Appendix 6

Response Strategy 2027-2032

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Executive Summary

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's (LFRS) Response Strategy 2027–2032 sets out how we will provide a safe, effective and timely emergency response that is aligned to risk and demand. It supports delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) by translating strategic priorities into response activity that helps make Lancashire safer. The strategy recognises that Lancashire is changing through its built environment, demographics, technology and climate impacts, and places risk intelligence, data and evidence at the heart of planning, investment and operational decision-making.

The strategy focuses on four connected areas: operational response, operational competence, operational preparedness, and operational effectiveness including continuous improvement. We will work to ensure the right people, skills, resources, vehicles, equipment and command arrangements are in the right place at the right time. This includes maintaining fire engine and staff availability, strengthening on-call recruitment and retention, delivering realistic risk-based training, supporting firefighter fitness and safety, and ensuring staff are prepared for current and emerging risks, including climate-related impacts such as wildfire and flooding.

Preparedness is central to the strategy. We will maintain accurate and accessible risk information, strengthen planning with partners through methods including Lancashire Resilience Forum arrangements, align response activity with prevention and protection work, and improve resilience for major incidents, severe weather, terrorism, infrastructure failure and other disruption. The strategy also highlights the importance of national resilience capabilities, business continuity planning, operational assurance and learning from incidents, exercises and debriefs.

Delivery will be managed through annual service planning, department, district and station plans, with progress monitored through performance reporting, strategic reviews, risk management, assurance activity and governance arrangements. Measures will include attendance times, fire engine and staff availability, training completion, learning actions, business continuity testing, incident outcomes and evidence of continuous improvement. The strategy will be reviewed annually so that it remains responsive to changes in risk, demand, legislation, policy, funding and organisational design.

Introduction

Lancashire is constantly changing through our evolving built environment, demographics, emerging technology and climate impacts. To continue making Lancashire safer, we must put risk intelligence at the heart of how we prioritise, invest and lead. This strategy uses our latest Strategic Assessment of Risk and risk registers to evidence what we do through operational response. It sets out a clear golden thread from risk to outcomes, actions, and measures.

We will provide a safe, effective and timely emergency response, aligned to risk and demand. Our approach ensures we have the right people, skills and resources in the right place at the right time, supported by strong leadership, risk intelligence and continuous improvement. Our ability to respond quickly and competently relies on effective communication between operational crews, Officers and North West Fire Control. Through the receipt and management of emergency calls, mobilising of resources and provision of incident support, Fire Control plays a pivotal role in delivering an effective emergency response across Lancashire.

We aim for operational effectiveness before an incident, during mobilisation and attendance, and after the event through assurance, debrief, learning and improvement. This ensures response activity remains quick, safe, effective, sustainable and focused on reducing risk and harm across Lancashire.

Our achievements from the 2022–2027 strategy provide an important foundation for this new strategy, demonstrating how LFRS has continued to strengthen operational response, resilience and learning in line with changing risk and demand.

Response Strategy 2022–2027 – Key Achievements

Since 2022, we have continued to strengthen how we prepare for, respond to and learn from operational incidents.

Key achievements include:

- Maintained and reviewed operational guidance, procedures, training and exercising arrangements so that firefighters are supported to respond safely and consistently.
- Strengthened operational assurance, debriefing and learning processes, to identify good practice, address areas for improvement and share learning locally, regionally and nationally.
- Improved Site Specific Risk Information to support firefighter safety and operational planning by ensuring crews have access to relevant risk information for higher-risk sites and premises.
- Maintained resources in the right place at the right time, enabling us to respond to a wide range of incidents.

- Progressed work to make operational response more digitally enabled, including appliance digitisation, rota management, pre-alerting, dynamic cover and mobilisation-related technology.
- Worked with North West Fire Control, invested in command units, aerial capability and specialist assets, to strengthen situational awareness, resource management, mobilisation and incident command.
- Maintained and strengthened multi-agency working, JESIP, national resilience capabilities, including Urban Search and Rescue and high-volume pumping, alongside mutual aid arrangements and business continuity planning, testing and training.
- Invested in drone and robotics technology enhancing our operational capability and fire fighter safety.

Community Risk Management Plan

The Response Strategy supports delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2027–2032 by setting out how we will respond to fires and other emergencies quickly, safely and competently. The Response Strategy is one of six core strategies and whilst our Prevention and Protection Strategies aim to reduce the frequency and impact of emergencies, the Response Strategy ensures we are prepared and able to respond quickly and effectively when those moments arise. The Strategy translates the CRMP's strategic aims into response activity that is aligned to risk and demand, supports firefighter and public safety, and helps deliver the best possible outcomes for Lancashire's communities.

Our Purpose

Our purpose is to **make Lancashire safer**. It is what we are here for. We are committed to ensuring that everything we do contributes to improving the safety of Lancashire's diverse communities.

Our Priorities

- Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer
- Preventing fires and other emergencies from happening
- Protecting communities through safer buildings
- **Responding to fires and other emergencies quickly and competently**
- Using digital, data and technology to drive continuous improvement
- Delivering value for money in how we use our resources



Implementation

This strategy will be delivered through annual service planning, department plans, district plans and station plans. Each year, delivery actions, milestones and measures will be aligned to available resources, emerging risk, corporate governance and the outcomes set out in the CRMP.

Delivery will be overseen through the Service's governance framework, with progress monitored through performance reporting, strategic reviews, risk management arrangements and the scrutiny of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA). The strategy will be reviewed annually and refreshed when there is a significant change in risk, legislation, policy, funding or organisational design.

Legislation, Guidance and Best Practice

Our Response Strategy will continue to align to relevant legislation and accepted good practice as well as the direction of government and fire sector bodies, including but not limited to the following:

- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Fire and Rescue National Framework 2018
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- National Risk Register 2026
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013
- National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Operational Response and Fire Control Guidance
- Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP)
- National Resilience arrangements and mutual aid provisions
- Fire Standards Board
- Audit and assurance provided by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

Area of focus 1: Operational Response

Deliver a sustainable, efficient and effective response model that enables a quick and proportionate response, with people and resources aligned to risk and demand.

We will ensure the right people and resources are available in the right place at the right time, aligned to the risks and demands faced by Lancashire's communities. This means maintaining a sustainable response model that supports our attendance times, enables an effective response across a range of incident types, and ensures our wholetime, on-call and specialist capabilities remain available when they are needed most.

Our approach will be agile, risk-based and evidence-led, using a blended fleet and flexible deployment model that reflects the types of incidents we attend. We will strengthen on-call recruitment, availability and retention, particularly at times of peak demand, while improving workforce planning in line with retirement profiles, succession planning, emerging risks and the People Strategy. We will also maintain a global view of staffing and appliance availability, supported by accurate forecasting and real-time systems, so that resources can be deployed efficiently and operational demand can be met. We will develop our response model considering routine availability to meet day-to-day demand, and surge capacity to increase the response when demand escalates for prolonged-incident resilience. We will also consider concurrent-incident resilience to manage simultaneous incidents while maintaining appropriate emergency cover.

National Resilience funded capabilities will continue to be maintained and assured against relevant performance and assurance requirements.

Our ability to respond quickly and competently relies on effective communication between operational crews, Officers and North West Fire Control. Through the receipt and management of emergency calls, mobilising of resources and provision

of incident support, Fire Control plays a pivotal role in delivering an effective emergency response across Lancashire.

What we will do:

- Ensure response arrangements deliver effective attendance and performance across incident types.
- Use all operational staff flexibly across duty systems and functions to improve response, resilience and availability.
- Maintain sustainable wholetime and on-call availability, strengthening recruitment and retention where risk and demand require it.
- Use real-time visibility and forecasting through digital systems to manage staffing and appliance availability according to risk and demand.
- Align the workforce plan to retirement profiles, competence requirements, emerging risks, and succession planning.
- Maintain National Resilience capabilities, effective mutual aid and cross border arrangements, assured against national requirements.
- Adopt and evaluate flexible, risk-based deployment models, using pilots and evidence where appropriate.
- Develop and test arrangements to add surge capacity and sustain response resilience during prolonged or simultaneous incidents, within our available capabilities and while maintaining risk-based emergency cover.

How we will measure progress:

- Appliance and staff availability levels
- Call handling times
- Attendance times
- Number of mobilisations and usage
- Review of response arrangements i.e. Response Review and Special Appliances
- On-call recruitment, retention and availability trends

Area of focus 2: Operational Competence

Ensure our workforce is competent, confident and adaptable, able to respond safely to current and emerging risks.

Competence is essential to ensuring our workforce is able to respond safely, confidently and effectively to current and emerging risks. We will make sure our personnel are well trained, capable and adaptable, with regular and realistic training. This includes training at high-risk locations, working with neighbouring fire stations, Services and partner agencies, and ensuring that training remains aligned to local and national operational learning. We recognise the importance of effective multi

agency working for the successful, safe and effective resolution of incidents and managing the impacts on the community.

We will continue to embed organisational learning from incidents, training events and investigations so that performance improves and firefighter safety is strengthened. Our approach will support the Service to anticipate and respond to emerging risks, including the growing impacts of climate change and other environmental risks, while maintaining specialist National Resilience capabilities and embedding them within training, exercising and operational practice. The Response and People Strategies will remain closely aligned so that operational response models are sustainable, command capability is resilient, and staff are physically prepared for the demands of their role through ongoing fitness, wellbeing and medical arrangements.

What we will do:

- Deliver risk-based, realistic training aligned to operational requirements.
- Increase training at high-risk sites and multi-agency exercises.
- Embed organisational learning from incidents, exercises, investigations, national learning and public inquiries.
- Align training to local and national learning and risk intelligence.
- Maintain clear, role-based competency frameworks, with appropriate validation and revalidation of risk critical skills.
- Maintain and assure incident command competence and decision-making across all command levels.
- Build capability to respond to emerging risks, including climate driven, technological and environmental risks.
- Maintain fitness and wellbeing
- Continue to develop specialist capability.
- Deliver training in a flexible way, using digital and innovation opportunities to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.
- Invest in training facilities that meets the needs of the emerging and current risks

How we will measure progress:

- Staff competence for risk-critical skills.
- Completion and assurance of risk-based training and exercise plans including multi-agency and cross border.
- Implementation and evidence of embedding learning actions.
- Operational fitness and relevant workforce health indicators.

Area of focus 3: Operational Preparedness

Be a risk-informed, intelligence led and well-prepared organisation, ready to respond to routine incidents but also complex, large-scale and emerging incidents.

We will ensure that risk data is current and of a high quality, consistent and accessible to staff so that operational planning, training and decision-making are informed by the latest evidence. Our response activity will be aligned with Prevention and Protection priorities, ensuring that local plans, district activity and operational arrangements reflect the risks identified across Lancashire.

We will continue to strengthen multi-agency planning with Lancashire Resilience Forum partners and neighbouring fire and rescue services, particularly in relation to the highest risk premises and foreseeable disruptive events within the county. This includes improving resilience for large-scale incidents, industrial action, severe weather, terrorism, infrastructure failure and other threats identified through local and national risk assessment. This will be achieved through regular risk reviews, business continuity planning, exercising, debriefing and learning. We will assess how effectively our people, systems and partners work together to deliver an emergency response. We will also assess the impact of concurrent, cascading and systemic disruption, and dependencies on control, communications, digital systems, suppliers, utilities and partner capacity. Using learning from JESIP and Local Resilience Forum we will identify risks to interoperability and inform improvements, taking account of the external factors that could affect our ability to respond.

We will develop our capability to respond to the evolving risk landscape, including climate-driven and environmental risks, ensuring staff are trained, equipped and supported to apply learning from incidents and exercises. We will also consider equality and vulnerability within relevant planning and evaluation so that we understand whether response and recovery arrangements create differential impacts for particular communities or groups.

What we will do:

- Maintain accurate, accessible and consistent risk information.
- Strengthen multi-agency and cross border planning through Lancashire Resilience Forum partners, neighbouring services, North West Fire Control and Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) arrangements.
- Integrate data, local knowledge and intelligence across Prevention, Protection and Response to improve outcomes for communities and strengthen operational decision making.
- Enhance preparedness for major incidents, severe weather, climate driven events, terrorism, infrastructure failure and other foreseeable disruption.

- Strengthen business continuity and organisational resilience.
- Develop staff to strengthen resilience within communities.
- Understand differential impacts and ensure emergency response and recovery arrangements remain risk led and equitable.

How we will measure progress:

- Quality assurance of risk information including currency date and accuracy
- Delivery and assurance of multi-agency, cross border and major incident plans and exercises
- Outcomes and learning from business continuity and emergency preparedness testing
- Assurance of preparedness for major and emerging risks, including identified equality impacts

Area of focus 4: Operational effectiveness and continuous improvement

Deliver high-performing, learning-driven emergency response, achieving the best outcomes for communities.

We will bring together operational response, operational competence and operational preparedness so that we are operationally effective providing a safe, effective, efficient service aligned to risk and demand. This means ensuring the right people, skills, vehicles, equipment and command arrangements are in place to respond quickly and effectively to routine, complex and major incidents.

Our approach will be underpinned by strong leadership, effective incident command, operational assurance and a culture of continuous learning. Our Organisational Assurance Framework will provide a structured approach to understanding performance, identifying risks, assuring operational standards and driving continuous improvement. We will use performance information, key performance indicators, audits, debriefs, reviews and organisational learning to evaluate how effectively we perform and ensure lessons are translated into meaningful and sustainable change. By embedding learning before, during and after incidents, we will strengthen firefighter and public safety, improve operational effectiveness and ensure the Service continues to adapt to evolving risks, demand and community needs. Learning and assurance outcomes will inform policy, training, equipment, command practice and future planning, ensuring continuous improvement across the organisation. Learning will be applied across the entire operational response, from call handling and mobilisation through to incident resolution and recovery and will be shared locally, regionally, and nationally where appropriate to support consistency, accountability and effectiveness in service delivery.

We will continue to use a horizon-scanning approach to identify emerging risks and assess their potential impact on our ability to respond. We will use the findings to inform the annual service plan and training and organisational development plan, adapting our response capability and workforce development aligned to these risks.

Innovation is central to how we respond to emerging risks, improve firefighter safety, operational effectiveness, and organisational resilience. Our investment in drones and robotics, specialist vehicles and equipment, enhanced climate-response capabilities, and digital systems supports safer, more informed and effective operations. Looking ahead, embedding innovation in our culture and decision-making will be vital to operational response: using data, learning and collaboration to anticipate changing risks, test emerging technologies such as heavy-lift drones, strengthen resilience and ensure our people have the skills and tools to protect Lancashire's communities.

Operational Effectiveness ensures that when incidents occur, our response is:

- **Safe** – protecting firefighters and the public
- **Effective** – resolving incidents and reducing harm
- **Efficient** – using resources wisely and proportionately
- **Learning-driven** – continuously improving through experience

What we will do:

- Embed continuous improvement through operational assurance, command assurance, debriefing, evaluation and organisational learning.
- Use a horizon-scanning approach to identify emerging risks and assess their potential impact on our ability to respond.
- Strengthen incident command, leadership and decision-making.
- Use performance data, operational outcomes, assurance findings and key performance indicators to drive improvement.
- Maintain a strong focus on firefighter and public safety, including understanding differential community impacts where relevant.
- Work with North West Fire Control and partners to learn from the complete operational response, from call receipt and mobilisation

How we will measure progress:

- Incident outcomes, operational effectiveness and evidence of appropriate resource deployment.
- Firefighter and public safety indicators, including near misses and operational learning.
- Completion, embedding and effectiveness of assurance and improvement actions including public inquiries, Joint and National learning, and Regulation 28s.

- Evidence that learning and evaluation have resulted in continuous and sustained improvement

Monitoring and Evaluation

The strategy and its priorities will be monitored through performance reporting, strategic reviews, risk management arrangements, assurance activity, organisational learning, business continuity testing and established governance arrangements to ensure we continue to deliver a safe, effective and continually improving operational response.

The Areas of focus set out in this Response Strategy are measurable and will be subject to regular monitoring and review. This will enable us to understand how the strategy is being implemented, track progress against agreed priorities, and assess how effectively response arrangements are supporting community safety, operational effectiveness and resilience.

Progress will be reviewed annually and reflected through service planning, local delivery plans and established reporting arrangements, with actions refreshed where there are significant changes in risk, demand, legislation, policy, funding or organisational design.

The strategy will be reviewed no later than one year after publication and then annually during the strategy period. Progress will also be reported through the Annual Service Report.

Performance Measures

We will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of our response activities through relevant performance information, including Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), operational data, assurance activity, learning from incidents and exercises, seasonal trends and community risk information. This will help us to assess whether response arrangements remain risk-based, resilient, effective and aligned to the needs of Lancashire's communities.

The measures used to monitor delivery will include KPIs:

- Overall Activity
- Critical Fire Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance
- Critical Special Service Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance
- Fire Engine Availability

Performance information will be reviewed regularly through established service performance arrangements to identify progress, emerging risks, learning and opportunities for improvement.

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Term / Acronym	Meaning
Annual Service Plan	The yearly plan that sets out what LFRS will do. It shows how the strategy will be turned into action each year.
Assurance	Checks to make sure work is safe, effective and improving. It helps LFRS learn from experience and improve how it responds.
BCP	Business Continuity Planning: planning how essential services will continue during disruption.
CFA	Lancashire Combined Fire Authority. The public body that oversees Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service
Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)	LFRS's main plan for understanding and reducing fire and rescue risks in Lancashire. This Response Strategy helps deliver the CRMP 2027–2032.
District plans	Local plans for different areas of Lancashire.
Dynamic cover	Moving resources to where they are most needed. It helps LFRS maintain emergency cover when demand changes.
High-volume pumping	Specialist equipment used to move large amounts of water. It supports response to major incidents such as flooding.
Incident command	The way an emergency incident is managed.
Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP)	National guidance that helps emergency services work well together.
Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	A measure used to track performance.
Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF)	A partnership of organisations that plan for emergencies in Lancashire.
Mobilisation	Taking an emergency call and sending the right resources.
MTFS	Medium-term Financial Strategy
National Resilience	Specialist support that can be used for major incidents locally or nationally.

National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT)	A national team that checks specialist resilience capabilities.
North West Fire Control (NWFC)	The control room service that helps handle emergency calls and send fire crews.
OAG	Organisational Assurance Group.
OARS	On-Call Availability, Recruitment and Skills software. A system used to support on-call recruitment, availability, skills planning and training prioritisation.
OA reporting	Operational Assurance reporting.
On-call staff	Firefighters who respond when needed, often from home or another workplace.
Operational assurance	Checking how emergency response is working in practice.
REP	Response and Emergency Planning.
Risk intelligence	Using evidence and information to understand risk.
Service Delivery	The part of LFRS that provides frontline operational services.
Service planning	Planning the actions, resources and measures needed to deliver services. It helps turn this strategy into practical delivery.
Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI)	Important information about specific buildings or sites. It helps crews understand risks before and during incidents.
Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAoR)	A key source of evidence about current and future risks in Lancashire. It helps shape priorities, planning and resource decisions.
Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)	Specialist rescue support for complex incidents, such as collapsed buildings. It is one of LFRS's specialist national resilience capabilities.
Wholetime staff	Full-time firefighters. They are part of LFRS's emergency response workforce.

Document Control

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26/08/2026	V2.0	Amended to reflect the wording in the CRMP 27-32 consultation draft
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15/09/2026	V2.3	Updates further to consultation and feedback from EVGs and rep bodies
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