

Annual Service Plan

The year ahead

In 2017, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service maintained a secure financial position and stable environment which enabled us to keep investing in people, training and equipment.

Our emergency cover review confirmed that we are able to respond safely and effectively and that no changes to staffing or fire engines are required. This leaves us in a strong position not only to face future challenges but to lead improvements and innovation in our sector.

The year ahead promises further transformation in the way we work where it allows us to improve services for our communities, reduce risk to vulnerable people and provide more value for money. The skills, resilience and dedication of our staff enable the Service to lead the way forward, rather than waiting to be pulled along by the Government's reform agenda.

Our financial position remains stable and secure, with reserves in place to offset the majority of financial challenges that lay ahead. We have an excellent track record on efficiency savings and will continue to look for ways to be more efficient to allow us to keep re-investing in service improvements.

Reinvesting in people, training and equipment

We remain steadfast in ensuring that our people have the best equipment, training and development opportunities available and this year will be no exception. We have a range of investment planned that will improve operational and training experiences alongside advancements in our leadership programme and provision of new technical rescue jackets, helmets and gloves.

Staying operationally effective and efficient

Staying at the forefront of operational excellence remains a priority, particularly in an increasingly complex and demanding environment. Our continued investment in training and equipment supports this alongside a commitment to collectively drive forward improvements and raise standards in performance.

Organisational culture based on values

The Fire and Rescue Service continues to evolve in line with the changing landscape of risk and demand in our communities. This is a challenging future but our workforce is expertly trained with adaptable skills. The future role of the firefighter could see us delivering more services that focus on prevention and intervention, in ways that make best use of our skills, equipment and experience. With clear values and strong leadership at the heart of the Service, we will be well positioned to face these challenges.

Building stronger collaborations

We have a strong history of working with others to make a real difference by improving services for local communities. In the year ahead we will seek new opportunities to collaborate in ways we haven't before whilst keeping in focus our purpose to make Lancashire safer.

We are a strongly performing and forward-thinking Service. We have some of the best firefighting equipment and training facilities in the country, our targeted prevention and protection activity continues to reduce the number of people and properties harmed by fire and other emergencies, and we have introduced new ways of working with partners that are making a real difference to people's lives.

All our priorities in the year ahead aim to improve services for the people of Lancashire, particularly the most high risk and vulnerable members of our communities.

Chris Kenny

Chief Fire Officer

Preventing fire and other emergencies from happening, protecting people and property when they happen and responding quickly and competently

We believe that the best way to make Lancashire safer is to prevent fires and other emergencies from happening in the first place. We will continue to focus our efforts on helping people start safe, live safe, age safe and be safe on our roads, targeting our resources at those most vulnerable.

We will also continue to support local businesses to help them reduce fire risk and comply with legislation, and will lead effective enforcement activity where businesses fail to commit to safety.

We integrate how we prevent and protect people across life's stages with ensuring that when an emergency happens we respond quickly and competently.

Evaluate tools to strengthen our response

Last year's Emergency Cover Review endorsed proposals to adopt a pre-alert policy and evaluate a dynamic cover tool to determine the potential to strengthen our collaborative response arrangements.

We will:

- Trial a pre-alerting system to measure the impact on performance levels of early mobilisation messages.
- Evaluate use of a dynamic cover tool on pump attendance times through geographical resource allocation.

Strengthen our operational assurance

To make sure that the Service operates as safely and effectively as it can, we will continue to build strong planning, preparedness, response and learning processes. We will audit our work to attest to how well we perform and assure strong foundations for the Service's aim, priorities and values.

We will:

- Prepare for inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, a new programme established under the Government's fire service reform agenda to assess effectiveness, efficiency and leadership.
- Review National Operational Guidance and make amendments (where necessary) to Standard Operating Procedures and associated training activity, which will be aligned to new national training specifications.
- Develop an assurance monitoring system app that collates information and intelligence from multiple sources, as well as linking to national learning.

Integrate water towers into our fleet

Following evaluation last year, the water tower appliance (stinger) was found to significantly enhance firefighter safety and firefighting capability. It also minimises damage and associated costs to businesses and homes, and will be adopted into our fleet.

We will:

- Adopt the water tower trialled at Blackburn and purchase a second vehicle that will be stationed at Skelmersdale.

Replace incident command units

Our incident command units are critical to how we manage complex or large scale incidents. We are reviewing what we will need in the future with a view to replacing them with leading-edge resources that are compatible with other agencies.

We will:

- Produce a specification for improved capability and technologically enhanced command support units, and explore potential for shared use and investment with partners.

Emergency Services Network (ESN)

This is a national project to replace the communications network used by the police, fire and rescue, and ambulance services in the UK. The new ESN will provide voice communication and broadband data services.

We will:

- Continue to support national and regional development of the ESN to prepare us for local delivery once the project is ready to commence.

Optimise availability of front-line services

The Service operates a number of wholetime and retained shift systems to provide efficient cover that meets the risk and demand in Lancashire. Reviewing how we manage staffing levels across the shift systems will help us maintain availability of our front-line services more effectively, particularly during periods of high demand and absence.

We will:

- Review rota management systems to ensure optimum staffing levels are maintained.

Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer

Develop a strong organisational culture where our values are understood

We have established STRIVE values to guide the professional behaviours we expect of all our staff. Collectively we all STRIVE to achieve our purpose of making Lancashire safer by making sure what we do is guided by strong principles of service, trust, respect, integrity, value and empowerment. Effective performance management is essential to help staff link their own roles and behaviours to the aim, priorities and values of the Service.

We will:

- Continue to consult with staff and line managers on the most effective way to undertake the appraisal conversation.
- Performance manage the completion of appraisals ensuring that all members of staff have the opportunity to receive and give feedback.
- Develop a range of tools to improve the appraisal conversation.

Encourage and listen to employee voice

We want our people to be central to the advancement of LFRS and recognise the positive influence on both our employees' wellbeing and organisational success when people at all levels can contribute their views, expertise and ideas.

We will:

- Survey staff for their views on what it's like to work for the Service, leadership and management, training and development, recognition and communication in order to inform future activity in these areas.
- Create a new intranet incorporating social networking to connect staff across the Service. It will provide a central location for the vast majority of our information and provide a forum for expression of views and knowledge sharing.

Develop our leaders

We recognise that effective leaders with the right behaviours and competencies are crucial to the success of the Service. Good performers, effective decision makers and leaders who can deliver change quickly and successfully demands excellent leadership qualities. Our three areas of focus continue to be creating a shared understanding of what leadership means within LFRS, developing leadership and displaying leadership.

We will:

- Deliver a leadership development day which will launch our Annual Service Plan to set out our direction in terms of a positive, ambitious and realistic future and focus on dealing with change, developing resilience and increasing staff engagement.
- Deliver leadership development to all crew managers on how to create a climate for challenge and high performance, including having difficult conversations with staff in a positive and developmental way, by using influence and feedback.

Promote equality, diversity and inclusion within the Service

To ensure we serve our communities as well as we possibly can, we will recruit, develop and retain a workforce that is inclusive and reflects Lancashire's diverse communities.

We will:

- Ensure that opportunities to work at LFRS are promoted to all our diverse communities.
- Consult communities to shape our work in this area through our equality, diversity and inclusion steering groups.

Expand apprenticeship opportunities

We welcome apprentices in the Service and have already recruited in areas including IT, finance, human resources, service development and fleet and engineering. With the establishment of new apprenticeship frameworks we want to expand the number we offer to include operational firefighting, business safety and community fire safety.

We will:

Increase the number and range of apprenticeships available in the Service subject to the availability of new national standards.

Build a strong and resilient workforce

The physical and mental health and wellbeing of our staff is at the forefront of our efforts to ensure that our workforce is equipped to deal with the changing demands of the Service. Our firefighters have the highest standards of fitness aided by facilities and physical training instructors at stations and annual testing. We will continue to support staff in both their physical fitness and mental wellbeing through our health and wellbeing framework.

We will:

- Embed a trauma risk management system (TRiM) that will replace critical incident debriefing and be delivered by trained practitioners from across the Service.
- Review research on the effects of contaminants at fires on firefighters' health.

Delivering value for money in how we use our resources

Invest in training and equipment

We are steadfast in ensuring that our people have the best equipment and training available. This year will see upgraded facilities along with advanced technology to provide better training experiences.

We will:

- Continue to scope the development of area-based training hubs across the county.
- Extend the workshop and garages at Service Training Centre (STC).
- Replace Midgley House facilities at STC.
- Introduce new XVR virtual reality training software to enhance simulation-based operational training at STC.
- Develop wider ranging incident command software.

- Review duty rig with a view to providing alternative clothing and boots that are more suited to operational activity that isn't fire-related, such as road traffic collisions and missing person searches.

Collaboration with Lancashire Constabulary

Following a long history of successful partnership working with Lancashire Constabulary and a legal duty to do so, we now have a formal agreement in place to explore closer operational collaboration while maintaining separate entities.

We will:

- Explore new ways to collaborate where we can make a real difference by improving services for local communities, decreasing risk to vulnerable people and demand on services, and providing better value for money.

Property collaborations and co-location

We have worked with Lancashire Police and North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) for many years to share accommodation and identify opportunities for the joint development of property in order to co-locate staff and resources.

We will:

- Complete building of Lancaster's new combined fire and ambulance station.
- Continue scoping a new fire station at Preston potentially in partnership with NWAS.

Information management strategy

Work to modernise how we collect, store and use information will take large strides forward this year through our information management strategy.

We will:

- Improve records management by sorting and reducing paper and digital files, and creating a central, accessible document store using the SharePoint platform.
- Implement a new integrated planning and performance (IPP) system that will extract data from a number of locations to provide information about an incident in one place.
- Review processes that involve collecting personal information from members of the public and partners, to ensure that we protect personal and sensitive data, and record and process it in line with General Data Protection Regulations.