

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Meeting to be held on 23 March 2021

RISK MANAGEMENT

(Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

The report highlights action taken in respect of corporate risk since these were last reported to the Audit Committee.

Decision Required

The Committee is asked to note the actions taken and endorse the revised corporate risk register.

Information

The latest review of the corporate risk register has identified one new risk which warrants consideration for inclusion on the corporate risk register: -

Changes to Emergency Response Driver Training leading to a reduction in trained appliance drivers and hence impacting pump availability

A new Fire Standard for Emergency Response Driver Training has been published. This requires more training for new drivers within the sector, requiring: -

- Current instructors added to a register and new instructors will need to complete a formal pathway;
- A 10-day course with an element of night driving for all new appliance drivers;
- A 10 or 15-day Initial Response course for flexi-officers depending on current competency in response driving;
- Longer courses for special appliances which are not LGV.

All of these will see a marked increase in the length of a driving course, which may require additional instructor resource and we are currently reviewing the impact on driving instructors and hence the need for additional capacity within the Team.

In terms of the initial driving course the extension of time from 5 days to 10 days not only increases instructor time, but may lead to difficulties in the on-call service as personnel will not be able to take the time away from primary employment to undertake training leading to a decline in on-call appliance availability.

As this only applies to new drivers the impact will be felt gradually over a period of time as personnel leave the service and are replaced. This will be more significant in the on-call service as turnover rates are much higher. We will monitor the impact in the on-call service over time to ensure that new entrants are able to undertake the relevant training and therefore are able to drive appliances.

At the moment this is considered a medium risk, but may increase over time as personnel leave the service and new entrants are required to comply with the new standard.

Existing Risks

Of the existing risks 9 have been reviewed, and an updated corporate risk register is attached as appendix 1, with changes summarised below: -

		Update since last meeting	Proposed Risk Score	
1	Insufficient resources due to poor funding settlement, inability to make required savings, additional financial pressures such as RDS pensions etc., plus council tax limits via local referendum resulting in Authority being unable to set a balanced budget	We had previously anticipated a new 4-year Spending Review being published, however due to uncertainty this has been delayed. As such 21/22 is a one-year settlement, with a four-year settlement anticipated later this year. Running alongside this is a Fair Funding and the prospect of moving to a 75% Business Rates Retention model, both of which will impact future funding, have also been put on hold. As such it is impossible to predict what future funding will look like, which is reflected in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The budget for 22/23 and beyond assumes a funding increase of 1.5% each year, and based on assumptions contained within the Medium Term Financial Strategy shows a funding gap of up to £1.0m in subsequent years. The Authority holds sufficient reserves to meet this in the short to medium term, until March 2024.	Remains at 16	High

2	Premises Risk Information: That operational staff do not have available adequate and reliable premises information to efficiently resolve operational incidents: Risk information is provided to operational staff based on premises information and premises risk are identified on a continuous basis although this is not consistent throughout the Service.	No change, not due to report till 30/11/21	9	Medium
3	Insufficient staffing resources, due to Industrial Action, to deal with operational demand and fulfil statutory responsibilities	No change, not due to report till 31/7/21	12	Medium
4	Lack of availability of water supplies for fire fighting prevents effective fire fighting resulting in additional damage to property and increased risk to life.	Previously discharged		
5	The increasing age profile of operational staff could adversely affect our ability to deliver effective emergency response.	Previously discharged		
6	Operational staff do not have the required skills to operate safely at an incident with the potential to result in F/F injuries or fatalities.	No change, not due to report till 31/7/21	9	Medium
7	Failure of key ICT systems resulting in disruption to services	No change, not due to report till 31/7/21	9	Medium
8	Loss of corporate reputation through negative publicity	Emergency communication plan and toolkit covers all aspects of risk including business continuity issues, emergencies and broader reputational risk, and fulfils requirements of the	Remains at 9	Medium

		<p>Lancashire Resilience Forum emergency communications plan. Plan regularly tested during exercises. Effective reactive press office and proactive media activity to build positive reputation including on-call arrangements for out-of-hours cover. Media and social media training forms part of middle manager development programme and is delivered to individuals and teams as required throughout the year. This was reduced during the pandemic however a number of social media training sessions were held in 2020 via Microsoft Teams. Corporate use of social media is embedded in communication plans with policy and guidance in place. Scanning and planning function helps anticipate and plan for specific reputational risks and daily media monitoring highlights inaccurate reporting and emerging issues that need to be addressed or corrected. This activity is communicated to members of service management team via a daily media summary email.</p> <p>Work on processing and storing images has been delayed due to the pandemic, however an updated social media guidance will include a holding position on images until it can be resolved</p>		
9	Retention and recruitment of RDS staff impacts on RDS appliance availability	Overall vacancy levels remain consistent at approx. 18%, despite this on-call pump availability for the first 6 months the year was in excess of 90%, reflecting that	9	Medium

		<p>the establishment provides for 7 riders at any time. Work continues between Retained Support Officers (RSOs) and HR on the recruitment of on-call staff. For those who fail the on-call course the RSO's continue to maintain contact and undertake developmental work with a view to attendance on subsequent courses. RSOs/HR additionally monitor success of on-call recruitment initiatives.</p> <p>There are two current RSO post vacancies that the Service will look to fill to further support recruitment within Areas.</p>		
10	Lack of workforce planning resulting in significant over/under provision of staff and resulting impact on service and finances	Previously discharged		Medium
11	Lack of compliance with legislation resulting in prosecution or compliance order	Previously discharged		
12	Ineffective Health and Safety in the workplace, resulting in prosecution, intervention fees etc.	No change, not due to report till 30/11/21	9	Medium
13	Lack of effective Information management impacting on service delivery and support or leading to a breach of data protection/freedom of information or a loss of sensitive/personal information	Work is ongoing through a number of key projects to align many aspects of this work. This is being covered through the CorVu replacement project and the records management and intranet replacement project, both of which are Corporate Programme Board items. Amendments have been made to the district plans and intelligence profiles to assist with the planning and	Remains at 9	Medium

		reporting functions, with a longer-term view of further developing this area of work. The records officer role has now drafted the associated policies to support the above workstreams and with the introduction of MS365 a more robust and secure mechanism will be in place to effectively manage data.		
14	Delayed mobilisation, impacting on service delivery	No change, not due to report till 30/11/21	9	Medium
15	High levels of staff absence due to outbreak of ebola.	Previously discharged		
16	Lack of clarity on future of FRS, leading to inertia	Previously discharged		
17	Failure of ESMCP to deliver a viable communication facility.	No change, not due to report till 31/7/21	9	Medium
18	Inability to maintain service provision in spate conditions	Previously discharged		
19	Failure to maximise the opportunities that technological advances present due to a lack of capacity within the ICT department, and an inability of staff to keep pace with new development that are implemented	No change, not due to report till 31/7/21	9	Medium
20	Loss of support for Vector Incident Command product with the product name Command Support System (CSS) leading to ineffective command function at large incidents	A project has now commenced to deliver a new command software solution and has developed a draft specification, with a view to going out to procurement at the start of the new financial year.	Remains at 9	Medium
21	Risk of rapid external fire spread in high rise premise resulting in a major incident	No change, not due to report till 30/11/21	10	Medium

22	Failure to maximise collaborative opportunities presented by Policing and Crime Act 2017	No change, not due to report till 30/11/21	9	Medium
23	Lack of leadership capacity impacting on delivery of services	No change, not due to report till 31/7/21	9	Medium
24	Insufficient preparation for inspection programme leading to opportunities being lost in terms of national learning and Lancashire's ability to effectively communicate its progress and awareness	Previously discharged		
25	The outcome of the EU court ruling on the Matzak case relating to on-call arrangements in Belgium has a detrimental impact on service provision and/or cost.	Previously discharged		
26	Increase in costs of and/or lack of availability of goods and services, following Brexit	We continue to monitor impact, to date this has been minimal in regards to impact of goods being received and increase in costs.	Remains at 12	Medium
27	Increase in costs associated with changes to pensionability of allowances	Following a High Court decision on allowances within the fire service, which provided a different interpretation to both the historical basis and to previous decisions of the Pensions Ombudsman, the pensionability of various allowances changed with associated cost implications. The Service agreed eligibility with the FBU going forward and this has been implemented. The question of backdating remains unresolved. The current situation is the Service has responded positively to the FBU request	Remains at 16	High

		for 6 years backdating for relevant allowances (primarily DCP) but the Union has not currently accepted this offer. Since the offer the Pensions Ombudsman has determined an individual case for an active employee within Lancashire and the implications for both the Service and employees is being worked through. This includes liaison with our pension provider in respect of potential remedy implications. Once we have determined the appropriate action we will need to provide administrative resource to resolve.		
28	Discontinued or long-term malfunction in the KPI management software product (CORVU)	No change, not due to report till 30/11/21	6	Low
29	High levels of staff absence due to pandemic.	Following implementation of Business Continuity Plans, staff absence levels peaked as expected during mid-January, following the Christmas / New Year relaxation of lockdown arrangements. The highest levels of staff absence were evident between 13 th and 15 th January 2021, at which time 92 staff were absent, with 15 confirmed C-19 cases, 50/51 self-isolating, and 4 with suspected C-19 (awaiting test results). This compares to staff absences which typically run at c.40 cases across the Service at any given time.	Reduce to 15	High

		<p>In early December 2020, LFRS accessed a provision of Lateral Flow Tests and began a pilot rollout across a number of locations aimed at early identification and isolation of asymptomatic cases of C-19. An ambitious rollout plan followed which resulted in LFT provision being made available in a self-sustaining manner across all 39 fire stations, Service Headquarters, Service Training Centre. As at 15th January 2021, 4277 LFT have been conducted with our workforce, resulting in a number of positive cases being identified and measures then implemented to reduce risk to their closest colleagues.</p> <p>Interim BCP debrief conducted internally to capture learning from the first few months of the pandemic. Further internal and LRF debriefs to be progressed once BCP arrangements stood down.</p>		
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Financial Implications

None

Human Resource Implications

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

None

Environmental Impact

None

Business Risk Implications

The improvement in risk management arrangements should result in reduced business risk

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact
None		
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate:		