

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

Meeting to be held on the 16 December 2020

WILDFIRES POSITION STATEMENT

Contact for further information:

A/Assistant Chief Fire Officer Steve Morgan – Tel. 01772 866801

Executive Summary

This report deals with Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service position on the prevention of wildfires and specifically disposable barbecues.

Information included on the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), wild fires and campaign planning.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note and endorse the report/recommendation.

Information

During Summer 2020 an informal position statement on disposable barbecues was agreed by the Chief Fire Officer and the Chairman, which was used widely following the Darwen and Longridge fires, <https://www.lancsfirerescue.org.uk/lfrs-call-for-an-end-to-disposable-barbecue-use-in-lancashires-countryside> calling for people to stop using disposable barbecues in the countryside. A number of local and national political leaders took up this call for a ban.

These two large wildfires had significant impact on our performance: we have seen a 25% increase in wildfire incidents in 2020 compared to 2019 and a 36% increase in pump deployments, with estimated resourcing costs of approximately £850,000.

Background - National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Guidance

NFCC are also now asking the public to ensure they are doing their utmost to prevent outdoor fires from occurring. Many outdoor fires start from portable BBQs, litter and campfires. At this time where fire and rescue services are also working to assist in the Covid-19 response, we ask people to exercise caution and please avoid lighting fires in the countryside. (NFCC, Wildfire Prevention, 2020)

CFA (Current) Position Statement (with additional amendment)

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority (CFA) is calling for people to stop using disposable barbecues in the countryside to reduce the amount of harm caused by wildfires. Wildfires are easily started and can spread rapidly putting people, property and infrastructure at risk. The terrain makes them challenging to firefight and demands large amounts of resources from the service and our partners.

Lancashire knows only too well the devastating effects of wildfires following a fire on Winter Hill near Bolton in summer 2018 which destroyed 18 square kilometres of moorland. Despite this, we continue to experience avoidable fires in open spaces across the county, causing long-lasting harm to wildlife, habitats and biodiversity.

The CFA believes that the threat to the environment and our communities can be significantly reduced if people enjoy Lancashire's great outdoors without using disposable barbecues. (With either (1) a ban on the sale of disposable BBQs or (2) a restriction on the use of disposable BBQs in public open spaces – specifically around moorlands and forestation).

Options for Committee Members to consider:

1. With a ban on the sale of disposable BBQ's
2. With a restriction on the use of disposable BBQs in public open spaces – specifically around moorlands and forestation

Recommendation, option 1.

Fire Safety & Business Support Information

Preventative work will be carried out 1 June – 30 September 2021, which will focus on reducing moorland and grassland fires.

Objectives of Prevention activity

- Reduced risk of wildfires during summer period (1 June – 30 Sept 2020).
- Collaborate with partners in key areas.
- Increased understanding of the risk of wildfires from disposable barbecue, campfire use and discarding of cigarettes and litter.

Business Risk

Severe – Committee members need to be aware that prevention of wildfire activity within Lancashire is suitability and sufficiently robust.

Environmental Impact

Positive, reducing wildfire occurrence and protecting the environment.

Equality & Diversity Implications

None

HR Implications

None

Financial Implications

Minimal - Prevention work budgeted for and included within the campaign calendar

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact
Reason for inclusion in Part 2, if appropriate:		