

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Monday, 28 June 2021 at 10.00 am in Washington Hall, Service Training Centre, Euxton

MINUTES

PRESENT:

D O'Toole (Chairman)

Councillors

J Shedwick (Vice-Chair)	J Mein
P Britcliffe	G Mirfin
S Clarke (part)	S Morris
M Dad	M Pattison
F De Molfetta	J Rigby
N Hennessy	P Rigby
D Howarth	S Serridge
J Hugo	J Singleton
K Iddon	D Smith
A Kay (part)	T Williams
H Khan	R Woollam

1-20/21 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

The Clerk invited nominations for the appointment of Chairman for 2021/22. County Councillor John Shedwick proposed County Councillor O'Toole which was seconded by County Councillor John Singleton. No further nominations were received. The Clerk held a vote. There were 13 Members who voted in favour, none against and 10 abstained.

The motion was therefore CARRIED and it was:

RESOLVED: - That County Councillor O'Toole be appointed Chairman of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) for 2021/22.

2-20/21 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Chairman invited nominations for the appointment of Vice-Chairman. County Councillor John Singleton proposed County Councillor John Shedwick which was seconded by County Councillor Andrea Kay. No further nominations were received. The Clerk held a vote. There were 13 Members who voted in favour, none against and 10 abstained.

The motion was therefore CARRIED and it was:

RESOLVED: - That County Councillor Shedwick be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) for 2021/22.

3-20/21 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed to the Authority new County Council Members: Keith Iddon, Ged Mirfin, Stuart Morris, John Singleton, Ron Woollam, Munsif Dad, Jennifer Mein and Sean Serridge and also welcomed a new Blackburn with Darwen Council Member, Councillor Jean Rigby.

The Chairman took the opportunity to recognise the work of the outgoing Chairman, County Councillor Frank De Molfetta who had been an excellent Chairman to work with over the past 8 years and the Authority Members applauded. County Councillor Nikki Hennessy also took the opportunity to thank County Councillor De Molfetta for his support to the Authority particularly his enthusiasm and commitment to the residents of Lancashire.

The Chairman also gave thanks to Members who had now left the Authority for their contributions to the work of the Authority and making Lancashire safer.

4-20/21 COMPOSITION OF THE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

RESOLVED: - That the Composition approved by the 3 Constituent Authorities for 2021/22 for the Combined Fire Authority be noted and endorsed, and the new Members appointed by Lancashire County Council and Blackburn with Darwen Council to serve on the CFA for 2021/22 be welcomed.

5-20/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Simon Blackburn and Councillor Zamir Khan.

6-20/21 DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None received.

7-20/21 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMEN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

The Chairman, County Councillor O'Toole presented the proposed Chairmen and Vice Chairmen for the Authority's Committees. County Councillor Nikki Hennessy commented that this was an opportunity to demonstrate equality of opportunity to female Members of the Authority.

It was confirmed that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Strategy Group were the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Authority.

RESOLVED: -

(1) That in accordance with Standing Order 5.1(b) of the Authority, the following Members be appointed as Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees of the CFA for 2021/22.

(i) Appeals	Chairman	County Councillor P Britcliffe
	Vice-Chairman	County Councillor M Pattison

(ii) Audit	Chairman Vice-Chairman	County Councillor J Shedwick To be agreed by the Labour Group and the Clerk advised accordingly
(iii) Performance	Chairman Vice-Chairman	County Councillor K Iddon County Councillor P Rigby
(iv) Planning	Chairman Vice-Chairman	County Councillor G Mirfin County Councillor S Clarke
(v) Resources	Chairman Vice-Chairman	Councillor T Williams County Councillor D O'Toole

(2) That County Councillor S Morris be appointed as Chairman and Councillor D Smith be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Member Training and Development Working Group for 2021/22.

(3) That County Councillor S Serridge be appointed as Chairman of the Injury Pensions Sub-Committee for 2021/22.

(4) That County Councillor D O'Toole be appointed as Chairman of the Service Headquarters Relocation Working Group for 2021/22 and that the proposed terms of reference, as now considered be approved.

(5) That the Authority confirmed appointment of the following four Member Champions for 2021/22 as:-

- Community Safety - Councillor Jean Rigby;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Councillor Zamir Khan;
- Health & Wellbeing - County Councillor Andrea Kay;
- Road Safety – County Councillor Ron Woollam.

8-20/21 REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES 2021/22

The Authority was requested to determine its representation on outside bodies for the 2021/22 municipal year.

RESOLVED:-

- i) That County Councillor D O'Toole, Chairman of the Authority be authorised to cast the Authority's vote at the LGA Annual General Assembly;
- ii) That County Councillors D O'Toole and J Shedwick (as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Authority) be appointed to the Local Government Association Fire Commission;
- iii) That County Councillor D O'Toole, Chairman of the Authority can authorise additional representation(s) to either the LGA Fire Commission or the Fire Services Management Committee as appropriate;
- iv) That 2 members of the Conservative Group and 1 member of the Labour Group (County Councillors D O'Toole, J Shedwick and N Hennessy as Chairman, Vice-Chairman and main Opposition Spokesperson) be appointed

- to serve as representatives on the North West Fire Forum for 2021/22;
- v) That County Councillors D O'Toole and J Shedwick (as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Authority) be appointed as North West Fire Control Directors for 2021/22.

9-20/21 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: - That the Minutes of the CFA held on 26 April 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

10-20/21 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS FOR 2021/22 AND 2022/23

RESOLVED: - That the proposed programme of meetings for the Combined Fire Authority for 2022/23 be agreed as: -

25 April 2022

27 June 2022 (Annual meeting of the CFA)

19 September 2022

19 December 2022

27 February 2023 (Budget Setting Meeting)

11-20/21 MINUTES OF MEETING THURSDAY, 29 APRIL 2021 OF MEMBER TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

RESOLVED: - That the proceedings of the Member Training and Development Working Group held on 29 April 2021 be noted and endorsed.

12-20/21 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

County Councillors S Clarke and A Kay left the meeting at this point.

The Clerk presented a report received on behalf of County Councillor Hennessy which detailed key points raised at Local Government Association (LGA) meetings of the Fire Service Management Committee attended on behalf of the Authority.

County Councillor Hennessy highlighted that the LGA had established a Fire Diversity and Inclusion Champions Network in late 2019 to bring together Fire and Rescue Authority Members. Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) was a key priority for the sector with the LGA considering annual training. The report proposed EDI be a standard agenda item for future meetings which was noted.

RESOLVED: - That the report be noted.

13-20/21 RE-APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON

Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 made provision in relation to standards matters. The Authority had a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted Members which included the

appointment of one or more Independent Persons.

At its meeting held 17 June 2019 Mrs Hilary Banks was re-appointed to the role of Independent Person for a further term of 2 years, continuing in that role until June 2021 with the option for Mrs Banks to continue to hold office after that date if the Authority so wished and she was prepared to do so (resolution 12/19 refers). The Authority was asked to consider formally extending the period of office until the Authority's meeting in February 2022 to enable the Authority to make arrangements for a replacement.

The Authority expressed gratitude to Mrs Banks who had been closely associated with the Fire Authority for 20 years.

RESOLVED: - That the Authority re-appointed Mrs Hilary Banks as the Authority's Independent Person as required by the Localism Act until February 2022.

14-20/21 UNWANTED FIRE SIGNALS POLICY - PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE

The report and presentation provided an overview of the current policy relating to fire engine attendance at False Alarms caused by Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) actuations and the high proportion of these which were subsequently categorised as Unwanted Fire Signals (UWFS).

Members noted that the March 2021 Performance Committee meeting considered the implications of the current policy and the resultant performance, endorsing two options for change which were presented for full Fire Authority consideration. The two options were framed around i) non-attendance to non-sleeping risk premises; and ii) the development of a new policy relating specifically to domestic false alarms (which were growing at pace due to increased use of Telecare in Social Care provision for the most vulnerable).

It was noted that a third option, 'charging for attendance at UWFS', was considered by Performance Committee but discounted as ineffective due to the disproportionate financial impact on other Public Sector organisations and the failure of the policy to address the underlying need to reduce unnecessary mobilisations.

The proposals would bring Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) into greater alignment with other North West services and with sector direction of travel.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Steve Healey highlighted that false alarm mobilisations consistently accounted for approximately 50% of all LFRS attendances, compared to 42% nationally. This disparity was noted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in their last inspection. It was reasonable therefore to expect further scrutiny in this area during the next round of HMICFRS inspections later in 2021. He advised that the latest national statistics for Automatic Fire Alarm actuations per 100,000 population showed South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service was at

the top of the list with 27 mobilisations per 100,000 population with Lancashire second with 26 mobilisations. Other North West FRS were: Greater Manchester 14, Cheshire 10 and Cumbria 9 per 100,000 population which demonstrated Lancashire was the worst when compared with other local FRS.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided a presentation setting out: i) the impact of UWFS on the Service and the communities of Lancashire; ii) the national guidance published by the National Fire Chiefs Council to assist Fire and Rescue services to reduce risks created by UWFS; iii) details of the advice provided and enforcement powers used to secure compliance; iv) false alarm incidents during October – December 2020; v) UWFS demand as a proportion of overall incident activity over 10 years up to 2019/20; vi) national performance; vii) Lancashire performance by premises type; viii) breakdown by occupancy type over 10 years; ix) impact of domestic alarms; x) observations from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services; xi) details of the improvement option to remove attendance to automatic fire alarms as non-sleeping premises; xii) benefits of alignment to other North West Fire and Rescue Services and xiii) details of the improvement option to introduce a domestic false alarm policy.

It was noted that the percentage of false alarm calls would increase if the 1,500 – 1,600 mobilisations per annum to support North West Ambulance Service were excluded from the overall mobilisation figures.

In response to a question raised by Councillor J Rigby, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that North West Fire Control did call challenge on our behalf. He reassured Members that the Service would always mobilise where there was potential occupancy / life risk and where a 999 call had been received.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Williams regarding additional activity the Service could provide to improve the effectiveness of the apparatus which caused the majority of the false alarm calls, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service worked very closely with businesses and was now ready for frontline crews to begin to inspect low risk buildings. In addition, there were many occasions where the Service enforced legislation which was the subject of a report later on the agenda.

In addition, in response to a comment from County Councillor Woollam regarding public responsibility for ensuring their equipment was in good working order, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service did carry out inspections and there were British Standards that needed to be achieved. Where a breach was identified the Service had the ability to enforce activity which in turn aimed to reduced mobilisations to false alarm calls.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Hennessy regarding the consultation process, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that public consultation would be through the Community Risk Management Plan later in the year; this would be discussed in detail with Members at the forthcoming Strategy Group meeting.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Hugo, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer

confirmed that the introduction of any new Domestic False Alarm Policy would involve collaboration with partners across Lancashire which included the 2 unitary authorities.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Mein regarding the number of calls considered as false alarms that proved to be a life risk, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the percentage of these calls was between 1% and 2%. He advised that in any revised policy, the Authority could exempt certain buildings for example, to ensure mobilisations to hospitals.

RESOLVED: that the Authority:

- i) Endorsed for public consultation a recommendation made by the Performance Committee at its meeting held 17 March 2021 (45/19 refers) to remove attendance to Automatic Fire Alarms at Non-Sleeping premises staged over 2 years; to be introduced during the day in year 1 and during the night from year 2;
- ii) Endorsed for public consultation the development of a new policy relating specifically to domestic false alarms.

15-20/21 ANNUAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

The Authority considered the Annual Safety, Health and Environment Report for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service covering the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

As the body with ultimate responsibility for staff health, safety and environmental compliance it was important that all CFA Members were aware of performance in this respect. The report therefore provided a summary of key actions, overall progress and outturn performance in respect of accidents and near misses and carbon emissions, together with a look forward.

The report summarised the arrangements in place to deliver the Service's Safety, Health and Environment Policy and provided a summary of safety, health and environment performance data. It included the reporting on occupational safety, health and environmental issues that had arisen during the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

It was noted that Covid-19 had been a significant challenge to the Service during 2020/21 which had required significant focus across all areas to ensure that operational response and safety critical community work continued to be carried out safely for both staff and members of the public. While the vaccination programme was providing a route out of the restrictions, the Service would continue to comply with Covid-19 workplace safety requirements which would be reviewed as restrictions changed.

External Audit

Since initial certification in November 2011 annual surveillance visits had been conducted with re-certification every 3 years to maintain external certification of

the Health and Safety and Environment Management Systems. In April 2021 the auditor from British Assessment Bureau carried out a virtual audit against health and safety standard ISO 45001:2018 and environment ISO 14001:2015. The scope for both standards was 'The Provision of Fire, Rescue and Supporting Services across Lancashire'. This included all operational activity with virtual visits to five fire stations that operated different duty systems and to a number of supporting departments. Continued certification was granted without any non-conformance and five opportunities for improvement identified. Areas for improvement identified by staff had been developed into an Improvement Action Plan which would be taken forward through the Service's Health, Safety and Environment Advisory Group. The report included examples of improvements carried out during 2020/21.

Health and Safety Performance

During 2020/21 there were 57 accidents, 117 near misses and 9 RIDDOR events. The report provided a summary of the total accident and ill-health statistics for 2020/21. A comparison against previous performance showed an overall downward trend from absence following work related injury/illness and demonstrated a positive increase in near miss reporting.

Health and Wellbeing

The management of sickness absence for 2020/21 showed that absence had remained above target. To improve performance the Service aimed to continue with: i) early intervention by occupational health; ii) support to managers in following absence management policy; iii) encouraging employees to make use of the employee assistance programme and the Firefighters Charity; iv) HR to attend stress risk assessment meetings to support managers and offer appropriate support to the employee; and v) support from Service fitness advisor/personal training instructors.

During 2020/21 the focus for health and wellbeing had been on supporting staff, colleagues, families, and friends in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. A range of material, as outlined in the report had been developed to support staff through this difficult time.

Environmental Performance

The Service continued to support the Firefighters Charity with eighteen fire stations currently having recycling banks on site. In 2020/21 the banks collected over 82 tonnes of textiles.

There had been a 2% increase in waste collected from April – March 2019/20 to April - March 2020/21. The total waste collected was 113 tonnes. The percentage of recycled waste during 2020/21 was 30% which showed a slight decrease from the previous year.

The Carbon Management Plan agreed by the Resources Committee in September 2010 included a target of 40% carbon emission reduction by March 2030 from a baseline of 4352 tonnes of CO² in 2007/08. The Service had achieved an overall reduction of 23% by March 2021 which equated to 1020 tonnes of CO².

A look ahead to 2021/22

The report also detailed key safety, health and environmental priorities for 2021/22 which included: the continued management of the impact of Covid-19 on activities and ensuring that the Service complied with Government Covid-19 workplace safety requirements; the implementation of revised National Guidance, the maintenance of certification standards, reducing energy and waste and the continued review of Health and Wellbeing arrangements.

RESOLVED: - That the Authority noted and endorsed the report and associated safety, health and environment performance outcomes.

16-20/21 POLICY ON DEALING WITH HABITUAL AND VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS - ANNUAL UPDATE

At its meeting held 20 June 2016 the Authority adopted a formal Policy on Dealing with Habitual and Vexatious Complaints (resolution 13/16 refers) which was fair and proportionate, yet which did not prevent genuine complaints from being properly investigated and fair and equitable outcomes promulgated.

On an annual basis the Clerk and Chief Fire Officer reviewed the status of complainants judged to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious and reported this to the Authority. In addition, each year the Clerk reviewed the Policy, as now presented. This year's review concluded that the effectiveness of the Policy was demonstrable, accordingly the Policy remained appropriate, proportionate and effective to the needs of Members, Officers and staff.

During the previous 12 months there had been 2 complainants who were judged to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious. These individuals had given cause for concern and would be informed in writing of this status in open correspondence from the Clerk.

RESOLVED: - That the report be noted and endorsed.

17-20/21 FIRE PROTECTION REPORTS

A report summarising Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's fire safety prosecutions and arson related incidents was provided.

Members noted there was 1 successfully completed prosecution and 2 arson convictions during the period.

Fire protection and business support information was provided which included: i) risk-based inspection programme - in addition to targeting inspections based on risk, protection officers were focussing on premises most likely to present greatest risk when they reopened following the recent lockdown easing; ii) protection transformation team – the function continued to develop in line with evolving national expectations and legislation. The Fire Safety Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021 and was expected to come into force over the summer. The Act gave additional powers to Fire and Rescue Services with respect to the

suitability of external wall systems and apartment front doors in all buildings comprising more than 2 domestic dwellings. The Service continued to contribute to the Government Building Risk Review project with inspectors having completed full audits of all 70 premises that meet the review criteria. Technical reports were awaited on external wall systems from 37 premises and to date, 6 premises had been found to have unsatisfactory external wall systems. Inspectors were working with responsible persons regarding remediation and all premises were subject to interim measures. Development of the new Building Safety Act and associated guidance was likely to receive Royal Assent late in 2022; and, iii) business fire safety checks – a project for these checks to be provided by operational fire crews in order to support businesses and reduce risk had been delayed by covid-19 but the project would now go live at the end of June commencing from pilot stations in northern and western areas.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Pattison regarding attendance by the Service to small shops, the Chief Fire Officer advised that a response would be made to any concern raised by a member of the public. He confirmed that the focus for Inspecting Officers was high risk premises, prosecutions and supporting investigations.

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

18-20/21 COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY REPORTS

This report provided an overview of community safety activities and incidents of operational interest across the 14 district authorities during April 2021 – May 2021. It highlighted the continued work to deliver prevention activity, making use of digital technology and adapted working practices to ensure Lancashire's communities continued to receive a high level of service.

Community Safety

After careful preparation, various prevention activities were re-introduced across community safety teams and operational crews including: i) the delivery of Home fire Safety Check visits in people's homes; ii) Prince's trust teams had started their final programmes, which included the 100th team to be run from Blackburn; iii) the Fire Cadet units had started to meet up again and were preparing for recruitment for the coming year; iv) the water safety campaign was launched to align with the National Fire Chiefs Council 'Be Water Aware' campaign which involved a digital delivery to all schools in Lancashire, partnership work at local hot spots, posters displayed at hot spot locations, radio interviews and a presence on several social media platforms; v) a wildfire campaign involving a great deal of partnership working was ongoing to encourage people to look after the countryside; vi) an incident involving composite fencing in Blackburn with Darwen was subject to a comprehensive post incident analysis. In response to a question raised by Councillor Smith regarding whether there would be an investigation into these types of common, flammable materials, the Chief Fire Officer advised that these were significant events which were reported nationally and learning would be shared. It was noted that a presentation on this topic would be presented to Members at the forthcoming Strategy Day.

Covid-19

The Service continued to support the national pandemic response and was the first Fire and Rescue Service nationally to engage in the roll out of the vaccination programme. Locally, our firefighters, community safety staff and support staff had delivered some outstanding work in support of the national vaccination programme. As at the end of March 2021, staff had supported the 5 mass vaccination sites (Blackburn, Blackpool, Lancaster, Burnley and Preston) and assisted in the delivery of 187,000 vaccinations of which 21,800 were injections delivered directly by our staff. Staff had also been widely involved in marshalling, administration and coordination at the centres. The Service had received wide ranging praise from members of our communities. There were currently 309 volunteers and 33 staff repurposed full time to assist with the vaccination programme. Internally, the health and safety of staff had been a continued priority and the ability to roll out Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) arrangements across our sites was an early ambition. LFT was now in place across all Service locations and integrated into working practices to ensure our staff, their families and our communities can be as safe as possible during this pandemic.

Members then considered operational incidents of note during the period.

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

19-20/21 MEMBER COMPLAINTS

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that there had been no complaints since the last meeting.

RESOLVED: - That the current position be noted.

20-20/21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Authority would be held on Monday 13 September 2021 at 10:00am in Washington Hall at the Training Centre, Euxton.

LFRS HQ
Fulwood

M NOLAN
Clerk to CFA