



Annual Statement of Assurance 2015-16

1. Introduction.....	3
Lancashire Combined Fire Authority.....	3
The County of Lancashire.....	4
Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS)	5
2. Financial Assurance.....	6
3. Assurance on Governance.....	7
4. Operational Assurance	8
Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)	9
<i>Performance</i>	9
<i>Consultation</i>	9
<i>Community Risk Management</i>	10
Prevention, Protection and Response	10
<i>Mutual Aid Agreements</i>	11
<i>National Resilience</i>	11
<i>Business Continuity</i>	12
Safety, Health & Environment.....	13
Training and Development	14
5. Assurance Declaration.....	14
Figure 1 - Combined Fire Authority structure.....	4
Figure 2 - Service Delivery Areas and Fire Station locations.....	6
Figure 3 - Changes in Fire Risk 2006-2016	10

1. Introduction

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2012) provides overall strategic direction to English Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA). It sets out the Government's priorities and objectives and places a requirement on all FRA's to provide assurance to their communities and to Government on financial, governance and operational matters.

This Statement of Assurance aims to provide the necessary accountability and transparency to the people of Lancashire and evidence that their Fire and Rescue Service continues to deliver under the expectations detailed within both the National Framework and our own Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

This statement sits alongside our IRMP, Statement of Accounts, the Annual Governance Statement and recently re-designed Annual Service Plan and Annual Progress Report. It details what measures are in place to assure that the Combined Fire Authority's performance is efficient, economic and effective.

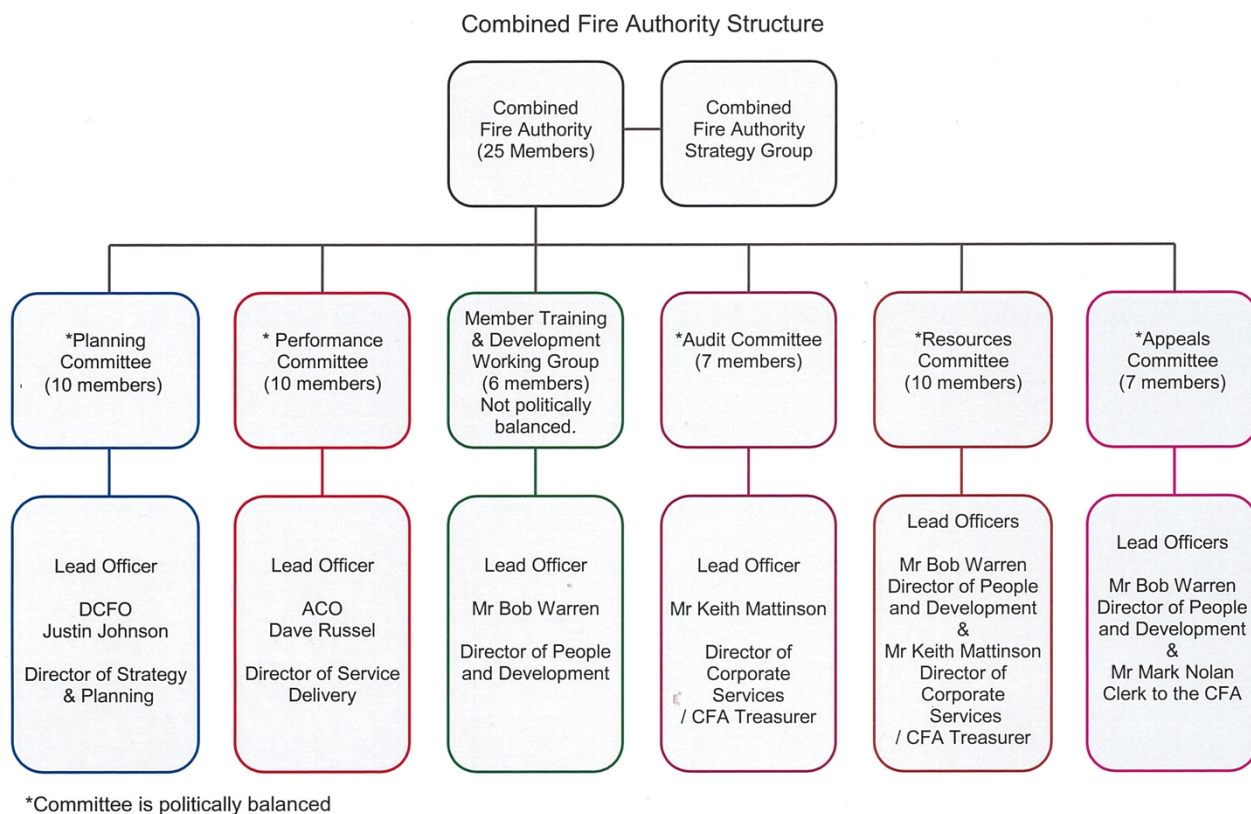
Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority (CFA) is made up of 25 elected councillors drawn from Lancashire County Council (19) and the unitary authorities of Blackburn-with-Darwen (3) and Blackpool (3). The CFA is responsible under the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004 for providing a Fire and Rescue Service in Lancashire. This involves the provision, training and equipping of our staff to undertake firefighting operations, fire safety work, rescue of persons from road traffic collisions and preparing for our response to other emergency situations. The CFA is the body legally responsible for enforcing the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and is a designated Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

The CFA ensures that the work of the Fire and Rescue Service is efficient, effective and provides best value. To achieve this, they operate under a framework of five full meetings each year (Figure 1), which are supplemented by a number of smaller committees focusing upon Planning, Performance, Resources, Audit and Appeals.

Further information on the afore-mentioned committees is accessible via our website at <http://www.lancsfirerescue.org.uk/Pages/fire-authority.aspx>

Figure 1 - Combined Fire Authority structure



The County of Lancashire

Lancashire comprises 14 districts, 12 which are within the Lancashire County Council area (Burnley, Chorley, Fylde, Hyndburn, Lancaster, Pendle, Wyre, Ribble Valley, Rossendale, South Ribble, West Lancashire and Preston) and 2 unitary authorities of Blackpool and Blackburn-with-Darwen. The area is home to a resident population of circa 1.46 million people (Census 2011) and is one of the most populated and urbanised shire counties within Great Britain, with a legacy of historical, industrial heritage.

Lancashire covers just over 3,000 square kilometres including 400 kilometres of coastline stretching from Morecambe Bay in the north of the county, down to the sands of West Lancashire in the south. The County has an extensive motorway network, port facilities, nuclear installations and airports and is home to a diverse demographic, with almost 20% of

our population being over retirement age and 10% representing Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities.

The County is bordered by Cumbria to the north and North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside moving from east to south. The major conurbations are Lancaster, Preston, Burnley, Blackburn, Accrington, Chorley and the seasonal town of Blackpool which receives around 16 million visitors per year.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS)

LFRS is the service provider on behalf of the CFA. We currently operate from 39 locations (with 58 front-line fire engines and a fleet of specialist vehicles), a specialist Urban Search and Rescue unit, Service Headquarters in Fulwood and our Service Training Centre in Euxton, Chorley. LFRS staff deliver an extensive range of prevention, protection and emergency response services throughout Lancashire.

To deliver these services, we employ circa 950 operational staff in a wide variety of roles using a variety of shift systems; Wholetime, Retained, Day Crewed, Day Crewing Plus and Day Duty (Figure 2).

Our Mobilising and Control Centre moved to North West Fire Control (NWFC), Warrington in 2014, where we worked collaboratively with Cumbria, Greater Manchester and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Services to develop this facility.

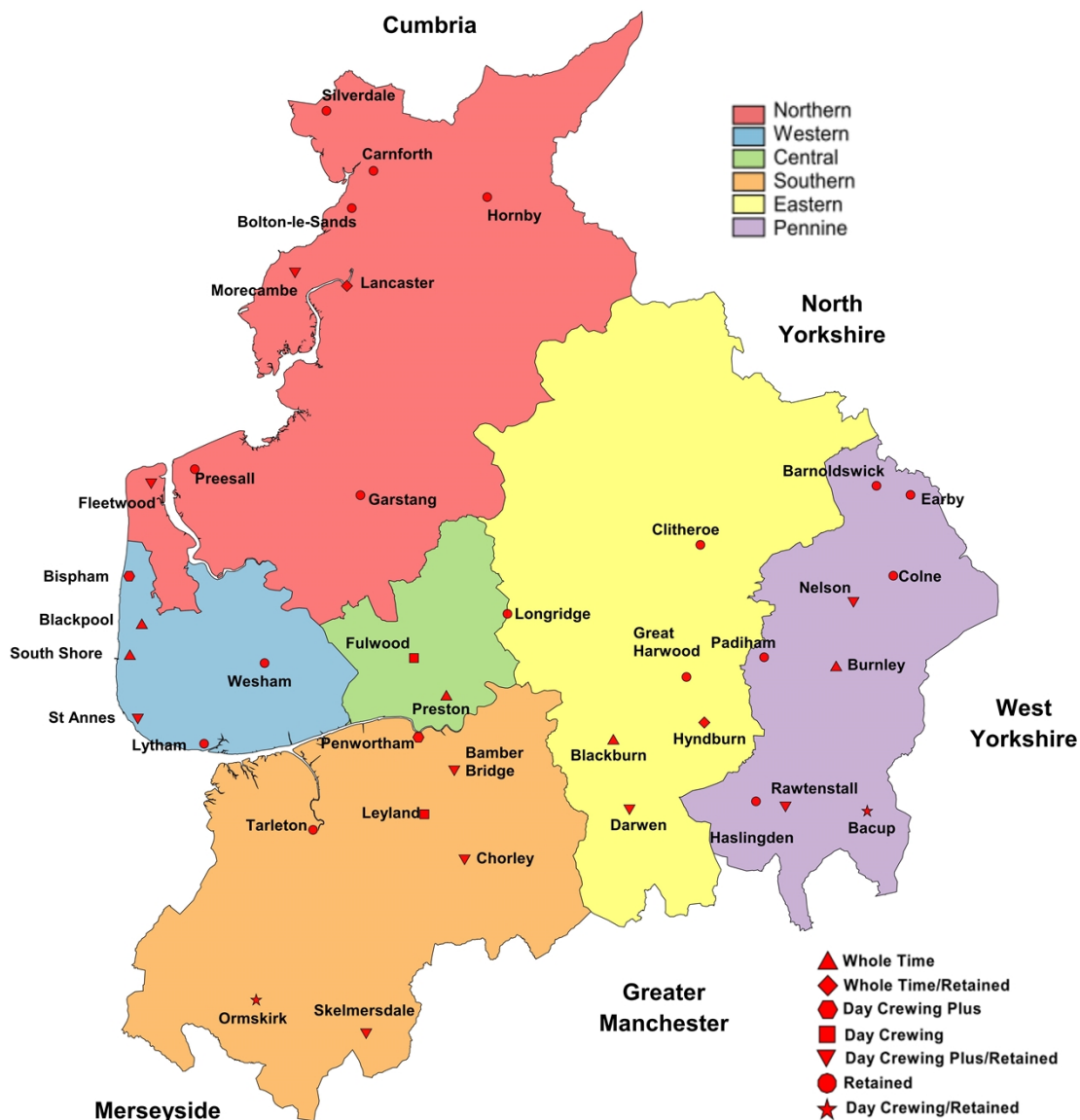


Figure 2 - Service Delivery Areas and Fire Station locations

2. Financial Assurance

All local authority accounts are required to adopt ‘proper accounting practice’ based on either statutory requirements or the code of practice on local authority accounting. These specify the principles and practices of accounting required to prepare a Statement of Accounts that ‘present a true and fair view’.

The Treasurer to the CFA provides publically available annual accounts which are approved by the Resources Committee.

An independent audit of the accounts is undertaken by an external auditing body, Grant

Thornton. The external auditor undertakes a review of the accounts and forms an overall opinion which is published in September of each year. The audit for 2015/16 was conducted in accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and provided the following –

- An unqualified opinion on the accounts which gives a true and fair view of the Authority's financial position as at 31 March 2016 and its income and expenditure for the year.
- An unqualified conclusion in respect of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

A copy of the Statement of Accounts 2015/16 can be found [here](#).

A copy of Grant Thornton's Audit Opinion can be found [here](#).

3. Assurance on Governance

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the CFA to publish an Annual Governance Statement along with the Authority's financial statements, following a review of the effectiveness of the internal controls in place. It sets out the key elements of the Authority's governance framework, how these have been evaluated, the outcome of the assessment of effectiveness and any areas for improvement.

The Audit Committee has adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, in line with guidance produced jointly by CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants) and SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives). The Code defines corporate governance as the way an authority ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

Included within the Code are the following core principles:-

1. Focusing on the purpose of the Authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area;
2. Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles;
3. Promoting values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour;
4. Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk;
5. Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective;

6. Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

The code also sets out the principles which support each of these core elements, as well as how the Authority will address each of these.

During 2015/16 we undertook a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the systems of internal controls in operation. This review was supported and informed by the work of both internal audit, which is undertaken by Lancashire County Council, and external audit, which is undertaken by Grant Thornton. This self-assessment formed the basis of the Authority's [Annual Governance Statement for 2015/16](#), which concluded that Lancashire Combined Fire Authority and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service has in place a satisfactory system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk, and that no significant governance issues were identified.

4. Operational Assurance

The National Framework outlines the requirement placed upon FRA's to provide assurance on operational matters which are determined locally by them in partnership with their local communities; citizens, businesses and others.

FRA's function within a clearly defined statutory and policy framework of which the key legislative documents defining these responsibilities are:

- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007
- Localism Act 2011
- Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

This section aims to provide assurance that our service is delivered in line with our statutory responsibilities and with due regard to the expectations set out in our IRMP including cross-border, multi-authority and national incident arrangements.

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

Our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) is a public facing document covering the period 2013-17. It reviews LFRS progress to date and provides information on the major challenges facing the Service over the 4-year period and how we plan to deliver services designed to overcome them or reduce their potential impact. A new IRMP will be published early 2017 and will cover a 5-year period through to 2022.

Key to the successful identification and management of risk is our ability to maintain a clear and current understanding of the present and future threats to Lancashire's communities. Risk in Lancashire remains dynamic; it changes over time; is different in different areas and requires different solutions. As a result, no single activity to reduce risk is adequate in all circumstances and a mix of prevention, protection and response activities delivered by a range of organisations is needed to reduce the likelihood of the risk event occurring or to lessen its consequences. This depth of understanding underpins everything we do, driving our governance and planning arrangements; our findings are published within the [Strategic Assessment of Risk](#).

Performance

Whilst the IRMP is presently a four year plan, the Service reviews its priorities and targets annually. We previously produced a Performance Report and Action Plan (which detailed both the coming year's intentions and the previous year's performance) but following the review of our corporate planning processes, we now produce two separate documents. Firstly a forward-looking [Annual Service Plan](#) which clearly sets out what we will deliver over the coming 12 months and then at the year end, an [Annual Progress Report](#) which details our achievement against those objectives.

On a quarterly basis, we produce a performance management report known as '[Measuring Progress](#)'. The content of this report is considered at Senior Management Team meetings and by the Performance Committee of the CFA.

Consultation

External and internal consultation is an essential part of the development of the IRMP and as such we have a clearly defined [Consultation Strategy](#). We use a variety of methods for engaging with community members and for every consultation exercise completed, a summary report is provided to the relevant committee of the CFA. This process ensures that potential stakeholders are consulted, involved and informed of the proposals to ensure that their input is considered within the final plans.

Community Risk Management

Our approach to integrated risk management is supported by the use of modelling. The Office of National Statistics categorises every part of the UK into a small neighbourhood called a Lower Layer Super Output Area (SOA). There are 941 SOA's in Lancashire, each containing around 1500 people. We use information about where fires have taken place in the past and combine this with various social deprivation data to give each area a risk grade.

The information is then used to identify geographic areas at higher risk where a combination of Prevention, Protection and Response activities can have the greatest impact.

This is utilised alongside the provision of a tailored Home Fire Safety Check service (HFSC) which is geared towards occupant risk and importantly, to those in greatest need and at greatest risk of fire.

We update the risk model on a regular basis and use the outcomes to direct and reprioritise our activities. Risk reduction progress over the last 10 years is depicted in the table below.

	VERY HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	OVERALL SCORE
	SOA Count	SOA Count	SOA Count	SOA Count	Risk Score Change
2006	154	145	257	384	43158
2007	126	119	280	415	41036
2008	87	124	301	428	39022
2009	70	119	299	452	37202
2010	60	118	310	452	36532
2011	60	114	303	463	36238
2012	53	100	313	474	35558
2013	40	93	301	507	34228
2014	32	95	306	508	33648
2015	41	86	281	533	33268
2016	32	76	314	519	32990
OVERALL CHANGE	-79% ↓	-48% ↓	22% ↑	35% ↑	-24% ↓
	OVERALL REDUCTION IN VERY HIGH RISK SOAs	OVERALL REDUCTION IN HIGH RISK SOAs	OVERALL INCREASE IN MEDIUM RISK SOAs	OVERALL INCREASE IN LOW RISK SOAs	OVERALL REDUCTION IN RISK SCORE

Figure 3 - Changes in Fire Risk 2006-2016

Prevention, Protection and Response

During the last 12 months, the Service has implemented the changes approved by the Authority's Planning Committee in relation to the Prevention and Protection Review (2015). The review analysed the current provision of Prevention and Protection functions across Lancashire and considered how roles could be re-structured and re-aligned to most efficiently and effectively meet future needs, including the provision of a Business Support function to assist with improving safety and achieving compliance with Fire Safety law in non-domestic

properties.

Assuring ourselves that what we are doing out on our Fire Stations by training effectively, by preparing for response by gathering risk information, and by our broader understanding of risk so that our prevention and protection activities are as focused and effective as they can be is nothing new to LFRS. However, there was evidence to support the need to review how we currently provide assurance and therefore continue to improve.

The previous station assurance arrangements had established a framework which delivered improvements across service delivery, but by considering other ways of providing assurance we have recently revised the existing staffing structures to create two roles that form the Service Delivery Assurance Team (SDAT).

The core work for the assurance team will be the completion of all station based assurance visits for the Service. This will provide a consistent approach to the process across the county. The assurance team is focused on service delivery staff's 'rounded preparedness' and this work will complement the work that the Emergency Response Assurance Group (ERAG) carries out. The ERAG team consider what happens at incidents through our incident ground monitoring and debrief processes.

The key priorities for the work that the assurance team completes are around improving the service we deliver to our communities and supporting firefighter and public safety. The approach to how the work is carried out is very much about being supportive to staff, sharing good practices, developing better ways of doing things and therefore contributing to improving service delivery as a whole.

Mutual Aid Agreements

The National Framework states that Fire and Rescue Authorities must make provision to respond to incidents such as fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies within their area and in other areas in line with mutual aid agreements. LFRS maintain mutual agreements for reinforcements with our five bordering Fire and Rescue Authorities - Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire. These agreements are periodically reviewed to maintain currency and provide optimal response arrangements.

National Resilience

For the purposes of this document, National Resilience (NR) is defined as the capacity and capability of Fire and Rescue Authorities to work together and with other Category 1 and 2 responders to deliver a sustained, effective response to major incidents, emergencies and disruptive challenges, such as (but not limited to) those identified in the National Risk Register of Civil Emergencies. It refers to risks that need to be planned for on a strategic, national

basis because their impacts and consequences would be of such scale and / or complexity that local resources would be insufficient, even when taking into account mutual aid arrangements.

LFRS is a signatory to the National Mutual Aid protocol and has deployed assets to major incidents outside the region. The costs of such mobilisations are borne by the FRA within whose area the incident occurs and are therefore re-claimed by LFRS.

We remain subject to National Resilience annual audit processes which test the various aspects of our NR capabilities. National Resilience has transferred from The Home Office to Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service as the Primary Authority.

Business Continuity

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is an integral part of our corporate risk management process. In relation to BCM processes and procedures, all FRA's have to satisfy the requirements of both the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004.

We are required to 'write and maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable, that if an emergency occurs the Authority is able to continue its functions'. This includes periods of industrial action.

In order to ensure that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service comply with both pieces of legislation, our plans have been developed in line with national best practice. Our Business Continuity Plan (BCP) provides a framework for the activation, allocation and deployment of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's resources for any event or occurrence which impacts on the normal day-to-day functions of the Service. The plan applies to the provision of all critical activities, including support functions.

Our business continuity policy provides a framework through which:

- Critical processes are identified;
- Assessments of both internal and external risks which may impact on business

continuity are made;

- Strategic and Tactical Plans have been produced to ensure an acceptable level of service can be maintained following disruption;
- Procedures are developed to invoke the BCP;
- Arrangements are made to test the BCP;
- All key personnel are trained to understand their role within the plan;

- Responsibilities are clearly identified and assigned.

In 2016 a full review of our Business Continuity arrangements was completed to ensure that they continue to follow the Business Continuity Institute of national best practice. In October 2016 a BCP exercise was completed successfully. The exercise involved the loss of the Service Headquarters Building instigating an evacuation and relocation of key staff to S54 Chorley. The exercise encompassed three fire stations. Learning points identified are being progressed by a Service action plan.

Safety, Health & Environment

The Combined Fire Authority meets regularly to consider local and national Safety, Health and Environment issues and to provide strategic political leadership to the Service. The Authority has overall responsibility for the effective governance of Safety, Health and Environment, including agreeing the Safety, Health and Environment Policy and ensuring adequate resources are available to manage performance effectively. Overall responsibility for management is delegated to the Chief Fire Officer.

Our Health and Safety Management System (HSMS) is based on the model Plan, Do, Check, Act laid down in the Health and Safety Executive publication HS(G)65 – Successful Health and Safety Management and written and implemented to the standard for Health and Safety Management Systems, OHSAS 18001:2007. The Environmental Management System (EMS) is written and implemented to the International Standard ISO 14001:2004. Both accreditations were achieved during 2011/12 and have been re-certified in 2014/15 for a further three years subject to successful annual surveillance audits.

As part of the audit process, the auditors visit a range of stations and departments and examine the 'Full provision of fire, rescue and supporting services across Lancashire' delivered by the Combined Fire Authority from a health and safety and environmental perspective. A number of positive aspects of our business were reported and following the surveillance audit in November 2016 achieved continued certification to both standards subject to the successful closure of two non-conformances both relating to Operational Controls for others operating on LFRS premises, one for each standard.

Each year a performance review of Safety, Health and Environment is carried out and reported to the Combined Fire Authority in the [Safety, Health and Annual Review report](#).

Part of business-as-usual is the review of all policies, procedures, instructions and guidance to ensure that we continue to meet our legal obligations in respect of safety, health and environment and we validate this by a system of peer review and internal audits.

To ensure continuous improvement is made in both the HSMS and EMS, we have developed an action plan to assist in delivering future improvements.

Training and Development

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Training and Operational Review policy is designed to provide training and development to personnel to enable the organisation to fulfil its vision of 'Making Lancashire Safer'. Training is based on the needs of the organisation with a strong focus on ensuring that personnel are safe and competent in the delivery of the prevention, protection and response services we provide.

The training programme takes into account learning identified through our own operational review processes as well as from reports describing learning from events of national significance. The training department supports continual learning and organisational development through a wide range of programmes tailored to role and responsibility, as well as managing the selection processes which identify managers for advancement. Ongoing development and maintenance of competence is a key focus and this is facilitated through a robust maintenance of skills programme linked to an e-learning system which is continually updated.

Trainers are selected and developed across an extremely diverse variety of specialisms ranging from the intricacies of boat handling and rope rescue through to the complexities of mounting a successful fire safety prosecution. Where necessary, support is commissioned from specialist providers.

5. Assurance Declaration

The Chairman of Lancashire Combined Fire Authority and Chief Fire Officer of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service are satisfied that the Authority's financial, governance and operational assurance arrangements are adequate and operating effectively and meet the requirements detailed within the Fire and Rescue National Framework.

Chris Kenny - Chief Fire Officer

Frank De Molfetta – CFA Chairman

Date: