

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 19 March 2018, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Councillors

M Parkinson (Chairman)
I Brown
F De Molfetta (for D Coleman)
J Eaton
N Hennessy
F Jackson (Vice-Chair)
M Khan
T Martin
D O'Toole
J Shedwick

Officers

C Kenny, Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)
J Johnston, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)
D Russel, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)
B Norman, Head of Service Development (LFRS)
M Nolan, Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority
D Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer (LFRS)

15/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Coleman.

16/17 DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None received.

17/17 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 27 November 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18/17 ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN 2018/19

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented a report on the Service's Annual Service Plan for 2018/19. This year's Annual Service Plan continued to provide Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service (LFRS) with the platform to highlight the priority activities that the Service intended to deliver over the upcoming year.

The year ahead promised further transformation in the way LFRS worked to improve services for our communities, reduce risk to vulnerable people and provided more value for money. The skills, resilience and dedication of staff enabled the LFRS to lead the way forward, rather than waiting to be pulled along by the Government's reform agenda.

The financial position remained stable and secure with reserves in place to offset the majority of financial challenges that lay ahead. LFRS had an excellent track record of efficiency savings and would continue to look for ways to be more efficient to allow for the reinvestment in service improvements.

The Annual Service Plan was a core part of the planning framework which set out the activities intended for delivery during the next 12 months. It was built around the Service's four corporate priorities as detailed in the Integrated Risk Management Plan which were: -

1. Preventing fire and other emergencies from happening and Protecting people and property when fires happen;
2. Responding to fire and other emergencies quickly and competently;
3. Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer;
4. Delivering value for money in how we use our resources.

The Annual Service Plan sat at the heart of the framework and informed activity that would be led across the Service as well as locally within district plans. Activities that were planned for delivery also informed staff performance appraisal so that all staff understood the plans and were involved in helping to deliver key activities.

As in previous years, detailed under each corporate priority was a series of priority activities. This year's plan also provided a brief description of each item to give further clarity and context. This ensured that all staff and the public were informed of the changes and activities the Service aimed to progress and how these items fitted within our priorities. This provided the opportunity for the Service to ensure that we continued to provide transparency and visibility of our plans in a clear concise format. The governance arrangements for delivery of the Annual Service Plan would continue to be monitored through the Service's Corporate Programme Board.

The Government's Fire Reform programme was much clearer and involved:

- Efficiency and collaboration;
- Transparency and accountability;
- Workforce reform.

As a result, the action plan this year involved activities to improve in these areas. Activities to be contained within the plan were considered by Members.

It was noted that a draft of the Annual Service Plan was near completion and would be published and circulated to all staff in April.

RESOLVED: - That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the report.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report. Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) had a long and detailed evidence base of working in collaboration with partners, both within the sector and wider public services. Examples of such work extended to joint procurement with other Fire and Rescue Services; vehicle servicing, audit and finance arrangements with Lancashire County Council and site sharing at a number of locations with North West Ambulance Service.

Increased scrutiny had been placed upon LFRS through the introduction of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 whereby it had been mandated to work cohesively with other Blue Light organisations in order to deliver the most effective and efficient services.

To ensure that such collaborations could be commissioned, delivered and evaluated in the most robust manner an operational Collaboration Executive Board (CEB) had been established with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Constable undertaking the Programme Board role of Sponsor. The CEB would review all recommendations put forward, agree business cases to be put forward to each organisations change programme to agree funding and operating models.

A Blue Light Collaboration Programme Board (BLCPB) would be jointly chaired by Chief Superintendent Chris Bithell and Area Manager Ben Norman. The BLCPB would track the progress of the projects put forward, consider any new areas of collaboration to be put before the CEB for assessment and agreement to the commitment of resources, identify and manage risks and interdependencies and share any operational changes which could change the direction of any projects within the collaboration. Benefits realised would be reported back to the BLCPB once the implementation was complete. The BLCPB would ensure that the projects developed within the collaboration were in line with both organisations strategic objectives and had a clear link to delivering these.

Members considered the operational statement of intent and commended the level of work that had been done by staff to draft the initial blueprint documents in order to evaluate business as usual and project level work streams for development into business case documents and subsequent approval. The opportunities outlined were recommendations from departmental leads who had extensive knowledge of their business area and were aware of the current demands faced. It was proposed to use a simple quadrant analysis to initially categorise the opportunities as either i) High Effort / Low Benefit; ii) High Effort / High Benefit; iii) Low Effort / Low Benefit; and iv) Low Effort / High Benefit.

CC Hennessy expressed concern that the governance arrangements did not include at least the presence of Members given the amount of work produced by staff. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the collaboration work had been informally progressing for a couple of years without any formal framework however it was accepted that the operational environment had now changed. Opportunities had been identified for Shared Support Services, Response, Training and Engagement and Prevention. The assessment of these opportunities would be done at the next Programme Board which would form the basis of the Programme Plan. Each project would develop a business case and implementation and benefits realisation plans. Once that work had been done a more detailed breakdown could be undertaken to accurately categorise each proposal. The options would be worked through and

brought back to this committee and then taken to the full Authority for formal approval.

In relation to the proposal in the report to formulate a task and finish group to enable broader engagement and scrutiny, the Authority Chairman, CC De Molfetta suggested this consist of 6 Labour and 4 Conservative Members drawn from the Authority membership. He advised that an email had been sent to the Chief Fire Officer on 12 March 2018 from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Clive Grunshaw's office which stated his intention to put together an options report which included a business plan to take over the responsibilities of the Authority. CC De Molfetta proposed that the remit of the task and finish group also consider the Authority's response to that intention. He advised that he had responded to the email (on 14 March 2018) on behalf of the Authority stating support for collaboration but not a takeover of the governance arrangements. A response to his email had not yet been received.

CC O'Toole confirmed that he had been made aware of the email from the PCC and he was also alarmed. He agreed with the Chairman's view and the proposal to extend the remit of the task and finish group. It was agreed therefore that Party leaders would provide membership details to the Clerk and the first meeting of the group be arranged for as soon as possible.

The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Policing and Crime Act 2017 placed a duty on the Service to collaborate in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness. Collaboration was something that was already happening where working together provided the best outcomes for the public ie: breaking and entry, drones and missing persons.

He advised that some of the Authority's long-term plans, such as the potential relocation of Service Headquarters might require reconsideration as a consequence of the PCC producing an options report. Following discussion with the Chairman he had prepared a draft message to all staff which was now considered and the following agreed: -

"Lancashire Combined Fire and Rescue Authority remains committed to delivering the best possible service to our communities, with the resources we have available. We continue to work productively and effectively with a range of stakeholders. We also acknowledge the new statutory duty to collaborate with other emergency services, while recognising many initiatives were already in place or in development irrespective of this mandate.

Last week we had notification from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Clive Grunshaw. He welcomed the progress we had made to date saying 'these arrangements clearly help both parties discharge their statutory duty to keep collaborative opportunities under review and to collaborate with each other where it is in the interests of either efficiency or effectiveness'.

He went on to say he was commissioning some work 'which will produce an Options Report for further discussion with you and other stakeholders. I see the Options Report as being complementary to the work you are already undertaking through your collaborative arrangements as described already. The Options Report will review a range of options to further police and fire collaboration in Lancashire, including the status quo, representation on the

Fire and Rescue Authority, the governance model (having a Police Fire Crime Commissioner) and finally the single employer model. Through this report, I am also keen to develop a further understanding of the scale and impact of collaborative efficiencies and how these can be best harnessed for the people of Lancashire’.

The Authority remains confident that current governance arrangements present the best way to deliver a fire and rescue service for our communities. We will provide the information required for the work proposed by the PCC, which we believe will evidence that we are already effectively progressing collaborative opportunities within existing structures.

Following the Planning Committee meeting this morning (19/3/18) this position was unanimously endorsed. The Authority reaffirms its commitment to collaboration but remains strongly of the view that current governance arrangements best serve LFRS and the communities of Lancashire.

We will keep you updated on any developments.”

RESOLVED: - That:

- i) The content of the report be noted;
- ii) A Task and Finish Group be formed consisting of 6 Labour and 4 Conservative Members, with membership drawn from the Full Authority to broaden the engagement and scrutiny of collaboration arrangements and to consider the Authority’s response to the PCC adopting a governance model.

20/17 HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS) - UPDATE

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided an update to Members on the progress that the Service was making towards the forthcoming inspection by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). Members noted the Audit Assurance Team responsibilities and key dates and a summary of progress was presented against a number of work streams.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the 3 pilot inspections began that day. Lancashire was in the first tranche of inspections and had now received confirmation that the date of inspection would be the second week in July 2018. The inspection visit would last for 4 or 5 days to undertake reality testing with outcomes published after each inspection rather than wait until all the inspections had been completed.

It was noted that it was not a remit of the HMICFRS to inspect the role or interaction of Members because they did not have the remit to inspect the PCC however Members should be kept informed and engaged. The intention therefore was to bring all items including action plans to this Committee through regular update reports.

RESOLVED: - That the report be noted.

21/17 BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN TEST

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer introduced Area Manager Norman to present the report that provided reassurance to Members of the Service’s business continuity

arrangements.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Services (LFRS) had a duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to create and subsequently test business continuity plans. LFRS policy was approved at principal officer level with heads of department responsible for business continuity. Plans must be: reviewed every year, tested every year and audited every 2 years. Business continuity policy was aligned to Business Continuity Institute good practice guidelines. Business continuity plans were: i) aligned to critical activities; ii) easy to understand and read; iii) aligned to best practice and detailed actions to be taken to protect the Service.

In December 2017 LFRS enacted a pandemic flu simulated exercise in order to test the strategic business continuity plan and the tactical business continuity plan for staff absence. The exercise demonstrated that the policy and plans were aligned to good practice guidelines and learning from the event was facilitated through a debrief session to capture areas for improvement, areas of best practice, recommendations and lessons learned. Therefore the exercise increased the understanding of business continuity and improved resilience.

In response to a question from the Committee Chairman, CC Parkinson the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service was called to an incident on 7 March 2018 at Blackpool Tower. Four crews were mobilised and the Officer in Charge requested another 2 appliances. The fire involved a flat roof within the complex where the fire investigation indicated that workmen had been using bitumen and waterproof felt.

From an operational perspective the fire was not particularly challenging; it was the location of the incident that attracted a significant amount of interest and there had been a lot of misinformation on social media.

A decision was taken in conjunction with the tower management to hold 6 people in the viewing gallery until the environment was safe. There were no injuries to staff or members of the public and the Tower and other buildings were back open for business later that day.

RESOLVED:- That the report be noted and endorsed.

22/17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday, 16 July 2018 at 1000 hours in the main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Further meeting dates were noted for 26 November 2018 and agreed for 18 March 2019.

M NOLAN
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood