

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Monday, 26 April 2021 at 10.00 am - Virtual Meeting accessible via MS Teams and YouTube (as a live webcast)

MINUTES

PRESENT:

F De Molfetta (Chairman)

Councillors

N Hennessy (Vice-Chair)

L Beavers

P Britcliffe

I Brown

S Clarke

J Eaton

S Holgate

D Howarth

J Hugo

A Kay

H Khan

M Khan CBE

Z Khan

T Martin

D O'Toole

M Pattison

P Rigby

A Riggott

J Shedwick

D Smith

G Wilkins

T Williams

132/19 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chairman, CC Frank De Molfetta welcomed Authority Members and members of the press and public to the virtual committee meeting of the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority. He advised that in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic the Government had made regulations that enabled virtual meetings. This meeting was accessible for Committee Members via Microsoft Teams and for members of the press and public via a live webcast on YouTube.

Mr Mark Nolan, Clerk to the Authority conducted a roll call and Authority Members individually confirmed their attendance.

133/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from County Councillor Liz Oades and Councillor Simon Blackburn.

134/19 DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None received.

135/19 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: - That the Minutes of the CFA held on 22 February 2021 be confirmed for signature by the Chairman.

136/19 MINUTES OF MEETING MONDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2021 OF PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the proceedings of the Planning Committee held on 8 February 2021 be noted and endorsed.

137/19 MINUTES OF MEETING WEDNESDAY, 17 MARCH 2021 OF PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

In response to a question raised by County Councillor O'Toole regarding the determination of accidental and deliberate fires in commercial properties, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service had a very strong team of Incident Intelligence Officers (IIOs) who attended incidents where there was a higher number of appliances in attendance or where there were suspicious circumstances. The IIOs were a specialist team, highly trained to national standards who worked jointly with Police Service scenes of crime. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that there had been an increase in commercial fires and the Service was working diligently alongside Police colleagues supporting criminal proceedings as evidenced in the Fire Safety report later on the agenda.

In response to a further question from County Councillor O'Toole in relation to deliberate antisocial behaviour fires (in particular, moorland fires which devastated the moorland and killed wildlife) the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service worked preventatively with other partner agencies and landowners to limit nuisance and deliberate fires. The Service had a strong communications team that raised awareness locally and nationally to support National Fire Chief Council campaigns.

RESOLVED: That the proceedings of the Performance Committee held on 17 March 2021 be noted and endorsed.

138/19 MINUTES OF MEETING TUESDAY, 23 MARCH 2021 OF AUDIT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the proceedings of the Audit Committee held on 23 March 2021 be noted and endorsed.

139/19 MINUTES OF MEETING WEDNESDAY, 24 MARCH 2021 OF RESOURCES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the proceedings of the Resources Committee held on 24 March 2021 be noted and endorsed.

140/19 URGENT DECISION ARRANGEMENTS AT ELECTION TIME

The Clerk presented the report. He advised that the High Court judgement on a legal challenge to allow the continuation of virtual meetings had not yet been made available and as soon as this was announced he would inform Members.

RESOLVED:- That the Authority authorise the Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk to the Authority to take any urgent decisions upon any matters arising between the date of the County elections and the CFA Annual Meeting, in the event of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman not being re-elected.

141/19 FIRE PROTECTION REPORTS

A report was presented that summarised: i) an ongoing fire safety prosecution for Plaza Beach Hotel, Blackpool; ii) Fire protection and business support information which confirmed the inspection activity for high rise premises remained a priority and that tailored advice and support was being provided to businesses which may not have been occupied or operating throughout the recent lockdown in order to ensure responsible persons fully considered fire safety within their reopening processes; and iii) cases of arson incidents were reported where evidence had been provided by Fire Investigators into the Criminal Justice System and court proceedings had progressed to trial and custodial sentences given. The report also included a restorative justice arrangement.

Members thanked officers who worked in this difficult area for providing evidence to the Police which had resulted in these successful prosecutions. County Councillor O'Toole commented that there was a lack of consistency in sentencing and wondered if the National Police Chiefs' Council could make a recommendation to the courts for better consistency.

RESOLVED: - That the Authority noted and endorsed the report.

142/19 COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY REPORTS

This report provided an overview of community safety activities and incidents of operational interest across the 14 district authorities during February 2021 – March 2021. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer highlighted the continued work with young people via: i) the Fire Cadet programme which continued to work virtually with over 100 Cadets achieving Skills for Justice qualifications; ii) the Road Sense package which had been adapted for virtual delivery into schools and for pupil's home schooling had now reached over 5,000 pupils; iii) The Service had recently celebrated 20 years delivery of the Prince's Trust programme to over 6,000 young people. He also highlighted that the Service continued to support the response to the covid-19 national pandemic. Staff had assisted in the delivery of over 200,000 vaccinations of which circa 25,000 had now been delivered by our own staff. Operational incidents of note included a terrible incident in Bolton-le-Sands of a roof collapsing where a father and son had sadly lost their lives and serious road traffic collisions where sadly there had been a number of fatalities on Lancashire's roads.

Councillor Williams commented on the high level of assurance provided by external auditors and internal auditors; particularly the internal auditors opinion of substantial assurance on key financial systems and safeguarding. He was proud of the level of support given to the people of Lancashire.

County Councillor Shedwick was really pleased with the collaborative work undertaken between staff internally and with key partners to reduce risk within our communities, as referred to on page 86 of the agenda pack.

County Councillor Kay praised the work of the Prince's Trust programme. She also drew Members' attention to a road traffic accident the previous evening on Amounderness Way commenting that she would welcome support from a number of agencies to look at this area in relation to road safety.

RESOLVED: - That the Authority noted and endorsed the report.

143/19 MEMBER COMPLAINTS

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that there had been no complaints since the last meeting. County Councillor Wilkins gave credit to the Fire Authority for Member transparency in relation to complaints.

RESOLVED: - That the current position be noted.

144/19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Authority would be held on Monday 28 June 2021 at 10:00am – venue to be agreed.

As the forthcoming local elections included Lancashire County Councillors, the Chairman, Leader of the Opposition and County Councillor George Wilkins (who confirmed his retirement from local politics) separately took the opportunity to thank all Members, Officers and support staff for their contribution to the work of the Authority.

M NOLAN
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood