

# Public Document Pack

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

**Monday, 27 April 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 - 22)**

#### 5. **Minutes of meeting Wednesday 11 March 2026 of Performance Committee (Pages 23 - 56)**

#### 6. **Minutes of meeting Wednesday 25 March 2026 of Resources Committee (Pages 57 - 72)**

7. **Minutes of meeting Thursday 26 March 2026 of Audit Committee (Pages 73 - 80)**

**Items for noting:**

8. **Member Champion Activity Report and Member Feedback (Pages 81 - 86)**
9. **Fire Protection Reports (Pages 87 - 90)**
10. **Operational Incidents of Interest (Pages 91 - 110)**
11. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Authority will be held on **Monday 15 June 2026** at 1030 hours at Washington Hall, Leadership and Development Centre, Euxton.

12. **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.

13. **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.

**Part 2**

**Items for decision:**

14. **Re-appointment of Independent Person (Pages 111 - 114)**

(Paragraph 1)

It was resolved at the meeting held on Monday 27 April 2026 that this item would be considered under part 1 of the agenda, without the exclusion of the press and public.

15. **Urgent Business**

**Lancashire Combined Fire Authority**

Monday, 23 February 2026 at 10.30 am in Washington Hall, Service Training Centre, Euxton

**Minutes**

**Present:**

**Councillors**

G Mirfin (Chair)  
 U Arif (Vice-Chair)  
 A Blake  
 S Asghar  
 J Ash  
 G Baker  
 P Buckley  
 M Clifford  
 I Duxbury  
 J Fox

D Howarth  
 J Hugo  
 L Hutchinson  
 Z Khan MBE  
 A Riggott  
 M Ritson  
 D Smith  
 J Tetlow  
 R Walsh  
 E Worthington

60-25/2	<b>Chair's Welcome and Introduction</b>
	<p>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. On behalf of the authority, and via the CFO, he sent his thoughts and prayers to County Councillor A Ali who had given apologies for this meeting.</p> <p>The Chair informed members of two firefighters from Lancashire who were deployed to Mozambique in January to support international flood rescue operations following storms and widespread flooding. They were mobilised as part of the UK's International Search and Rescue Team, which is made up of specially trained firefighters who volunteer their time from Fire and Rescue Services across the country.</p> <p>The Chair remarked on the variety of incidents contained within the operational incidents of interest report within the agenda pack, noting that there were a number of serious road traffic collisions. He remarked that funding should reflect the variety of roles undertaken by the Fire Service.</p> <p>The Chair announced that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer was leaving the role, with today being his last full authority meeting. He commenced the role in October 2015 and would be moving on to pastures new from 1 May 2026. On behalf of the authority, the Chair thanked the Clerk and Monitoring Officer for his Service over the past 10 years and wished him the best of luck in his new role. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer remarked that it had been an honour and a privilege to serve in the role and commented that there was a sense of community within the authority that he was grateful for.</p>

61-25/2	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
	Apologies were received from County Councillors N Alderson, A Ali and L Parker and Councillors F Jackson and S Sidat.
62-25/2	<b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interests</b>
	None received.
63-25/2	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>
	<b>Resolved:</b> That the Minutes of the CFA held on 12 January 2026 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.
64-25/2	<b>Minutes of meeting Wednesday 3 December 2025 of Performance Committee</b>
	<p>In response to a question from County Councillor E Worthington in relation to the wellbeing interactions provided across the Service, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) confirmed that the Service had an occupational health unit which provided support via nurses, doctors and psychologist. The Service also had a wellbeing unit which provided support following traumatic incidents, this included mindfulness, support dogs, anxiety support and discussion of thoughts and feelings after traumatic incidents.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor E Worthington in relation to how the Service worked with highways to address flooding, the ACFO confirmed that flooding reports often related to surface water collection on roads or rivers that had burst their banks. The Service worked with the Highways Agency to carry out prevention activities along with proactive response to incidents, this included effective communication to encourage road users not to drive through flood water.</p> <p>The Chair thanked officers for their Water Safety presentation at the committee meeting.</p> <p>County Councillor J Tetlow added that there had been continued improvement in relation to staff survey engagement which was a credit to the Communications Team and Leaders building trust. He added that there had been an increase in demand relating to wildfires which the committee would continue to scrutinise through the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). He commended Prevention Support Officer Paul Slee on his recent award in relation to Water Safety and advised members that the Performance Committee had requested reports be brought to the committee relating to battery fires, houses in multiple occupancy (HMOs) and arson convictions.</p> <p>The minutes were proposed by County Councillor E Worthington and seconded by County Councillor R Walsh.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the proceedings of the Performance Committee held on 3 December 2025 be noted.</p>

65-25/2	<b>Minutes of meeting Thursday 11 December 2025 of Audit Committee</b>
	<p>County Councillor M Clifford thanked members, officers and external audit for their engagement at the Audit Committee, and noted the positives of questions raised and scrutiny. He drew members attention to the statement of accounts, risk register and two external audit recommendations contained within the minutes.</p> <p>The minutes were proposed by County Councillor M Clifford and seconded by County Councillor J Ash.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the proceedings of the Audit Committee held on 11 December 2025 be noted.</p>
66-25/2	<b>Minutes of meeting Monday 2 February 2026 of Planning Committee</b>
	<p>County Councillor I Duxbury drew members attention to the following items contained within the minutes, Consultation Strategy, Blue Light Collaboration Board update, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) update, council tax precept mid-point consultation update and the Annual Service Plan.</p> <p>The Chair added that in relation to the Blue Light Collaboration Board updates, he had written a paper and was keen to explore co-location between blue light Services and Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>The minutes were proposed by County Councillor I Duxbury and seconded by County Councillor J Ash.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the proceedings of the Planning Committee held on 2 February 2026 be noted.</p>
67-25/2	<b>Annual Statement of Assurance 2024-25</b>
	<p>The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) presented the report to members. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018) set out the Government's high-level expectations, priorities and objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in England. Included within the framework was the requirement that all FRAs must provide assurance on financial, governance and operational matters.</p> <p>The Statement of Assurance aimed to provide the required accountability and transparency to Lancashire communities and the Government that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) continued to deliver efficient, effective value for money Services.</p> <p>The statement sat alongside the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), Statement of Accounts, the Annual Governance Statement, the Annual Service Plan and Annual Progress Report. It detailed what measures were in place to assure that the Combined Fire Authority's performance was efficient, economic, and effective and provided further evidence that LFRS continued to deliver under the expectations detailed within both the National Framework and its own Community Risk</p>

	<p>Management Plan.</p> <p>The Clerk and Monitoring Officer added that HMICFRS would be focusing on governance at their next inspection, including the impact that the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) had on the Service and its performance. He noted that work was ongoing to review and update the authority's constitution to ensure that arrangements were robust and resilient. The Chair added that the work of the Constitution Working Group was intensive.</p> <p>County Councillor M Clifford emphasised the focus on governance and thanked the Fire Authority for the amount of continuous training he had received through Grant Thornton, the Services' external auditors. Additionally, he thanked those involved in the Constitution Working Group and advised members that once the review was finalised the document would be brought to the full Fire Authority for approval.</p> <p>The report was proposed by County Councillor M Clifford and Seconded by County Councillor L Hutchinson.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Authority approved the Annual Statement of Assurance 2024-25 as presented and approved the signing of this by the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer.</p>
68-25/2	<p><b>Matters of Governance in relation to appeals and dismissals of statutory officers</b></p>
	<p>The Director of People and Development (DoPD) presented the report to members.</p> <p>The report outlined a matter of governance related to the appeals and dismissals of statutory officers within Lancashire Combined Fire Authority.</p> <p>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 was underlined by recent national events highlighting the pressures and scrutiny associated with these senior posts and the risks of inadequate support or oversight.</p> <p>It was proposed that matters of misconduct, relating to directors of the Fire Authority, other than the statutory officers, would be dealt with under the Service's Disciplinary Procedure which clearly explained the process to be followed and the support which should be in place. An additional procedure would be established for dealing with matters relating to statutory officers, who had additional provisions relating to dismissal due to their statutory protection. These provisions required approval from the full Fire Authority and would 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 was attached at Appendix A of the report.</p> <p>Further to the review of the Complaints Procedure by the Fire Authority 28</p>

	<p>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 was proposed to address this omission. In addition, it was proposed to amend the Appeals Committee Terms of Reference (TOR) in accordance with the new arrangements for dealing with issues of concern raised against directors including statutory officers.</p> <p>County Councillor M Clifford noted that the Appeals TOR referenced attending appropriate training and asked that this be arranged.</p> <p>The report was moved by County Councillor M Clifford and seconded by the Chair.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Authority approved;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The implementation of a new Disciplinary Procedure for dealing with matters of misconduct relating to Statutory Officers and agree that matters relating to other Executive Board members would be dealt with under Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) Disciplinary and Grievance procedures.</li> <li>• An amendment to the Appeals Committee Terms of Reference as detailed within the report.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
69-25/2	<p><b>2026/27 Budget</b></p>
	<p>The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) / Treasurer advised that appendices A to D in the Budget Report were linked, with changes in one impacting on the others: A) the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) set out the financial outlook and estimated borrowing over the next five years, B) the Capital Strategy set out major expenditure for investment within the Service (including the ten-year capital programme), C) the Reserves Strategy set out savings and how they were planned to be used over the next 5 years, and D) the Treasury Management Strategy set out investment, borrowing, repayment and how money was set aside to repay borrowing.</p> <p>The DoCS presented the report that set out the Council Tax Precept and Budget for 2026/27 along with the associated appended documents.</p> <p>The Authority was required to set a balanced budget and council tax precept for the next financial year by 1 March 2026. The Authority had to ensure it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considered the link between capital investment decisions and the revenue implications.</li> <li>• Considered the results of the Council Tax Precept Consultation.</li> <li>• Considered the Treasury Management implications of revenue and capital decisions.</li> <li>• Provided value for money.</li> <li>• Reflected best practice.</li> <li>• Ensured consistency between financial planning and pay policy.</li> </ul>

The Budget and appended documents in the report formed the Service's financial strategies which were part of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) strategic planning activity and governance framework which set out the direction of the Service and how it would achieve the aim of making Lancashire safer. These financial strategies were one of six core strategies that set out how LFRS, would provide Services in line with the following priorities in the five-year Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP):

- Valuing our people.
- Preventing fires.
- Protecting people and property.
- Responding to fire and other emergencies.
- Delivering value for money.

### **Financial Context**

At the time of the report, UK inflation (CPI) stood 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, expected inflation to continue easing through 2026, moving closer to over 2% by the end of the year. Economic growth was forecast to remain modest but steady at around 1.2–1.4%, broadly in line with long-term trend levels. Overall, 2026 was expected to bring gradually improving conditions, with lower inflation helping stabilise household finances despite continuing subdued economic growth.

Nationally, the Fire and Rescue Service continued 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**

Funding for the fire sector had 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 wholetime firefighters since 2008. In addition, latest comparison figures for On-call firefighter (full time equivalent) numbers showed 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 impacted on funding levels.

Funding for capital schemes had 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 was repaid from revenue budgets). During this period the Service had funded its capital schemes primarily from revenue resources and had not utilised any borrowing, unlike most of the Fire and Rescue Services.

### **Fair Funding Review**

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 allocated 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.

All Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) resourced to risk which was driven by a range of other risks, most notably deprivation. Unfortunately, the new funding review, rather than increasing funding to match increasing risk, was mainly being redistributed towards areas with higher population growth. There was a perversity in the result, LFRS was experiencing cuts in its share of funding and yet had one of the highest levels of deprivation. If the funding formula continued at this level, revenue resources would continue to decline.

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 was 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 had 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 was welcome; it was unfortunately offsetting Government grant cuts rather than an opportunity to invest in the Service.

### **Settlement**

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 suggested that funding levels would be broadly in line with the previously set MTFS for 2026/27; an increase of circa 3%. Whilst this was 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 would represent a real term cut. Unfortunately, no capital grant funding was provided again for in the provisional settlement despite continuous lobbying from the sector.

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 would be earmarked to meet potential in year pressures and future deficits.

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

The 2025/26 budget proposals were based on the latest funding assumptions set out in the report and a maximum increase in the council tax precept allowed of £5 at Band D was assumed to give total funding of £45.1 million. The proportion of the budget that was funded by Council Tax had increased again as the percentage of funding from other sources such as government grants reduced. The proportion of the budget that was funded by Council Tax had increased again as the percentage

of funding from other sources such as government grants reduced.

The net expenditure budget took 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>

The proposal delivered a balanced budget as required by law. The £5 increase equated to a 5.57% increase in the council tax precept, if the precept was reduced additional savings would be required, for example, a reduction of 1% would reduce funding by £0.4 million which equated to a loss of £4 million in funding over 10 years.

The main elements that made up the Proposed Budget Requirement for 2026/27 are set out below and were detailed in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in Appendix A:

- Economic changes
  - Pay - An allowance of 4% for pay awards in 2026/27 had been included with 2% thereafter. If pay awards were higher than assumed they would need to be met from reserves or in year savings in 2026/27 with additional savings made in future years. Each 1% increase resulted in an additional £0.5 million and £0.1 million for Grey book and Green book staff respectively.
  - Inflation – Non-pay budgets had been increased by 3.8% in line with CPI and 2% thereafter. Specific increases in price inflation for known areas had been assumed.
  - Interest earned – The interest earned on cash balances in the MTFS was

updated to reflect the amended use of reserves and gradual reduction in interest rates. The budget in 2026/27 was £1.4 million and then reduced over the period of the MTF5 to £0.2 million by 2030/31.

- Commitments – These reflected the impact of previous decisions that had a financial consequence in 2026/27 or were due to policy, legal or regulatory changes. The main adjustment in 2026/27 related 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 had taken place, and asset life extended where possible, significant inflationary pressures for vehicles, property and ICT meant that without dedicated central Government capital grants, revenue to capital contributions must increase.
- Permanent increases in Resourcing - An increase of £0.5 million was required in 2026/27 to reflect the loss of the National Insurance grant; Government had confirmed this had been rolled into Grants now.
- Permanent decreases in Resourcing – In 2026/27 £1.8 million of savings would 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 would 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 was built into the base budget and thus assumed to continue.

### Council Tax Precept

Council Tax funding was based on the estimated taxbase (band D equivalents) provided by each local authority. Compared to 2025/26, the overall taxbase had 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 1 – 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

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

### **Council Tax Precept Consultation**

The legal requirements for council tax increases were 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 were set out in Appendix E of the agenda pack along with the response from the Fire Brigade Union to the budget.

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 (MTFS)**

The purpose of the MTFs was 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 considered 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 2 – 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 were assumed at £5 in 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 and 2% thereafter.

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 were estimated at 4% then 2% thereafter. Non-pay budgets had increased by the September Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) CPI figures; 3.8% in 2026/27 and 2% thereafter. Income earned on investments was expected to reduce as cash balances reduced and interest rates reduced from 3.7% to 3% over the period of the MTFS.
- Commitments – The MTFS included 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 was financially sustainable in the long term.
- Increases in Resourcing - The 2026/27 increase reflected the loss of the National Insurance grant; Government had confirmed this had been rolled into Grants now. Increases thereafter related 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 were forecast at £4.1 million per annum.
- Decreases in Resourcing – These were required to balance the budget. In 2026/27 £1.8 million of savings would 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 were 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 would be required to balance the budget.
- Funding – Detailed assumptions were included in the MTFS, in broad terms the funding was expected to increase between 2% to 3% however, the outcome of the next spending review and review of the funding formula was likely to impact on these assumptions which was expected to be determined during late 2028. This year there was a small surplus on the business rates collection fund of

£0.151 million which would be earmarked to meet in year pressures and future deficits on the collection fund.

The key variables within the budget were inflation assumptions, in particular pay awards, and funding levels. The MTFS in Appendix A considered a range of risks and scenarios that impact on the MTFS. The analysis showed that whilst the general reserve was 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

In addition to the revenue budgets a programme of capital investment was proposed for 2026/27, this was set out in detail in the Capital Strategy in Appendix B. The purpose of the Strategy was to provide the Authority, staff, the public and other stakeholders with information on the Capital plans. Capital plans needed 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 3 – 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>

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 had 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 were required. The result was that the masterplan had been delayed by approximately one year with planning approval now sought in late summer / early autumn 2026.

Progress with the Leadership and Development Centre Training Facilities would continue in tandem with the masterplan application to ensure development was not unduly delayed. The Preston, Fulwood and Headquarters and Stores relocation projects had been programmed for years four and five of the capital programme so

the scope could be considered as part of a refreshed CRMP and supporting the Service Review during 2026.

A summary of the major projects was reflected in the updated 2026/27 10-year capital programme, these included:

- Leadership and Development Centre Training Facilities – A modern and progressive Service required 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 was required to meet our requirements and an estimate of £18 million was included in the programme between 2027/28 and 2028/29.
- The following major projects were programmed for 2029/30 to 2030/31, however the scope and timing of these major schemes would be considered as part of the CRMP and Service Review that was due to be consulted on and finalised in early 2027.
  - The Preston replacement station was the busiest station in Lancashire and was in a very poor condition, the budget was £10 million.
  - The Headquarters and Stores relocation project combined the Headquarters and Training Facility and relocated 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 required a resolution). The budget was £18 million.
  - The relocation of Headquarters necessitated the need to invest in a new station to replace Fulwood either on the existing site or at an alternative location. The budget was £7 million.

To fund the Capital Programme, in addition to utilising the Capital Reserve and revenue contributions, £51.2 million of borrowing was required to fund the major schemes. The long-term revenue costs of this borrowing was £4.1 million per annum, this would need to be met from revenue resources. The scope and timing of these major projects would be considered as part of the CRMP and Service Review.

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**

Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 placed a requirement on the Section 151 Officer to formally report on the adequacy of the reserves. The DoCS assessed this in the context of the strategic, operational and financial risks and opportunities facing the Authority.

While holding reserves was 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 was set out within the Reserves Strategy attached at Appendix C, which included details of the reserves held and their proposed usage over the next five years.

It was good practice for an Authority to review its reserves on a regular basis to consider each reserve. This was to ensure that the level was both prudent and adequate for the current climate, but not excessive. A review had been undertaken based on historical analysis and the current environment and future forecasts; this review had not resulted in any material change.

The General Reserve existed 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 was one that was equivalent to 5% of the net revenue budget but that must be considered alongside specific Authority risks; 5% of the net revenue budget was approximately £4 million. Considering the risks facing the Authority the Treasurer recommended increasing the minimum level for 2026/27 to £4 million. The level of the General Reserve at 1 April 2025 was estimated at £6 million, this was above the minimum level of General Reserve recommended. Over the period of the MTFS the level of the General Reserve remained above this minimum level.

### **Treasury Management**

Treasury Management covered the cashflow, investment and borrowing activities together with the impacts of budgetary decisions on such activities. The Treasury Management Strategy was included at Appendix D and comprised of four main elements:

- Capital Expenditure Plans and Prudential Indicators.
- Borrowing Strategy and Prudential Limits.
- Annual Investment Strategy.
- Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement.

The Strategy reflected the revenue and capital estimates contained in the MTFS and Capital Strategy. Treasury Management in the public sector was heavily regulated and transparency with the Authority on its activities was paramount. The Resource Committee oversaw Treasury activities, but it was a legal requirement that the Authority approved the Strategy.

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

Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 placed a requirement on the “Chief Finance Officer” of an Authority to report on the robustness of the estimates used in preparing the budget. There was 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 was the DoCS.

The statutory requirement was reinforced by the Prudential Code, which required authorities to have regard to affordability when considering recommendations about future capital programmes.

The Authority had a medium term planning process that took account of Service demands and the financial scenario covering a 5-year period to 2031. The aim of the Medium Term Financial Strategy was to provide a realistic and sustainable plan that reflected the Authority's priorities and anticipated the future impact of current decisions. Alongside this, future capital programmes were planned taking into account forecasted Government funding, borrowing limits and council tax.

For 2026/27, full consideration of these issues had led to:

- Policy and expenditure proposals that reflected 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.

In assessing the robustness of the 2026/27 proposals and the estimates on which they were based, the DoCS had been assured that:

- The budget proposals were based on the advice of Service managers (supported by finance staff) or were based upon or supported by information that the DoCS considered reasonable to accept.
- The budget proposals had been fully reviewed and endorsed by the Executive Board and the implications on performance, if any, had been identified and assessed.
- The proposed budget provided for all known future developments either within the revenue budget itself or as part of the Reserves Strategy.

When using estimates in preparing the budget every effort was taken to ensure that they took into account the most up to date data. There was, 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 (i.e. variances on budgets);
- Ability to deliver policy proposals and/or achieve projected savings; and
- Unforeseen additional operational demands and activities.

The potential for unanticipated events to occur that may impact on the budget, reinforced 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.

Based on the advice and assurance set out above and the process by which the budget had been constructed, the DoCS was satisfied that the estimates were robust and could be relied upon for approval as part of the proposed budget.

### **Pay Policy Statement 2026/27**

In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 a pay policy statement for 2026/27 was considered by Members. The pay policy published data on senior salaries and the structure of the workforce and it demonstrated the principles of transparency. The pay policy statement set out the Authority's policies for the financial year relating to:

- The remuneration of its chief officers;
- The remuneration of its lowest paid employees; and
- The relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and that of other employees who were not chief officers.

The statement included:

- 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; and
- The publication of and access to information relating to the remuneration of chief officers.

It also included the Authority's policies for the financial year relating to other terms and conditions applying to its chief officers.

In response to a question from Councillor J Hugo in relation to permanent decreases in grey book resources, the DoCS confirmed that this would be achieved through natural wastage with no redundancies planned.

In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow in relation to the variation in pay award percentages in the report, the DoCS confirmed that the local government pay award for green book staff was effective from April and the grey book staff pay award was effective from July hence the change in percentage detailed.

In response to a question from Councillor J Hugo in relation to the real living wage, the Director of People and Development (DoPD) confirmed that pay rates would be adjusted in line with any changes to the real living wage.

	<p>The report was proposed by County Councillor I Duxbury and moved by County Councillor M Clifford.</p> <p>The Authority voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations by a named vote.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Authority: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed the 2026/27 budget, including the Net Budget Requirement of £80.5 million as set out in Table 2 paragraph 18 of the agenda pack, which took account of adjustments set out and detailed in Appendix A.</li> <li>• Agreed the proposed Council Tax increase of £5 for a Band D Council tax precept of £94.73 for 2026/27.</li> <li>• Agreed the levels of Council Tax precept as set out in Table 3, paragraph 21 of the agenda pack.</li> <li>• Approved the capital programme and associated funding for 2026/27 as set out in table 5, paragraph 28 of the agenda pack;</li> <li>• Approved the Medium Term Financial Strategy set out in Appendix A;</li> <li>• Approved the Capital Strategy set out in Appendix B;</li> <li>• Approved the Reserves Strategy set out in Appendix C;</li> <li>• Approved the Treasury Management Strategy in Appendix D, this included the Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision;</li> <li>• Noted the results of the Council Tax Precept Consultation as set out in paragraph 24 of the agenda pack and Appendix E;</li> <li>• Note the Statement of Robustness of Estimates set out in paragraph 40 of the agenda pack; and</li> <li>• Approved the Pay Policy Statement in Appendix F.</li> </ul>
70-25/2	<p><b>Member Champion Activity Report and Feedback</b></p>
	<p>The current Member Champions and their areas of responsibility were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Safety – County Councillor Andy Blake</li> <li>• Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Councillor Salim Sidat</li> <li>• Health and Wellbeing – County Councillor Sohail Asghar</li> <li>• Road Safety – County Councillor Jordan Fox.</li> </ul> <p>Reports relating to the activity of the Member Champions were provided on a regular basis to the Authority. This report related to activity for the period up to 22 February 2026.</p> <p>Member Champions highlighted several details within the reports and expressed thanks to the officers who supported them in their roles.</p> <p>The Chair remarked that the Biker Down scheme was very popular within the Ribble Valley.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor P Buckley in relation to coordinating road safety across partners and the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), the ACFO confirmed that the focus of the Lancashire Road Safety Partnership (LRSP) was being reviewed in conjunction with partners at a strategic</p>

level to continue to drive performance and keep everyone safe on the roads of Lancashire.

The CFO added that the LRSP has been established for over 25 years but had recently undergone a review of responsibilities and funding. The LRSP covered the whole of Lancashire and used data to drive focus. He added that the Service worked with partners in line with the statutory duties to educate and protect road users. The Chair commented that there was previously a pan-Lancashire data group which had been disestablished and could be reestablished. He requested that a report be brought to Performance Committee in relation to road traffic collision hot spots. The CFO confirmed that this could be incorporated in the annual road safety report brought to the full CFA later in the year for visibility of all members of the Authority.

County Councillor E Worthington commented that she had serious concerns in relation to a number of rural roads in West Lancashire, one where somebody had lost their life.

Councillor J Hugo reminded those in attendance that when referring to local authority and highways involvement they should be mindful that the fire authority was made up of three constituent authorities.

County Councillor D Howarth remarked that he had not heard about the LRSP recently and it was useful to know it was still ongoing.

The report was proposed by County Councillor J Ash and seconded by Councillor Z Khan.

**Resolved:** That the Authority noted the report and acknowledged the work of the respective Champions.

71-25/2 **Fire Protection Reports**

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) presented the report which summarised Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) prosecutions pertaining to fire safety offences under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005.

Members noted that there had been no sentencings since the previous meeting.

Four cases sat within the court system. The responsible person for two Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) premises, (located in Bacup and Darwen) pleaded guilty to breaches of the Fire Safety Order (FSO) on the 13 August 2025 at Preston Magistrates Court. A sentencing date for the 30 January 2026 at Preston Crown Court had been cancelled and the Service was awaiting a new date.

An NHS Trust and maintenance company were due to appear at Blackburn Magistrates Court on the 1 October 2025. The initial plea and case management hearing was heard on 15 December 2025, no pleas were given. A further plea and case management hearing would be heard at Preston Crown Court on 22 April 2026.

The responsible persons and a company were to appear at Blackburn Magistrates

	<p>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 twelve other premises where offences were believed to have been committed under the FSO.</p> <p>Members noted that there had been four arson convictions since the last report and another 15 deliberate fire investigations were ongoing within the criminal justice system.</p> <p>Members noted a breakdown of arson prosecutions, the details of which had been requested at the last full authority meeting.</p> <p><b>April 2023 to March 2024</b> 16 arson related convictions resulting in: 8 custodial sentences totalling 48 yrs 2 months, 7 youth referral orders and 1 youth caution.</p> <p><b>April 2024 to 2025</b> 11 arson related convictions resulting in: 9 custodial sentences totalling 33 yrs 11months and 2 suspended sentences.</p> <p><b>April 2025 to date</b> 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.</p> <p>The ACFO advised that the request to provide details on the behaviours and motivation in relation to arson convictions was unable to be provided as the Service did not capture such data.</p> <p>The report was proposed by County Councillor J Ash and seconded by Councillor Z Khan.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the report be noted.</p>
72-25/2	<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial building fire in Burnley (17/11/25)</li> <li>• Road Traffic Collision in Chorley (3/12/25)</li> <li>• Animal Rescue in Preesall (12/12/25)</li> <li>• Dwelling fire in Bispham (19/12/25)</li> <li>• Road traffic Collision in Lancaster (20/12/25)</li> </ul>

- 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)

There were several complex incidents which included the use of modern capabilities such as drones and advanced skills and specialist rescue whilst maintaining capability across the county.

County Councillor M Ritson remarked that there has been a number of serious incidents in the Bacup area, he thanked the Service for its response to these incidents. The ACFO added that there had been a lot of warning and informing messaging completed by the communications team to keep residents informed.

Councillor J Hugo remarked that she had felt privileged to attend a commendation event in Blackpool following a serious fire in Blackpool in July 2024. Following the event the firefighters involved and the CFO had been invited to attend the Mayors Parlour at Blackpool. The CFO expressed his thanks in relation to this and remarked that the firefighters involved had enjoyed the event and felt very privileged to attend. The CFO would write formally to thank the Mayor for hosting colleagues.

County Councillor D Howarth commented that a number of incidents appeared to have been caused by carelessness.

The Chair requested that a report be taken to Performance Committee on incidents of interest over the past few years and to understand trends. The CFO highlighted that this information was included in the annual refresh of the strategic assessment of risk which came to the Authority and would also be used to inform the forthcoming Service review which would undergo scrutiny by members as a matter of course.

County Councillor I Duxbury proposed the report and County Councillor E Worthington seconded the report.

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

73-25/2 **Member Complaints**

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer confirmed that there had been no complaints since the last meeting.

The Chair suggested that consideration be given to removing this as a standing item and only listing the item on the agenda should there be any complaints to note. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer confirmed that this was a historical item and as part of the review of the constitution, going forward, any complaints would be reported into the Audit Committee.

It was noted that the member champion report agenda item would be amended to incorporate feedback from members at future meetings, and that this would be made clearer within the report title going forward.

	<p>County Councillor A Riggott proposed the removal of member complaints as a standing agenda item, this was seconded by County Councillor P Buckley.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the current position be noted and member complaints be removed as a standing item on the agenda, with any complaints to be reported to Audit Committee.</p>
74-25/2	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>
	The next meeting of the Authority would be held on Monday 27 April at 10:30am at the Training Centre, Euxton.
75-25/2	<b>Exclusion of Press and Public</b>
	<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.
76-25/2	<b>Appointment of Monitoring Officer</b>
	<p>The Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer recused themselves from the meeting.</p> <p>The Director of People and Development (DoPD) presented the report to member in relation to the appointment of the Monitoring Officer.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the authority appointed the Deputy Monitoring Officer (Legal Services and Standards Manager) as Monitoring Officer.</p>
77-25/2	<b>Business Continuity Planning</b>
	<p>The Chief Fire Officer presented the report to members in relation to the Services business continuity planning activities.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the authority noted the report.</p>

**M Nolan**  
Clerk to CFA

**LFRS HQ**  
**Fulwood**

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## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 23 February 2026

### Proceedings of Performance Committee held 11 March 2026

(Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information:

Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager - Tel: 01772 866720

#### **Executive Summary**

The proceedings of Performance Committee meeting held 11 March 2026.

#### **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 11 March 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 Performance Committee

Wednesday, 11 March 2026, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room,  
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

### Minutes

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

<b>Officers</b>
<p>S Pink, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)  M Hamer, Area Manager, Prevention and Protection (LFRS)  P Jones, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery (LFRS)  K McCreech, Acting Area Manager (LFRS)  T Powell, Area Manager, Head of Service Improvement (LFRS)  D Howell, Monitoring Officer (LFRS)  S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS)  L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)</p>

1-25/26	<b>Apologies For Absence</b>
	Apologies were received from Councillor J Hugo, and County Councillors A Blake, M Clifford, G Mirfin, and M Ritson.
2-25/26	<b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests</b>
	None received.
3-25/26	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>
	<b>Resolved:</b> - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on the 03 December 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
4-25/26	<b>Q3 Measuring Progress Report</b>
	The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) presented a comprehensive report to the

Performance Committee. This was the 3rd quarterly report for 2025/26 as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-2027.

In quarter 3, two Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), 1.2.3 Staff Absence Greenbook, and 2.9 Business Fire Safety Checks were shown in positive exception and one KPI was shown in negative exception, 1.2.1 Staff Wholetime Absence Wholetime (WT).

Members examined each indicator in turn focusing on those KPIs in exception as follows:

### **KPI 1 – Valuing our people so that they can focus on making Lancashire safer**

#### **1.1 Overall Staff Engagement**

Members received an update on how staff were engaged during the period.

From October to December 2025, 27 station visits were carried out by Principal Officers and Area Managers as part of the service-wide engagement programme.

Forty-seven wellbeing interactions were undertaken ranging from workshops with crews to wellbeing support dog interactions.

In November, the Service held its annual Celebration of our People event to recognise dedication and achievements across the organisation. 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. One Hundred and thirty-six submissions were received from members of staff nominating their colleagues for a Star Award.

Engagement took place with operational staff regarding several improvements to Tarleton, Preston, and Fulwood fire stations and a staff poll was conducted to ascertain interest levels in a salary sacrifice scheme.

The Service's new Modern Ways of Working Forum was launched and promoted which encouraged staff across the Service to submit ideas for smarter ways of working using technology that would lead to improvements in efficiency and productivity.

A new regular Watch Managers' Forum was also established to keep wholetime and functional watch managers informed of what was happening in service delivery and give them the opportunity to share feedback and be involved in changes.

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.

<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: 3.04

Cumulative total number of shifts lost: 7.43

The negative exception report was due to the number of shifts lost through absence per employee being below the Service target for quarter 3.

The element of that section of the report referred to sickness absence rates for the period 01 April 2025 to 31 December 2025.

The agreed target performance level was 8 shifts lost per employee per year for

wholetime staff, which equated to a target of 6.00 shifts lost per employee per year for quarter 1 to quarter 3. The actual shifts lost for the period for that group of staff was 7.43, which was 1.43 shifts above target. During the same period of the previous year, 6.05 shifts were lost which was an increase of 1.38 shifts lost per wholetime employee compared to the same period of the previous year.

A total of 4,542 wholetime absence shifts lost = 7.43 against a target of 6.00.

The number of cases of long-term absence which spanned over the total of the 3 months remained at 4 cases in Q3. The absence reasons were:

- Mental Health 3 cases
- Other absence types 1 case

Two hundred shifts were lost during quarter 3 as a result of the above four cases of long-term absence. This was in comparison to 114 shifts which were lost during the same quarter of 2024-25. Those cases accounted for 0.33 shifts lost per person over the quarter.

There were 33 cases of long-term absence which were recorded within the 3 months:

- Musculo Skeletal 13 cases
- Mental Health 12 cases
- Hospital/Post Operative Procedure 2 cases
- Other absence types 6 cases

There were 301 shifts lost which related to Respiratory related absences including Coronavirus absence. This was compared to 61 shifts lost in Q1, 132 shifts lost in Q2 of 2025-26 and 205 shifts lost in the same quarter of 2024-25.

The Service managed staff absence through a formal Absence Management Policy supported by the Human Resources (HR) system iTrent, which provided monthly absence reports to managers and HR Business Partners. Employees absent due to mental health or stress were referred early to Occupational Health, and all returning employees completed return-to-work interviews and relevant risk assessments.

Support mechanisms included Occupational Health guidance, Trauma Risk Management (TRiM), the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), and the Firefighters Charity. If an employee did not return promptly, absence review meetings were held to explore support options such as modified duties or redeployment; outcomes could include dismissal or ill-health retirement.

Formal review thresholds were triggered by:

- Short-term absence: 3+ period in 6 months or 14 days absence; or
- Long-term absence: reviews at 3,6,9 and 11 months.

Recent increases in absence could possibly relate to respiratory illness, although no national rise in Covid/flu was evident. Flu vaccination reimbursement was offered; however, an earlier offering this intervention might improve absence rates.

The Service was analysing absence data for trends, such as school-holiday spikes. Recent formal absence meetings included 10 at Stage 1 and none at Stages 2 or 3. Managers aimed to facilitate earlier returns through meaningful modified duties.

Occupation Health Unit referrals were high across Q1-Q3, including many follow-up appointments. Referrals could be preventative as well as related to absence. A breakdown between absence-related and non-absence related referrals was not available.

In response to a question from the Chair as to whether the Service compared against other Services, such as the Police, in relation to Musculo skeletal absences, the ACFO explained that the Service did not benchmark against the Police but did use national sickness data for comparison of categories and themes.

Councillor Sidat queried whether the Musculo skeletal injuries were related to being on-duty and how they were managed. The ACFO advised that the data for injuries revealed a mixture of internal and external factors as the nature of the job was physical, some injuries could occur in the workplace, and some injuries could also be attributed to recreational activities outside of the workplace. To manage those types of injuries, the Service provided high-quality physiotherapy, Occupational Health Support, and rehabilitation through the Firefighters Charity. Proactively, the Service encouraged a fitness culture providing staff with gym facilities to maintain fitness. The number of referrals to physiotherapy had increased, and feedback from staff had been positive.

In response to a question from County Councillor Asghar regarding mental health support, the ACFO confirmed that there was immediate support through the TRiM programme for anyone who had experienced a traumatic incident. For long term cases, there was access to a Psychotherapist, The Employee Assistance Programme, and the Firefighters Charity. The ACFO had met with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) to discuss proactive action taken prior to operational stress such as the Hope Programme which was delivered through the Firefighters Charity which helped to build resilience, and assisting managers to recognise low level indicators of stress to prevent situations from reaching crisis point. Area Manager, Phil Jones, added that the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and International Search and Rescue (ISAR), who dealt with devastating and traumatic incidents at home and overseas, had an enhanced, bespoke mental health support programme designed to help manage the risk of developing PTSD.

### **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, 1.51%.

### **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: 0.97

Cumulative shifts lost: 4.10

The positive exception report was due to the number of shifts lost through absence per employee being below the Service target for quarter 3.

The agreed target performance level was 8 shifts lost per employee per year for Green Book staff, which equated to a target of 6.00 shifts lost per employee per year for quarters 1 to quarter 3. The actual shifts lost for the period for this group was 4.10, which was 1.90 within target. During the same period of the previous year, 5.10 shifts were lost which was a decrease of 1.00 shifts lost per green book employee compared to the same period last year.

During the period, April – December 2025, absence statistics showed non-uniformed personnel absence above target for the quarter with 0.97 shifts lost in the quarter against a target of 2.00 shifts lost.

1,049 non-uniformed absence shifts lost = 4.10 against a target of 6.00 during quarters 1 to quarter 3. There were no cases of long-term absence which spanned over the total of the 6 months.

The number of long-term absence cases recorded in the quarter decreased from 10 in Q2 to 4 in Q3:

- Mental Health 2 cases
- Other absence types 2 cases

During the quarter, 60 shifts were lost as a result of the 4 cases of long-term absences, this was in comparison to 406 shifts lost during the same quarter of 2024-25. These cases accounted for 0.23 shifts lost per person over the quarter.

Respiratory related absences accounted for 83 lost shifts, which included Coronavirus absence. This was compared to 40 shifts lost in the same quarter of 2024-25.

The Service managed staff absence through a formal Absence Management Policy supported by the Human Resources (HR) system iTrent, which provided monthly absence reports to managers and HR Business Partners. Employees absent due to mental health or stress were referred early to Occupational Health, and all returning employees completed return-to-work interviews and relevant risk assessments.

Support mechanisms included Occupational Health guidance, Trauma Risk Management (TRiM), the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), and the Firefighters Charity. If an employee did not return promptly, absence review meetings were held to explore support options such as modified duties or redeployment; outcomes could include dismissal or ill-health retirement.

Formal review thresholds were triggered by:

- Short-term absence: 3+ period in 6 months or 14 days absence; or
- Long-term absence: reviews at 3,6,9 and 11 months.

Recent increases in absence could possibly relate to respiratory illness, although no national rise in Covid/flu was evident. Flu vaccination reimbursement was offered; however, an earlier offering this intervention might improve absence rates.

The Service was analysing absence data for trends, such as school-holiday spikes. Recent formal absence meetings included 10 at Stage 1 and none at Stages 2 or 3. Managers aimed to facilitate earlier returns through meaningful modified duties.

Occupation Health Unit referrals were high across Q1-Q3, including many follow-up appointments. Referrals could be preventative as well as related to absence. A breakdown between absence-related and non-absence related referrals was not available.

In response to a question from the Chair as to whether any cases of respiratory illnesses were work/smoke-related, the ACFO explained that there were none to her knowledge and highlighted that Firefighters underwent a medical examination every three years which included a lung function test and were checked for occupational exposure to contaminants.

### 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%(92%)	Not stated
	5%(4%)		
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 5%(4%)	Heterosexual 63%(60%)	Not stated
	32%(36%)		
Disability:	Disability 4%(3%)	No disability 93%(94%)	Not stated
	3%(3%)		

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

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

Gender:	Female	Grey book 11%	Green book 62%
	Male	Grey book 89%	Green book 38%
Ethnicity:	BME	Grey book 3%	Green book 6%
	White	Grey book 92%	Green book 85%
	Not stated	Grey book 5%	Green book 9%
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT	Grey book 5%	Green book 3%
	Heterosexual	Grey book 62%	Green book 68%
	Not stated	Grey book 33%	Green book 29%
Disability:	Disability	Grey book 3%	Green book 6%
	No disability	Grey book 95%	Green book 88%
	Not stated	Grey book 2%	Green book 6%

### 1.3.2 Workforce Diversity Recruited

This new indicator measured workforce diversity recruited as a percentage.

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

Gender:	Female 22%(39%)	Male 78%(61%)	
Ethnicity:	BME 1%(7%)	White 91%(65%)	Not Stated 8%(28%)
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 4%(3%)	Heterosexual 86%(85%)	Not stated 10%(12%)
Disability:	Disability 1%(7%)	No disability 94%(88%)	Not stated 5%(5%)

During quarter 3, there were a total of 43 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, 21 for quarter 3; year to date 44; previous year to date 45. Quarterly activity increased 31.25% (5 incidents) over the same quarter of the previous year. Year to date activity decreased 2.22% 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 13,879; previous year to date 12,936. Quarterly activity decreased 1.92% over the same quarter of the previous year.

In quarter 3, the Service attended 4,185 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) – 1263, 30%
- Good Intent False Alarm – 651, 16%
- Malicious False Alarm – 52, 1%
- Total Primary Fire Calls (accidental dwelling / building and deliberate dwelling / commercial fires and other primary fires) – 456, 11%
- Total Secondary Fire Calls (deliberate and accidental fires) – 527, 13%
- Total Special Service Calls (critical incidents, gaining entry, RTCs, Flooding and other critical incidents) – 1220, 29%

### **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, 200 in quarter 3; year to date 563; previous year to date 518. Quarterly activity increased 5.82% 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	1 in quarter 3; year to date 2; previous year to date 6
Injuries appear Serious	4 in quarter 3; year to date 7; previous year to date 6
Injuries appear Slight	12 in quarter 3; year to date 24; previous year to date 24

County Councillor Tetlow queried the maximum of 10 casualties and the ACFO confirmed that 10 casualties represented the tolerance level. In quarter three, there had been a high number of casualties despite a relatively low number of incidents. The Service used the data to analyse trends such as age, and cause of the incidents which helped inform future prevention delivery to high-risk individuals.

Members noted that the casualties related to residential incidents.

### **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 86% against same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 87%.

Combined quarterly percentage decreased 0.77% over the same quarter of the previous year.

### **2.4 Accidental Building Fires (ABF) (Commercial Premises)**

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a building had been

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

ABF (Commercial Premises), 45 in quarter 3; year to date 161; previous year to date 188. Quarterly activity decreased 21.05% 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 77% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 68%.

Combined quarterly percentage had therefore increased 9.36% 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), 16 in quarter 3; year to date 94; previous year to date 58. Quarterly activity remained static against the same quarter of the previous year.

#### **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 38% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 37%.

Combined quarterly activity had therefore increased 0.50% 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 – 370 in quarter 3; year to date 1,773; previous year to date 1,474. Quarterly activity decreased 16.10% 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, 21 in quarter 3, year to date 57; previous year to date 65. Quarterly activity decreased 8.70% 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, 38 in quarter 3; year to date 117; previous year to date 102.

Quarterly activity increased 22.58% 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.

County Councillor Riggott asked how the Service worked with Crown Premises to minimise the risk of deliberate fires. Area Manager, Matt Hamer responded that incidents were managed under the Fire Safety Order (FSO), although responsibility for Crown premises fell within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice and the Crown Inspectorate. The Service worked with crown premises, including probation services and prisons, and the Fire Investigation Team would collect and analyse data from fire investigations. It had been found that some inmates had used electronic smoking materials as an ignition source for attacks or self-protection purposes. To address deliberate fires, the Service had undertaken a trial with tamper proof vapes, and fire safety talks were given by the Community Safety Team. Additionally, 12 weeks pre-release the Service provided a half day safety session covering safety information and relevant legislative changes. If an incident had malicious intent, prison sentences could be extended to act as a deterrent, however, through the Prison Working Group chaired by the Service, prevention and

protection education was considered the most effective approach.

In response to a question from County Councillor Asghar regarding the response from inmates to the safety packages delivered by the Service, Area Manager explained that inmates had been involved with the design of the package and the feedback had been positive. Engagement was enhanced through the family centre with advice shared with inmates' families and the Service worked with the art department in prisons to design prevention messaging which added value to the initiative.

### **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, 311 in quarter 3; year to date 1,599; previous year to date 1,307. Quarterly activity decreased 19.64% over the same quarter of the previous year.

In response to a question from the Chair regarding whether a lack of bins in public spaces contributed to bin and rubbish fires, the ACFO advised that bins fires could be accidental attributed to discarded smoking materials, but rubbish fires were not linked to evidence where they were due to the amount of lack of bins. Area Manager, Phil Jones explained that periods of dry weather contributed with some individuals setting rubbish fires. Accurate reporting by crews had been encouraged, noting that incidents were only classifying as deliberate if that was known.

### **2.7 Home Fire Safety Checks**

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

An improvement was shown if:

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

HFSCs completed, 5,559 in quarter 3; year to date 22,901; previous year to date 18,268. Quarterly activity decreased 7.9% against the same quarter of the previous year.

HFSCs with high-risk outcomes, Quarter 3, 52%; previous year Quarter 2, 51%.

High risk outcomes increased 0.9% against the same quarter of the previous year.

Members noted that Dynamic Resource Management could have a direct impact on prevention activity due to fire engine cover.

## **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, 279 sessions delivered to 7,871 students;

RoadSense, 242 sessions delivered to 7,761 students;

SENDSafe, 3 sessions delivered to 49 students;

Wasted Lives, 44 sessions delivered to 4,153 students;

Biker Down, 3 sessions delivered to 38 attendees;

FIRES, 46 referrals opened prior to Q3 and carried over. 38 referrals received in Q3. 41 referrals closed in Q3. 43 referrals carried to 2025-26, Q4;

Partner Training (including care providers), 22 sessions delivered to 330 delegates;

Specific Education packages – delivered Water Safety, BrightSparx, ASB, Deliberate Fire Setting etc (Covers key stages 2, 3 and 4). 134 in-person BrightSparx sessions to 18,137 pupils. 6 virtual delivery BrightSparx sessions at 25 schools, to 14,748 pupils.

Arson Threat Referrals – 193.

In response to a question from Councillor S Sidat as to whether the BrightSparx education package included firework safety, Area Manager, Matt Hamer confirmed that the package covered bonfires, safety for firework and sparkler use at home, and the action to take in the event of a burn. Ideally, the Service advocated attending organised, controlled events.

## **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, 719 in quarter 3; Cumulative 2,241; YTD target, 1,875; previous YTD 2,750.

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being satisfactory, 2,024. Top 5 completed satisfactory premise types (Shops 723, Offices 347, Factories/Warehouses 274, Other Workplaces 207, Other Public Premises 141).

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being unsatisfactory, 217. Top 5 completed unsatisfactory premise types (Shops 83, Factories/Warehouses 33, Other Workplaces 27, Offices 17, Licensed Premises 15).

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.

Councillor S Sidat asked if the Service carried out enforcement regarding the sale of fireworks. Area Manager, Matt Hamer explained that the Service worked closely with Trading Standards. The Fire Safety Team received a list of licenced establishments which was shared with operational crews for information in the event of an incident. Unlicenced sales were picked up through BFSCs and reported to Trading Standards who were the regulatory body. The ACFO advised that on Bonfire Night, a multi-agency approach was used to target the improper use of fireworks with monitoring taking place through attendance at North West Fire Control and intervention taking place where necessary.

The Chair referenced a ski resort bar fire in Switzerland and asked if that incident influenced prevention work in pubs and clubs. Area Manager, Matt Hamer advised that sparklers and a polystyrene roof had been involved in the ski resort fire, with two similar incidents occurring in the north west. One of the incidents involved sparklers in bottles and helium balloons, and the other was the ignition of green foliage. A newsletter had been relayed through licensing teams to focus on the fire rating and risk assessment of decorations in establishments. The Service would go through findings from incidents, taking lessons, which informed education and safety messages for responsible persons.

### **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 3, 404;  
Formal Activity in Quarter 3, 8%, same quarter of the previous year 8%.  
Quarterly activity remained static against the same quarter of the previous year.

Members noted the cumulative number of Fire Safety inspections undertaken for 2025/26 was 1,248.

## **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 3, Building Regulation Consultations received 265, of which 242 were completed within the timeframe (LFRS should make comments in writing within 15 working days of receiving a BRC).

Area Manager, Matt Hamer commented that requests for further information could affect the timeframe for completion, as could staffing levels at times, and added that the Service was working to improve the number of competent staff.

## **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 3, Very High 05:31 min; High 06:06 min, Medium 07:19 min, Low 09:03 min.

Q3 overall 07:49 min. Year to date overall 07:50 min. Previous year to date overall 07:40 min.

### **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, 08:44 min in quarter 3; year to date 08:42 min; previous year to date 08:36 min.

In response to a question from the Chair regarding animal rescues and whether mistreated animals were reported to the RSPCA, the ACFO stated that the Service had a duty of care to report mistreated animals to the RSPCA. However, the Service was generally called to animal rescues where animals were in distress such as horses entering ice. Additionally, Acting Area Manager, Kirsty McCreesh advised that the Service had access to Vets who could assist when needed and could make direct referrals to the RSPCA.

### **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, 89.67% in quarter 3; year to date 89.19%; previous year to date 87.45%.

Quarterly availability increased 0.37% 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. At the end of quarter 3 there was a small underspend of £0.2m (budget £55 million, spend £54.8 million). This was mainly attributable to savings on Wholetime pay due to the structure reducing earlier than anticipated, offset against additional on call costs and higher

than budgeted pay awards of 3.2% for all staff compared to the 3% budgeted.

The annual revised capital budget for 2025/26 was £12.6 million and spend at the end of December was £3.9 million. Slippage of £6.7 million had been identified.

Quarter 3 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 report outlined the progress of major workstreams overseen in Lancashire by the Blue Light Collaboration Board (BLCB). These workstreams were managed through both Strategic and Tactical meetings, supporting improved outcomes, better value for money, reduced demand, and addressing inequalities in communities.

### Leadership Development

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

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 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 mentor. The events that ran in 2025 provided an opportunity for the attendees to be briefed on the benefits of that and indicate whether they would be willing to enter into a coaching or mentoring arrangement which received a positive response.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

A new collaborative group was formed earlier in the year, bringing together Health and Wellbeing leads from all 3 Services. The group was led by LFRS, and its goal was to understand and align the health and wellbeing offerings across Blue Light's organisations, exploring joint opportunities to support staff. It was recognised that there were a number of similarities in the challenges faced by personnel across the 3 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 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.

Fleet had now been added as part of that 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 on 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**

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. The parallel response increased the likelihood of timely intervention. Whilst that 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 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 NAWAS 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. The group were looking at opportunities for joint recruitment initiatives, exploring ways to improve the vetting and references protocol, reviewing best practice for supporting applicants with neurodiverse conditions and consider cost saving collaboration through shared recruitment events and recruitment material.

Councillor S Sidat asked whether the Fire Service would commence action without the police in a scenario where both services were requested through a 999 call. Acting Area Manager, Kirsty McCreesh advised that it would be dependent on the incident type. If it were a fire, the Service would begin immediately, however, in the event of other incidents, such as gaining entry, support may be required from the National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers (NILO) on duty to understand any risks posed to ensure the Service made informed decisions.

### **4.3 Overall User Satisfaction**

People surveyed included those who had experienced an accidental dwelling fire, a commercial fire, or a special service incident that the Service attended. The standard was achieved if the percentage of satisfied responses was greater than the standard.

Annual Standard: 97.50%

In quarter 3, 76 people had been surveyed and the number satisfied with the service was 73. The running total number of people surveyed was 4,074 with 4,016 of those people being satisfied with the Service; 98.58% against a standard of 97.50%; a variance of 1.08%.

The Chair thanked Officers for an excellent report and positive work.

County Councillor J Tetlow moved to note and endorse the Quarter 3 Measuring Progress report; seconded by Councillor S Sidat.

**Resolved:** - That the Performance Committee noted and endorsed the Quarter 3 Measuring Progress report, including two positive and one negative exception.

5-25/26

**Lithium Battery-related Fires**

The paper supported the presentation to the Committee and provided an overview of lithium battery-related Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs) in Lancashire, including scale, trends, product types, locations, casualty impact, and the implications for prevention and risk management activity.

Area Manager, Matt Hamer informed Members that the increasing prevalence of consumer products powered by lithium-ion batteries presented an emerging and distinct fire risk within domestic settings. Those products were widely used, frequently charged within living spaces, and were often associated with poor charging practices, battery degradation, or non-compliant devices. The presentation summarised Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's (LFRS) analysis of lithium battery-related ADFs using enhanced incident recording and retrospective data interrogation.

A custom incident recording question set was introduced into the Incident Recording System (IRS) in June 2023 to improve identification of lithium battery-related fires. To ensure earlier incidents were captured, keyword searches of free-text fields were also applied, recognising that many lithium-powered products were described inconsistently (e.g. vapes, e-cigarettes, electronic cigarettes). The combined approach strengthened confidence that lithium battery-related incidents were being consistently identified across the dataset.

Over the most recent three-year period, LFRS attended 93 lithium battery-related accidental dwelling fires. Incident levels had remained broadly static, averaging 31 incidents per year. During the same period, LFRS attended 2,123 accidental dwelling fires in total, meaning lithium battery-related fires accounted for 4.4% of all ADFs.

In 58% of incidents (54 fires), the product involved was recorded generically as lithium-ion batteries, reflecting limitations in the information available at incident level. Other identified product types included:

- E-Bikes,
- E-Scooters,
- E-appliance chargers,
- E-cigarette and similar devices,
- Portable electronic equipment.

This indicated risk across a wide range of consumer products, not limited to any single category.

The most common locations for fire ignition were:

- Bedrooms – 23.7% (22 incidents),
- Living rooms – 19.4% (18 incidents),
- Kitchens – 16.1% (15 incidents).

These findings demonstrated that lithium battery fires most frequently originated in occupied living and sleeping areas which increased the potential for life risk.

In terms of Geographic Distribution, the three highest incident districts together accounted for 45.2% of all lithium battery-related ADFs.

There were 13 recorded casualties from 8 incidents:

- 61.5% (8) resulted in slight injuries,
- 23.1% (3) resulted in serious injuries,
- 15.4% (2) resulted in fatalities.

Although the overall number of incidents was relatively modest, the proportion of serious injury and fatal outcomes indicated that lithium battery fires could have severe consequences, particularly when fires developed rapidly in domestic settings.

Analysis highlighted several important risk characteristics:

- Lithium battery fires were consistently occurring year-on-year rather than emerging as a short-term spike.
- Incidents predominantly occurred in habitable rooms, increasing life risk.
- A wide range of everyday consumer products were involved, many of which were used and charged without formal safety oversight.

The findings reinforced the importance of:

- Targeted public safety messaging on safe charging, storage, and disposal of lithium battery products,
- Integration of lithium battery risk into home fire safety check advice and campaigns,
- Continued improvement in data quality and incident identification,
- Ongoing monitoring to identify any future growth linked to increased uptake of electric mobility and portable devices.

Additionally, Area Manager, Matt Hamer informed Members that from a regulatory perspective, a Private Member's Bill for lithium-ion battery safety had been put forward to the House of Lords and was currently its second reading.

The Chair queried whether the source of purchase for lithium-ion batteries impacted on the number of fires. Area Manager, Matt Hamer explained that the majority of fires related to the tampering and modifying of products, over charging or incorrect charging, and charging with damaged chargers. It was acknowledged that cost was an influential factor in the type of charger purchased, however, the Service encouraged the purchase of batteries with incorporated safety features. The Service worked closely with Trading Standards, gathering evidence, to assist in closing down opportunistic, unsafe, online sellers.

In response to a question from Councillor Sidat in relation to the work of Prevention regarding lithium-ion battery fires, Area Manager, Matt Hamer explained that the Service had developed a dedicated electrical safety campaign which was informed by the annual analysis of incident data and ran prior to times when incidents were most likely to occur. The campaign in the winter period comprised of heating safety messages with the charging safety campaign delivered in October/November, in advance of the purchase of electrical gifts at Christmas. In addition to working closely with Trading Standards, the Service also promoted national campaigns such as the 'Register my Appliance' campaign. It was noted by Members that learning taken from fatal incidents had informed subsequent education packages.

The Chair requested further information on mobile phone related bedroom fires.

Area Manager, Matt Hamer highlighted that the fires were most likely to occur when batteries were damaged causing over-heating when charging which could result in thermal-runaway. High-quality products had in-built safety features and had battery-performance intelligence. Low-quality and modified products for phones posed a safety risk for a significant battery fire.

County Councillor Tetlow referenced a fatal incident where an electric scooter ignited in a lift. Area Manager, Matt Hamer stated that the ignition of batteries did occur and was a recognised hazard. Some new buildings were designed with charging points on exit routes, and the Service were influencing design practice to ensure escape routes remained clear.

In response to a query from Councillor S Sidat regarding safety provision in schools, Area Manager, Matt Hamer explained that with the increase of electronic device use within schools, a school education package had been developed for young people and also teachers, in relation to safe charging practices. During holiday periods, engagement would take place with schools to ensure safe shutdown procedures. Advice had also been requested from schools on fire risk assessments to include pupils travelling to school on e-scooters and bikes.

The Chair requested a more detailed breakdown of lithium-ion battery related accidental dwelling fires in relation to districts. Area Manager, Matt Hamer advised that data would be broken down to wards in Lower Super Output areas to identify causes of fires and target specific risk. Details of the ward and causation for the high numbers of incidents could be provided to Members.

County Councillor Aidy Riggott commented that, while the number of fires in some districts was proportionate to their population, there were instances where districts with lower populations recorded a surprisingly high number of fires. Area Manager, Phil Jones highlighted that many large districts had a high number of delivery drivers and individuals using modified e-bikes which posed safety risks, particularly whilst charging. Area Manager, Matt Hamer added that comparable district data would be provided for context.

County Councillor J Tetlow remarked that more legislation was needed to regulate e-bikes and prevent modifications. As part of the Road Safety Partnership, the Service worked with the police who were aware that electric-powered two-wheeled vehicles were a significant issue. During Operation Centurion, the police had the power to seize illegal e-bikes, many of which had been modified. Due to the speed and noise of e-bikes, there was also a link to organised crime and anti-social behaviour. The Chair asked if regulated enforcement could be adopted and penalties imposed to deter for individuals from riding e-bikes without a licence. Area Manager, Matt Hamer stated that the police have enforcement powers to seize and crush vehicles. E-bike issues were reported back to the National Fire Chiefs Council as it was a high-profile topic.

County Councillor A Riggott stated that if individuals were shown the end result of e-bikes and e-scooters that had been crushed, it could act as a deterrent. Area Manager, Matt Hamer replied that he could feed that back to the police.

County Councillor A Riggott moved to note the report and presentation; seconded

	<p>by Councillor J Tetlow.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Performance Committee noted the report and presentation.</p>
6-25/26	<p><b>Houses in Multiple Occupation</b></p>
	<p>The report supported the presentation to Performance Committee and provided an overview of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service’s (LFRS) risk-based approach to managing the risk in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), including the scale of the risk, recent fire and enforcement data, emerging pressures, and the collaborative arrangements in place with Local Housing Authorities.</p> <p>Area Manager, Matt Hamer informed Members that HMOs represented a complex area of risk due to high occupancy levels, shared facilities, and often, the vulnerability of residents. While Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) were the lead regulator for most HMOs, LFRS retained responsibility under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 for higher-risk and more complex premises, including taller buildings and mixed-use accommodation.</p> <p>Lancashire had over 68,000 regulated premises, with HMOs forming a significant and growing component of residential risk. The current three-year Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) identified 5,085 high and very high-risk premises. A fully established Protection establishment (Level 4 competent staff) provided capacity for up to 3,000 audits per year. To maintain a three-year intervention cycle, the Service aimed to complete 1,500 high-risk audits per annum, prioritising premises that presented the greatest life risk.</p> <p>A HMO was defined as a property occupied by three or more tenants forming more than one household, sharing basic facilities. Larger HMOs were those with five or more tenants. Local Housing Authorities were the lead regulator for most HMOs, including licensed and unlicensed properties. LFRS acted as the enforcing authority for higher-risk premises, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HMOs within mixed-use buildings,</li> <li>- Taller and more complex residential layouts,</li> <li>- Hostels, hotels, and accommodation managed by local authorities.</li> </ul> <p>The dual-regulatory framework required strong coordination to ensure that risk was effectively managed without duplication.</p> <p>Local authority data indicated several hundred known HMOs across Lancashire, with the majority being below three storeys, but a smaller number of 3-6 storey HMOs that presented elevated risk. Between 2021 and 2025, LFRS attended 125 primary fires in HMOs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 63% occurred in licensed HMOs,</li> <li>- 33% where licensing status was unknown,</li> <li>- 4% in known unlicensed HMOs.</li> </ul> <p>Since 2021, LFRS had undertaken significant regulatory activity within HMOs, including audits, enforcement notices, alterations, and prohibitions. Enforcement action had been used proportionately to address serious deficiencies and manage risk where compliance could not be achieved through advice or informal measures.</p>

Emerging risk pressures were:

- Rapid growth in small (3-4 person) HMOs that fell outside licensing schemes, reducing visibility and oversight.
- Increased investor ownership, often by individuals based outside the area, making engagement and compliance more challenging.
- Growing use of HMOs as supported accommodation, housing residents with increased vulnerability, which elevated life risk and complexity.

LFRS worked closely with all Lancashire Local Housing Authorities through:

- A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU),
- Selective licensing and joint initiatives targeting higher-risk HMOs and rogue landlords.
- Information sharing and coordinated enforcement activity,
- Attendance at pan-Lancashire housing leads forum,
- Continual safeguarding and signposting through prevention pathways (e.g. Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) / Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSC),
- National Leadership on Improving premises risk data, including development of improved local data systems.

County Councillor A Riggott commented that only 6 Councils in Lancashire had issued an Article 4 Directive to remove permitted development rights for HMOs and some Councils were not exercising their regulatory powers.

The Chair asked if the severity of injuries of those involved in HMO fires was recorded as she believed it would be useful campaign material and encourage Councils to issue Article 4 Directives. Area Manager, Matt Hamer confirmed that the severity was recorded as slight, serious, or fatal.

Councillor S Sidat queried whether Councils could identify some unlicensed HMOs through the Housing benefits system based on addresses with multiple claimants. Area Manager, Matt Hamer advised that the matter was left to professional judgement. Due to personal circumstances, many tenants of unlicensed premises could be claimants of multiple benefits and some opportunistic landlords use an individual's vulnerabilities to increase rent charges.

In response to a question from Councillor Sidat regarding Homes of Multiple Occupation, Area Manager, Matt Hamer explained that if the residents were from the same family (immediate or extended), it would be classed as a single private dwelling. The perspective from the Fire Service would be prevention in the home. He advised that he would check the legislation with regards to classification and the number of family members in one household as there were grey areas in housing and planning legislation, and fire safety.

In response to a question from the Chair in relation to Air BnBs, Area Manager, Matt Hamer explained that the property was classified as a single private dwelling, however, when hosting paying guests, it should be treated as a small property for paying guests in accordance with guidance. The Air BnB website advised guests to provide their own smoke detection. Nationally, Fire Services had collaborated with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and Air BnB to raise awareness of fire safety issues. It was acknowledged that once a paying guest was present, the property should fall under paying guest regulations, however, it would need to be

	<p>enforced. Following a fire in a glamping pod, the Service worked with the NFCC to shape guidance around those types of dwellings.</p> <p>County Councillor highlighted a tax break that the government had introduced for renting additional rooms in homes, which could result in a growing number of HMOs. Area Manager, Matt Hamer advised that he would investigate it outside of the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair queried the number of unlicensed properties in relation to slavery. Area Manager, Matt Hamer explained that he would liaise with the Fire Safety Manager in Blackpool as there was an organised crime response which identified victims of modern slavery.</p> <p>County Councillor J Tetlow moved to note the report and presentation; seconded by Councillor S Sidat.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Performance Committee noted the report and presentation.</p>
7-25/26	<p><b>Flooding Incident Activity</b></p>
	<p>The report as the same as that reported to the Performance Committee in December 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 have been due to surface water for example, the actual cause of the incident could 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</p>

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).

Over the last 10-year period, Lancaster district accounted for the largest number 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.

Members were provided with a breakdown of the 881 flooding incidents by district and the Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) in which the incident was located.

In response to a query from the Chair as to whether flooded subways were included in the surface water statistics, Area Manager, Phil Jones confirmed that they were. He explained that the subways were mostly in Skelmersdale and the Service sometimes pumped them when flooded and informed the local authority.

	<p>County Councillor Tetlow remarked that the country was not as proactive in response to flooding as some other countries. Area Manager, Phil Jones stated that a lot of flooding occurred in the autumn period when drains were blocked due to falling leaves which caused surface water and localised flooding. Despite financial pressures, local authorities had made improvements in the clearing of drains and gullies.</p> <p>County Councillor J Tetlow commented that new developments would add to flooding issues in the county by increasing surface water.</p> <p>The ACFO explained that the Chair of the Authority was working with Flooding Groups. Farmers were proactively undertaking natural interventions and initiatives to mitigate flooding, and that further measures were in progress, including the implementation of flood alleviation tunnels in urban areas.</p> <p>County Councillor J Tetlow moved to note the analysis of flood-related demand and the continued importance of effective planning, preparedness, and response to severe weather events impacting on communities; seconded by Councillor S Sidat.</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>
8-25/26	<p><b>Dynamic Resource Management</b></p>
	<p>The report and the attached six-month evaluation of Dynamic Resource Management (DRM) focused on its application, frequency, and effects across operational and financial areas. Also provided, was a review of the impact of DRM on response standards, availability, prevention and prevention activities, and impacts on mobilisations. Members were provided with assurance that the DRM had provided the required efficiency savings whilst maintaining excellent operational response performance within the standards set by the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) over the first six months of implementation.</p> <p>Area Manager, Tom Powell informed Members that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (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>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 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.</p> <p>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</p>

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.

Following an initial three-month evaluation, LFRS had undertaken a six-month evaluation of DRM, with the full evaluation in Appendix 1. Over the first six months (1 July – 31 December 2025), DRM had been used a total of 208 times in quarters 2 and 3 (Q2 and Q3) which represented that DRM had been enacted 14% of available shifts across the four stations.

Critical fire response times at DRM stations had improved by 8 seconds during Q1 – Q3 2025 compared with Q1 – Q3 2024, whereas response times across all LFRS stations over the same period had increased by 8 seconds. Whilst DRM could not be attributed to the improved response times, it did highlight that DRM had not had detrimental impacts on response times and public safety.

Critical special service call response times at DRM stations had increased by 30 seconds in Q1 – Q3 2025 compared with Q1 – Q3 2024, whereas response times across all LFRS stations over the same period had increased by 8 seconds. Whilst this was a higher increase than overall, response times had remained substantially under the 13-minute average response time target, and the 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 in the six months since DRM was introduced, however this had 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 1 July 2025, which was higher than the average

availability over the same period last year.

The total cost of overtime shifts across Q2 and Q3 2025 was £47,185. For the same period in 2024, the overtime bill was £596,270, this equated to a saving of £549,085. This figure included 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 as a 3.2% pay rise was awarded from July 2025.

The numbers of detachments in Q2 & Q3 2025 increased by 0.6% from 713 in 2024, to 717 in 2025. In Q2 and Q3 2025 the cost of detachments was £22,055, in 2024 the cost of detachments over the same period was £21,198 (equivalent including 2025 pay rise), representing a 4% 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 16% less Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSC) in Q2 and Q3 2025 compared with Q2 and Q3 2024, and 17% 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 (14%) and Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) numbers (16%).

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. The Service had also seen a similar drop in BFSC and HFSC at those neighbouring stations aligned to increased operational activity.

In response to a question from the Chair regarding firefighters' perception of the overtime reduction, Area Manager, Tom Powell stated that the response had been mixed. Overtime had never been guaranteed, however, there had been a significant reduction which had affected those firefighters that had frequently chosen to undertake overtime. Although there had been a shift in the level of overtime, firefighters understood the need for the Service to make efficiencies. The ACFO further advised that, from a national and HMICFRS perspective, there was an expectation that Fire and Rescue Services should utilise their resources more effectively.

County Councillor J Tetlow asked how Wholetime and On-Call crews operated within a station and whether this had been taken into account regarding the DRM and potential cost savings. Area Manager, Tom Powell explained that the data Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) was being refreshed in the current year, alongside an additional Service Review that considered emergency cover arrangements in relation to risk, demand, resources, and placement. Duty systems would also be reviewed with each presenting its own challenges.

Councillor S Sidat left the meeting at 12.03pm.

County Councillor A Riggott commented that the outcomes were excellent, though

	<p>he stressed the importance of monitoring the HFSCs and BFSCs and for the Service's and national targets to be met whilst balancing what was realistically achievable. The ACFO responded that targets to be met and measurement against those were regularly discussed, deploying staff effectively across high-risk, commercial and prevention activity. Ongoing work was taking place to develop an evidence-based approach to identifying and targeting high-risk individuals and premises to ensure that activity was based on risk rather than volume. Going forward, evidence used would align resources to identified risks with crews identifying low level risk which could be elevated to high-risk where required. The importance of meeting targets was emphasised using an evidence-based framework with updates brought back to the Committee in due course. The priority was to ensure that the right people with the right skills were deployed effectively. Area Manager, Matt Hamer added that aspirational targets aided the Service in maximising potential and reiterated the importance of the right intervention, with the right person and the right place. Operational crews helped with capacity to ensure and business fire safety, and the community safety staff focused their expertise on high-risk individuals. A paper detailing a targeted approach would be presented to Members in summer/autumn.</p> <p>County Councillor a Riggott moved to note the report and evaluation; seconded by County Councillor S Asghar.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Performance Committee noted the report and evaluation.</p>
9-25/26	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on 08 July 2026 at 1000 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.</p> <p>Further meeting dates were noted for 15 September 2026 and agreed for 09 December 2026.</p>

**M Nolan  
Clerk to CFA**

**LFRS HQ  
Fulwood**

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## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 15 December 2025

### Proceedings of Resources Committee held 25 March 2026

(Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information:

Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager - Tel: 01772 866720

#### **Executive Summary**

The proceedings of Resources Committee meeting held 25 March 2026.

#### **Recommendation(s)**

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

#### **Information**

Attached at Appendix 1 are the proceedings of the Resources Committee meeting held on 25 March 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 Resources Committee

Wednesday, 25 March 2026, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room,  
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

### Minutes

<b>Present:</b>	
<b>Councillors</b>	
A Blake	
A Ali OBE (Chair)	
G Baker	
J Fox	
Z Khan MBE	
D Smith	

<b>Officers</b>
<p>S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS)  S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)  S Pink, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)  E Sandiford, Director of People and Development (LFRS)  J Meadows, Head of Finance (LFRS)  J Hutchinson, HR Manager - Pay, Pensions and Performance (LFRS)  M Nolan, Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority  D Howell, Legal Service and Standards Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer (LFRS)  S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS)  L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)</p>

<b>In attendance</b>

31-25/26	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
	Apologies were received from County Councillors N Alderson, M Ritson, J Tetlow and Councillor S Sidat.
32-25/26	<b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests</b>
	None received.
33-25/26	<b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b>

**Resolved:** That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 26 November 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

34-25/26 **Financial Monitoring 2025-2026**

The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) advised members that this report set out the current budget position in respect of the 2025/26 revenue and capital budgets.

**Revenue Budget**

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's 2025/26 revenue budget had been set at £77.511 million. The budget profiled to the end of January 2026 was £61.604 million and expenditure for the same period was £61.403 million which was essentially breaking even.

The budget included £0.5 million of savings to be delivered through effective deployment of resources and effective management of overtime, management information showed that overtime had been avoided and therefore the service was forecasting that these savings would be met.

Overall, a small underspend was forecast of £0.184 million, which was just 0.2% of the services net budget. The year to date and forecast positions within all departmental budgets were set out in Appendix 1 of the report, with the major variances of note shown separately in table 1.

Area	Year to Date	Forecast	Reason
Service Delivery - Pay	£0.274 million	£0.359 million	The variance was largely due to two factors; the pay award of 3.2% from July 2025 was 0.2% above budgeted assumptions, and higher than budgeted activity levels for on call staff.
Prevention and Protection - Pay	(£0.316 million)	(£0.361 million)	As previously reported to the Committee vacant posts had remained throughout the year. Successful recruitment campaigns had been offset by leavers. Challenges continued to persist in recruitment and retention due to competition from the private sector.

Non devolved financial management (DFM) - Insurance Liability	£0.184 million	£0.184 million	An Employers' Liability claim relating to a historical case continued to be managed by the services insurers. During the year, costs associated with this claim had progressed to the point where the Service had become liable for the insurance excess. This had resulted in payments being made in-year in accordance with the policy terms. There would be no further costs associated with this claim for LFRS.
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Table 1 – Major variances of note

**Future Pressures**

Although not reflected in the 2026/27 budget set in February, the escalating conflict in the Middle East presented a growing financial risk. Geopolitical instability had already contributed to higher than assumed inflation, particularly in energy markets, with utility costs tracking above 6% compared to the 2% inflation assumption underpinning the budget. This sustained volatility could increase pressures on fuel, utilities, supply chain dependent non-pay budgets, and capital project costs throughout the year. Given the continued uncertainty in global markets, these factors had the potential to create additional in year pressures and would require close monitoring and potential adjustment within future financial planning cycles.

The 2026/27 budget included a 4% increase for both green and grey book pay awards. National negotiations for the 2026 pay awards were underway. For Green Book staff (effective April 2026), the recognised National Joint Council (NJC) unions had submitted a formal pay claim seeking a minimum increase of £3,000 or 10%, alongside a £15 minimum hourly rate and improvements to working time and leave. Employers had not yet tabled a counter-offer, with a response expected later in March. For Grey Book staff (effective July 2026), the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) had initiated discussions and was pressing for a substantial above-inflation increase, although no specific figures or employer proposals had yet been published. The service would continue to monitor national negotiations and update Members once formal offers were issued.

**Savings Targets**

To deliver the £0.5 million savings required for 2025/26 the Dynamic Resource Management (DRM) policy came into effect on 1 July which provided steps which could be taken prior to using overtime to fill shortfalls, including using the fifth crew member from the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) stations and redistributing the crew from second pumps at two pump wholetime stations where there was adequate fire cover in the area. The saving target had been delivered.

The Productivity and Efficiency Plan for 2025/26 included £0.572 million of savings to be delivered in 2025/26; the delivery of £0.5 million had been explained above. The balance of £0.072 million was a balance of some smaller initiatives

such as procurement savings, this would be reported through the update of progress against the plan later in the year.

### General Reserve

The General Reserve existed to cover unforeseen risks and expenditure that may be incurred outside of planned budgets. In February 2026 the Authority approved the minimum level of General Reserve as advised by the Treasurer at £4 million.

The year end forecasted general fund position is summarised below which was above the minimum level of General Reserve approved by the Authority:

	£' million
Opening balance of LFRS general fund	(5.556)
Forecast revenue underspend	(0.184)
Forecast closing balance of general fund	(£5.740)

Table 2 - year end forecasted general fund position

### Capital Budget

The revised Capital Programme for 2025/26 was approved by the Authority at £7.190 million, to date £4.371 million had been spent to the end of January. A summary of the programme was set out in the table below and in more detail in Appendix 2 of the report.

Area	Budgeted Items	Budget	Year to Date
Operational Vehicles Budget	The budget included the purchase of four Type B pumping appliance Chassis.	£0.719 million	£0.149 million
Other vehicles Budget	This budget allowed for the replacement of various operational support vehicles including several cars, vans and a welfare unit.	£1.120 million	£0.706 million
Operational Equipment Budget	This budget allowed for operational equipment purchases including Breathing Apparatus, CCTV cameras for appliances, ballistic vests and helmets, flow meters and hose reel, cutting and extrication equipment.	£1.061 million	£0.506 million
Building Modifications Budget	This budget included the continued programme of Drill Tower Replacements, upgrades to Preston and Blackpool stations.	£3.173 million	£2.460 million

IT systems Budget	This budget included various projects including upgraded Firewalls, network upgrades, Retained Duty System Alerts, North West Fire Control (NWFC) Dispatch System and replacement of each protection, pooled Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and stock management systems.	£1.117 million	£0.549 million
-	-	<b>£7.190 million</b>	<b>£4.371 million</b>

Table 3 - revised capital programme

In addition, further slippage of £0.019 million relating to ICT was requested to be transferred to the 2026/27 capital programme.

**Potential Financial Risks**

There were several potential scenarios that had not been reflected in this monitoring report that, if they materialise, may give rise to an increase in revenue and capital expenditure. To provide some information about potential significant financial risks these had been quantified to provide an estimated worst-case scenario, these were set out in Appendix 3 of the report. Taking all these risks overall and adjusted for the remainder of the year, a potential worst-case scenario would impact the Revenue Budget and Capital Budget accordingly:

£ million	Worst Case
Revenue Budget - unbudgeted costs	1.1
Capital Budget – Additional Expenditure	0.2

Table 4 – potential worst-case scenario revenue budget and capital budget

The potential worst-case scenario could be funded from available budgets but would reduce the general fund balance to below the minimum acceptable level agreed by the CFA.

Councillor D Smith praised officers for keeping within 0.2% of the budget.

In response to a question from the Chair in relation to protections for emergency services should the conflict in the Middle East lead to fuel rationing, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) explained that arrangements were in place through the Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF) to ensure that emergency services had access to fuel before the general public. He added that during previous fuel rationing, emergency services staff had been able to show their ID badges to be given priority access to fuel. He assured members that the issue was high on both internal and LRF risk registers.

In response to a question from County Councillor A Blake in relation to the service holding stores of fuel, the DCFO explained that the service had bulk fuel supplies at some stations and did carry reserves however it was important to note that fuel did expire. He added that access to fuel was not a great concern for the service at the minute however this would continue to be assessed. The Assistant Chief Fire

	<p>Officer (ACFO) added that the UK National Emergency Plan for fuel ensured that emergency services were prioritised, and the service would ensure its voice was heard by government through the LRF.</p> <p>In response to a question from Councillor D Smith in relation to electric fire engines, the ACFO confirmed that electric fire engines were used in London but were very expensive and were better for shorter distances, she suggested that hydrogen vehicles could be better options for the future. The DCFO added that the service had begun to introduce electric vehicles for its flexi duty officers which afforded significant savings for the service. Electric vehicles would continue to be introduced with the view to all flexi duty officer vehicles being electric within the next five years.</p> <p>The DCFO confirmed that a briefing note would be circulated to members in relation to the services' access to fuel.</p> <p>The report was proposed by the chair and seconded by County Councillor J Fox.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Committee;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Noted and endorsed the financial position; and</li> <li>2. Approved additional slippage in the capital programme of £0.019 million to 2026/27.</li> </ol>
35-25/26	<p><b>Social Value Report: Blackpool Fire Station</b></p>
	<p>The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) presented the report to members.</p> <p>The report outlined the Social Value outcomes delivered by Schofield and Sons Limited as part of the Blackpool Fire Station (Forest Gate) project. The Blackpool Fire Station project involved a full redevelopment and modernisation of the station to ensure the facilities met current and future operational requirements. The scheme included significant refurbishment of the existing building, upgrades to operational spaces, improvements to welfare and training areas, and general estate enhancements to create a safer, more efficient and fit for purpose working environment for firefighters and support staff. The capital works were designed to extend the life of the asset, improve functionality, and ensure the station could continue to support effective emergency response within the Blackpool area.</p> <p><b>Social Value Background</b></p> <p>As part of the Authority's procurement processes, major contracts included Social Value commitments to ensure that service investment delivered wider benefits for the communities LFRS served. This approach reflected the requirements of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, which placed a duty on public bodies to consider how the goods, services or works they buy could also improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the area.</p> <p>In practice, this meant that when the service awarded contracts, it did not focus solely on cost or technical quality. LFRS also considered how the supplier could contribute to wider outcomes; for example by supporting local jobs and skills, offering work experience or training opportunities, using local supply chains, or delivering community projects that added value beyond the core construction</p>

works.

These Social Value requirements were therefore built into the services procurement activity from the outset, forming part of the evaluation, the contract, and the monitoring arrangements. The Social Value Report had been completed to demonstrate how these commitments had been delivered in line with the Authority's expectations.

**Overview of the Project and Delivery**

The Blackpool Forest Gate Fire Station project generated a wide range of Social Value activities. These included:

- Extensive engagement with young people, including work experience placements, mock interviews, careers talks and not in education, employment or training (NEET) support programmes delivered in partnership with The King's Trust and local colleges. Activities helped participants develop skills, confidence and insight into career pathways.
- Support for education and skills, including long-term T-Level and Architecture student placements, contributions to "Women in Construction" events, and collaboration with Preston and Fylde Colleges.
- Community enhancement projects, such as material donations and practical help for local school and community projects, refurbishment works (including courtyard improvements and restoration of a heritage station plaque), and seasonal donations to support local outreach.
- Strong local supply-chain spend, significantly surpassing targets through the award of additional work packages to regional businesses, supporting local employment and the local economy.
- Commitment to Fair Payment, Living Wage, and wider responsible contractor practices implemented throughout the supply chain.

The contractor exceeded the overall Social Value target of £255,950.57 by £158,951.36, delivering a total of £414,901.93 in recorded social and economic benefit. This reflected substantial additional investment in local suppliers, high-impact educational and employability activities, and tangible improvements within the local community.

**Resolved:** That the Committee noted the contents of the report.

36-25/26

**Pensions Update**

The Director of People and Development (DoPD) and HR Manager – Pay, Pensions and Performance presented the report to members which provided oversight and the latest information on pension issues in respect of uniformed officers of the Fire Service.

**Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure (IDRP) – Stage 2**

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) had several cases that had

previously progressed through both stages of the IDR process. These related to the payment of pensionable allowances within LFRS. Some members remained dissatisfied, particularly regarding the limitation of backdated allowances to six years or the classification of allowances as non-pensionable when applied to temporary roles. The Pensions Ombudsman had contacted the Service regarding these cases. While LFRS had provided the relevant information, no formal outcomes had been received to date.

A further IDR application had recently been submitted for consideration by the Committee. This was related to the Age Discrimination Remedy (McCloud/Sargeant).

### **Firefighter's Pension Scheme Member Contribution Structure Consultation**

During 2024/25 the government conducted a consultation on proposed amendments to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) Regulations 2014.

The objectives of the consultation were to:

- achieve the target yield of 13.2% of pensionable pay over 1 October 2025 to 31 March 2027, and future valuation periods.
- update the member contribution structure to encourage scheme participation and reduce opt-outs.
- ensure the member contribution structure was administratively sustainable.
- ensure due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

On 8 December 2025, the outcome was published confirming that, with effect from 1 April 2026, the contribution structure would be amended as follows:

- An additional band would be introduced, increasing the bands from four to five.
- Contributions would be based on Actual Pay rather than Wholetime Equivalent (WTE) pay. This would be a change for part-time and on-call firefighters, whose banding would now be based on their actual pay instead of the WTE for their role.
- From April 2027 the bandings would be increased each April in line by consumer price index (CPI) to allow for futureproofing.

This change affected all employees who were members of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015, resulting in either an increase or decrease in employee contributions. This change had been communicated to employees.

FRA's were expected to have an appropriate policy in place to determine employee contribution bandings.

### **Information Consultation on the Firefighters' Compensation Scheme for injury and death**

The Local Government Association (LGA) launched an informal consultation on 6 March 2026 relating to the Firefighters' Compensation Scheme (FCS). The FCS provided compensation for injury and death, in the form of an injury pension or gratuity for firefighters who were permanently disabled or died as a result of an injury received in the exercise of their duties. The consultation formed part of an initial review commissioned by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to ensure the scheme remained fair, effective and reflective of the modern firefighting role. The information consultation period

ended on 14 April 2026.

### **Age Discrimination Remedy (McCloud/Sargeant)**

In 2015, the government introduced new laws which resulted in a new pension scheme for firefighters - the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 (FPS 2015). These laws included protections which meant that some members of the existing schemes (FPS 1992 and FPS 2006) didn't join FPS 2015 either straight away or at all, depending on their age. Following a legal challenge known as McCloud/Sargeant, the courts determined that the protections given to members were age discriminatory.

From 1 April 2022 all existing employees who were members of the pension scheme were moved to the reformed scheme, FPS 2015. The service was currently implementing retrospective remedy, providing eligible members with a choice to receive legacy pension benefits (FPS 1992 or FPS 2006) or reformed pension benefits (FPS 2015) for the period of discrimination (01.04.2015 – 31.03.2022).

The implementation of retrospection involved a statutory requirement to issue a Remediable Service Statement (RSS) to all members affected by age discrimination by 31 March 2025. This was a requirement for all public service pension schemes and had been a challenge across the sector. The table below showed the breakdown of the RSSs issued and the numbers outstanding which had been updated since the agenda reports had been published.

	<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>Number Issued</b>	<b>Not Issued</b>
<b>Pensioners (including ill-health cases)</b>	357	308	49
<b>Pensioners (Beneficiaries of deceased members)</b>	12	0	12
<b>Actives</b>	328	301	27
<b>Deferred</b>	181	157	24
	<b>878</b>	<b>766 (87.25%)</b>	<b>112</b>

The delay in issuing RSSs was due to a range of factors, including the delay in the issue of final government guidance, data processing challenges, software defects and the need to enact the Part-Time Workers remedy (Matthews) before progressing with McCloud related options.

The Pension Scheme Manager reported a breach to The Pensions Regulator (TPR) in relation to cases where guidance was available, but the Local Pensions Partnership Administration (LPPA) failed to issue an RSS. As part of this breach, an action plan was developed with LPPA to ensure the issue of the outstanding RSSs. The remainder of the RSSs were expected to be issued by 31 March 2026, with the beneficiary calculations being issued by 30 June 2026.

LPPA continue to prioritise the issue of RSSs but had reported a risk in relation to 54 of the 80 outstanding Immediate Choice (IC)-RSSs. 31 of these cases had an interaction with the Matthews part-time remedy, LPPA were currently experiencing production issues and were working with their software suppliers to resolve this

issue. LPPA had informed LFRS that these IC-RSSs would not be issued by the 31 March 2026 deadline. A further 23 cases were at risk of not being issued, most of these cases related to data validation errors. LPPA would make every effort to issues these cases by 31 March 2026 and were prioritising unprotected and taper protected members, but these cases were complex to resolve and required specialised resource requirement from LPPA. The Scheme Manager had provided an update to The Pensions Regulator in relation to this breach and would provide a further update following the 31 March 2026 deadline.

73 IC members had opted for alternative pension benefits. LPPA commenced the payment of retrospective pensions in October 2025, and 59 members had had their pension adjusted as at the end of February 2026. LPPA continued to process payments for the remaining 14 pensioners.

A number of IC members had yet to make their election. The 12-month deadline for many of these members was approaching at the end of March 2026. If these members failed to decide by the 12-month deadline, a deemed election would be made by the Scheme Manager, this decision was irrevocable. LPPA and LFRS were making efforts to contact these members, particularly the tapered or unprotected members ahead of the deadline date.

The Service acknowledged the concerns of affected former firefighters and was actively working with LPPA to ensure the remaining IC-RSS statements were issued to members by 31 March 2026 and to bereavement cases by June 2026.

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

The failure to issue RSSs had applied across all Fire Authorities in respect of the Firefighter pension schemes. Indications across the public sector pension schemes and the fire sector suggested that LPPA remained ahead of the position nationally in terms of the implementation of remedy.

### **Contingent Decisions**

The firefighter remedy regulations provided for some decisions made by members during the remedy period to be revisited. This included decisions to opt out of the pension scheme and whether a firefighter would have purchased additional years in their legacy scheme had they been allowed to remain in it.

LFRS had received 16 contingent decisions opt-out claims, which had been accepted by the Pension Scheme Manager. 11 of the 16 contingent decisions were from members purchasing service under the Part-Time Workers remedy (Matthews 2). A contingent decision was a decision taken by a member who may have taken a different decision if there had been no changes to the pension scheme. These individuals were due to be issued with a Contingent Decision Remediable Service Statement (CD-RSS) so that they could decide whether to make an election to opt back into their legacy scheme for the remedy period. These were yet to be issued as the Contingent Decision guidance from the Local Government Association (LGA) had been withdrawn. Questions raised by the LGA, trade unions and employers in relation to the contingent decision provisions in remedy legislation were yet to be resolved. The Home Office had taken legal

advice to provide clarity over which pension schemes were available for individuals to opt back into.

Further guidance from the LGA to scheme managers was published in September 2025. This guidance allowed for members who opted out of the FPS 2006, or where an FPS 1992 member opted out during remedy period and did not rejoin during the remedy period to be processed. All other types of cases remained on hold pending further guidance.

### **Part Time Workers (Matthews 2) Remedy**

The Matthews remedy for part-time workers involved a series of steps to ensure that On Call firefighters could access pension schemes.

The Service had identified over 600 existing and former employees who were eligible to express an interest in joining or purchasing additional pension under the Modified Pension Scheme. Reasonable endeavours had been made to contact all eligible individuals, including multiple follow-up letters and the use of a tracing service. These efforts were on-going.

To date, 420 individuals had expressed an interest, and 355 calculations/options packs had been issued. The calculations could be complicated and, occasionally requiring data going back as far as the 1960's and 1970's. So far, 259 individuals had elected to join or purchase additional pension.

LPPA had implemented a process to facilitate backdated pensions to Special Pensioner Members. These were On Call firefighters who were employed between 7 April 2000 and 5 April 2006. They were eligible to join the Firefighters Pension Scheme 2006 with retrospective membership to the start date of their employment, which for a small number of these cases dated back as far as the late 1960's. Payments began in March 2025, with 106 individuals having received backdated lump sum and pension payments to date.

The historical nature of these claims, including reverting back to the individuals original 'date entered service', posed difficulties in respect of service progression and payroll information. Issues over tax treatment had also not been resolved.

As a result of the difficulties and issues that had arisen, the Government had undertaken a consultation. This consultation considered making changes to the original legislation including extending the deadline. The outcome of the consultation was published on 4 December 2025; it was expected that the legislation would come into effect no later than 1 April 2026. It was anticipated that the legislation would include a 12-month period from the date of publication in which fire authorities and pension administrators must fully implement the legislation and resolve outstanding cases.

The proposed amendments related to deceased members, the payment of additional death grants and conversion options. The fire authority would need to review cases from both the first and second options exercises.

An area that remained of some concern was no mechanism had been finalised to deal with aggregation. This was where an on-call employee subsequently

achieved a wholetime role and would wish to combine both pension scheme benefits. Unless an agreement was reached by the government and Fire Brigades Union (FBU), the issue of disqualifying breaks in service would need to be addressed through the legal process in 2026 before aggregation would be dealt with in 2027. The Authority had agreed to the LGA proposal to jointly participate with other Fire Authorities in cost sharing in respect of any legal costs. The three case types to be resolved were:

- Retained duty system (RDS) firefighters who, without a break in service, changed to become whole-time firefighters at some stage between 7 April 2000 and 6 April 2006, and who joined the FPS 1992 in respect of their wholetime service.
- RDS firefighters who, without a break in service, changed to become wholetime firefighters on or after 6 April 2006, and who joined the FPS 2006 Standard scheme in respect of their wholetime service.
- Firefighters with concurrent retained and wholetime service.

The national Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) had written to HMRC to highlight their concerns that no 'spreading mechanism' had been put in place for members affected by the Matthews remedy receiving pension backpay, over a number of years, taking them into a higher tax bracket. A spreading mechanism had been put in place for employees affected by the McCloud/Sergeant Age Discrimination remedy.

In addition, the SAB were engaged with MHCLG in relation to a compensation framework, to assist employees and former employees with tax advice and the potential costs of reopening an estate for a deceased member.

### **Resources**

In addition to the LFRS resources, the LPPA had increased their resource to deal with this workload. Both sections were working extensively on age discrimination and part-time workers remedy in addition to the business-as-usual workloads.

It was likely that the government would extend the deadline for completion of the Part-Time Workers (Matthews 2) exercise to March 2027; this would allow for LFRS to complete existing workloads and any required changes as a result of the legislative changes.

The challenge of implementing two significant, complex pieces of pension legislation, affecting large numbers of individuals concurrently was not to be under-estimated.

To create capacity sufficient for the implementation of the above two projects, the Temporary Pensions Coordinator role was filled on a casual basis and the postholder was predominantly supporting the administration of the Part Time Workers (Matthews 2) exercise. This temporary post continued until 31.03.2026.

### **Dashboards**

The Pensions Dashboard Programme continued to publish regular updates and newsletters in the lead-up to the pension schemes beginning their connections in April 2025. The connection date for public sector pension schemes into the central

	<p>digital architecture was 31 October 2025. LPPA's completed connection of schemes to the dashboard's infrastructure by 15 December 2025.</p> <p>Following this connection, the government would issue LPPA with a Dashboard Available Point (DAP). This was the date when the pension dashboard would become publicly available. This date was set by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and would provide a minimum of six months' advance notice. In preparation for this date, LPPA would continue to cleanse member records, verifying data calculations and ensuring matching criteria were correct.</p> <p>The Pension dashboard Programme (PDP) had published an updated draft of its reporting standards and opened a consultation on the changes. The update explained how pension schemes and providers would need to send daily reporting data to Money and Pension Service (MaPS) using a software interface, but it did not change what data must be collected or reported. The proposed deadline to implement the new standards was 30 November 2026, and the consultation was open until 25 March 2026. LPPA's Dashboards Working Group intended to respond to this consultation.</p> <p>Councillor D Smith remarked that this was a complex and challenging subject and thanked officers for explaining the content of the report well.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the committee noted the report and its implications for pension administration and member communication.</p>
37-25/26	<p><b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b></p>
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on <b>Monday 29 June 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 30 September 2026 and 25 November 2026.</p>
38-25/26	<p><b>Exclusion of Press and Public</b></p>
	<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>
39-25/26	<p><b>Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure (IDRP) - Stage 2</b></p>
	<p>(Paragraph 1)</p> <p>Members considered a report regarding an IDRP Stage 2 application under the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure. The report outlined the facts of the case.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That members approved a response to the applicant in line with the narrative included within the report, noting that the Committee did not have</p>

	jurisdiction to make decisions that were incompatible with prevailing legislation.
40-25/26	<b>High Value Procurement Projects</b>
	<p>(Paragraph 3)</p> <p>Members considered a report that provided an update on contracts valued above £175,000.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Committee noted and endorsed the report.</p> <p>Councillor D Smith noted that it was the Clerk and Monitoring Officer's final committee meeting, members expressed their thanks and well wishes to the Clerk for his ten years' service.</p>

**M Nolan**  
**Clerk to CFA**

**LFRS HQ**  
**Fulwood**

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 23 February 2026

### Proceedings of Audit Committee held 26 March 2026

(Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information:

Sam Hunter, Member Services Manager - Tel: 01772 866720

#### **Executive Summary**

The proceedings of Audit Committee meeting held 26 March 2026.

#### **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 26 March 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 Audit Committee

Thursday, 26 March 2026, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room,  
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

### Minutes

<b>Present:</b>	
<b>Councillors</b>	
J Ash	
M Clifford (Chair)	
J Hugo (Vice-Chair)	
<b>Officers</b>	
S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS) J Meadows, Head of Finance (LFRS) A Latham, Financial Accountant (LFRS) D Howell, Monitoring Officer (LFRS) S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)	
<b>In attendance</b>	
L Luddington, External Audit, Grant Thornton C Wallace, External Audit, Grant Thornton A Dalecki, Internal Audit, Lancashire County Council L Rix, Internal Audit, Lancashire County Council Oldendorp, Internal Audit, Lancashire County Council	
25-25/26	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
	Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors S Asghar, P Buckley, L Hutchinson, and R Walsh.
26-25/26	<b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests</b>
	None received.
27-25/26	<b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b>
	<b>Resolved:</b> - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 11 December 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

	<p>The minutes were proposed by County Councillor J Ash, and seconded by County Councillor J Hugo.</p>
<p>28-25/26</p>	<p><b>External Audit - Auditors Plan 2025-26</b></p>
	<p>Liz Luddington, Key Audit Partner, and Curtis Wallace, Public Sector Audit Manager presented the Audit Plan 2025/26.</p> <p>It was noted that the external auditors were required to produce an annual audit plan, setting out the areas intended for review during the year.</p> <p>Members considered the Audit Plan which included key matters that impacted on the audit, details of significant risks identified and the key aspects of proposed response to the risk, other matters, progress against prior year recommendations, Grant Thornton's approach to materiality, IT audit strategy, value for money arrangements, audit logistics and team, audit fees, independence and non-audit services, and communication of audit matters with those charged with governance.</p> <p>The proposed audit fee was £105.938k (last year's fee was £106.053k).</p> <p>The report identified significant risk areas were i) Management of override of controls, ii) The revenue cycle includes fraudulent transactions, iii) The expenditure cycle includes fraudulent transactions, iv) Valuation of land and buildings, and vi) valuation of the pension fund net liability.</p> <p>Liz Luddington explained that the Audit would commence earlier this year with a date for completion of the Audit in November 2026, in time for the January deadline.</p> <p>The Chair asked if there were any indications that fees would increase. Curtis Wallace advised that the fees were set and there were no risks that would indicate that fees would be increased. The only reason for an increase in fees would be if an unplanned area of work were needed which was above normal procedures.</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) asked for clarification on the potential outcome of a failure to meet the backstop date of 30 November. Liz Luddington confirmed that in the worst-case scenario, a qualified opinion could be issued due to insufficient time to gather all evidence required. An exception form would allow the failure of meeting the deadline without being officially non-compliant. Following a disclaimed opinion, sample sizes would increase in the following year. It was difficult to gain assurance 'build back' and it would usually take a 2-3 year cycle to complete the extra work.</p> <p>In response to a query from the DoCS regarding Grant Thornton's capacity to complete the audit, Liz Luddington advised that this year had been a trial run and there was a focus on delivery in the firm. The Audit would commence earlier and there was a pooling of teams where departments would be paired with one manager across both. The work would be continuous with no audit running alone. Work to meet the deadline would commence as soon as the ledger closed.</p>

	<p>Councillor J Hugo asked if the Fire Authority was on track to meet the deadline. Liz Luddington confirmed that they had met the deadline for the current year so by starting the audit earlier, there should be no issue. Curtis Wallace added that interim testing had taken place on the sample selection,</p> <p>Councillor J Hugo moved to note the report and presentation; seconded by County Councillor J Ash.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Audit Committee agreed the external audit plan for 2025/26.</p>										
29-25/26	<b>Internal Audit Plan 2026-27</b>										
	<p>The Internal Auditors were required to produce an Annual Audit Plan, which set out areas they intended to review during the year. The plan amounted to a total resource of 70 audit days in 2026/27 which equated to an overall cost of £30,531 (the daily rate for auditors would be £418 and audit managers £495), which was consistent with previous years.</p> <p>A proposed plan was presented by Laura Rix, Senior Auditor.</p> <p>The Internal Audit annual plan was a critical tool for ensuring that Internal Audit effectively supported the organisation’s objectives. By adhering to the new Global Internal Audit Standards, the plan ensured a risk-based, strategically aligned approach that enhanced governance, risk management, and control processes. Internal Audit focus should be proportionate and appropriately aligned.</p> <p>The plan would remain fluid and subject to ongoing review and amendment in consultation with senior management within the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, to ensure it continued to reflect the organisation’s needs and risks. Any significant amendments to the plan would be reported to the Audit Committee.</p> <p>The deployment of audit resources was proposed as follows: -</p> <table data-bbox="288 1361 1177 1585"> <tr> <td>Governance and business effectiveness</td> <td>5 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Service delivery and support</td> <td>24 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Business Processes</td> <td>24 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other components of the audit plan</td> <td>17 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td><b>70 days</b></td> </tr> </table> <p>The Chair commented that a Constitution Working Group had been created with Terms Of References (TORs) being reviewed as per page 47 of the agenda pack. He noted that 5 days had been allocated for governance, and he asked for further information. Sarah Oldendorp, Audit Manager, explained that a discussion had taken place with the Chair and Vice-Chair regarding the TORs to enable joint working with Members. Days allocated could be adjusted where required.</p> <p>In response to a question from the Chair as to whether 70 audit days would be sufficient, Sarah Oldendorp advised that the number of days was based on the previous year and she was confident that Key Financial Systems could be completed on reduced days which allowed 2 additional days for health and</p>	Governance and business effectiveness	5 days	Service delivery and support	24 days	Business Processes	24 days	Other components of the audit plan	17 days	<b>Total</b>	<b>70 days</b>
Governance and business effectiveness	5 days										
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<b>Total</b>	<b>70 days</b>										

	<p>wellbeing, and contaminants. Andrew Dalecki, Head of Internal Audit, stated that he was confident, for the size of the organisation, that the number of days was appropriate, however, this could be flexible if required.</p> <p>County Councillor J Ash asked why the number of days for contaminants had increased to 2. Sarah Oldendorp explained that some audits had gone over the number of days in that area, so they had increased the number of days.</p> <p>The Chair asked and Laura Rix confirmed that there was a positive relationship with Officers in the Service and there had been no challenges.</p> <p>County Councillor J Ash moved to agree the Internal Audit Plan for 2026/27; seconded by Councillor J Hugo.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Audit Committee agreed the Internal Audit Plan for 2026/27.</p>
30-25/26	<p><b>External Audit - Progress with External Audit Recommendations</b></p>
	<p>The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) presented the External Auditor's Progress with the Recommendations in the Auditor's Annual Report Year ending 31 March 2025.</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 Committee received the Auditor's Annual Report on 11 December 2025. The report brought together a summary of all the work the auditors had undertaken for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service during 2024/25. The core element of the report was the commentary on the Value For Money (VFM) arrangements. The report included an assessment of three criteria: Financial Sustainability, Governance and Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. No significant weaknesses or improvement recommendations were made in relation to Financial Sustainability or Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness, and two improvement recommendations were made in relation to Governance. The recommendations were set out in Appendix 1 in the agenda pack.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Committee noted the progress made.</p>
31-25/26	<p><b>Internal Audit Monitoring Report Quarter 4</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 ended 11 March 2026 was presented by Laura Rix, Senior Auditor.</p> <p>To date, 60 days had been spent this financial year on completion of the 2025/26 plan, equating to 86% of the total planned audit activity of 70 days. The table in the report showed the current status of all audit work.</p>

	<p>The Chair queried the 2 day allocation for Cyber Security given its complexity. Laura Rix stated that a full audit was not needed as follow-up activities were light touch.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Committee noted the report.</p>
32-25/26	<p><b>Risk Management</b></p>
	<p>The Director of Corporate Services presented the report to Members.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The Corporate Risk Matrix and summary register included at Appendix A of the agenda pack reflected a stable overall risk position, with some movement during the reporting period. Notably, the loss of funding risk (2a) had reduced following increased funding certainty and was no longer within the priority reduction zone. As a result, retention and recruitment of on-call staff and the replacement of the existing mobilising system remained the most significant areas of organisational exposure.</p> <p>The Service continued to monitor internal, national, and geopolitical developments that could impact risk exposure or service delivery, with any material changes incorporated into the Corporate Risk Register through established processes.</p> <p>Members noted that the top two risks identified in the risk register were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of staff due to industrial action</li> <li>• Failing Pager messages</li> </ul> <p>The three decreased risks were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete removal of the Day Crew Plus (DCP) duty system</li> <li>• Major lack of effective Management of personal data</li> <li>• Loss of funding</li> </ul> <p>Overall, the risk landscape remained consistent and well-controlled, with targeted adjustments reflecting operational change, sector context, and maturing mitigation rather than new or escalating threats.</p> <p>Following the internal audit of the Service's risk management framework, which provided a reasonable level of assurance, work was ongoing to address the three agreed areas of development: training, risk register consistency, and reporting. Progress to date had focused on identifying the most effective and proportionate approach to risk management training for risk owners and members, alongside improving consistency in action setting, review, and reporting across risk registers. This included alignment with emerging national approaches within the fire sector to support standardisation and continued maturity.</p>

	<p>Implementation remained on track, with delivery of improvements forming part of the Service’s wider risk maturity trajectory towards April 2026. As part of the next review cycle, the Service would also look to further align its approach with HM Treasury’s Orange Book: Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts, ensuring continued alignment with recognised best practice.</p> <p>Councillor J Hugo commented that she was pleased that the ongoing conflict in the Middle East was being monitored and was recognised as a risk due to fuel availability and organisational resilience.</p> <p>The Chair acknowledged that rising fuel prices would have an impact on the budget. The DoCS explained that the Service had a general reserve of £6m which was available to help with any financial pressures which were not accounted for in the budget.</p> <p>In response to a query from County Councillor J Ash regarding the ‘Failing Pager Messages’ risk and whether the pager referred to an app, the DoCS stated that pagers were a mixture of physical pagers moving towards apps. The increase in the ‘Failing Pager Messages’ risk reflected a temporary rise in likelihood during the transition to new mobilisation arrangements.</p> <p>The DoCS advised Members that he would invite the Digital, Data and Technology (DDAT) team to the next meeting to provide an update on pagers and the technology used.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Committee: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Endorsed the Service’s risk management arrangements: and</li> <li>ii) Noted the latest position reflected in the Corporate Risk Matrix and Register.</li> </ul>
33-25/26	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on 30 June 2026 at 10:00 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.</p> <p>Further meeting dates were noted for 01 October 2026 and agreed for 15 December 2026.</p>

**M Nolan**  
**Clerk to CFA**

**LFRS HQ**  
**Fulwood**

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 27 April 2026

### Member Champion Activity Report and Member Feedback

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 26 April 2026.

Members are invited to provide any feedback they may have for the period up to 27 April 2026.

#### **Recommendation(s)**

The Authority is requested to note and endorse the report of the respective Member Champions and share any feedback received in relation to associated Service activities.

#### **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 & Climate Change – 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**

From February to early April, our Community Fire Safety (CFS) teams have been actively delivering key prevention and engagement activities across Lancashire. These initiatives focused on protecting vulnerable residents, strengthening community relations, and supporting partner agencies.

A major highlight was our Eid al-Fitr safety campaign, which promoted safe cooking practices in student halls of residence. With a growing number of students from the Indian Subcontinent, we targeted halls with a history of cooking-related fires. Our team engaged with students and wardens, ensuring that crucial fire safety messages were shared. Linked to this we did not attend any cooking-related incidents during the Eid al-Fitr festivities.

Additionally, a targeted safety talk was delivered to communities supported by the Salvation Army, focusing on safety during Ramadan. The presentation emphasised fire risks in the kitchen, particularly related to clothing and cooking distractions.

We are also pleased to announce our successful application for funding from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's £7.5 million Uniformed Youth Fund. The National Fire Chiefs Council secured a total of £532,233.40, and we were awarded a bursary of £3000 to replace outdated equipment in our Fire Cadet units. This funding has enabled us to purchase essential tools, such as dividing breeches and a standpipe key and bar set, ensuring practical training for our fire cadets can continue without interruption, even if a fire engine is unavailable.

In March, we launched the CareSafe Fire Safety Scheme, aimed at improving fire safety in the homes of individuals at higher risk. The scheme provides free training to care providers, ensuring fire safety remains a priority in their work with vulnerable individuals. A launch event on 18 March brought together representatives from 18 care providers and Blackburn with Darwen Social Services to discuss key topics, such as hoarding, clutter, and fire risks. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many agencies planning to share the learning with their teams. To date, 20 providers have signed up, and the scheme will be evaluated after 12-months, with plans for a wider rollout.



Furthermore, our CFS team attended training delivered by Lancashire Carers Service, which focused on identifying carers, understanding what support is available, and how we as a Fire and Rescue Service can best refer individuals for further assistance through the Carers Service.

Our CFS team also participated in the second annual Blackpool Careers Fair. This event has already become the largest of its kind in the area, bringing together a wide range of local employers and providing numerous opportunities for attendees.

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – County Councillor Salim Sidat**

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) continues to deliver targeted community engagement, prevention activity and organisational improvements aligned to safety, inclusion and accessibility priorities.

Social media activity continues to align safety messaging with religious, cultural and national awareness events, including Ramadan, Diwali and Neurodiversity Week,

supported by toolkits provided to local stations and partners to ensure consistent, timely messaging.

During Ramadan, LFRS reinforces fire safety advice linked to fasting and increased cooking activity and continues to support staff observing Ramadan through flexible and considerable arrangements. A data-led cooking safety campaign used Mosaic insight to identify higher-risk groups, resulting in new targeted materials for social and sheltered housing and advertising on bus routes serving affected areas.

Community engagement supported the 2026-27 Council Tax and Shaping Our Services for the Future consultations through digital promotion, printed materials, stakeholder communications and targeted social media advertising. The targeted advert reached over 64,000 people and generated more than 2,800 survey responses, helping amplify voices from higher-risk communities.

The Service attended the Lancashire Faith Forum, where interest was expressed in LFRS signing the Faith Covenant, which would represent a national first for the fire sector. Engagement with faith communities has also included a staff visit to the new mosque in Blackburn and ongoing fire safety talks to community groups which focus on evacuation awareness and safety.

Prevention activity continues to evolve, with flexible fire safety packages delivered to home-educated children and a review of rural fire safety materials underway, focusing on wildfire risk and rural workplaces. Targeted fire safety interventions have also supported responsible persons from ethnic minority communities through bespoke materials and tailored engagement.

Internally, work continues to strengthen equality, inclusion and accessibility. An 'On the Menu' session supported understanding of Equality Impact Assessments, and from April 2026 an Equality Progress Update Report will be presented at each Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Culture Board (EDICB) meeting to strengthen oversight. Positive progress has been made through Employee Voice Groups, including enhancements to Transition at Work arrangements, improved engagement with On-Call staff, and exploration of improved Chaplaincy provision.

Significant digital and accessibility improvements have been delivered, including the rollout of CoPilot Chat across the Service, updated procurement standards requiring Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) compliance, accessible corporate templates, and the availability of Read and Write assistive software for all staff. Accessibility training and usability reviews continue to ensure inclusive digital design is embedded across systems.

A new Exit Interview online form is currently in development, with the aim of launching the revised process in April 2026, subject to approval and testing.

These activities demonstrate LFRS's ongoing commitment to inclusive engagement, effective prevention and continuous improvement. By working closely with communities and strengthening internal accessibility and governance, the Service continues to build trust and improve safety outcomes across Lancashire.

## **Health and Wellbeing & Climate Change – County Councillor Sohail Asghar**

### **Climate Change and Environment**

Service-wide recycling figures have shown a significant improvement, increasing from 30% to 40% over the past 12 months. Our waste contractor, Suez, has advised that such an improvement within a single year is unusual and has highlighted LFRS as one of the leading organisations they work with in terms of recycling performance.

A competition has been launched across LFRS to identify which station can collect the highest number of clothing donations over a one-month period. Donations will be collected via Fire Fighters Charity textile recycling banks, which are located at 22 LFRS stations. The competition aims to encourage colleagues to donate and recirculate items rather than contributing to a throwaway culture, while also raising vital funds for the Fire Fighters Charity. All Fire Fighter Charity textile banks will be emptied at the end of March to allow all stations to start from the same benchmark.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

Ninety-nine per cent of Grey Book (operational and functional) staff have now completed their annual fitness assessment, representing a significant 25% improvement compared with last year. The remaining 1% are colleagues who are currently on long-term sickness absence. The Fitness function is supporting the 2026/27 training calendar by scheduling fitness assessments to ensure all Grey Book staff complete an assessment within the next 12-month period.

The Firelight Project is a bespoke eight-week programme developed by Cuerden Valley Park Trust in collaboration with LFRS, Lancashire Police and North West Ambulance Service (NWAS). The project aims to establish a mental health and wellbeing hub within Cuerden Valley Park to support those serving in Blue Light and associated services. The programme delivers a range of experience-led conservation activities through regular weekly sessions in the park. The initiative was conceived by Andy Seddon, a former member of Greater Manchester Police. Andy experienced significant mental health challenges and, following a period of homelessness, sadly passed away in December 2024, despite the support of his family and friends. His commitment to helping others facing similar difficulties inspired the development of the Firelight Project.

In March, LFRS had the privilege of taking part in the inaugural Experience Day, with the pilot programme due to go live on 29 April 2026. A selection of photographs from the Experience Day is included below. Progress with the programme will be shared through future update reports.



### **Road Safety – County Councillor Jordan Fox**

Education sessions delivered in the last quarter:

Road Sense (yr 6): 157 sessions, 5188 pupils

Biker Down: 6 Sessions, 92 attendees

Wasted Lives (yr 10/ 11): 28 sessions, 3099 pupils

January to April is a quiet period for events due to the weather, however lots of meaningful work has still taken place. A project to deliver an adapted Wasted Lives session to Young Farmers groups including the Crashed Car was continued following its launch in December. This work was prompted by staff from On Call Fire Stations noting they were concerned about some of the young driver behaviour in tractors. This was also notable in the KSI statistics. An offer was shared with Young Farmer Groups, and four sessions have now been delivered. The groups were all well attended – some had over 40 young people and the feedback from all of the sessions was overwhelmingly positive. We will continue to reach out to other groups across the county and expand this project. A case study was presented in the session where a young farmer was prosecuted in Preston, this is an incident most of the young people were aware of, so it highlighted the importance of Road Safety within their community.

Biker Down has had a busy quarter with courses being delivered and filming taking place for TikTok in preparation for the biking season starting at Easter. Short clips will be posted throughout April encouraging Bikers to book on a course along with sharing key safety messages around ensuring their bike and personal protective equipment (PPE) are in good shape and road worthy. This year's clips are shorter and hopefully more catchy, appealing to a wider audience. Utilising the CFA Road Safety Champion budget, we were able to purchase 360 First Aid kits for the next 12 months courses. We also had A5 flyers and business cards printed with QR codes which take the user to the LFRS website to book a course.

Wasted Lives sessions have been delivered to both Police and Air Cadet groups, all were well attended sessions and feedback was really positive. Cadet groups allow us to deliver longer more interactive sessions than those in schools due to timetable constraints. We have also found some of the young people who attend cadets are home educated and would otherwise have missed out on this delivery, as both these

cadet groups range from 13-18 years. We also engage with many learner and new drivers within this cohort. The offer will continue to go out to these groups to increase the number of sessions delivered.

We are currently working with Lancashire Constabulary on a project that will provide a new experience with a new crashed car. Whilst this is in the early stages, we have secured permission from the family via the Family Liaison Officer and we are now looking at a suitable trailer to transport the car. More details will be shared in due course.

### **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 27 April 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 16 February 2026.

#### Prosecutions in the Court system

Five cases currently sit within the court system.

The responsible person and company for two houses in multiple occupation, in Bacup and Darwen pleaded guilty to breaches of the Fire Safety Order on 13 August 2025 at Preston Magistrates Court. The original sentencing hearing Court date was adjourned on 7 January 2026, with sentencing now set for 16 April 2026 at Preston Crown Court.

An NHS Trust and maintenance company appeared at Blackburn Magistrates Court on 1 October 2025, this case is related to a fatal fire and breaches of the Fire Safety Order in late 2023. 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 were to appear at Blackburn Magistrates Court on 18 February 2026 for breaches of the Fire Safety Order for a Nightclub. The defendants did not appear at Court, but subsequently attended Lancaster Magistrates Court on 26 March 2026. At this hearing the defendants gave the following submissions, one responsible person pleaded guilty to all charges. The other responsible person and company pleaded not guilty. This case has been sent to Preston Crown Court with a hearing date of 23 April 2026.

Two companies and a charity were to appear at Blackburn Magistrates Court on 28 January 2026. This related to breaches of the Fire Safety Order for a mixed commercial and residential use student accommodation in Preston. This case was subsequently sent to Preston Crown Court after no pleas were given at Magistrates Court. The hearing at Preston Crown Court was heard on 6 March 2026 where no plea indications were given. A further hearing will be held on 3 July 2026 at Preston Crown Court.

### **Prosecution cases currently being developed and reviewed**

Protection teams continue to investigate and build case files in relation to fourteen 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 3
- 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 bar x 1
- Hotel x 2
- Supported living x 1

### **Arson Risk Reduction**

#### **R v Fakhru Islam**

Address – Breck Road, Poulton Le Fylde, FY6 7AA

Date and Time of Call – 08/12/2024, 04:02

This incident involved a deliberate fire at an Indian restaurant. Three fire appliances were mobilised to the address. On arrival crews were confronted with a severe fire at the front of the restaurant with flames issuing from the front window and door. The restaurant was closed and unoccupied at the time of the fire. A flat was located above the restaurant and several residents were evacuated. The fire caused severe damage to the front area of the restaurant, and the remainder of the restaurant was severely damaged by smoke. Evidence of an ignitable liquid was discovered during the investigation.

The defendant pleaded guilty to ‘Arson reckless as to whether life endangered’ and was sentenced to 7 years and 6 months imprisonment.

#### **R v Shane Haigh**

Address – Queens Promenade, Blackpool, FY2 9AB

Date and Time of Call – 15/09/2025, 21:48

This incident involved the attempted ignition of combustible items that had been placed in the oven. Prior to fire service arrival a support worker who was at the premises at the time of the incident evacuated the entire building, which comprised of several flats over four floors.

The defendant pleaded guilty to 'Arson reckless as to whether life endangered' and received a 12-month community order with 15 days rehabilitation activity requirement.

**R v Jake Carr**

Address – Tag Croft, Preston, PR2 7AQ

Date and Time of Call – 08/09/2025, 18:28

This incident involved the deliberate ignition of combustible items placed on a kitchen worktop directly below a gas boiler. Evidence of a second seat of fire was discovered in the gas meter cupboard. The property comprised of a first floor flat. The fire caused severe damage to the kitchen and contents and moderate damage by smoke to the remainder of the flat. The defendant, who was the sole occupier of the flat, was arrested at the scene.

The defendant pleaded guilty to 'Arson reckless as to whether life endangered' and was sentenced to 6 years imprisonment.

**Arson Sentencing Guidelines**

The maximum sentence for arson in the UK is life imprisonment, as it's 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 (such as endangering life), and specific circumstances, with ranges from discharges or fines for minor incidents to many years in custody for severe cases.

There are currently another 10 arson cases ongoing within the criminal justice system.

**Business risk**

Moderate – Members are made aware of prosecutions related to fire safety activity and 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 27 April 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:

- Building fire in Burscough (5/2/26)
- Mud rescue in Skelmersdale (6/2/26)
- Commercial building fire in Blackpool (6/2/26)
- Road traffic collision in Tarleton (11/2/26)
- Hazardous materials incident in Middleton (18/2/26)
- Commercial building fire in Hapton (22/2/26)
- Domestic building fire in Preston (3/3/26)
- Rescue of person in Preston (9/3/26)
- Barn fire in Preston (13/3/26)
- Explosion at domestic house in Hambleton (27/3/26)
- Commercial building fire in Morecambe (28/3/26)

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>S51 Ormskirk</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>5 February 2026</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>08:23</b>

On 5 February 2026 at 08:23, four fire engines from Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Tarleton responded to a building fire on Mart Lane in Burscough, Lancashire. The ambulance service confirmed one fatality. The crews used four breathing apparatus and one hose reel and remained at the scene for seven hours.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>S56 Skelmersdale</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>6 February 2026</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>20:24</b>

On 6 February 2026 at 20:24, fire engines from Skelmersdale, Ormskirk, Penwortham, Darwen and Preston, along with the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) drone, responded to an incident on Chequer Lane, Skelmersdale. They rescued two people from the mud and handed six other casualties to the North West Ambulance Service. The crews worked for approximately two hours.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>W37 South Shore</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>6 February 2026</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>23:30</b>

On 6 February 2026 at 23:30, LFRS responded with fifteen fire engines, two aerial ladder platforms and a water tower to a large commercial building fire on Waterloo Road, Blackpool. The three-storey premises, approximately 50 by 100 metres, housed multiple shops and warehouse, which had a well-developed fire due to high fire loading and consequently suffered significant fire damage. A full multi-agency response was deployed to support the re-housing of nearby residents. Thankfully, no casualties were reported, and crews remained on the scene for eight days.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>S58 Tarleton</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>11 February 2026</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>07:17</b>

On 11 February 2026 at 07:17, four fire engines and the Urban Search and Rescue team responded to a road traffic collision on Southport New Road in Tarleton. The collision involved one bus and five cars resulting in one casualty being taken to hospital and three other casualties treated for minor injuries. The crews remained on scene for approximately an hour and ten minutes.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>N12 Morecambe</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>18 February 2026</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>14:52</b>

On 18 February 2026 at 14:52, two fire engines from Morecambe and Carnforth attended an incident on Gas Field Road, Heysham Business Park, Middleton, involving a large vehicle tanker leaking gas, with firefighters assisting in making the scene safe and remaining detained for approximately two hours and fifteen minutes.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>E70 Hyndburn</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>22 February 2026</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>14:38</b>

On 22 February 2026 at 14:38, five fire engines from LFRS attended a commercial building fire on Bridgewater Close, Hapton. The incident involved a two-storey building approximately forty by twenty metres, which was extinguished using six breathing apparatus and two hose reel jets, with crews remaining on scene for approximately three hours and twenty minutes.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>C50 Preston</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>3 March 2026</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>08:15</b>

On 3 March 2026 at 08:15, fire engines from Preston, Fulwood, Bamber Bridge and Penwortham, along with the aerial ladder platform from Hyndburn and the command support unit from Blackburn, attended a persons reported fire on New Hall Lane, Preston. The incident involved a domestic building with significant fire spread extending to the roof space of five other properties.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>C50 Preston</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>9 March 2026</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>09:40</b>

On 9 March 2026 at 09:40, five fire engines from Preston, Penwortham, Chorley and Bamber Bridge, including Urban Search and Rescue, rope rescue, a boat with swift water rescue technicians and an aerial ladder platform, attended an incident on South Meadow Lane, Preston. The incident involved the rescue of a person from height, with crews on scene for approximately two hours.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>C50 Preston</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>13 March 2026</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>23:31</b>

On 13 March 2026 at 23:31 LFRS responded to a barn fire on Potters Lane, Samlesbury. Eight fire engines two aerial ladder platforms and a drone attended. Firefighters used two jets and remained on scene for several hours.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>W33 Preesall</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>27 March 2026</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>09:51</b>

On 27 March 2026 at 09:51, fire engines from Preesall, Bispham, Fleetwood and South Shore, along with the aerial ladder platform from Blackpool, responded to a fire on Carr Lane in Hambleton. The fire involved an explosion in a domestic property and crews used two jets and two breathing apparatus. They remained at the scene for approximately ten hours.

<b>LFRS station area:</b>	<b>N12 Morecambe</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>28 March 2026</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>16:34</b>

On 28 March 2026 at 16:34, fire engines from Morecambe, Lancaster, Bolton-le-Sands and Fulwood, along with the command unit, robot and drone, responded to a fire in a commercial unit on White Lund Industrial Estate, Morecambe. Firefighters used two breathing apparatus and a firefighting jet, remaining on scene for four hours.

**Business risk**

None.

**Sustainability or Environmental Impact**

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

**Equality and Diversity Implications**

None.

**Data Protection (GDPR)**

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

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

**HR implications**

None.

**Financial implications**

None.

**Legal implications**

None.

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

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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



Lancashire Fire  
and Rescue Service

# Incident 2602002136



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12 Waterloo Road,  
Blackpool

6 February 2026,  
23:30hrs

# Smart Mart and the challenges

- Home Furniture Store selling second-hand furniture, and Soft Play centre
- Significant fire loading due to nature of products sold and foam in soft play equipment.
- Several buildings in very close proximity and/or attached to Smart Mart
- Residential buildings in very close proximity
- Difficulties in accessing all sides of building



# The Incident – 23:30hrs (T.O.C)

3

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Initial  
attendance



**SM Dave Curran**



Lancashire Fire  
and Rescue Service

# The Incident – On Arrival

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Lancashire Fire  
and Rescue Service

# The Incident – On Arrival

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Lancashire Fire  
and Rescue Service

# The Incident – On Arrival

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# Hazards & Considerations



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- Large thick smoke plume
- Rapid fire spread
- Structural collapse
- Establishing water supplies
- Impact on businesses and community
- Public safety and reassurance (media messages)



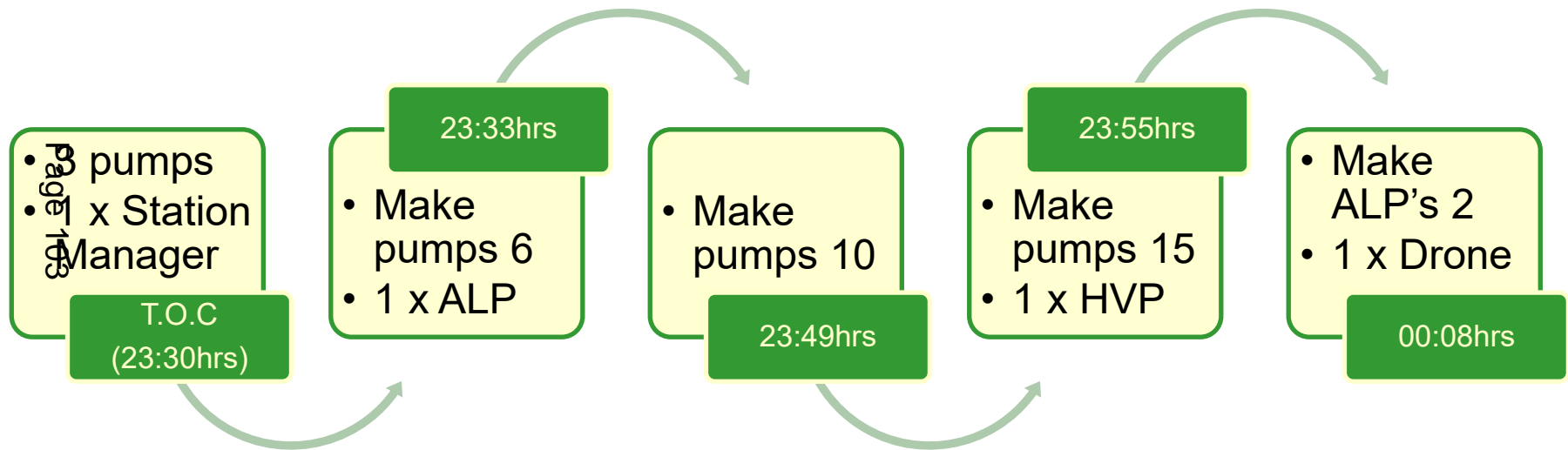
# Priorities

- Establish adequate water supplies
- Extinguish the fire and prevent fire spread
- Evacuation of neighbouring commercial and residential properties
- Identify any hazards to maintain firefighter safety
- Protect the environment
- Fire Investigation





# How the incident grew.



Quick and decisive decision making,  
leading to improved outcomes



# The Incident – 01:06hrs (total resources)

2



1

15



By 01:06hrs, the total resources requested had risen to



1

1



1



Lancashire Fire  
and Rescue Service

# The Incident – Led and supported by..



Blackpool Council

[www.blackpool.gov.uk](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk)



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# Multi-agency actions

## LFRS:

- Evacuate and protect neighbouring residential and commercial properties
- Ensure the fire was extinguished and monitor for hot spots
- Complete fire investigation
- Joint Communication strategy established between LFRS, Police & Blackpool Council. This included updates / information for businesses and public

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## Lancashire Constabulary:

- Preserve the scene for fire investigation and maintain strict cordons due to unsafe structures

## Blackpool council:

- Emergency planning - Road closures and traffic management
- Building control – assess structural stability of buildings and offer advice to property owners / occupants





# Protracted Incident

LFRS resources worked alongside partners for 5 days.

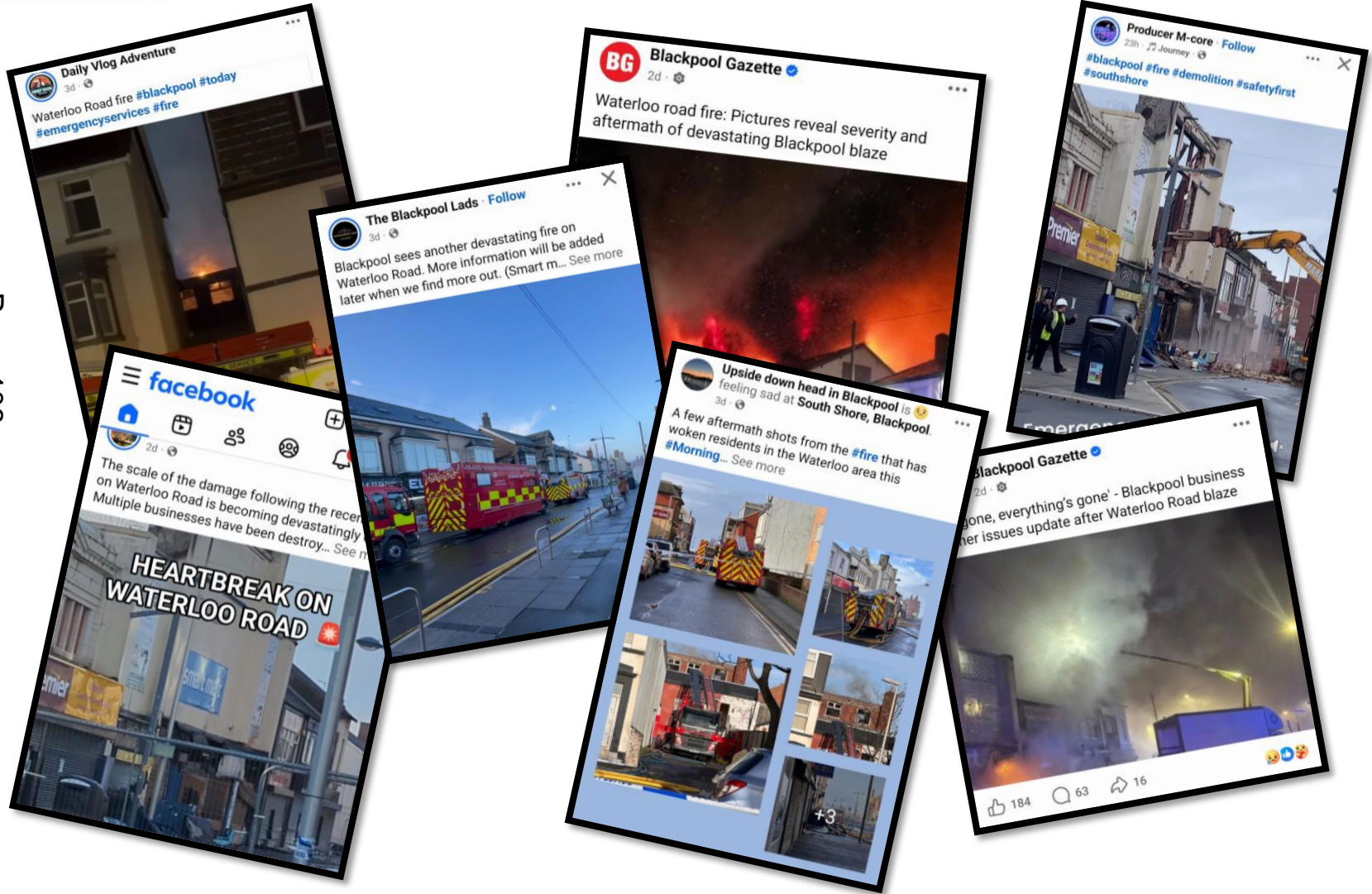
- Multi-Agency meetings continued throughout to:
  - Monitor for hot spots
  - Complete fire investigation
  - Agree post-incident closure responsibilities with Blackpool Council
  - Reduce the cordon & impact on local businesses and community
  - Return occupants to residential properties (Gordon Street)
  - Provide community reassurance due to social media coverage
- Incident closed on 11/2/26
- Liaison with partners continued post-incident



Lancashire Fire  
and Rescue Service

# Public attention

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# Public reassurance



## South Shore Fire Station

1d · 🌐

We will be in attendance in the area of Lytham Road/Waterloo Road over the next few days, between 10am-2pm, to offer reassurance to our local community following the recent fire on Waterloo Road in Blackpool.

We will be out and about in the area, so please feel free to speak with us if you have any concerns or need support. We'll also be providing advice and guidance to local businesses and residents.



- Community Safety teams
- Fire Safety teams
- Operational Crews
- Multi-agency collaboration



# Questions?

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on Monday 27 April 2026

### Appointment of Independent Person

(Not for publication – Exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972)

Contact for further information – Dominic Howell, Deputy Monitoring Officer  
Tel: 01772 866960

#### Executive Summary

The Localism Act 2011 requires the appointment of at least one independent person (IP) whose views must be taken into account when allegations of a breach of the member's code of conduct are being considered. It is however considered best practice for local authorities to have two such IPs, rather than one and the Authority does have two in line with this best practice. The term of one of them is however due to end in May 2026. The Service wishes to extend the contract of this individual for a term of four years to continue the provision of two IPs.

#### Recommendation(s)

The Authority is asked to approve the extension of appointment of Julie Byrom for four years to May 2030.

#### Information

The Localism Act 2011 requires the appointment of at least one independent person (IP) whose views must be taken into account when allegations of a breach of the member's code of conduct are being considered. It is however considered best practice for local authorities to have two such IPs.

IPs are people who are neither councillors nor officers of the Authority but are appointed to work with the Authority to uphold high ethical standards in respect of the the members' code of conduct. Their views must be sought and considered in relation to member complaints before deciding on an investigation or sanction, and they can also advise the member under investigation.

It is important that the people of Lancashire have confidence that allegations of member misconduct are dealt with properly. Appointing independent people ensures that the Authority has an open and transparent process for dealing with potential breaches of the code of conduct.

Following the Authority's approval of a new disciplinary procedure for statutory officers in February 2026, the IP role will be extended to include involvement in this procedure.

Following a recruitment process in 2022, two IPs were appointed for different length terms to avoid them coming to an end at the same time. Julie Byrom was appointed for a term of four years.

Julie is an experienced independent person, working with local authorities across the country to uphold member standards and also professional standards within children's services. She has an extensive background in health, acting as a Fitness to Practise Panellist at the General Dental Council, Scottish Social Services Council and Social Care Wales, and as a Disciplinary Panellist for the National Register of Public Service Interpreters. Julie is a Trustee Board Member at the National Examining Board for Dental Nurses where she is also Chair of the Governance Committee.

Julie Byrom's contract is due to expire on 2 May 2026 and she has indicated a willingness to continue in the position for another four years. This length of term will ensure the Authority continues to have sufficient arrangements in place. Ann Highton is the other IP and her contract is in place until 2028.

The Authority is asked to approve the extension of appointment of Julie Byrom for four years to May 2030.

### **Business risk**

IPs play a vital role in upholding high ethical standards in local authorities, which is critical to maintaining public confidence and is a statutory requirement. Best practice is for public authorities to have two IPs (recommendation in Local Government Ethical Standards - A Review by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, 2019). This reduces the risk of the Authority having any period without an IP which is increased if only one person is in position and gives notice to terminate their contract. Having two people in position for terms that end in a staggered timeframe also reduces this risk.

### **Sustainability or Environmental Impact**

None.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

The reappointment proposed in the recommendation means that the post is not being readvertised in the community however a full open recruitment process took place at initial appointment in 2022.

### **Data Protection (GDPR)**

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

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**

Contract renewal to be arranged. Consultation with director of people has taken place.

### **Financial implications**

£1,143.24 per annum allowance, subject to inflationary increases.

### **Legal implications**

The provisions of section 28(6) and 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 require local authorities to appoint at least one independent person, whose views are to be sought,

and taken into account, by the Authority before it makes its decision on an allegation that it has decided to investigate.

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

### **List of background papers**

Paper: Appointment of Independent Person

Date: Monday 22 April 2024

Contact: Mark Nolan, Clerk and Monitoring Officer

Paper: Appointment of Independent Persons

Date: Monday 25 April 2022

Contact: Mark Nolan, Clerk and Monitoring Officer

Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate: Paragraph 1

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