Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Monday, 21 September 2026 at 10.30 am in Washington Hall, Service Training Centre, Euxton

Minutes

Present:

Councillors

N Alderson
A Ali OBE
U Arif
S Asghar
J Ash
A Blake
P Buckley
M Clifford
I Duxbury
J Fox
D Howarth
J Hugo
F Jackson
A Joynes
Z Khan MBE
B Langford
G Mirfin
L Parker
A Riggott
J Tetlow
L Thomson
R Walsh

2026/27	**Chair's Welcome and Introduction**
	The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and reminded members of a CFA showcase event taking place immediately after the meeting, to complete their personal development plans with Democratic Services and the importance of attending committee meetings and sending apologies to Democratic Services. The Chair welcomed County Councillor L Thomson to the authority who had replaced County Councillor E Worthington and expressed his thanks to County Councillor E Worthington for her hard work and commitment to the role of Performance Committee Chair and for the work she had undertaken in relation to funding for the service. The Chair referenced a number of important items within the agenda and updated members that Baroness Blake had been appointed as the new Fire Minister.
2126/27	**Non-attendance**
	Councillor G Baker (Apologies) County Councillor M Ritson (Apologies) Councillor S Sidat (Apologies)
2226/27	**Disclosure of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interests**
	None received.

2326/27	**Minutes of Previous Meeting**
	Resolved: That the Minutes of the CFA held on 15 June 2026 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.
2426/27	**Notes of the meeting Monday 15 June 2026 of Strategy Group**
	Resolved: That the notes of the Strategy Group meeting held on 15 June 2026 be noted.
2526/27	**Minutes of the meeting Monday 29 June 2026 of Resources Committee**
	The Chair of Resources Committee, County Councillor A Ali drew members attention to the increase in energy costs and financial pressures faced by the authority and emphasised the importance of the council tax precept. The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) explained that lobbying would continue in relation to capital grants, the fire funding formula and council tax precept. It was noted that the council tax precept increase was currently capped at £5 per annum. The Chair updated members that County Councillors M Clifford and J Tetlow had been appointed to the Local Pensions Board. County Councillor M Clifford was the newly appointed chair of the board and thanked the previous chair, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO). It was noted that the DCFO and Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) would remain on the board as observers. **Resolved:** That the proceedings of the Resources Committee held on 29 June 2026 be noted.
2626/27	**Minutes of the meeting Tuesday 30 June 2026 of Audit Committee**
	The Chair of Audit Committee, County Councillor M Clifford updated members that audit remained on track and assurance levels were good. The Chair commended report authors for the clarity of their reports. **Resolved:** That the proceedings of the Audit Committee held on 30 June 2026 be noted.
2726/27	**Minutes of the meeting Wednesday 8 July 2026 of Performance Committee**
	The Vice-Chair of Performance Committee, County Councillor J Tetlow thanked the previous Performance Committee Chair, County Councillor E Worthington and provided an update from the newly appointed Chair of Performance Committee, County Councillor M Ritson drawing attention to the positive outcomes discussed at the committee meeting. The Chair requested that a handout that was shared with Performance Committee members relating to the risk profile across the county be circulated to all members.

	Resolved: That the proceedings of the Performance Committee held on 8 July 2026 be noted.
2826/27	**Minutes of the meeting Monday 13 July 2026 of Planning Committee**
	The Chair of Planning Committee, County Councillor I Duxbury drew members attention to the draft Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) update and the annual service report. The CFO updated members that the service had recently hosted a HMICFRS Northern region roadshow which had received positive feedback, with the intention for this to be held again next year. He expressed the importance of the relationship between the service and the HMICFRS Service Liaison Lead (SLL) which had recently changed to Andy O'Brien. He also explained that a new His Majesty's Chief Inspector had been appointed, Sir Andy Marsh and the service was due to be inspected towards the end of this inspection programme which could be in January 2027. In response to a question from County Councillor D Howarth in relation to coordinating gaining access, the DCFO explained that a memorandum of understanding was in place with the Northwest Ambulance Service (NWAS) which set out that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) and NWAS would attend the most urgent category one calls at the same time, which could result in LFRS arriving first, but for lower risk calls NWAS must be in attendance first. He added that the police were responsible before and after access had been gained. In response to a question from the Chair in relation to the national framework, the CFO explained that this was last published in 2018 and outlined the expectations and direction for fire and rescue services. A review was ongoing to encompass new and emerging risks globally. He added that once published the national framework was expected to include a model scheme of delegation which would need to be benchmarked against the authority's constitution. In response to a further question from the Chair in relation to national response standards, the CFO explained that the service was consulting on its response standards as part of the CRMP, the service currently operated with four different response standards based on risk and was considering one single response standard to provide clarity for members of the public. He added that risk maps would continue to be utilised to influence prevention activities. The Chair asked a question relating to the fire standards board, the CFO explained that this related to standards that were being developed across a range of activities and functions delivered by fire and rescue services, and that whilst operational response was one aspect, it was much broader than response times, which were not nationally set. **Resolved:** That the proceedings of the Planning Committee held on 13 July 2026 be noted.

2926/27	**Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting Tuesday 18 August 2026 of Audit Committee**
	The Chair of Audit Committee, County Councillor M Clifford explained that the next HMICFRS inspection would focus on governance, and it was important to review the authority's constitution, the constitution was a working document that would be constantly reviewed. He explained that a large amount of work had taken place with the Constitution Working Group and thanked all officers and members involved. He also noted that the Audit Committee would be renamed to the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee when the new constitution was adopted. In response to a question from the Chair in relation to the number of independent members on Audit committees, the Monitoring Officer explained that there was not yet any legislation to mandate Independent Persons (IPs) on Audit Committees and it was noted that some larger authorities had two Audit IPs. The Authority had recently appointed an Audit IP who was going through the HR process. County Councillor M Clifford added that he thought that one Audit IP was appropriate given the size of the committee but noted that there were two Audit IP's at Chorley Borough Council. **Resolved:** That the proceedings of the Extraordinary Audit Committee held on 18 August 2026 be noted.
3026/27	**Change of membership of Performance Committee**
	The Monitoring Officer presented the report which proposed that County Councillor Luke Parker and County Councillor Liam Thomson join the Performance Committee. County Councillor Russell Walsh would leave the Performance Committee and as County Councillor Ella Worthington was no longer a member of the Fire Authority, she was also by default no longer a member of any committee. All four above named members are from the Reform group and therefore the political balance was unchanged. County Councillor Mackenzie Ritson was already a member of the Performance Committee but would take up the role of Chair which had been vacated by County Councillor Ella Worthington. The report was proposed by County Councillor A Ali and seconded by County Councillor J Ash, with all members voting in favour. **Resolved:** That the authority approved the changes to the membership and roles of the Performance Committee as set out above.
3126/27	**New Constitution**
	The Monitoring Officer presented the new constitution to members.

It was good practice to publish a comprehensive constitution which set out how the fire authority managed its business. The proposed new constitution broadly comprised of 3 sections: a scheme of delegation; terms of reference for the various committees which had been set up; and standing orders which set out the technical details about how matters were dealt with. There were also a number of other miscellaneous documents which completed the picture.

It was noted that as this was a major revision of what had existed previously, further changes may be required once implemented and operated against. It was, in any event, good practice to review constitutions regularly, at least on an annual basis. Should Local Government Reorganisation in Lancashire proceed, certain sections would need to be re-visited at that point to reflect the changes.

Below are highlighted sections of the constitution which were particularly significant or had undergone major revision.

Scheme of delegation
National guidance on what should be in a fire authority's scheme of delegation, and also legislation about operational independence of Chief Fire Officers was potentially forthcoming at some stage in the future. However, this was not currently available and there was no clarity as to when it would be finalised. The new scheme of delegation had been drafted so far as possible to take into account anticipated requirements of any such guidance, and schemes of delegation from a number of other authorities had been reviewed in order to distil best practice.

Paragraph 6 (page 5 of the constitution) set out the matters that were reserved to the authority (or its committees). These were the high level, strategic matters such as budget setting and overall direction of the fire service. All other matters were delegated to one of the three statutory officers (Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer, Monitoring Officer). It would be seen by comparing paragraphs 6 and 16 for example, that once the authority set the strategic direction, discharging these duties at an operational level was delegated to the Chief Fire Officer.

It was not intended that this revised scheme of delegation made any significant change to the current split of decision-making abilities between the authority and the service, but rather it simplified and clarified what was previously a lengthy and technical document. Of note, paragraphs 8 to 12 set out general principles of delegation which should ensure that no issue which should be considered by the authority was able to by-pass that crucial oversight and governance.

Committee and working group terms of reference
In the main, these had not changed significantly. Key changes were as follows:-

Audit Committee
Re-naming to Audit, Risk and Governance; addition of function determining member complaints and the addition of an independent person (which would in due course be a legislative requirement).

Resources Committee

	Addition of approval of severance payments above £100,000; removal of appointments to the Executive Board (appointments of statutory officers would be dealt with by an appointments committee formed by authority members, all other appointments were now delegated to the Chief Fire Officer). Appeals Committee Addition of pensions appeals (Internal Disputes Resolution Procedures (IDRP)) Stage 2). These were previously heard in Resources Committee. Addition of hearing appeals from Audit relating to member complaint matters. Appointments Committee This was new and would deal with the appointment of the three statutory officers (note there was also now a Standing Order which dealt with disciplinary action including dismissal of statutory officers). Capital Building Projects Working Group This had been streamlined and clarified that it would make recommendations into the relevant decision-making body. **Standing Orders** Standing orders (SOs) 1 – 8 as listed deal with the specifics of how meetings would run. These had been revised to reflect best practice and legislation where that applies. SO 3 relating to replacement and temporary members was new, as is SO8 relating to the 'Urgent Business' procedure. The other SOs were re-worked and amended versions of SOs that were already in place. **Miscellaneous** The member complaints procedure was new and set out a detailed procedure for dealing with any complaints that came in. The member's allowance scheme had been amended to add a dependents' carers' allowance and also an allowance for the Audit Committee independent person. A special responsibility allowance had been added for the leader of the ruling group if they were not also chair or vice chair of the authority and it had been clarified in paragraph 5.1 that it was possible to have more than one Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA). County Councillor A Ali thanked officers for their work in relation to the constitution, this was echoed by the Chair. The report was moved by County Councillor A Ali and seconded by County Councillor M Clifford with all members voting in favour. **Resolved**: That the Authority approved the new constitution for adoption from 21 September 2026.
3226/27	**Flexible Day Crewing trial at Fleetwood Fire Station**

	The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) presented the report to members. Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) allocated resources based on risk through its Community Risk Management Plan, risk modelling, and service reviews. Emergency cover reflected the most effective and efficient use of resources for the whole of Lancashire. Some areas had more resources than others because there were greater community risks and activity levels were higher. Fleetwood Fire Station had two fire engines: one wholetime fire engine crewed by firefighters working the wholetime 2/2/4 duty system and one on-call fire engine crewed by on-call firefighters. The trial affected the wholetime fire engine which had changed from 2/2/4 to flexible day crewing (FDC) for a period of 18 months. The trial was to change a crewing system, not to reduce the number of fire engines covering the area, and there was no change to the on-call fire engine. The decision to proceed with the trial was informed by a detailed review of operational evidence, community risk data and feedback received through the consultation. Views from employees, representative bodies, local residents, and other stakeholders were carefully considered before a decision was reached. The FDC duty system was already operating successfully at five other Lancashire fire stations, providing valuable experience and evidence to support this trial. The trial was designed to: • Confirm that FDC could meet operational risk and demand in Fleetwood. • Improve workforce sustainability and reduce reliance on compulsory transfers and significant detachments into the station under the current crewing model. • Support wider service resilience by releasing wholetime resources. The anticipated impacts were: • At night, the response time from call receipt to crews attending the incident was expected to increase slightly as firefighters would need to travel to the station within five minutes before mobilising. • Emergency response standards were maintained with FDC crewing arrangements. • No overall reduction in firefighter posts. • Prevention and protection activities would be maintained. **Consultation outcomes** Consultation with stakeholders began at the start of 2026 and public consultation took place via an online survey and public events during June 2026. The Consultation Document was available at Appendix 1 of the report. The proposal received the support of the Fire Brigades Union and a majority of employees who responded during the consultation period. A public survey was conducted and a public information event was held at the fire station to give residents the opportunity to share their views and ask questions directly. 8 people attended the public event and there were 148 responses to the public survey. In response to a question about the trial in principle:

- 18% strongly agreed or agreed with the proposed trial in principle
- 2% neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposed trial in principle
- 80% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposed trial in principle

Further details were available in Appendix 2 of the report.

Consultation respondents who disagreed with the trial expressed concerns about the potential impact on response times at night and community safety. These concerns were carefully considered and assessed against operational evidence. A predominantly low risk area, Fleetwood had some medium risk areas and one high risk area. There were no very high-risk areas. The FDC duty system aligned firefighter availability with community risk and incident levels in Fleetwood, and maintained the Service's ability to meet its emergency response standards, both locally and across Lancashire.

There were also robust systems in place to monitor and manage risk and incident levels across the county in real-time, enabling the Service to move fire engines and firefighters to where they were needed at any given time. The closest fire engines were always mobilised to critical incidents. This may not be those based in the nearest fire station, which may already be attending an incident or involved in training or other activities. There were 58 fire engines and 45 specialist appliances in Lancashire and they were moved around the county to meet risk and demand.

Importantly, emergency response deals with the consequences of risk, while prevention activity reduced or removed the risk in the first place. Dedicated prevention services would continue in Fleetwood communities throughout the trial to keep reducing the likelihood of fires and other emergencies occurring. These included the home fire safety check and business fire safety services, fire safety education, and prevention campaigns.

It was identified in the consultation that some people held a perception that the trial could lead to the loss of the on-call fire engine at Fleetwood or the closure of the station. This was not the case.

Implementation
The trial started on 7 September 2026. The staffing model was 12 wholetime firefighter posts, aligned to FDC duty system arrangements, with all posts ultimately being filled from existing wholetime staff living within a five-minute radius of the station.

Firefighters displaced from Fleetwood had been placed at stations with crewing requirements across the county. This had largely resulted in a reduction in travel time and distance for these members of staff. Fleetwood was now crewed by firefighters living within a five-minute radius of the station, which was predicted to give a more sustainable crewing model, using members of the local community.

There was no change to the on-call crewing arrangements at Fleetwood and there had been no reduction in the overall number of firefighters in the Service.

Evaluation

The 18-month trial would be subject to robust monitoring and formal evaluation at 6, 12 and 18 months, providing assurance that public and firefighter safety remained paramount throughout. The evaluation would assess emergency response performance, appliance availability and operational resilience, incident demand, prevention and protection activity, operational preparedness and competence, any actions identified in the equality impact assessment and workforce sustainability. It would also consider staff and stakeholder feedback and any unintended consequences arising from the change.

Performance would be considered against appropriate pre-trial baseline data and agreed measures, enabling any emerging issues to be identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity.

It was proposed that an evaluation report was taken to the next Performance Committee meeting following 6, 12 and 18 month points in the trial:

1. 7 March 2027
2. 7 September 2027
3. 7 March 2028

The final evaluation would provide members with a comprehensive evidence base to inform any decision regarding the future crewing arrangements at Fleetwood Fire Station. A copy of the evaluation criteria was included as Appendix 4 within the agenda pack.

County Councillor A Ali thanked the officers involved in the pilot and the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) for their support.

Councillor B Langford explained that he had sent a number of questions via email to Democratic Services yesterday evening in relation to this item and asked the following questions;

1. Would the decision to extend the trial or make it permanent come back to the full authority;
2. What were the trigger points for reversing the trial and could the nighttime incident data be provided before the 6-month review; and
3. Could the remaining points included within the email including the request for an equality impact assessment and confirmation of what share of the '£1.8 million optimised wholetime crewing efficiency' be answered in writing and circulated to all members.

The DCFO confirmed that any decision to make the trial permanent would be a member decision and could be considered as part of an emergency cover review (ECR) which would include consultation with members of the public, unions and staff members. Alternatively, the decision could be considered as part of the trial reviews which were proposed to be completed by the Performance Committee, with any decision taken through Planning Committee and the full Authority.

The DCFO explained that details on trigger points were included within appendix 4 of the report and would be considered by the Performance Committee as part of the review process. The DCFO thought that the nighttime data had been included

	within a previous report brought to the authority in June 2026 but explained that this could be circulated to members if this was not the case. The DCFO confirmed that the Fleetwood trial did not form part of the £1.8 million efficiencies and staffing was not reduced. He confirmed that a written response would be received in due course. The Chair remarked that the public engagement evets held at Fleetwood Fire Station had been positive and requested that the slide deck used at these events be circulated to members. He suggested that similar events could take place around the county to educate councillors on the role of the service. The DCFO explained that LFRS's average response time to critical fires was roughly two minutes quicker than the national average and the key performance indicators (KPIs) set by the authority set the standard for the whole of Lancashire. The CFO added that the service would be scrutinised as part of its HMICFRS inspection on its utilisation of resources inline with risk and demand around the county. The Chair requested that analysis of the free text consultation responses be shared with members. The ACFO confirmed that this could be shared and explained that the public engagement events had helped to address misconceptions and confirm that the service was retaining its two fire engines at Fleetwood. The report was proposed by County Councillor I Duxbury and seconded by County Councillor J Tetlow with all members voting in favour. **Resolved**: - That the Authority; 1. Noted the contents of the report and evidence supporting the decision. 2. Approved monitoring of trial evaluation at 6, 12 and 18 months by the Performance Committee.
3326/27	**Member Champion Activity Report and Feedback**
	The concept of Member Champions was introduced in December 2007. A review of the areas of focus for Member Champions was considered at the Authority meeting held in June 2017 where new areas of responsibility were agreed. The current Member Champions and their areas of responsibility were: • Community Safety – County Councillor Andy Blake • Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Councillor Salim Sidat • Health and Wellbeing – County Councillor Sohail Asghar • Road Safety – County Councillor Joanne Ash. 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 20 September 2026. Member Champions and the ACFO highlighted details within the reports and expressed thanks to the officers who supported them in their roles.

	In response to a question from the Chair in relation to the firefighter's charity, the ACFO explained that the firefighter's charity supported officers and staff in a variety of ways including when they were injured or needed mental health support. The service raised funds for the charity through a range of events and clothing donations. County Councillor J Ash expressed her thanks to the Rawtenstall Crew who had attended the Edenfield Village Fete, with particular thanks to Station Manager Aubrey Cooper and Clare Burscough and her team. **Resolved**: That the Authority noted the report of the respective Member Champions and shared feedback in relation to associated Service activities.
3426/27	**Fire Protection Reports**
	The report summarised Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) prosecutions pertaining to fire safety offences. Members noted that there have been no sentencings since the previous report dated 15 June 2026. Five cases sat within the court system, and one awaited summons being issued. Protection teams continued to investigate and develop case files relating to sixteen other premises and one fire risk assessor where offences were believed to have been committed under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Members noted that there had been two arson convictions since the last report. With 11 live cases ongoing through the Criminal Justice System. **Resolved:** That the report be noted.
3526/27	**Operational Incidents of Interest**
	The ACFO informed members that the service had recently attended a recognition event at Warburtons and had received an award to say thank you for the services' response to a fire at their factory in Burnley. The 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: • National Resilience and Major Incident support across varying Fire and Rescue Services • Building fire in Fleetwood (3/6/26) • Commercial building fire in Chorley (17/6/26)

- Rescue from major entrapment in Accrington (22/6/26)
- Commercial building fire in Ormskirk (30/6/26)
- Waste fire in Preston (18/7/26)
- Fire involving agricultural building in Bispham (21/7/26)
- Derelict building fire in Chorley (11/8/26)
- Domestic dwelling fire in Nelson (22/8/26)

County Councillor M Clifford expressed his thanks to the officers who attended the fire in Clayton-Le-Woods involving a derelict building and asked how firefighters had gained access as the building was boarded up. The ACFO explained that the service was grateful for responsible persons who secured their buildings and confirmed that there were no access issues on this occasion.

In response to a question from County Councillor I Duxbury in relation to the waste fire in Preston, the ACFO explained that the business involved had made investments on site to assist in tackling smaller fires.

Resolved: That the Authority noted the report.

The ACFO welcomed Crew Manager (CM) Chris Jowett and Watch Manager (WM) Lindsay Sielski who gave a presentation to members on the UK International Search and Rescue (ISAR) Team.

CM Jowett explained to members that the United Kingdom Fire Service Search and Rescue Team (UKFSSART) was formally created in 1993 and today UK ISAR was the official UK Government international search and rescue capability, funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and drawn from 14 fire and rescue services. The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) classification provided the common UN standard and coordination framework. The ISAR team also provided a flood response.

CM Jowett explained a number of published deployments which included a deployment to Iraq in 1991, separate August and November 1999 Turkey earthquake responses, a further Turkey response in 2023, and Mozambique deployments in 2000 and 2026. In 2021 there was a National Resilience wildfire deployment to Greece of 21 UK firefighters, including personnel from Lancashire and most recently there had been a deployment to Venezuela in 2026 following an earthquake.

The team was able to scale the response to meet the needs of the host nation including canine, acoustic and technical searches, drones and flood rescue boats. The team was self-sufficient for 14 days.

Capacity building reduced the need for international intervention by strengthening national teams before disaster happened. Current and recent UK ISAR work included water rescue in Malawi; trainer development in Kenya; search-and-rescue development in Tajikistan; international operations training with Georgia; specialist programmes for Ukrainian responders; and flood and water-rescue training in Taiwan. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, UK ISAR was providing sustained peer mentoring and readiness support.

	CM Jowett and WM Sielski shared photos and experiences from their deployments including to Turkey, Malawi and Morocco and explained that challenges included humidity, communication barriers and navigating flooded areas. CM Jowett explained that Lancashire had recently joined Cheshire and Greater Manchester for an assurance visit with five areas assessed and green ratings received for all areas. CM Jowett summarised and shared his honour at being a part of the ISAR Team, he acknowledged the investment within the team having gained a range of skills and undertaken training to enhance the teams' capabilities to help others. The ACFO thanked CM Jowett and WM Sielski for their presentation and the Chair commended officers for their work.
3626/27	**Date of Next Meeting**
	The next meeting of the Authority would be held on **Monday 14 December 2026** at 10:30am at the Washington Hall, Leadership and Development Training Centre, Euxton. **Glossary** ACFO – Assistant Chief Fire Officer CFO – Chief Fire Officer CM – Crew Manager CRMP – Community Risk Management Plan DCFO – Deputy Chief Fire Officer ECR – Emergency Cover Review FBU – Fire Brigades Union FDC – Flexible Day Crewing HMICFRS – His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services IDRP – Internal Disputes Resolution Procedures INSARAG – International Search and Rescue Advisory Group IPs – Independent Persons ISAR – International Search and Rescue Team KPIs – Key Performance Indicators LFRS – Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service NWAS – Northwest Ambulance Service SLL – Service Liaison Lead SOs – Standing Orders SRA – Special Responsibility Allowance UKFSSART – United Kingdom Fire Service Search and Rescue Team WM – Watch Manager

D Howell
Monitoring Officer to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood