

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Urgent Decision – Consultation relating to pilot duty system change at Fleetwood Station

29 May 2026

Contact for further information – Jon Charters, Chief Fire Officer

Executive Summary

The Chief Fire Officer wants to start a public consultation about a proposed pilot shift change at Fleetwood station. As this consultation is intended to start on 1 June 2026, this decision needs to be taken under the urgent business procedure

Recommendation(s)

That the Chair(s) support the Chief Fire Officer's decision.

Information

Urgent Business Procedure

1.Lancashire Combined Fire Authority (CFA) has an urgent business procedure which is in place to allow the Chief Fire Officer, the Treasurer or the Monitoring Officer to take urgent decisions which due to timescales involved need to be taken outside of the usual cycle of meetings, and where it is not practicable or expedient to set up an extraordinary meeting.

2.The procedure is that the statutory officer will seek the views of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority and the Chair of any Committee that would usually take the relevant decision. Having taken those views, the statutory officer will then make an appropriate decision which will be recorded and reported to the next relevant meeting of the Authority or Committee.

3.In this instance, the Chief Fire Officer wishes to take the urgent decision to start a public consultation in relation to a proposed pilot of a change in shift system at Fleetwood Fire Station. The intention is to run this consultation for 1 month from the 1 June 2026. The next full Authority meeting is the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 15 June 2026, and the next Planning Committee (which would ordinarily decide this matter) is not until 13 July 2026. There is insufficient time between the time of writing this document and the proposed start date of the consultation to set up an extraordinary meeting. It is for these reasons that the urgent business procedure is being used, and the Chief Fire Officer will seek the views of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the full Authority and also the Chair of the Planning Committee on the contents of this paper before making his decision.

The Proposal

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4. Fleetwood Fire Station currently operates as a wholetime 2-2-4 station. The proposal is to pilot a change from the 2-2-4 shift system to Flexi Day Crewing (FDC) (where firefighters are on station during the day from 08:00 hours to 18:00 hours (as with 2-2-4) but outside of these hours, emergency cover is provided on an on-call basis from their home address). This pilot would be for a period of around 18 months after which it would be evaluated and a decision taken then whether to make the change permanent or not.

5. There are a number of drivers for this proposal. The first is to release firefighters to work at other stations which is urgently needed in the summer due to predicted shortfalls. As the FDC system requires less staff, this pilot should release 3 firefighters and 3 Watch Managers to be deployed elsewhere.

6. The proposal is informed by a detailed assessment of risk, incident demand, workforce availability and operational performance in the Fleetwood area. Analysis of incident data (2023–2025) demonstrates that Fleetwood has the lowest demand of all wholetime stations, with approximately 636 incidents annually and relatively low levels of critical fire incidents and casualties. The number of incidents it deals with are consistent with the activity levels of other FDC stations and so making this change would be a more efficient use of resources.

7. Risk modelling confirms that the station currently meets required response standards and that an FDC model would continue to achieve those standards, including during on-call hours when crews respond from nearby locations.

8. Workforce analysis indicates a viable staffing model, with a cohort of wholetime and on-call personnel living within a five-minute response radius. Travel time analysis shows that a potential FDC crew could achieve an average response-to-station time of approximately 3 minutes, comparable to or better than existing on-call performance.

9. The proposal also supports broader organisational objectives, including improving workforce sustainability, reducing reliance on compulsory transfers, and releasing wholetime resources to support wider service pressures.

10. Subject to approval, the pilot would operate for 18 months, with formal reviews at 6 and 12 months to ensure service effectiveness is maintained.

11. The proposal will release wholetime capacity to support broader service pressures. There is no intention to reduce the Service staffing levels on the back of the pilot. Within the term of the pilot the additional allowances paid to staff equate to circa £100,000 per annum however these costs are offset by vacancy management across the Service.

12. Prevention and Protection targets could still be met by increased use of non-operational staff.

Consultation

13. As noted above, this is a pilot, not a permanent change, and the effect on services is expected to be minimal. It is right however that stakeholders are consulted. The Fire Brigades Union have been consulted and provided a supportive written response, and

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early engagement has been undertaken with staff and the local MP, both understanding and supportive of the proposals.

14.The service would like to consult with affected members of the public. This consultation will take some time and as these changes (if they occur) need to be brought about swiftly to support crewing levels through the summer period, there is a need to start public consultation forthwith. As such the urgent decision is **to start a public consultation on the proposed pilot.**

15.The proposed next steps as to how to develop the pilot once the public consultation is complete will be set out in a paper to be taken to the AGM in June.

16.The proposed public consultation will consist of targeted engagement activity towards service users in the locality and town council.

Business risk

Failure to run this consultation swiftly may impact negatively on the viability of the pilot if it cannot be implemented in time for summer.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None.

Data Protection (GDPR)

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

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

HR implications

None.

Financial implications

None.

Legal implications

A failure to carry out a public consultation may make any decision to implement the pilot unlawful.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact: