt - A prudent estimate of external debt, which includes sufficient headroom for unusual cash movements:</b>				
Borrowing	4.000	4.000	11.000	30.000
Other long-term liabilities	30.000	25.000	25.000	22.000
Total	34.000	29.000	36.000	52.000
3. <b>Operational boundary for external debt - A prudent estimate of debt, but no provision for unusual cash movements. It represents the estimated maximum external debt arising because of the Authority's current plans:</b>				
Borrowing	3.000	3.000	9.000	24.000
Other long-term liabilities	16.000	15.000	15.000	13.000
Total	19.000	18.000	24.000	37.000
4. <b>Upper limit for fixed interest rate exposure:</b>				
Upper limit of borrowing at fixed rates	100%	100%	100%	100%
Upper limit of investments at fixed rates	100%	100%	100%	100%
5. <b>Upper limit for variable rate exposure:</b>				
Upper limit of borrowing at variable rates	50%	50%	50%	50%
Upper limit of investments at variable rates	100%	100%	100%	100%
6. Upper limit for total principal sums invested over 364 days (per maturity date)	40.000	40.000	40.000	40.000
7. <b>Maturity structure of debt:</b>	<b>Upper Limit %</b>	<b>Lower Limit %</b>		
Under 12 months	100	-		
12 months and within 24 months	50	-		
24 months and within 5 years	50	-		
5 years and within 10 years	75	-		
10 years and above	100	-		

## 8. Estimated Capital Expenditure

Table 13 Estimated Capital Expenditure

	<b>2024/25 Actual</b>	<b>2025/26 Forecast</b>	<b>2026/27 Budget</b>	<b>2027/28 Budget</b>	<b>2028/29 Budget</b>
Capital Expenditure (£ million)	6.034	6.925	9.241	10.012	17.873

## 9. Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

Table 14 Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

	<b>2024/25 Actual</b>	<b>2025/26 Budget</b>	<b>2026/27 Budget</b>	<b>2027/28 Budget</b>	<b>2028/29 Budget</b>
Financing costs (£ million)	(2.177)	(1.295)	(1.300)	(0.790)	0.378
Proportion of net revenue stream	(2.90%)	(1.67%)	(1.61%)	(0.95%)	0.46%

## **Treasury Management Policy Statement**

The Fire Authority adopts the key recommendations of CIPFA's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the Code), as described in Section 5 of the Code.

Accordingly, the Authority will create and maintain, as the cornerstones for effective treasury management: -

A treasury management policy statement stating the policies, objectives and approach to risk management of its treasury management activities suitable treasury management practices (TMPs), setting out the manner in which the Authority will seek to achieve those policies and objectives, and prescribing how it will manage and control those activities.

The Authority delegates responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of its treasury management policies and practices to the Resources Committee and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions to the Director of Corporate Services, who will act in accordance with the Treasury Management Policy Statement and CIPFA's Standard of Professional Practice on treasury management.

The Authority nominates the Resources Committee to be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies.

### **Definition**

The Authority defines its treasury management activities as: the management of the Authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.

### **Risk management**

The Fire Authority regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the organisation, and any financial instruments entered into to manage these risks.

### **Value for money**

The Fire Authority acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving value for money in treasury management, and to employing suitable comprehensive performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.

### **Borrowing policy**

The Fire Authority greatly values revenue budget stability and will therefore borrow most of its long-term funding needs at long-term fixed rates of interest. However, short-term and variable rate loans may be borrowed to either offset short-term and variable rate investments or to produce revenue savings. The Authority will also constantly evaluate debt restructuring opportunities of the existing portfolio.

The Fire Authority will set an affordable borrowing limit each year in compliance with the Local Government Act 2003 and will have regard to the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities when setting that limit. It will also set limits on its exposure to changes in interest rates and limits on the maturity structure of its borrowing in the treasury management strategy report each year.

### **Investment policy**

The Fire Authority's primary objectives for the investment of its surplus funds are to protect the principal sums invested from loss, and to ensure adequate liquidity so that funds are available for expenditure when needed. The generation of investment income to support the provision of local authority services is an important, but secondary, objective.

The Fire Authority will have regard to the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Guidance on Local Government Investments. It will approve an Investment Strategy each year as part of the Treasury Management Strategy. The strategy will set criteria to determine suitable organisations with which cash may be invested, limits on the maximum duration of such investments and limits on the amount of cash that may be invested with any one organisation.

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## Council Tax Precept Consultation

### Background

The legal requirements for council tax increases are primarily governed by the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011. A consultation with the public was launched on 11 December 2025 for a £5 increase in the council tax precept for the year ahead. The consultation ended at 5pm on 4 February 2026, the results are set out below.

The consultation was promoted during the period through a variety of channels:

- Seven articles were published in the media with an opportunity to see of 17.2 million.
- Featured in Hot Topics and Prevention Matters stakeholder newsletters and 351 key stakeholders emailed directly.
- Details were sent to 84,572 subscribers of our In The Know public e-newsletter.
- Social media posts reached 73,939 people.
- Community groups were engaged by community fire safety officer with some paper surveys completed.
- Promoted internally on the Service's intranet and staff newsletter.

Appendix one of this report also contains the Fire Brigade Union response to the budget.

Analysis of the budget consultation – February 2026

Total respondents: 970.

### 1. To what extent do you support Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service increasing its council tax precept in line with the levels set out above?

Level of support	Numbers	Percentage
Strongly support	576	59%
Support	160	16%
Neither support nor oppose	54	6%
Oppose	48	5%
Strongly oppose	124	13%
Don't know	8	0%

### 2. Comments

490 comments (50% of respondents).

### Positive Sentiment

A strong majority of comments express clear support for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, recognising its essential, life-saving role and the need to maintain high standards of emergency response. Many respondents emphasise that the proposed increase is modest, reasonable, or “worth every penny.” Examples include:

- “LFRS provide an excellent service and I believe we need to ensure that the high level of service is maintained by this relatively small increase in the precept.”
- “Happy to pay this modest increase for such a professional public service.”
- “The fire service is vital, so a small increase as proposed will not be noticed for the vast majority of residents.”

These comments demonstrate widespread appreciation for the work of firefighters and a willingness to financially support the continuity of services.

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### Negative Sentiment

A substantial minority of comments reflect concerns about the financial burden on households, particularly during the ongoing cost of living crisis. These respondents often feel that council tax is already too high or increasing too frequently, and some express frustration about perceived inefficiencies or unnecessary spending. Others oppose the principle of raising local taxes instead of using central government funding. Representative comments include:

- “Council tax just seems to increase year after year. As a pensioner even small increases matter.”
- “Too many increases to the cost of living.”
- “The government should fund this, not residents who are already struggling.”

There is also a cluster of comments criticising equality and diversity spending or the inclusion of equality questions in the survey, which contributes to negative sentiment.

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### Neutral Sentiment

A smaller proportion of respondents take a neutral or conditional stance. These comments often seek additional information, express uncertainty about the cumulative impact of future rises, or state that support depends on how the funding is allocated.

Examples include:

- “It is difficult to say whether I support the increase without knowing if we are getting good value for money already.”
- “Would this guarantee that appliances stay on the run and stations stay fully staffed?”
- “I need to know what other services are planning to increase before I decide.”

Neutral comments frequently request reassurance around transparency and efficiency.

### Percentage Breakdown

- Positive Sentiment: 59%
- Neutral Sentiment: 16%
- Negative Sentiment: 25%

### Overall Summary

Overall, there is strong support for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, with many residents recognising the essential role it plays in protecting lives and expressing willingness to contribute financially to sustain its performance. However, concerns also exist around the broader affordability of council tax, value for money, and perceived inefficiencies in spending. The inclusion of equality related questions appears to have increased some negative sentiment.

Sentiment patterns captured through social media responses broadly match those obtained through the direct consultation channels. Please note, respondents do not have to answer the equalities questions to take part in the consultation but it helps the Service understand if we are talking to all parts of the community.

### 3. Are you answering the survey as:

Status	Number	Percentage
A Lancashire resident	923	99%
A Lancashire business owner	5	0.5%
An employee of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service	16	2%
A representative of a partner organisation	3	0.5%
Public representative such as councillor or MP.	9	1%
None of the above	9	1%

### 4. Which area of Lancashire is your home or business in?

District	Number	Percentage
----------	--------	------------

Blackburn with Darwen	78	8%
Blackpool	106	11%
Burnley	80	8%
Chorley	75	8%
Fylde	67	7%
Hyndburn	44	5%
Lancaster	94	10%
Pendle	34	4%
Preston	95	10%
South Ribble	75	8%
Ribble Valley	33	3%
Rossendale	42	4%
West Lancashire	63	7%
Wyre	80	8%

### 5. What was your gender assigned at birth?

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	400	42%
Female	492	52%
Prefer not to say	62	6%

### 6. Which of the following best reflects how you would describe your gender identity?

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	397	42%
Female	486	51%
Non-binary	1	0.5%
Prefer not to say	67	7%

### 7. Does your gender identity align with the gender assigned to you at birth?

Answer	Number	Percentage
Yes	873	92%
No	8	1%
Prefer not to say	69	7%

### 8. What is your age?

Age range	Number	Percentage
16-19	2	0%
20-24	8	1%
25-29	23	2%
30-34	33	3%
35-39	61	6%

40-44	39	4%
45-49	51	5%
50-54	78	8%
55-59	68	7%
60-64	116	12%
Over 65	470	50%

### 9. What is your religion and belief?

Religion	Number	Percentage
Buddhist	5	1%
Christian	554	58%
Hindu	1	0%
Jewish	3	0%
Muslim	20	2%
Sikh	0	0%
No religion	249	26%
Decline	81	9%
Other	37	4%

### 10. What is your ethnicity, cultural or racial origin?

Ethnicity, cultural or racial origin	Number	Percentage
White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	886	92%
White – Irish	7	1%
White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0	0%
Any other White background – please describe below in the 'Other' section	6	1%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups – White and Black Caribbean	2	0%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups – White and Black African	0	0%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups – White and Asian	3	0%
Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background – please describe in the 'Other' section	1	0%
Asian/Asian British – Indian	7	1%
Asian/Asian British – Pakistani	10	1%
Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0%
Asian/Asian British – Chinese	1	0%
Asian/Asian British – Any other Asian background	0	0%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – African	0	0%

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – Caribbean	0	0%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – Any other Black/African/Caribbean background	0	0%
Other ethnic group – Arab	3	0%
Other	34	4%

### 11. What is your sexual orientation?

Sexual Orientation	Numbers	Percentage
Bi/bisexual	26	3%
Gay	17	2%
Lesbian	7	1%
Heterosexual/straight	749	80%
Other term	5	0%
Prefer not to say	129	14%

### 12. Do you have a disability?

Disability	Number	Percentage
Yes	213	23%
No	646	69%
Decline	81	9%

### 13. How did you hear about this survey

Channel	Number	Percentage
Social media	208	22%
In the Know email	662	70%
Hot Topics	3	0%
Prevention Matters	9	1%
Protection Matters	0	0%
Media	20	2%
LFRS employee	18	2%
LFRS internal channels	6	1%
LFRS website	19	2%
Community meeting	4	1%



**Executive Council member** Andrew Fox-Hewitt  
**Regional Secretary** Ian Hibbert  
**Brigade Secretary** Kev Wilkie  
**Brigade Chair** Mark Hoyle  
**Brigade Organiser** Ewan Duncan  
**Brigade SHE Rep** Paul Farman

**Region 5 North West**  
Fire Brigades Union  
Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service  
West Way  
Euxton  
Chorley  
PR7 6DH

Mark Nolan  
Clerk to the Authority  
Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service  
Garstang Road  
Fulwood  
Preston  
PR2 3LF

12<sup>th</sup> February 2026

Mr Nolan

### **LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY BUDGET CONSULTATION**

Lancashire Fire Brigades Union (FBU) finds itself in an unprecedented position.

Due to continued reductions in funding to Fire and Rescue Services across the UK since 2010, we are now at a critical financial point unlike anything we have experienced before.

Despite extensive lobbying and campaigning of local MPs by a cross-party delegation — including senior officials from Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service (LFRS) and the Lancashire FBU Brigade Secretary — Lancashire was hit with an estimated £3–£4 million reduction in the Fair Funding Review.

In light of these circumstances, FBU Lancashire fully supports the proposed £5 increase in Council Tax for a Band D property in Lancashire.

The FBU has concerns about increased borrowing; however, we recognise that due to ongoing underfunding from the current and previous governments, the service has little alternative.

The FBU will always support continued investment in Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service to ensure the safety of our communities, protect frontline services, and maintain the high standards of emergency response that the public rightly expects.

The FBU fully supports the investment set out in Table 5 in the Capital Programme. The FBU will support and work with the service in delivering a service that serves the communities of Lancashire and a better service for its staff.



Regardless of the outcome of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), Lancashire FBU remains committed to working constructively with LFRS to achieve a smooth transition and reduce any impact on the service.

The FBU support the investment in Leadership and Development Centre (LDC). Failure to invest in the center reduces the quality of training to all staff

Yours Sincerely

Kev Wilkie  
Fire Brigades Union  
Lancashire Brigade Secretary

### Pay Policy Statement for 2026/27

#### Introduction

In accordance with the Localism Act 2011 (Chapter 8 Sections 38 to 43) Lancashire Fire Authority is required to produce a pay policy for each financial year. These statements must articulate an authority's own policies towards a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce, particularly its senior staff (or 'chief officers') and its lowest paid employees. The pay policy statement must be prepared for each financial year, and they must be approved by members of the Fire and Rescue Authority and published.

Any decision under powers delegated to the Authority's Constitution with regard to remuneration to be taken in 2026/27 will be bound by and must comply with the 2026/27 Statement.

The Director of People and Development (DoPD) must be consulted prior to any decision impacting on remuneration where there is any question regarding compliance with the Statement.

In general terms the Fire Authority recognises terms and conditions negotiated nationally by the National Employers with the National Employees' bodies for three distinct staff groups. These are:

- National Joint Council for Brigade Managers (referred to in Lancashire Fire Authority as Principal Officers) of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (commonly referred to as 'Gold Book');
- National Joint Council for Local Government Services (commonly referred to as 'Green Book');
- National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (commonly referred to as 'Grey Book').

Under the definitions provided for within the Act, the officers included in this pay statement are the Chief Fire Officer (CFO), Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO), Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) and Director of People & Development (DoPD).

The Treasurer responsibilities are undertaken by the DoCS.

The Monitoring Officer duties are undertaken by the Clerk to the Authority who is engaged on a contract for services basis. Monitoring Officer duties are currently being reconsidered by the Authority and will be approved by the Authority in due course.

Changes from national negotiations generally take place each year, in July (Gold Book), April (Green Book) and July (Grey Book). The Fire Authority's policy is to implement national agreements, amended as needed to meet local needs.

A chosen natural internal benchmark for Chief Officer pay is the percentage rise in firefighters pay. This is the standard for most of the staff within the Service and has been deemed affordable and proportionate by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services. It has previously been agreed that the Chief Fire Officer's pay with the established linkages to the other Executive Board members should rise by the same amount as NJC for grey book when they receive their annual pay award.

No bonus payments are made to Executive Board members.

Information relating to chief officers pay and benefits in kind is found in the Fire Authority's Statement of Accounts and on the Authority's website.

### **Objectives of the Policy**

The Fire Authority attracts and retains a competent, motivated and well led workforce, to meet current and future organisational needs and to be an employer of choice with improved working practices, work life balance, personal development, health and well-being and fair pay. We are committed to striving to achieve fairness in pay and reward structures across all occupational groups considering all the employment relationships that exist.

Pay increases in 2025/26 were:

3.2% for staff covered by the "grey book" (with effect from 1 July 2025).

3.2% for Principal Officers (with effect from 1 July 2025) in accordance with the agreed linkage to "grey book" staff.

3.2% for staff covered by the "green book staff" (with effect from 1 April 2025). In addition, all locally agreed pay points above the maximum of the national pay spine were increased by 3.2%.

In addition to pay, the national agreements cover other terms and conditions such as annual leave and allowances for use of private vehicles on Authority business. The Authority pays car allowances in accordance with these national scales.

There are two Pension schemes in existence: the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 and the Local Government Pension Scheme. Some employees retain legacy scheme pension membership in the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (which became closed to new entrants in 2006) or the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme (which became closed to new entrants on establishment of the 2015 scheme). All firefighters are now members of the 2015 Firefighters Pension Scheme, which has a normal retirement age of 60.

All employees may join a pension scheme which is relevant to their occupational group. The operative schemes are statutory schemes with contributions from employers and the employees.

The Local Government Pension Scheme provides for flexible retirement for which the Fire Authority has approved a Policy statement.

The Firefighters' Pension Schemes allow for re-engagement after retirement. Any utilisation of this option is subject to approval by the Authority based on a business case and demonstrated need and may involve abatement of pension benefit where appropriate.

As part of the 2015 national pay agreement for Grey Book staff the trainee grade was removed. There are therefore now two pay grades for Grey Book staff (development and competent). There is a spinal column point and grading system for Green Book staff, the policy is to start any appointee on the lowest point of the pay grade, save for where an applicant brings specific skills or experience to a post, they then progress through the points until the maximum grade. In respect of Gold Book staff, they are appointed within a grade range of points and progress by incremental progression subject to annual performance reviews until the maximum of the range is reached on a similar basis.

The "green book" grading is determined and underpinned by the Local Government Job Evaluation Scheme. The salaries utilised are above the 'living wage'. The Service has a Market Supplements Policy, which covers all posts, and where evidence exists of recruitment and retention issues, allows the Service to make any additional payments to reflect the market rate. This is reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and is of particular importance in times of challenging recruitment and retention.

Delegated powers for the payment of honoraria lie with the Chief Fire Officer.

### **Individual Chief Officers**

Changes to chief officer salaries are approved by the Fire Authority.

The chief officers are conditioned to the Gold Book terms and conditions of employment.

A facility exists for the chief officers (either singularly or collectively) to present a case to the Authority (via the Chair) for a salary increase based on evidence, the overall performance of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service and an annual appraisal. This is in line with the 'two-track' approach for determining levels of pay for Brigade Managers, as detailed within the 'Gold Book' sixth edition 2025.

Lancashire Fire Authority does not operate a bonus scheme or performance related pay for chief officers.

Chief Officers may claim reimbursement for expenses incurred in the course of carrying out their duties.

### **Chief Fire Officer (CFO) - £181,456**

The post holder is a member of the 2015 Firefighters Pension Scheme and has two further increments before reaching the maximum of the salary range.

The current remuneration for this post on recruitment is between £178,272 and £184,637 per annum.

The Chief Fire Officer has a provided car to enable the duties of the post to be performed.

The provisions for redundancy are the statutory payments for redundancy.

**Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) – £171,904**

The post holder is a member of the 2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme and has reached the maximum of the salary range.

The current remuneration for this post on recruitment is between £165,538 - £171,904 per annum.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer has a provided car to enable the duties of the post to be performed.

The provisions for redundancy are the statutory payments for redundancy.

**Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) - £142,617**

The post holder is a member of the 2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme and has two further increments before reaching the maximum of the salary range.

The current remuneration for this post on recruitment is between £140,070 and £146,438 per annum.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer has a provided car to enable the duties of the post to be performed.

The provisions for redundancy are the statutory payments for redundancy.

**Director of People and Development (DoPD) - £103,200**

The post holder is a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme and has two further increments before reaching the maximum of the salary range.

The current remuneration for this post on recruitment is between £98,040 and £113,520 per annum.

There is no provision to utilise the car leasing scheme nor is any car allowance paid. Any mileage reimbursement utilises the casual user arrangement.

The post holder is entitled to discretionary entitlements in relation to redundancy which include average weekly pay with a multiplier of 2.2 applied and in exceptional cases augmentation of pensionable service to the maximum of 3 years. These provisions apply to all staff eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

**Treasurer/Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) - £108,360**

The post holder is a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme and has one further increment before reaching the maximum of the salary range.

The current remuneration for this post on recruitment is between £98,040 and £113,520 per annum.

There is no provision to utilise the car leasing scheme nor is any car allowance paid. Any mileage reimbursement utilises the casual car user arrangements.

The post holder is entitled to discretionary entitlements in relation to redundancy which include average weekly pay with a multiplier of 2.2 applied and in exceptional cases augmentation of pensionable service to the maximum of 3 years. These provisions apply to all staff eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

### **The Clerk to the Authority**

The monitoring officer activity is undertaken under a contract for services, the cost being £15,150 per annum, this is subject to review this year.

### **Recruitment of New Officers**

The Fire Authority takes the opportunity in year to review the salaries of the senior officer grouping to determine whether the salary range should be adjusted prior to advert.

### **Pay Floor**

The definition of the 'lowest paid employee' is that postholder receiving the lowest (full-time equivalent) annual salary (exclusive of Employer pension contributions).

The pay floor level is our Green Book Grade 2 posts (Cooks, Receptionists and Gardener/handypersons) who are on a scale of £25,583 to £25,989 per annum. £25,583 equates to £13.53 per hour. The minimum a current employee is receiving is £25,583.

The Chief Fire Officer's earnings ratio is 1:7.09 using the minima of pay grade 2.

The government statement is a recommendation that this ratio should not exceed 1:25.

As a further comparison, the ratio between a competent firefighter with continuing professional development (CPD) and the maximum salary for the Chief Fire Officer is 1:4.56.

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## **Lancashire Combined Fire Authority**

Meeting to be held on 23 February 2026

### **Member Champion Activity Report**

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

#### **Executive Summary**

This paper provides a report on the work of the Member Champions for the period up to 22 February 2026.

#### **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**

During December 2025 and early January 2026, our Community Fire Safety (CFS) teams delivered a comprehensive programme of prevention and engagement activity across Lancashire. This work focused on protecting vulnerable residents, strengthening community relationships, improving fire and road safety awareness, and supporting partner agencies during the winter period.

The team also attended a newly established Hoarding Peer Support Group in Blackpool and provided a fire safety presentation and practical advice on the risks associated with hoarding. This included guidance on combustible materials, blocked escape routes and electrical hazards.

In early December, Fleetwood and South Shore Fire Cadet Units jointly supported the Blackpool Fire Station Christmas Tree Service. The event gave cadets valuable community engagement experience, opportunities to work alongside operational firefighters, and helped develop communication, teamwork, and interpersonal skills, while showcasing the Fire Cadet programme to the public.

Throughout the winter months, road safety education was prioritised through the delivery of the Wasted Lives programme. This hard-hitting initiative combines educational content, real-life case studies, and emergency service perspectives to highlight the devastating consequences of dangerous driving and promote safer decision-making, particularly among young and high-risk drivers. Sessions were delivered at Parklands High School in Chorley, Lathom High School in Skelmersdale, British Aerospace (BAE) Systems, and multiple Young Farmers groups across the county.

A further road safety session was delivered at Skelmersdale Youth Zone, engaging a well-attended youth club. Many attendees were not in education, employment, or training (NEET), making this an important opportunity to provide vital road safety advice and reinforce safer choices around driving and road use.

On 11 December 2025, a joint road safety event was held at Charnock Richard Services in Chorley, in partnership with the Highway Authority and Lancashire County Council Road Safety Team. Drivers were engaged on winter driving conditions, general road safety, and the risks of drink and drug driving during the festive period.

On 6 January 2026, the team attended a Winter Wellbeing Event at South Ribble Council Offices. The event generated several referrals for Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) and helped further strengthen partnership working. Notably, links were established with Age UK, which resulted in a future fire safety presentation being arranged for staff involved in hospital discharge.

During the festive period, CFS staff attended a multi-agency event at Pendle Leisure Centre, organised by Cosy Homes in Lancashire, and focused on the support available to residents during the ongoing energy crisis. This engagement enabled us to promote the HFSC offer, reinforce 'Safe and Warm' winter safety messages, and raise awareness of seasonal risks, including electrical hazards associated with the Christmas period.

Our CFS teams also delivered a fire safety presentation to PUKAR, a group based in Preston. The session focused on key fire safety messages, particularly around staying safe at home during Electrical Safety Week and was specifically targeted at carers and individuals with disabilities to ensure inclusivity. PUKAR management expressed their appreciation for the continued support provided by the CFS team and Operational crews in delivering safety messages to disability organisations throughout the year.

Overall, Community Fire Safety activity across Lancashire during December 2025 and January 2026 demonstrated strong partnership working, targeted engagement with vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups, and a continued focus on reducing winter-related risks. These activities directly support our prevention objectives and contribute to wider community safety outcomes.

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Councillor Salim Sidat**

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) has continued to deliver important community safety and wellbeing initiatives across the county.

On 16 November 2025, LFRS marked the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, with the Assistant Chief Fire Officer and a Prevention Support Officer attending

a multifaith service at County Hall, Preston. This event honoured those killed or seriously injured on the roads and reaffirmed LFRS's commitment to road safety.

The Service also strengthened its engagement through Pendle Community Radio. The Combined Fire Authority (CFA) Vice Chair appeared on the Community Hour programme to promote winter fire safety and smoke alarm checks, highlighting the CFA's work and the importance of community connection. In a follow-up session, the Central CFS Team Leader shared electrical safety advice ahead of the festive period, raising awareness of appliance use, lithium battery risks and the importance of certified products.

In the Northern Area, LFRS continued its partnership with HMP Lancaster Farms, distributing 300 Christmas cards containing supportive messages and fire safety advice to vulnerable prisoners. This initiative supported wellbeing during a challenging time and helped reduce fire risk within the establishment.

To mark Hannukah, the CFS Team visited Shalom Lodge in Fylde to deliver fire safety guidance to elderly residents, including safe candle use, cooking practices and electrical safety. HFSCs were also completed, reinforcing the Service's commitment to supporting Lancashire's Jewish community.

Through these activities, LFRS continues to promote safety, strengthen community relationships and support an inclusive and informed workforce.

## **Health, Wellbeing & Climate Change - County Councillor Sohail Asghar**

### **Climate Change and Environment**

Following an idea brought forward by a firefighter as part of an environmental improvement initiative, the Assistant Safety, Health and Environment Advisor carried out a detailed review into the feasibility of introducing biodegradable nitrile gloves across the Service. This work involved identifying suitable manufacturers, researching product specifications, and assessing the environmental benefits compared with traditional nitrile gloves. Sample products from several suppliers were sourced and trialled to evaluate their durability, comfort, and compatibility with operational and non-operational tasks.

After this assessment was completed and it was confirmed that the biodegradable alternatives met the necessary performance and safety standards, the preferred product was selected. Working collaboratively with Procurement and Stores staff, the gloves were then added to the Service's existing Stores system. As a result, biodegradable nitrile gloves are now fully implemented and available for use across the whole organisation, supporting our commitment to reducing environmental impact while maintaining high standards of safety and practicality.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

Three Physical Training Instructor (PTI) standardisation days have been held to ensure that all Service PTIs are aware of the role, alongside the most up-to-date policies and procedures for undertaking and recording fitness assessments. Seventy per cent of Grey Book (operational) staff have completed their annual fitness assessment, indicating that the Service is on track to ensure all Grey Book staff had completed an annual fitness assessment by the end of the training calendar (2025/26).

LFERS recently hosted a well-received 'Nutrition for Menopause' session as part of the Women and Families Employee Voice Group programme. Delivered by a specialist in menopause-focused nutrition, the session was opened more widely to members of the Women in the Fire Service UK network, reflecting the Service's commitment to sector collaboration and inclusive wellbeing support. Engagement levels were particularly strong, with approximately 60 requests either to join the session live or access a recording. Feedback has highlighted the value of providing accessible, specialist-led information on menopause-related health matters. Based on this response, the Service was actively considering the delivery of future workshops to further enhance staff support in this area.

### **Road Safety – County Councillor Jordan Fox**

Education Sessions Delivered in the Last Quarter:

- Road Sense (Year 6): 209 sessions were delivered to 6496 Year 6 students, focusing on road safety and pedestrian awareness through interactive discussions and practical demonstrations.
- Wasted Lives (Year 10/ College): 44 sessions reached 4487 students, raising awareness of the dangers of impaired driving through real-life case studies and discussions on responsible behaviour.
- Biker Down: 3 sessions were held with 38 participants, teaching motorcyclists first aid, accident response, and road safety techniques to reduce injury severity in crashes.

This has been a particularly busy quarter, with much of our activity taking place at multi-agency events.

We partnered with Lancashire County Council (LCC) to celebrate Older Persons Day, hosting two events at garden centres in Chorley and Wrye Districts; areas identified as priorities from a senior road user. Key safety topics, such as 'Are Your Eyes Fit to Drive', 'Reaction Tests', and 'Tyre Safety' were covered, which marked the start of 'Tyre Safety Month'. We also attended additional events at Oswaldtwistle Mills and Golden Days in Parbold leading up to Christmas.

This year's Road Safety Week was our busiest yet, with a strong multi-agency approach. The Wasted Lives programme was delivered at West Lancashire College, Nelson and Colne College and Ormskirk Sixth Form. Feedback from students was overwhelmingly positive:

- 100 per cent of respondents said they found the event beneficial.
- 100 per cent said all the information was relevant to their age group.
- 93 per cent stated they would make safer decisions because of the events.

Additionally, Wasted Lives was extended to several high schools (Year 10 and 11 students), targeted apprentices at Springfields and BAE and smaller businesses. On International Men's Day, we also delivered assemblies to male students at Blackpool Sixth Form.

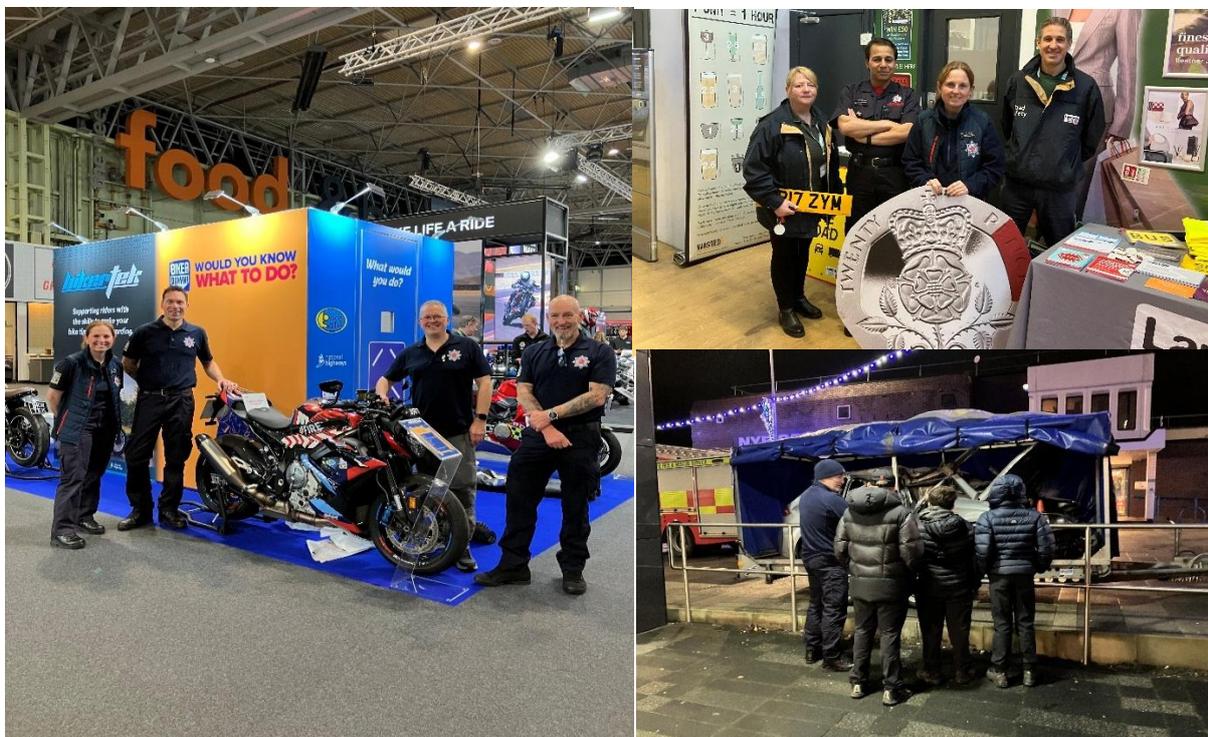
Our team participated in the NEC National Motorcycle Show in Birmingham, engaging with motorcyclists from across the country and promoting additional training opportunities, including the Biker Down and Bike Safe courses. The event, which drew an impressive 80,000 spectators, provided a valuable platform to connect with the motorcycling community and raise awareness about road safety.

We launched a project targeting Young Farmers, adapting the Wasted Lives programme to focus on rural roads and the long-term consequences of driving offences. The initial success has led to the delivery of three further sessions, and the promotion of this programme will continue.

In collaboration with LCC, we delivered Fatal 5 sessions to around 100 soldiers at Halton Barracks. The soldiers were divided into small groups to discuss key topics such as drink and drug driving, the dangers of impaired vision, and the consequences of road traffic incidents. These sessions were well-received by the Commanding Officer, as military personnel were disproportionately affected by fatal and serious road traffic injuries.

We partnered with EG Garages and Blackburn Rovers to display Fatal 5 safety messages on large screens at Blackburn Rovers home games. Additionally, we conducted a Road Traffic Collision demonstration before one of their matches during Road Safety Week and again in early December.

Finally, this quarter has seen a diverse range of successful initiatives, with our multi-agency partnerships continuing to make a significant impact on raising road safety awareness across the county.



### **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 23 February 2026

### Fire Protection Report

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

#### 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 is also 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

There have been no sentencings since the previous Combined Fire Authority report dated the 15 December 2025.

#### Prosecutions in the Court system

Four cases currently sit within the court system.

The responsible person and company for two Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) type premises, in Bacup and Darwen owned by the same responsible person has pleaded guilty to breaches of the Fire Safety Order on the 13 August 2025 at Preston Magistrates Court. The sentencing hearing Court date was adjourned on the 7 January 2026. The sentencing hearing for the 30 January 2026 at Preston Crown Court was cancelled and we are currently awaiting a new date.

An NHS Trust and maintenance company appeared at Blackburn Magistrates Court on 1 October 2025, this case is about a fatal fire and breaches of the Fire Safety Order in late 2023, in a Mental Health Unit in Blackburn. This hearing was adjourned until 18 November 2025 at Preston Magistrates Court, then passed up to Preston Crown Court. The initial plea and case management hearing was heard on 15 December 2025, no pleas were given. A further plea and case management hearing will be heard at Preston Crown Court on 22 April 2026.

The responsible persons and a company are to appear at Blackburn Magistrates Court on the 18 February 2026 for breaches of the Fire Safety Order for a Nightclub in Burnley. This premises was also under a licensing review on 20 January 2026 at

Lancaster Magistrates Court. During the licensing hearing the defendants did not attend their own appeal hearing, so the appeal was thrown out of Court and dismissed. Prior to this appeal the Police issued a three-month closure order on the premises a week before Christmas 2025.

Two companies and a charity appeared at Blackburn Magistrates Court on 28 January 2026. One company gave no plea, and one company and the charity gave “not guilty” pleas. The case will now be heard in Preston Crown Court on 25 February 2026 for a Plea and Trial Preparation Hearing (PTPH). This is for breaches of the Fire Safety Order for a Mixed commercial and residential use student accommodation in Preston.

### **Prosecution cases currently being developed and reviewed**

Protection teams continue to investigate and build case files in relation to twelve 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 2
- Mixed commercial and Residential x 1
- Commercial premises (shop) x 1
- Commercial but not residential (Used for sleeping) x 1
- Large Nightclub x 1
- Large theatre and after show bar x 1
- Hotel x 2
- Supported Living x 1

### **Arson Risk Reduction**

#### **R v Andrew Dewhurst**

Address – Picadilly Close, Clitheroe, BB7 2RR

Date and Time of Call – 02/03/2025, 07:50

This incident involved a deliberate fire in a first floor domestic flat. The fire was caused by furnishings and household items that had been placed on the hob of an electric oven. The fire caused severe damage by heat and flame to the electric oven, coffee table and other household items, severe damage by smoke to the room of origin and light damage by smoke to the remainder of the property.

The defendant received a sentence of 44 months imprisonment and was made subject to a restraining order for 15 years.

#### **R v restricted due to age**

Address – Friargate Social Club, Preston

Date and Time of Call – 04/09/2025, 16:25

This incident involved a deliberate fire in a derelict premises formerly used as a social club. CCTV captured 2 youths leaving the property shortly before the fire was discovered. The youths were subsequently identified as absconders from a children’s home.

One defendant pleaded guilty to starting the fire and received a caution. Police found no evidence of the involvement of the second youth in igniting the fire, so they were not charged in relation to the arson.

### **R v Jacob Collier**

Address – Furness Street, Burnley

Date and Time of Call – 28/08/2025, 18:02

This incident involved the deliberate ignition of a bed/bedding in the bedroom of an end-terraced house. The fire caused severe damage to the bed and bedding, and severe smoke damage to the bedroom and contents.

The defendant who was also the occupier pleaded guilty to arson and received a 3-year community order and 30 days rehabilitation.

### **R v Stuart Graham**

Address – Bethesda Street, Burnley

Date and Time of Call – 28/08/2025, 03:45

This incident involved the deliberate ignition of a pram within the staircase of flats comprising of four storeys. The fire was contained to the ground floor stairwell, close to the main entrance door and caused severe damage to the pram, a fire door, skirting boards, and the plasterboard of the enclosed area of the stairwell.

CCTV captured a group of individuals having an altercation before being moved on by the Police. The defendant is then captured returning to the property and attempting to ignite an artificial tree in the main entrance, he then enters the staircase before leaving a brief time before the fire is discovered.

The defendant pleaded guilty to arson with intent and received an extended 9-year prison sentence. Extended sentences – refers to the length of the sentence that can be imposed to provide extra protection to the public.

There are also another 15 deliberate fire investigations currently ongoing within the criminal justice system.

### **Arson Sentencing Guidelines**

The maximum sentence for arson in the UK is life imprisonment, as it is considered an exceptionally dangerous offence under the Criminal Damage Act 1971. While life imprisonment is the potential maximum, actual sentences vary significantly based on intent, harm caused (like endangering life), and specific circumstances, with ranges from discharges or fines for minor incidents to many years in custody for severe cases.

Sentencing Council Guidelines provide detailed ranges and starting points for courts, acknowledging life imprisonment for the most severe instances.

### **Arson Risk Reduction Outcomes**

LFRS are proactive in arson risk reduction activities. Ensuring robust and high-quality fire investigations to support prosecution has delivered strong legal sanctions, a breakdown of arson prosecutions is provided below.

**April 2023 to March 2024**

16 arson related convictions resulting in: 8 custodial sentences totalling 48 yrs 2 months, 7 youth referral orders and 1 youth caution.

**April 2024 to 2025**

11 arson related convictions resulting in: 9 custodial sentences totalling 33 yrs 11 months and 2 suspended sentences.

**April 2025 to date**

15 arson related convictions resulting in: 6 custodial sentences totalling 28 yrs 5 months, 4 suspended sentences, 2 detentions under the Mental Health Act, 2 cautions and 1 community order.

**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 23 February 2026

### Operational Incidents of Interest

Contact for further information – Assistant Chief Fire Officer Samantha 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:

- Commercial building fire in Burnley (17/11/25)
- Road Traffic Collision in Chorley (3/12/25)
- Animal Rescue in Preesall (12/12/25)
- Dwelling fire in Bispham (19/12/25)
- Road traffic Collision in Lancaster (20/12/25)
- Building Fire in Ormskirk (22/12/25)
- Road Traffic Collision in Blackburn (25/12/25)
- Animal Rescue in Lancaster (5/1/26)
- Dwelling Fire in Bamber Bridge (6/1/26)
- Commercial Building Fire in Bacup (21/1/26)

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>P90 Burnley</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>17 November 2025</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>18:28</b>

At 18:28 hours on 17 November 2025, six fire engines, an aerial ladder platform, an incident command unit and a drone, all from Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, attended a large fire involving a commercial building on St James Street in Burnley. Firefighters extinguished the fire using two forty-five-millimetre jets, two hose reels and two breathing apparatus. Crews were in attendance for seven hours and twenty minutes.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>S54 Chorley</b>
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<b>Date:</b>	<b>3 December 2025</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>12:35</b>

At 12:35 hours on 3 December 2025 two fire engines from Chorley and the Urban Search and Rescue Teams from Bamber Bridge and Chorley attended an incident on Spendmore Lane, Coppull. The incident was a road traffic collision involving one double decker bus in collision with railway bridge. Multiple casualties were escorted from the vehicle with one being conveyed to hospital by ambulance. Fire Service were on scene for approximately two and a half hours.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>W33 Preesall</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>12 December 2025</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>15:18</b>

At 15:18 hours on 12 December 2025, four fire engines from Blackpool, Fleetwood and Lancaster including specialist animal rescue technicians and the Urban Search and Rescue attended Hornbys Lane, Out Rawcliffe. Firefighters released a horse from a ditch of water using large animal rescue equipment and spreader bars. Fire crews were in attendance for approximately four hours.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>W31 Bispham</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>19 December 2025</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>15:18</b>

At 15:18 hours on 19 December 2025, six fire engines, an aerial ladder platform with supporting fire engine, the command unit and drone attended a domestic premises on Hobart Place, Blackpool. Firefighters wearing breathing apparatus rescued one casualty from the ground floor of the premises. Firefighters extinguished the fire involving a front porch with heat and smoke spread to the first floor and roof of a two storey building containing flats using six breathing apparatus, two hose reel jets, three positive pressure ventilation fans, fire investigation tools, breaking in tools, a thermal imaging camera and a triple extension ladder. Fire crews were on scene for approximately four hours and fifty minutes.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>N11 Lancaster</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>20 December 2025</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>17:11</b>

At 17:11 on 20 December 2025, three fire engines from Lancaster and Morecambe responded to a road traffic collision on the M6 southbound carriage way between junction 34 to junction 33. The vehicle involved had left the highway and into a ditch with one casualty trapped. Firefighters utilised a Holmatro cutting equipment, scene lighting, Tirfor winch, and Paratech struts to stabilise the vehicle and remained in attendance for three and a half hours.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>S51 Ormskirk</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>22 December 2025</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>00:59</b>

At 00:59 on 22 December 2025, five fire engines and an aerial ladder appliance from Lancashire and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue responded to a building fire on Manor Avenue, Burscough. The fire involved two semi-detached properties originating from the first floor and spread to a second property. The fire was extinguished by firefighters using eight breathing apparatus, one main line jet, two hose reels, small tools, one extension ladder, and one extension ladder. Three casualties were treated by paramedics with one later conveyed to hospital. One dog and two cats were removed from the property by firefighters and declared deceased. One cat was rescued by firefighters. Fire crews remained on scene for over ten hours working with partners.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>E71 Blackburn</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>25 December 2025</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>04:50</b>

At 04:50 hours on 25 December 2025 fire engines from Blackburn, Preston and the Urban Search and Rescue Team attended a road traffic collision persons trapped. On arrival a vehicle had collided with scaffolding and building with one casualty trapped in the vehicle. Crews used Holmatro cutting gear to release the casualty. Three casualties were taken to hospital by North West Ambulance Service. Fire crews were detained approximately one hour.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>N11 Lancaster</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>5 January 2026</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>09:58</b>

At 09:58 hours on 5 January 2026, three fire engines from Lancaster, Silverdale and Morecambe along with the swift water rescue team also from Lancaster fire stations attended the Lancaster canal at the bay gateway, Slyne to reports of three horses fallen through ice. Firefighters wearing and with swift water rescue personal protection equipment and small tools rescued the horses. Fire crews were on scene for approximately two hours and fifteen minutes.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>S53 Bamber Bridge</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>6 January 2026</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>23:54</b>

At 23:54 on 6 January 2026, fire engines from Bamber Bridge, Chorley and Penwortham along with the aerial ladder platform from Preston attended an incident on Greenwood, Bamber Bridge. The fire involved a domestic property. Firefighters used two hose reel jets, one forty-five-millimetre jet and six breathing apparatus to extinguish the fire and assist three casualties. Staff remained in attendance for a number of days supporting the investigation.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>P73 Bacup</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>21 January 2026</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>01:43</b>

At 01:43 on Wednesday 21 January 2026, ten fire engines from Lancashire and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service attended a commercial building fire on Railway Street, Bacup. Crews used the Aerial Ladder Platform, breathing apparatus, main jets, ground monitors and a triple extension ladder to extinguish the fire. Crews remained in attendance over twenty 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

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

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