

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Monday, 25 April 2022 at 10.00 am in Washington Hall, Service Training Centre, Euxton

MINUTES

PRESENT:

D O'Toole (Chairman)

Councillors

J Shedwick (Vice-Chair)
L Beavers
P Britcliffe
S Clarke
M Dad
N Hennessy
J Hugo
K Iddon
F Jackson
A Kay
H Khan
Z Khan

J Mein
G Mirfin
S Morris
M Pattison
J Rigby
P Rigby
S Serridge
J Singleton
D Smith
T Williams
R Woollam

84-20/21 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chairman advised that the recruitment and selection process had concluded for the post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer and that Jon Charters had been appointed to the role.

85-20/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from County Councillor David Howarth.

86-20/21 DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None received.

87-20/21 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: - That the Minutes of the CFA held on 21 February 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

88-20/21 MINUTES OF MEETING WEDNESDAY, 16 MARCH 2022 OF PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

In response to a question from County Councillor O'Toole regarding the key performance indicators that were in negative exception, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that a point of focus for the forthcoming year would be to return to the pre-pandemic levels of delivery for home fire safety checks. In addition, to address the challenges faced both locally and nationally regarding the decreasing

availability of fire engines crewed by the on-call duty system, he advised that a project would be undertaken this year to formally review many aspects of the on-call duty system to ensure it remained fit for purpose and enable the Service to provide the best retained availability over the years to come.

RESOLVED: - That the proceedings of the Performance Committee held on 16 March 2022 be noted and endorsed.

89-20/21 MINUTES OF MEETING TUESDAY, 29 MARCH 2022 OF AUDIT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: - That the proceedings of the Audit Committee held on 29 March 2022 be noted and endorsed.

90-20/21 MINUTES OF MEETING WEDNESDAY, 30 MARCH 2022 OF RESOURCES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: - That the proceedings of the Resources Committee held on 30 March 2022 be noted and endorsed.

91-20/21 ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN

Members were presented with a video that accompanied the approved Annual Service Plan which set out the activities intend to be delivered during the next 12 months. The Plan was built around the Service's four corporate priorities of: i) valuing people; ii) preventing fire and other emergencies from happening and protecting people and property when fires happened; iii) responding to fire and other emergencies quickly and competently and iv) delivering value for money in how we use our resources.

Councillor Jane Hugo commented that the work the Service undertook regarding flood preparation was excellent. She advised that herself and County Councillor Clarke sat on local and regional flood committees. They had recently attended a demonstration in Manchester to view regeneration initiatives including the use of fire breaks which was very interesting. Councillor Hugo queried whether the Authority could support the strategic work undertaken with partners across the county to tackle climate change as Members had specialisms (from other roles held in public service) which could contribute towards the development of future improvements. In response, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that later on the agenda Members would be provided with a presentation on the Climate Change Operational Response Plan which included plans to respond to climate change. He confirmed that the Service did already engage with a number of partners and as other agencies became as advanced with their plans and preparations around climate change there may be further opportunities to explore; confirming that Members would be kept updated and their views welcomed.

The Chairman confirmed that Lancashire County Council was very much involved in working with local authorities and other groups regarding climate change. County Councillor Kay added that work continued with children and young people providing education for early intervention.

RESOLVED: - That the report be noted.

92-20/21 MEMBER CHAMPION ACTIVITY REPORT

The concept of Member Champions was introduced in December 2007. A review of the areas of focus for Member Champions was considered at the Authority meeting held in June 2017 where new areas of responsibility were agreed. The current Member Champions and their areas of responsibility were:

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

Reports relating to the activity of the Member Champions were provided on a regular basis to the Authority. This report related to activity for the period up to February 2022. During this period all had undertaken their respective role in accordance with the defined terms of reference.

RESOLVED: - That the Authority noted the report and acknowledged the work of the respective Champions.

93-20/21 FIRE PROTECTION REPORTS

The report summarised Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) led prosecutions with respect to fire safety offences and set out convictions resulting from arson incidents for which Officers had contributed evidence to the Police led criminal justice process. Fire Protection and Business Support information were also included in the report to provide Members with an update on the continually evolving regulatory position and how the Service was developing and adapting both its services and workforce to ensure it kept pace with the changes to keep public and firefighters safe in the built environment.

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

94-20/21 OPERATIONAL INCIDENTS OF INTEREST

The report provided Members with information relating to operational incidents of note over the period 1 February 2022 – 31 March 2022.

County Councillor Shedwick expressed gratitude to staff who attended the incident in Fleetwood, as detailed on page 80 of the agenda pack.

County Councillor Mirfin also expressed gratitude to staff who attended the incident in Whalley, as detailed on page 81 of the agenda pack. He requested whether a report could be presented to committee which looked at lessons learned from fires in terraced houses (particularly those that started in shared roof spaces where the property occupier was a known hoarder who may potentially be suffering from mental health problems) and for the report to include the potential risk to neighbouring properties. In response, County Councillor Iddon, as Chairman of the Performance Committee agreed to consider this. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that he would be happy to provide information in due course, but the incident referred to was currently subject to coroner proceedings and therefore it was important not to undermine or conflict with those legal

proceedings. He confirmed that all significant incidents were subject to a full debrief and through that process the Service determined any learning for operational response, community safety activity and any interactions with partners, all of which were followed up post-incident.

County Councillor Mirfin congratulated staff for their rapid response time to an incident in Sawley, which was a difficult location to get to in the countryside (as detailed on page 82 of the agenda pack).

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer introduced Group Manager Liam Wilson who provided a short presentation on a wildfire incident in Rossendale (as detailed on page 83 of the agenda pack). The incident response demonstrated why the Authority's support for and investment in climate change response was important to the ongoing organisational evolution and success in dealing with some of the emerging risks around flooding and wildfire response.

Group Manager Wilson, tactical advisor for LFRS and national wildfire tactical advisor advised that the aim of the presentation was to provide an overview of the launch of the Climate Change Operational Response Plan and the benefits that the Authority's investment in new capabilities had had in supporting the swift and safe resolution of a recently attended wildfire incident.

GM Wilson advised that in 2021, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change suggested that continued global warming was projected to further intensify the global water cycle, including its variability, precipitation, and the severity of wet and dry periods. LFRS incident data from the last 10 years showed an increasing trend relating to flooding and wildfire events. The figures provided in the presentation identified that the Service had attended 838 flooding incidents and 350 wildfire related incidents over the last 3 years, each of which had a clear risk of impacting on local communities and placed significant resource demands upon the fire service and its partners.

LFRS' strategic assessment of risk identified the increasing impacts and consequences of climate change in terms of both prevalence and the duration of large-scale flooding and wildfire events within the county. In response to this increased risk, LFRS had recently published a Climate Change Operational Response Plan to be delivered over the next 5 years. The Plan looked to reduce the risk to communities by planning and delivering a range of Prevention, Protection and Operational Response aspirations relating to flooding and wildfire incidents. A brief video on the Plan was presented. As part of the Plan, investment had been made in the provision of two Hagglund all-terrain vehicles for use in both flooding and wildfire environments and the Service looked to continually learn from experience. Post-incident and training exercise debriefs were held to identify opportunities for improvement to practices, policies and equipment. An example of this was that operational staff had already been issued with flood suits and had recently been provided with dedicated wildfire PPE.

GM Wilson presented to Members an incident in Scout Moor, Rossendale which he had attended as tactical advisor. The initial time of call was 14:43 into North West Fire Control who mobilised: 4 fire appliances 1 Hagglund vehicle, the Burn Team, an Argo cat from West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and 2 tactical advisors. At the time the weather was warm, dry and sunny with a very strong

easterly wind. Due to conditions the officer in charge sent an assistance message to increase the fire appliances to 8 pumps; the initial 4 appliances, Hagglund, Argo cat and Burn Team engaged in wildfire fighting operations and the additional 4 undertook defensive firefighting operations given the local proximity to a farm house and forestry plantation.

The duration of the incident was just over 4 hours. The damage to the moorland was approximately 1.5 square kilometres. Historically, similar incidents had involved at least 10 pumping appliances engaged in active firefighting operations with additional resources involved for defensive operations at nearby properties and plantations. Incident data also suggested that resources were often engaged at such incidents for period of up to 36-48 hours in a similar area. The use of the Hagglund and burn team had a very positive impact on the success of the firefighting operations during this incident with less fire spread resulting in far less environmental damage, less impact on the local community and less demand on Service resources.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Hennessy GM Wilson confirmed that the Burn Team was a crew of 14 firefighters based in Bacup. This was a very effective method (from a toolbox of methods) used to extinguish a fire.

County Councillor Mein asked for an explanation of the term 'tactical burn'. In response, GM Wilson confirmed that once deployed the Burn Team would undertake reconnaissance, put a risk assessment in place and, to ensure the fire would not get out of control (for example where it was burning towards properties or forestry plantations) the Burn Team would apply fire to the ground (referred to as a tactical burn) to put a control line across the moorland or reinforce a path or road with the aim of preventing the fire from developing further.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Williams, GM Wilson advised that the Service, in partnership with Lancashire Police rural task force was engaged in the undertaking of investigations into the causes of wildfires and there were a significant number caused by deliberate ignition from antisocial behaviour or old agricultural practices.

County Councillor Shedwick stated that wildfires could happen in a very short period of dry weather. He was pleased to see the positive impact of the Hagglund vehicle and suggested it would be beneficial for new Members to receive a demonstration of the burns team.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Morris regarding how the Hagglund vehicle was transported, GM Wilson confirmed that it was pre-loaded on a small low-loader type vehicle for immediate response as required.

Councillor Williams commented on the complexity of incidents dealt with by the Service. He felt there should be a judicial strategy in relation to the level of sentences applied for arson convictions, which included those for the deliberate setting of wildfires, as the sentences handed down were so varied.

County Councillor Singleton queried whether there was a public space protection order in relation to disposable barbecues. In response GM Wilson advised that within climate change operational plan, one of the aspirations for the prevention

strategy formed an introduction of public space protection orders (such as the one in existence for the sand dunes in Blackpool). Partnership work was ongoing to scope out the potential for implementing public space protection orders on Darwen Moor, Anglezarke and Winter Hill.

In response to a question from County Councillor Hennessy the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the use of disposable barbeques was discouraged and there had been some success nationally with some supermarkets no longer stocking them. The challenge was that people rarely thought about what to do with them when they had finished their barbeque and people were unlikely to take them away as they were still warm; which was unfortunately probably the cause of most of the wildfires.

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

95-20/21 MEMBER COMPLAINTS

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

RESOLVED: - That the current position be noted.

96-20/21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Authority would be held on Monday 27 June 2022 at 10:00am in Washington Hall at the Training Centre, Euxton.

97-20/21 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: - That the press and members of the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there would be a likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the appropriate paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, indicated under the heading to the item.

98-20/21 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

(Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3)

Members considered a report prepared by the Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority concerning the appointment of Independent Person(s) in line with the Localism Act 2011.

RESOLVED: - that the Authority:

- i) noted and endorsed the recommendations arising from the recruitment process;
- ii) approved the appointment of 2 Independent Persons with one appointment being for 4 years and the other for 2 years (with the option for renewal); and
- iii) approved an increase to the annual allowance per Independent Person to £1,000 per annum, as set out in the Members' Allowance Scheme.

99-20/21 REPRESENTATIVE BODY RECOGNITION

(Paragraph 4)

Members considered a report received by the Director of People and Development regarding representative body recognition. Following discussion and a vote taken by the Clerk it was:

RESOLVED: - That the Authority approved the requests from both the Fire and Rescue Services Association and the Fire Officers Association for full recognition for collective bargaining purposes in respect of all grey book staff.

100-20/21 GREEN BOOK SUPPORT STAFF SUSTAINABILITY

(Paragraph 4)

The Director of People and Development presented a report on green book support staff sustainability. Following discussion, Members agreed to remove the requirement "from within the existing structure" from the final recommendation as outlined in the report.

RESOLVED: - That the recommendations outlined in the report be approved with the agreed amendment.

M NOLAN
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood