

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Performance Committee

**Wednesday, 8 July 2026, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room,
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.**

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
S Asghar	
B Langford	
G Mirfin	
A Riggott	
S Sidat MBE	
J Tetlow (Vice-Chair)	
E Worthington (Chair)	

Officers
S Pink, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) J Turner, Head of People P Jones, Area Manager - Head of Service Delivery I Armistead, Group Manager - Protection C Burscough, Prevention Support Officer D Howell, Monitoring Officer J Kelly, Member Services Officer (LFRS)
In attendance
K Matthews, North West Fire Control - Head of Operations

1-26/27	Apologies For Absence
	Apologies were received from County Councillor M Clifford and County Councillor L Parker who was a substitute for County Councillor R Walsh. County Councillors G Mirfin and J Tetlow were delayed. County Councillor M Ritson and North West Fire Control (NWFC) Head of Operations K Matthews joined the meeting remotely.
2-26/27	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.

3-26/27	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	The minutes were moved by County Councillor E Worthington. Resolved: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 11 March 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
4-26/27	Performance Management Information for Quarter 4, 2025-26
	The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) presented a comprehensive report which provided a clear measure of the Service's progress against the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-2027. The Performance Committee was asked to note and endorse the report which included two positive and one negative exception. Members examined each indicator in turn: 1.1 Overall Staff Engagement Members received an update on staff engagement during the period. From January to March 2026, 17 station visits were carried out by principal officers and area managers as part of a service-wide engagement programme. 40 wellbeing interactions were undertaken ranging from workshops with crews to wellbeing support dog engagements. An extended leadership workshop was held with middle and senior managers, and eight Watch Managers' Forum events took place to keep wholetime and functional watch managers informed of what was happening in service delivery and provided an opportunity to share feedback and be involved in changes. Engagement took place regarding improvements to Garstang Fire Station and several offices at Service Headquarters and the Leadership and Development Centre. The Service engaged with staff over topics relating to Service fleet and equipment including thermal imaging and situational analysis cameras, which were being trialled by breathing apparatus instructors. An 'On the Menu' online event was open to everyone in the Service to learn about equality impact assessments. It was noted that the Service has an engagement index which was calculated based on five questions measuring pride, advocacy, attachment, inspiration and motivation. In 2025, the response rate was 44% and the engagement index was 69% which was a drop from the two previous survey years (2023 = 74%, 2020 = 79%). The survey results highlighted areas of success as well as areas for development and the feedback was considered by the Service and used to inform planning, as well as being 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 It was noted that absence was calculated using 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 eight shifts lost

- Annual shifts lost ÷ 4 quarters = 2
- Quarter shifts lost: 2.49
- Cumulative total number of shifts lost: 9.85

The agreed target performance level was eight shifts lost per employee per year across all staff. Actual shifts lost for both for 2025-26 was 8.70 shifts lost per employee, 0.70 above target. The negative exception report was due to the number of shifts lost per employee being above the Service target for Quarter 4 (period covered was from 1 January to 31 March 2026).

The agreed target performance level was 2 shifts lost per employee per quarter for wholetime staff. The actual shifts lost for the period for this group of staff was 2.49, 0.49 shifts above target for the quarter. During the same quarter the previous year, 2.23 shifts were lost, which was an increase of 0.26 shifts lost per wholetime employee compared to the same quarter last year.

1,493 wholetime absence shifts were lost in the quarter equalling 2.49 against a target of 2.00. The number of cases of long-term absence which spanned over the total of the three months remained at 4 cases in Quarter 4. The absence reasons being mental health, musculo skeletal, hospital or post-operative, skin condition. 197 shifts were lost during the quarter as a result of the above four cases of long-term absence, this was in comparison to 46 shifts lost during the same quarter of 2024-25. These cases accounted for 0.33 shifts lost per person over the quarter.

There were 27 cases of long-term absence recorded within the 3 months:

- Mental health - 11
- Musculo skeletal - 9
- Other absence types - 5
- Hospital/ post-operative procedure – 2

In 2025-26, the agreed target performance level was 8 shifts lost per employee per year for wholetime staff. The actual shifts lost for the period for this group of staff was 9.85 which was 1.85 shifts above target for the year. During the same period the previous year, 8.28 shifts were lost which was an increase of 1.57 shifts lost per wholetime employee compared to the same period last year.

6,035 wholetime absence shifts were lost in the year which equated to 9.85 against a target of 8.00.

The increase in number of shifts lost between 2024-25 and 2025-26 were primarily explained by increased absences as a result of Musculo-skeletal and mental health absences. Musculo skeletal absence increased by 396 shifts lost and mental health absences by 371, which accounted for an increase in 767 shifts lost and for most of the overall 849 rise.

Councillor S Sidat asked whether the Service had any preventative or supportive measures in place for those staff who were sustaining Musculo-skeletal injuries at work. The ACFO commented on the fitness culture that the Service promoted, the availability of physio support and the role of the Fire Fighters charity in supporting post injury rehabilitation.

County Councillor G Mirfin expressed concern regarding the number of absences and asked about the overall health of staff. The ACFO responded that the staff were very fit and healthy but that firefighters worked in a role that placed significant demands on physical fitness and required a high level of physical capability and endurance. It was noted that, in addition to their own personal fitness regimes, firefighters were required to do two hours a day of robust training exercises. As well as healthy training and fitness regimes, staff were also aware of the benefits of healthy nutrition.

The Group Manager – Protection also reassured members of the Service’s procedures in the event of a near miss. The Head of People – Human Resources then commented on the Service’s focus on good nutrition and gave the example of encouraging staff towards the use of air fryers to cook healthier meals.

The Chair asked if injuries were sustained in or out of work and the ACFO commented that either could be the case. The ACFO indicated that we now were comparing benchmark data which evidenced national trends for firefighter injuries which could be built into future reports.

County Councillor G Mirfin commented on firefighters’ fitness and resilience in the past compared to the present and commented that the higher incidence of mental health issues was of concern. The ACFO commented that a high level of base fitness was very important when joining the Service. Mental health-related absence was attributed to a range of factors, most commonly personal circumstances, but also workplace-related stress arising from events or incidents experienced at work. Area Manager Phil Jones noted an increase in staff experiencing trauma following attendance at distressing incidents.

County Councillor A Riggott enquired as to how the KPI was set and the ACFO confirmed that it was set according to a national standard.

The Chair asked whether most absences were typically in one block of time and the ACFO confirmed this was the case with long-term sickness cases.

County Councillor A Riggott commented that it would be helpful to know the percentage figures for staff who had no time off at all, against the data for staff who did have significant absences. The ACFO noted this and also shared that absence trends were monitored by the Service, to identify whether there were patterns around weekends or during school holidays.

County Councillor G Mirfin commented on the small number of long-term absence cases which contributed significantly to the overall figures.

The number of instances of absences increased at a broadly similar rate to the increase in shifts lost. The largest increases in instances related to musculo skeletal absences, which rose from 38 occurrences in 2024-25 to 67 occurrences in 2025-26, an increase of 29 separate periods of absence. Mental health absences increased from 34 occurrences to 60.

Absence was predominantly medically supported and longer-term, not short-term sickness. Respiratory and gastrointestinal illness remained prevalent, particularly in

winter months but were typically short-term and self-resolving. The majority of time lost related to longer-term, medically supported absence, rather than repeated short-term episodes. Self-certified absences of under seven days also accounted for a significant proportion of absences with 114 occurrences which affected 109 wholetime staff.

The Service managed staff absence through an Absence Management Policy supported by the Human Resources (HR) system I-Trent which provided monthly absence reports to line managers and HR Business Partners. Employees absent due to a mental health or a stress related condition were referred early to the Occupational Health Unit and all returning employees had a return-to-work interview and relevant stress risk assessments. Support mechanisms included Occupational Health guidance, Trauma Risk Management (TRiM), access to an Employee Assistance Programme and the Firefighters Charity. If an employee did not return to work 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: three or more periods of absence in six months or 14 days
- Long-term absence: reviews at three, six, nine and 11 months.

During Quarter 4, 14 Stage 1 and one Stage 2 meeting were conducted.

1.2.2 Staff Absence On Call

This indicator measured the percentage of contracted hours lost due to sickness for all on-call contracted staff. The annual standard was for 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 was 1.47%.

1.2.3 Staff Absence Green Book

This indicator measured the cumulative number of shifts (days) lost due to sickness for support staff divided by the average strength.

- Annual Standard: Not more than 8 shifts lost.
- Annual Shifts Lost ÷ 4 quarters: 2
- Quarter shifts lost: 1.69
- Cumulative shifts lost: 5.97

This was a positive exception report due to the number of shifts lost through absence per employee being below the Service target. The agreed target performance level was eight shifts lost per employee per year for Green Book staff. The actual shifts lost for the period for this group of staff was 5.97, which was 2.21 within target. During the same period the previous year, 7.22 shifts were lost which was a decrease of shifts lost compared to the same period last year.

During the period, January 2026 – March 2026, absence statistics showed non-uniformed personnel absence below target for the quarter, with 1.69 shifts lost in the quarter against a target of 2.00 shifts lost.

1,482 non-uniformed absence shifts lost equated to 5.97 against a target of 8.00

during quarter 1 to quarter 4. There were no cases of long-term absence which spanned over the total of the three months. The number of long-term absence cases recorded in the quarter remained at four in Quarter 4:

- Mental health: 3 cases
- Other absence types: 1 case

179 shifts were lost during the quarter as a result of the above four cases of long-term absences in comparison to 188 shifts lost during the same quarter of 2024-25. These cases accounted for 0.69 shifts lost per person over the quarter.

1,482 Green Book absence shifts lost in the year equated to 5.97 against a target of 8.00.

During 2025-26, Green Book absence was largely driven by a small number of long-term absence cases, relating to mental health conditions, Musculo-skeletal and hospital or post-operative recovery. Stress related absences related to a small number of individuals, accounting for 175 shifts lost over six individual occurrences.

Short-term absence due to respiratory infections, gastro-intestinal illness and headaches or migraines, followed a seasonal pattern, with higher levels in the autumn and winter.

In summary, absence was predominantly medically supported and longer term, not short-term casual sickness. Absence management, employee support and formal review thresholds were as detailed under KPI 1.2.1.

1.3.1 Workforce Diversity

This indicator measured diversity as a percentage and a combined diversity percentage of all staff. The percentages outside of the brackets represented the current quarter and the percentage within the brackets illustrated the same quarter of the previous year:

- Gender – Female 23% (21%), Male 77% (79%)
- Ethnicity – Other than white 4% (3%), White 91% (94%), Not stated 5% (3%)
- Sexual orientation – LGBT 5% (4%), Heterosexual 64% (57%), Not stated 31% (39%)
- Disability – Disability 4% (3%), No disability 93% (94%), Not stated 3% (3%)

1.3.2 Workforce Diversity Recruited

This indicator measured workforce diversity recruited as a percentage. The percentages outside of the brackets represented the current quarter and the percentage within the brackets illustrated the same quarter of the previous year:

- Gender – Female 26% (32%), Male 74% (68%)
- Ethnicity – Other than white 4% (5%), White 86% (90%), Not Stated 10% (5%)
- Sexual Orientation – LGBT 3% (8%), Heterosexual 83% (87%), Not stated 14% (5%)
- Disability – Disability 3% (4%), No disability 88% (94%), Not stated 9% (2%)

During Quarter 4, there were a total of 37 new recruits. The ACFO reported that the recruitment figure was generally consistent each quarter.

1.4 Staff Accidents

This indicator measured the number of accidents which occurred to staff members at work within the quarter. Total number of staff accidents was 11 for quarter 4; year to date 55; previous year to date 61. Quarterly activity increased 31.25% (5 incidents) over the same quarter of the previous year. Year to date activity decreased 9.84% over the same period of the previous year.

2.1 Risk Map

This indicator measured the fire risk in each Super Output Area (SOA). 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 annual standard was to reduce the risk in Lancashire – an annual reduction in the County risk map score.

Calculation used: $(\text{Dwelling Fires} \div \text{Total Dwellings}) + (\text{Dwelling Fire Casualties} \div \text{Resident Population} \times 4) + \text{Building Fire} + (\text{IMD} \times 2) = \text{Risk Score}$.

The current score was 30,532 and the previous year's score was 30,750 which meant that the fire risk continued to reduce.

County Councillor G Mirfin and County Councillor A Riggott asked whether more detail could be provided in the report about changes to the risk profile of particular areas.

2.2 Overall Activity and Breakdown

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 such as missing person searches on behalf of Lancashire Constabulary (LanCon) and gaining entry incidents at the request of the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS).

- Incidents attended year to date - 17,663
- Previous year to date - 16,939
- Quarterly activity decreased 5.80% over the same quarter of the previous year.

In Quarter 4, the Service attended 3,786 incidents. The report presented a chart which represented the count and percentage that each activity had contributed to the overall quarter's activity:

- False Alarm incidents made up 45% of activity. Fire alarm due to apparatus incidents accounted for 28% of incidents, good intent false alarm 16%, and malicious false alarms accounted for 1%.
- Fire Primary incidents encompassed Accidental Dwelling Fires, which accounted for 45% of primary fires (KPI 2.3).
- Fire Secondary incidents, caused by either a deliberate or accidental act, or the cause was not known. Deliberate fires mainly involved loose refuse and accounted for 51% of secondary fires, with 49% due to accidental or not known cause.
- Special Service incidents were made up of many different activities, so only a selection of types, such as Gaining entry to a domestic property on behalf

of NWS and Road Traffic Collisions (RTC), effecting entry, flooding incidents can be shown. Types of other types ranged from hazardous materials incidents, to spill and leaks or advice only.

Councillor B Langford enquired as to whether the Service charged fines for false alarms caused by faulty apparatus. The ACFO confirmed the Service did not do so. The Group Manager - Protection shared that these call outs might include those from hospitals or from vulnerable, elderly individuals in sheltered accommodation and therefore the practice was not to issue fines. It was noted that the approach was different for commercial premises that generated false alarms and they received informal communications and advice to check their apparatus to avoid any recurrence. Prevention and protection work was also undertaken with organisations. The incidence of false alarms tended to decline following this informal approach to communications.

The Chair suggested a campaign could be useful to raise awareness about issues with false alarms and reduce incidences going forwards as any reduction would save the Service money. The ACFO commented that the Service tended to prefer to work directly with repeat offenders.

County Councillor G Mirfin asked for more detailed information on false alarms by district if possible. The Group Manager - Protection commented that he would share this outside the meeting.

County Councillor J Tetlow enquired whether other Services charged for false alarm calls as without fines there were no real sanctions or incentives for those responsible for the false alarms to take the appropriate remedial action. The Group Manager - Protection commented that some services do issue fines, but for LFRS it would be an additional resource requirement and therefore LFRS preferred to use the current approach to deter false alarms. County Councillor J Tetlow suggested that this activity could be outsourced and did not necessarily need to be undertaken by Service staff. County Councillor J Tetlow added that, although LFRS excels in many areas, this could be an opportunity to learn good practice from other services.

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, 178 in Quarter 4
- Year to date 742; previous year to date 690
- Quarterly activity had increased 3.49% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The ACFO shared that the hot weather period in Q1 saw an increase in accidental dwelling fires due to spread from outdoor fires. Cooking related incidents had also been prevalent which had led to a social media educational campaign. There was discussion of the increasing incidence of fires caused by air fryers, although the overall source for domestic fires still tended to be white goods.

The Chair asked how air fryers could ignite. The Group Manager - Protection responded they could be switched on for too long, overfilled, had the wrong materials placed inside or were not positioned appropriately.

Councillor B Langford commented that there could be issues with faulty models. The Chair asked if there should be a campaign about safer use of air fryers. The Group Manager - Protection responded that the Service issued regular communications and campaigns about cooking related issues. The Chair asked for statistics regarding how many fires are related specifically to air fryers – the request was noted.

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 - 3 in Quarter 4; year to date 5; previous year to date 6
- Injuries appear Serious - 10 in Quarter 4; year to date 17; previous year to date 7
- Injuries appear Slight - 8 in Quarter 4; year to date 27; previous year to date 31

County Councillor J Tetlow asked whether there was a common cause for fatalities. The ACFO responded that the elderly and people who lived alone could be more susceptible to fire. Concern was expressed about the tendency for elderly people to use flammable blankets and sit too close to heating appliances in order to keep warm which increased the risk of fire. County Councillor J Tetlow suggested a winter campaign to promote heated blanket use as they were very effective at heating the individual and very energy efficient.

2.3.2 ADF – Harm to property: Extent of damage (fire severity)

The KPI related to the extent of fire, heat and smoke damage recorded at the time the STOP message was sent and included all damage types. The table provided in the report gave a breakdown of fire severity at ADFs, with a direction indicator comparing the current quarter to the same quarter of the previous year. The percentage for Quarter 4 was noted as 88%, an increase of 3.25% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.4 Accidental Building Fires (ABF) – Commercial Premises

The KPI related to the number of primary fires (48 in Quarter 4) where a building had been affected, other than a dwelling or a private building associated with a dwelling, and the cause of fire recorded as Accidental or Not known. Quarterly activity decreased had 26.15% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.4.1 ABF (Commercial Premises) – Harm to property: Extent of damage (fire severity)

This indicator related to the extent of fire, heat and smoke damage recorded at the

time the STOP message was sent and included all damage types. The table in the report provided a breakdown of fire severity at ABFs, with a direction indicator comparing the current quarter to the same quarter of the previous year. The percentage for Quarter 4 was noted as being 73% and it was noted that the combined quarterly percentage had decreased 3.45% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.5 Accidental Building Fires (Non-Commercial Premises)

This indicator related to 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 has recorded as Accidental or Not known. Quarter 4 activity was noted as comprising of 14 incidents, 110 in the year to date (previous year's Quarter 4 total was 13, previous year to date 71.)

2.5.1 ABF (Non-Commercial Premises: Private Garages and Sheds) – Harm to property: Extent of damage (fire severity)

This indicator related to the extent of fire, heat and smoke damage recorded at the time the STOP message was sent and included all damage types. As the property types of sheds and garages were typically a single room construction, there was an increased likelihood that the whole building was affected. The figure for Quarter 4 was noted at 29%, the combined quarterly percentage had increased 13.19% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.6 Deliberate Fires Total: Specific performance measure of deliberate fires

This indicator related to the number of primary and secondary fires where the cause of fire has been recorded as deliberate. The Quarter 4 figure was 293 (2,064 year to date). Quarterly activity decreased 34.74% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.6.1 Deliberate Fires – Dwellings

This indicator related to the number of primary fires where a dwelling was affected and the cause of fire has been recorded as deliberate. The Quarter 4 figure was 10 (year to date 67). Quarterly activity had decreased 52.38% over the same quarter the previous year.

2.6.2 Deliberate Fires – Commercial Premises

This indicator recorded 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. A second incident activity line was shown which excluded Crown premises which fell outside of the Fire Service's legislative jurisdiction. Quarter 4 activity was noted as being comprised of 20 incidents, 137 year to date. Quarterly activity had decreased 47.37% over the same quarter of the previous year.

In terms of deliberate fires which occurred in Crown premises, there was discussion of the launch of fire prevention, education and self-safety programmes for prisoners. Councillor S Sidat asked whether the Service had the ability to monitor released prisoners who had previously set fires in prison. The ACFO commented that it was difficult when a person moved outside the area but that there would be a move to a person-centred rather than an address based area-focused approach going forward.

County Councillor J Tetlow asked about the use of vapes to set fires in cells and enquired why these were made available to prisoners. The Group Manager – Protection and ACFO confirmed that it was not possible to ban access to or use of vapes by prisoners. There was however a collaborative approach with the prison service to consider ways to mitigate the risks of vape usage in cells.

2.6.3 Deliberate Fires – Other (Rubbish, grassland, vehicles)

This indicator recorded the number of primary and secondary fires where the property type was other than a building, except where the building was recorded as disused, and the cause of fire recorded as deliberate. The majority of deliberate fires were noted as being outdoor secondary fires and included grassland and refuse fires. Abandoned vehicle fires were also included under secondary fires. There had been 263 incidents in Quarter 4 and 1860 in the year to date. Quarterly activity had decreased 32.56% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.7 Home Fire Safety Checks (HF SC)

This indicator showed the percentage of completed HFSCs, excluding refusals, carried out by LFRS personnel in the home, where the risk score was determined to be high. Quarterly activity was noted as being 54%, an increase of 11.1% against the same quarter of the previous year, whilst the high-risk outcomes remained static.

2.8 Prevention Activities delivered

The ACFO spoke about the incredibly high prevention and education engagement the Service had with different groups via a range of strategies and programmes. The various road safety programmes were detailed in the report to follow later in the meeting.

2.9 Business Fire Safety Checks

This indicator recorded the number of Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSC) - interventions which looked at different aspects of fire safety compliance and included risk assessments, fire alarms, escape routes and fire doors. If the result of a BFSC was unsatisfactory, fire safety advice was provided to help the business comply with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. If critical fire safety issues were identified, a business safety advisor conducted a follow-up intervention. Quarter 4 activity was recorded as being 810; cumulative year to date activity was 3060; 2774 checks were judged satisfactory and 286 were unsatisfactory. This was a positive exception as the number of completed Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSC) was greater than 10% of the quarterly target, and the cumulative year to date target.

2.9.1 Fire Safety Activity

This indicator showed the number of Fire Safety Enforcement inspections carried out within the period. These inspections supported businesses to improve and become compliant with fire safety regulations or would result in the taking of formal action of enforcement and prosecution of those that failed to comply. Formal activity was defined as one or more of the following: enforcement notice or an action plan, alterations notice or prohibition notice. Quarterly activity remained static against the same quarter of the previous year at 5%.

2.10 Building Regulation Consultations (BRC)

With regards to Building Regulations, it was noted that if a business intended to carry out building work it had to do so in accordance with the requirements of current Building Regulations. There were two building control bodies that were able to be used, the Local Authority or an Approved Inspector. These bodies were responsible for ensuring compliance with building regulations which generally applied when:

- Erecting a new building
- Extending or altering an existing building
- Providing services or fittings in a building
- Altering the use of a building

The purpose of the consultation process was noted: If the Regulatory Reform, Fire Safety Order 2005 (FSO), applied to the premises, or would apply following the work, the building control body must have consulted with LFRS. LFRS would then comment on FSO requirements and might also provide additional advice relevant to the building type which, if adopted, would enhance safety or resilience (for example, use of sprinklers). LFRS did not have the authority to enforce building regulations but could offer observations to the building control body regarding compliance if it was felt the proposals might not comply. In addition to securing a safe premises, an important outcome of the process was to ensure that the completed building met the requirements of the FSO once occupied, so that no additional works were necessary.

County Councillor A Riggott enquired as to whether there could be additional detail provided in future reports on the number of consultations progressed by the Service before planning decisions were made.

3.1 Critical Fire Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance

This indicator was in relation to critical fire incidents which were defined as incidents likely to involve a significant threat to life, structures or the environment. Response standards, in respect of critical fires, were variable and determined by the risk map (KPI 2.1) and subsequent risk grade of the Super Output Area (SOA) in which the fire occurred. 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 Service achieved set standards when the time between the 'Time of Call' (TOC) and 'Time in Attendance' (TIA) of the first fire engine which arrived at the incident, averaged over the quarter, was less than the relevant response standard. The Quarter 4 response time average was noted as 7:46 minutes which the ACFO commented was extremely fast.

3.2 Critical Special Service Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance

This indicator related to critical special service incidents which were non-fire incidents where there was risk to life, for example, road traffic collisions, rescues and hazardous materials incidents. For these incidents there was a single response

standard which measured call handling time and fire engine response time. The response standard for the first fire engine which attended a critical special service call was 13 minutes – the quarter response was noted as being 9:05 minutes (the year to date response time was 8:49 minutes, compared to previous year to date of 8:46 minutes).

3.3 Fire Engine Availability

The ACFO commented that there would be a report presented later in the meeting specifically related to this KPI.

4.1 Progress Against Allocated Budget

This indicator was regarding the total cumulative value of the savings delivered to date compared to the year's standard and the total. As a public service, LFRS were committed to providing a value for money service to the community and was committed to maintain spending within the set budget.

The 2025-26 revenue outturn position was £77.2 million against a £77.5 million net annual budget. The £0.3 million saving was mainly attributable to savings on pay due to carrying vacant posts.

The 2025-26 capital outturn was £6.2 million against a revised budget of £7.1 million. The remaining £0.9 million would slip into 2026-27. Extended lead times and resourcing shortfall ensued the slippage.

4.2 Partnership Collaboration

This indicator provided an update on work with partners. The ACFO commented on various strands such as:

- **Leadership Development** – opportunities for work with other Blue Light organisations who faced similar leadership challenges as well as an established coaching and mentoring network.
- **Health and Wellbeing** – an example given was The Firelight Project developed by Cuerden Valley Park Trust in collaboration with LFRS, Lancashire Police and North West Ambulance Service (NWAS). The project aimed to establish a mental health and wellbeing hub within Cuerden Valley Park which provided support to those serving in Blue Light and associated services. In March, LFRS had the privilege of taking part in the inaugural Experience Day, with the pilot programme launched on 29 April 2026.
- **Estates and Co-location** – the initiative between LFRS, NWAS, and LanCon aimed to identify opportunities for shared sites, enhancing collaboration and value for money. Successful co-location at Lancaster, St Annes, Darwen, Preston, and other Fire Stations had improved operational efficiency and fostered stronger inter-service relationships, ultimately benefiting Lancashire communities. The group had also proved successful in providing an understanding of each organisation's structures, processes, procedures and planned change in relation to the Estate and Asset Management. Current work included sharing of Fire Safety best practice from LFRS.
- **Fleet** – it was reported that Heads of Fleet departments across the three services met regularly and shared best practice, information and standards. Work took place to identify areas of similarity where collaboration would be beneficial and ensured that interoperability was factored into any strategic

fleet decisions. A specific workstream was looking at the introduction of electric vehicles into the fleet and the shared access to charging infrastructure.

- **Recruitment** – was the most recent subgroup set up with HR representatives from all three services. This group looked at opportunities for joint recruitment initiatives, improvements to vetting and reference protocol, reviewed best practice for supporting applicants with neurodiverse conditions and considered cost saving collaboration through shared recruitment events and recruitment material.
- **Procurement** – the LFRS Procurement department operated with several public sector collaborative procurement streams. Recent examples where savings have been made included the procurement of fire ground radios, Altberg boots (worn by all operational personnel) and gym equipment purchase. A blue light savings tracker was maintained by procurement to keep track of these savings. LFRS were currently undergoing a process to introduce new Breathing Apparatus sets across the service. These sets were purchased as part of a regional procurement process which offered not only value for money, but also improved resilience, standardisation, interoperability and governance across multiple organisations.

The Chair asked whether there was progress with Lancashire County Council in terms of collaboration and use of some of their sites. The ACFO responded that the Director of Corporate Services (LFRS) had looked at a number of suggested sites and felt they needed significant investment but that discussions continued about the options available for co-location and shared sites to be discussed in the capital working group.

County Councillor G Mirfin asked for a copy of the updated Blue Light collaboration document – the request was noted by the ACFO.

In terms of Fleet collaboration, County Councillor G Mirfin commented that there were many maintenance facilities in Council highways yards and there could be an opportunity for a shared service model. County Councillor G Mirfin suggested this was an area where economies could be made.

Regarding procurement, County Councillor G Mirfin expressed interest in finding out more detail about the partners with whom the LFRS procurement department collaborated and commented that it could be useful for them to engage in some joint procurement exercises with Lancashire County Council. The ACFO commented on the tight parameters the Service worked on within procurement and the usage of Blue Light frameworks. County Councillor G Mirfin enquired whether there could be improvements made to the procurement cycle in terms of tendering timeframes and indicated that there were Members with experience in this regard. The ACFO noted the comments for sharing with the Director of Corporate Services (DoCS).

4.3 Overall User Satisfaction

This indicator recorded the percentage of people who were satisfied with the service received from the total number of people surveyed. The Quarter 4 figure was noted as 98.56% which was above Service standard of 97.5%. It was noted that the people surveyed include those who had experienced an accidental

	dwelling fire, a commercial fire, or those who were present at a special service incident. During the quarter, 100 people were surveyed; 98 responded that they were very or fairly satisfied. County Councillor J Tetlow asked about the nature of negative user feedback and the ACFO gave an example of when the Service had gained entry to premises in support of the NHS Ambulance Service in cases of medical emergency and the resident of the property had objected. Resolved: - That the Committee noted and endorsed the Quarter 4 Measuring Progress report, including two positive and one negative exception.
5-26/27	North West Fire Control Quarter 4 2025-26 K Matthews, Head of Operations at North West Fire Control, was welcomed to the meeting by the Chair and provided Members with a summary of North West Fire Control's performance during Quarter 4 of 2025-26. Number of Emergency Calls In Quarter 4, the average mobilisation times to fire related incidents was 85 seconds. This represented a 3 second increase compared with the same quarter last year, but performance remained within 5 seconds of the 90 second KPI. There was a decrease from Quarter 3 in average call duration from 125 seconds. Incoming Administrative Calls The average call duration for Quarter 4 2025–2026 was 71.3 seconds, representing a decrease of 3 seconds compared with Quarter 3 2025–2026 and a 4-second reduction compared with the corresponding quarter in 2024–2025. Outgoing Administrative Calls Due to a loss in telephony reporting data between January to February 2026, the period contained gaps and anomalies within the data set. Incoming Group Request to Speak (GRTS) Group Request to Speak were incoming radio message transmissions from Fire and rescue service (FRS) appliances to Fire Control. Supporting crews at incidents was noted as one of NWFC's core functions. Analysis of Quarter 4 performance indicated that incoming GRTS averaged 69 seconds which represented a 3 second reduction compared with the previous quarter. NWFC continued to monitor performance trends and associated data. Average Time to Answer Emergency Calls Based on the available call data, average call answer times showed a strong and consistent improvement trajectory. In Quarter 4, the average dropped to 5.2 seconds, down from 6.8 seconds in Quarter 3. This built on significant year on year improvement from 8.0 seconds in Quarter 4 for the previous year and showed sustained improvements in responsiveness and the continued effectiveness of operational improvements in reducing customer call waiting times. Calls Not Requiring a Mobilisation Call Challenges were used by NWFC to ask set questions to decide if an

immediate response was required. 98% involved Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) or Gaining Entry for NWAS. Based on the average number of minutes spent travelling to AFAs and Gaining Entry, attending incidents and travelling back to station, data taken over an 8-day period highlighted this time equated to a 30-minute period. Quarter 4 had 3978 non-mobilisations, which equates to £220,421 in cost if one pump had been mobilised to these incidents.

Further data analysed from January to March 2026, indicated a total of 11,042 incidents (42%) were not mobilised to (including above mandatory FRS required scripted calls). This did not include repeat calls. If the same cost model as above was utilised, 11,042 incidents equated to £611,837 for Quarter 4. Call handling times for non-mobilisations were noted as often being more protracted. It was acknowledged these did not create physical savings for partners, however without the call challenge, activities such as training, exercising, community events and inspections would be impacted or would need to be resourced by other means.

Percentage of Shifts Covered

The figure for Quarter 4 was noted as being 79%. It was reported that no shift fell below critical or essential staffing thresholds or was without relevant supervision. Sickness had impacted staffing numbers, as had vacancies within the rota.

Skill Levels of Control Room Operators (CROs)

Proficiency levels remained strong, with 81% of staff assessed as 'Proficient or above' across the control room. This reflected a solid baseline of operational competence and capability within the teams. While this figure was expected to temporarily reduce in the next quarter due to the introduction of four new recruits in May 2026, this was a positive indicator of ongoing workforce expansion and investment in future capacity. The organisation continued to actively monitor experience levels within the control room to ensure safe and effective operations were maintained. The restructure of CRO pay during 2024-2025, as part of a broader strategy to enhance retention and strengthen long-term workforce stability, had demonstrated a clear and positive impact. Recruitment continued to be a key priority, with further CRO hiring initiatives actively progressed under the oversight of the Workforce Planning and Development Committee to support sustained operational resilience.

Skill Level of Supervisors

Competency remained high and stable. Temporary secondments had resulted in opportunities for other staff to act up in roles and succession planning was in place.

Absence – number of shifts lost per person

The number of shifts lost per person was 3.59. Consistent with trends seen throughout the year, mental health remained one of the leading causes of absence and accounted for 39% of all absences recorded in 2025-2026. This highlighted the ongoing importance of targeted wellbeing initiatives, early intervention, and supportive management practices. National Fire Control sickness data for Quarter 4 2025–2026 was not available.

Mobilising enquiries raised by Fire and Rescue Service

NWFC received approximately 28,500 emergency calls during Quarter 4, which resulted in 17 enquiries made regarding mobilisations. Four of these enquiries

determined that NWFC attributed to the cause, equating to 1 enquiry per 7125 emergency calls at a percentage of 0.01%.

Exercises and Formal debriefs

During Quarter 4, NWFC conducted a total of 30 exercises, of which 24 were facilitated and 6 were participation based. There were 6 debriefs held.

Overall Summary

- Performance was stable and improving
- Call handling was significantly improved
- Workforce capability was improving and strong.

Key risks

- System data issues had affected the data for this report – an internal debrief would discuss how this could be mitigated going forwards.
- Absence trends needed to be monitored, return to work meetings held and staff supported to return to the workforce.
- Recruitment – a campaign was planned for September 2026 and January 2027.

County Councillor J Tetlow asked whether there was confidence that the data presented was accurate, given some data had been lost due to a system failure. The Head of Operations (North West Fire Control) replied that the data loss was for a week in December and a three week period in January and February 2026. In relation to the call data provided, it was a relatively low loss and information had been generated from other sources such as the recording of 999 calls and mobilisation data.

County Councillor G Mirfin asked for details of the nature of the outage that took place. The Head of Operations (North West Fire Control) explained that it was due to a telephony and radio system upgrade and a resulting configuration issue. A fall back system (landline phones with no recording function) had been utilised but it was not possible to retrieve data from that system.

Councillor B Langford commented on the number of shifts lost due to personal mental health issues and asked whether staff had access to an employee engagement programme for support. The Head of Operations (North West Fire Control) confirmed this was in place as well as access to other support mechanisms and counselling provision. It was noted that control room staff were exposed to some traumatic calls and incidents and the service was conscious of the importance of providing appropriate wellbeing support for colleagues.

Councillor B Langford asked whether the various mental health support that staff accessed was felt to be successful. The Head of Operations (North West Fire Control) responded that the Business Support Team reviewed this and noted that there was success in getting staff back into work, sometimes with modified duties.

Councillor B Langford enquired about staff recruitment and staff turnover, what were the challenges, were exit interviews routinely held and were there any staffing resources that could be utilised from other services. The Head of Operations (North West Fire Control) responded that there had been recent improvements in staff

	recruitment and retention. It was shared that staff from NWAS and the Police had attended for interviews though call handling was noted as being different to that across other services. Salaries were competitive with other services following a review. Exit interviews were held and recent responses indicated that the role did not suit the individuals due to the nature of shift work. The Service was aware that the role was challenging but training, support and development opportunities for those who wished to progress were in place. Councillor B Langford asked if there were experience days offered for colleagues from other Blue Light services. The Head of Operations (North West Fire Control) responded that there were exercises such as familiarisation days offered to other agencies, as well as inter agency control room networking opportunities. Collaborative work across the emergency services had increased. County Councillor J Tetlow asked whether there was a drive to increase numbers of male recruits in the control room and enquired whether a hybrid working pattern was possible or was there a benefit from being based in the control room centre. The Head of Operations (North West Fire Control) responded that the control room role was not just about the call handling itself but also included incident management which benefitted from being part of a wider team based in the control room. In terms of male recruitment, a broader pool of applicants had emerged but recruitment was based on the experience and skills of individual candidates for the role. The Chair asked whether the data provided for the North West region could be broken down into Lancashire data and asked if there was an option to obtain information on the total amount of shifts lost and total number of individuals involved. The Head of Operations (North West Fire Control) indicated that she would look into obtaining the shift data. In terms of the call data however, this could not be separated into Lancashire calls but LFRS would already have access to data regarding the number of incidents. The Chair thanked the Head of Operations (North West Fire Control) for the report. Resolved: - That the Committee noted and endorsed the Quarter 4 performance report for North West Fire Control for 2025-26.
6-26/27	Road Safety Intervention Activity Annual Report 2025-26
	The ACFO handed over to the Prevention Support Officer who presented an update on activities undertaken in 2025-26. It was noted that the Road Thematic Road Safety Group continued to meet every quarter and there were strong links with CFA Member and Road Safety Champion. Updates were given on the following initiatives: • Lancashire Road Safety Partnership (LRSP) – LFRS continued to work with partners on the strategy ‘Ambition for Vision Zero’ to reduce those killed or seriously injured on the roads. LFRS had a particular role in the delivery of education. • Road Safety Core Prevention Offer – included the Road Sense road safety education programme delivered to Year 6 pupils. The focus was on

five key road safety themes selected to reflect Lancashire's issues with young people: In Car Safety, Pedestrian Safety, Cycle Safety, Be Safe Be Seen, Bus Safety, E-bikes & E-scooters. Positive feedback had been received from schools. Due to the increasing issues with E-bikes and E-scooters, the CFA Road Safety Champion agreed to an additional A5 fun activity sheet being printed to hand out at the end of the session which highlighted the law around these vehicles and fire safety considerations. During the current reporting period, 19,759 Year 6 pupils were recorded as receiving this input, with 593 sessions being delivered, the highest delivery since the package was developed.

- **'Wasted Lives' Young Driver Road Safety Education Programme** – LFRS was now the only delivery partner for Wasted Lives on behalf of LRSP. The programme was aimed at young and pre-drivers and aimed to influence behaviour and change attitudes. For the period 2025-2026, LFRS recorded delivery of the programme to 11,081 young people over 97 sessions. Whilst the focus was primarily on delivering in high schools, there had been an increase in the number of requests for delivery to apprentice groups and colleges following the removal of 'Safe Drive Stay Alive' intervention through LRSP. A Christmas Road Safety Campaign was also organised in conjunction with the military at Halton Barracks focused on Lancashire's Fatal 5 (Speeding, Drugs, Alcohol, Mobile Phones and Seatbelts). Over 90 soldiers attended a well-received half-day session. Statistically, the military lose more soldiers to RTCs than in war zones. Further engagement work had taken place through the delivery of Wasted Lives sessions to both Police and Air Cadet groups, covering pre-drivers and new drivers who might not be in mainstream schools. A project to deliver an adapted Wasted Lives session to Young Farmers groups, including the Crashed Car, continued following its launch in December.
- **'The Crashed Car'** – a complement to the 'Wasted Lives' provision which used a vehicle from a real incident where a fatality had occurred. During the 12-month reporting period, crashed car use had increased at Mosques during Friday Prayers and work had been undertaken in the Central, Eastern and Pennine areas, alongside the Imams to deliver key messages prior to prayers. This kind of engagement continued to improve, with Lancashire Council of Mosques working alongside the Service to reinforce the importance of key messages. This was highlighted at the first Road Safety Summit held in Pendle, which was broadcast on the radio to thousands of listeners nationwide. The event included a clear call to action for influential members of the community to come together and drive positive behaviour change.
- **Biker Down** – a free 3-hour course offered to members of the public, with three modules covered: Incident Management, First Aid and The Science of Being Seen. LFRS worked with LRSP to ensure delivery was complementary to Bike Safe, a Police-led initiative. During this reporting period 165 motorcyclists were killed or seriously injured. Lancashire's statistics showed riders were 72 times more likely to die on a motorcycle than in a car on our roads, which was higher than the national average of 60. There were 384 attendees at 18 Biker Down sessions in the last 12-months and appetite for the courses continued to grow. The pre and post questionnaire continued to show very positive behaviour change. This year,

Biker Down was able to purchase First Aid Kits through the CFA Road Safety Champion budget. Over the last 12-months, the team had developed links with a motorbike franchise which supported delivery for six months and new links had since been made with another franchise based in Blackpool.

- **Alive to Drive Events** – over the last 12-months, five of the main Road Safety Summer Events have taken place across the county: in Leyland, Preston, Blackpool, Morecambe and Blackburn. Over the years, the event had grown significantly with support from many partners. The initial aim had been to encourage people to sign up to the Institute of Advanced Motorist/ Motorcyclist courses, and whilst this was still a key focus, the event had expanded to ensure there is relevant information for all ages and types of road users. The pinnacle of the event was the RTC demonstration. This was a multi-agency demonstration between LFRS, NWS and Lancashire Constabulary which allowed members of the public to see what happens inside a road closure during an incident. The events also provided the opportunity to interweave key safety messages around Lancashire's Fatal 5 and the factors which contribute most to serious and fatal road traffic collisions. This year's events also featured a display of illegal E-bikes/ E-scooters to highlight the dangers they pose, explained which vehicles were road legal, and outlined the implications of being prosecuted for using illegal vehicles. This complemented Lancashire Constabulary Operation Centurion, which had a primary focus on anti-social driving. Alarming, these illegal vehicles were involved in six fatalities and 200 injuries last year on Lancashire's roads. A partnership was also established with Global Ardour, who now sponsored the events and provided a scrap car for the RTC demonstration free of charge.
- **Road Safety Week 2025** – this was very successful and busy, with extensive activity delivered through a multi-agency approach. It included the delivery of Wasted Lives sessions in colleges, high schools, and for targeted groups of apprentices. There was an increase in road safety activity across each area, with very targeted education taking place. Each area was tasked with delivering two Wasted Lives sessions to at risk groups (Year 10 or 11 in high schools or apprentice groups), many areas did more than asked. During this reporting period, the LFRS Biker Down team also represented the programme at the NEC National Motorcycle Show. Over the course of the show, an estimated 80,000 people attended. Social media posts reached nearly 60,000 people, with over 2,000 engagements, allowing messages to be shared while also highlighting the key road safety campaign work delivered. In addition, through a partnership with EG Garages, an animated Fatal 5 clip was played on forecourts across the UK. The same clip was also shown on the big screens at all Blackburn Rovers matches at half time, following a road safety awareness event in the run-up to Christmas which included an RTC demonstration.

In summary, the last 12-month period was a very positive period for road safety education and engagement. Road safety education has been delivered to around 34,000 people in schools, colleges, workplaces and at events. The Service continued to be an active member of the LRSP.

In terms of priorities for 2025-26, there were plans for further development of

	engagement at primary and secondary school and higher education level and with groups outside these settings, including the Child and Youth Justice Service, to deliver bespoke Wasted Lives sessions. Evaluation of all initiatives and campaigns was ongoing to ensure these were targeted appropriately, influenced positive behaviour change and presented value for money. Each road death costed society £2.3 million but more importantly, behind each death was a bereaved family whose lives were changed forever. Service staff were well placed to educate local communities and reinforce that road safety was everyone's responsibility. The Chair thanked the Prevention Support Officer for the comprehensive report. County Councillor G Mirfin confirmed that County Councillor J Ash had now replaced County Councillor J Fox as Road Safety Champion. Resolved: - That the Committee noted and endorsed the report.
7-26/27	Annual Review of Key Performance Indicator 3.3 - Fire Engine Availability
	The ACFO presented the report. Further to the scrutiny of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) by Members of the CFA Performance Committee, the Service was asked to reflect on the suitability of the 'Fire Engine Availability' KPIs with particular reference to the On Call (OC) measure. On the 17 July 2023, Members of the CFA Planning Committee approved the recommendation to combine the two Wholetime (WT) and OC availability performance measures, into a single station-based performance measure (resolution 08/23). Members agreed to change the previous KPIs (3.3.1) WT availability target of 99.5% and the (3.3.2) OC target of an aspirational 95%, into a combined (KPI 3.3) 90% first pump availability target across the 39 fire stations in Lancashire. It was agreed this would be reviewed annually. Members were recommended to maintain the combined 90% first pump availability target across the 39 fire stations in Lancashire. It was also proposed that the requirement for an annual review be removed. This 'Availability KPI' reported on the combined availability of the primary asset at each of the 39 locations, in percentage terms, whether that was a WT or OC appliance. This aligned with the Response Standard KPI approach which measured 1st pump response times and gave a true indication of the speed of response and first intervention provided across each of the 39 risk areas. As such the KPI reported availability by virtue of all first pumps at WT, flexi day crewed and day crewing plus stations in addition to the first pumps at stand-alone OC stations. At the national level, on-call availability remained a significant challenge, as emphasised by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). Ongoing efforts, both locally and nationally, were focused on addressing these key issues. Within the Service, considerable initiatives were underway to enhance recruitment, training, retention, and the wider use of on-call personnel, all while maintaining

	realistic role expectations given the limited training hours available each week. The total availability over 2025-26 was 89.55%, slightly below the 90% target. However, availability had increased over the year with the latest quarter being above the standard: Quarter 1 – 89.32% Quarter 2 – 88.58% Quarter 3 – 89.67% Quarter 4 – 90.67% Four months of the year recorded above the standard: April 90.08%, December 90.53%, January 91.78%, and March 90.29%. The Service KPI change appeared to provide an appropriate balance of oversight and ambition for fire engines crewed by both WT and OC firefighters. The 90% availability performance standard was supplemented by further internal KPIs for use by local managers to drive contractual performance and ensure value for money. County Councillor A Riggott moved the report which was seconded by County Councillor J Tetlow and all members voted in favour. Resolved: - That the Committee recommended to maintain the combined 90% first pump availability target across the 39 fire stations in Lancashire. That the requirement for an annual review be removed.
8-26/27	Date of Next Meeting
	The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Tuesday 15 September 2026 at 10:00 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood. Further meeting dates were noted for Wednesday 9 December 2026 and Wednesday 3 March 2027.

**LFRS HQ
Fulwood**

**D Howell
Monitoring Officer to CFA**