

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 27 June 2022

Operational Incidents of Interest

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Executive summary and recommendations

Executive Summary

The report provides Members with information relating to operational incidents of note since the last report to the Authority.

Recommendation(s)

The Authority is asked to note the report.

Information

The report provides Members with information relating to operational incidents of note over the period from 1 April 2022 – 31 May 2022.

The following summarises the incidents with further detail provided over the following pages:

- Fire in Great Harwood involving 700 pallets
- Fatal house fire in Preston
- 6 fire engines attend a fire in a commercial unit in Burnley
- One person rescued from Blackburn house fire
- 10 fire engines attend fire at Recycling Lives, Preston
- Assistance to a high-profile missing person incident in Gisburn Forest
- 6 fire engines attend a recycling waste fire in Blackburn
- Fatal Road Traffic Collision (RTC) involving a Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) in Altham
- Several large deliberate building fires within Preston City Centre
- Building explosion in Skelmersdale.

District council area:	Hyndburn
LFRS area:	E72 Great Harwood
Date:	3/4/2022
Time:	14:34

One fire engine from Hyndburn was mobilised to a report of a fire in the open on Balfour Street in Great Harwood. Following footage on the 999-EYE system, which has the ability for a caller to send video footage of the incident to Northwest Fire Control, a further 2 fire engines were mobilised from Hyndburn and Blackburn. The fire involved approximately 700 wooden pallets which was spreading to a building.

A further 3 fire engines were requested from Darwen, Burnley and Blackburn, along with an Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) from Hyndburn, supported by 2 flexible duty officers. The water bowser was also requested from Leyland.

Several firefighting water jets were utilised and the fire service was in attendance for 19 hours. The drone team was used to identify pockets of smouldering debris.

The cause of the fire is believed to have been deliberate.

District council area:	Preston
LFRS area:	C50 Preston
Date:	8/4/2022
Time:	19:52

Three fire engines from Preston and Penwortham were sent to a house fire on Coronation Crescent, where it was reported an adult female could be seen at an upstairs window.

The first 2 fire engines arrived within 4 minutes of the initial call. A further fire engine was requested along with an Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP). A female adult had already self-rescued from a first-floor window, with reports of 2 children still within the property.

Firefighters in breathing apparatus and firefighting water jets entered the property to extinguish the severe fire within and carry out the rescues. The 2 children were quickly located and brought outside to awaiting paramedics. Firefighters assisted paramedics with CPR and drove the ambulance to allow for the medics to perform life-saving treatment in the back of the ambulance.

LFRS was in attendance for approximately 20 hours, damping down and carrying out an investigation into the cause.

Tragically, the 2 children rescued died in hospital, several days later. The cause of the fire is still part of an ongoing police investigation.

District council area:	Burnley
LFRS area:	P90 Burnley
Date:	12/4/2022
Time:	17:44

Six fire engines from Burnley, Nelson, Bacup, Rawtenstall, and Colne, an ALP from Hyndburn and the air support unit attended a commercial building fire on Talbot Street in Burnley. Firefighters used five firefighting water jets to bring the fire under control. Local residents were warned to keep windows and doors closed to avoid any smoke.

The building involved was a 20m x 30m unit, of timber construction. The entire building was destroyed by fire. Several other properties were affected by the heat and flames.

LFRS was in attendance for 11 hours, bringing the fire under control and assisting with the investigation. The fire is believed to have been deliberate and 2 people were subsequently arrested.

District council area:	Blackburn with Darwen
LFRS area:	E71 Blackburn
Date:	19/4/2022
Time:	09:59

Three fire engines from Blackburn and Darwen, along with a flexible duty officer were sent to reports of a house fire with people trapped in Shakespeare Way. On arrival of the fire service, the house was well alight, with reports of 2 people inside. A request for a fourth fire engine was made, which came from Hyndburn.

Four firefighters wearing breathing apparatus entered the property with firefighting water jets. The only person within the property was quickly rescued and flown via air ambulance to hospital and the casualty has since made a full recovery. Approximately 20 cats and one dog were also rescued from the property.

Fire crews were in attendance for 6 hours and the cause of the fire was recorded as accidental.

District council area:	Preston
LFRS area:	C50 Preston
Date:	23/4/2022
Time:	12:23

A call was received to a fire at Recycling Lives in Preston and 4 fire engines were initially mobilised. A further 6 fire engines were requested, along with a stinger, ALP, foam unit and incident command unit.

The fire involved approximately 20 tonnes of scrap metal and excavator machinery. Site staff assisted by creating fire breaks with plant machinery whilst firefighters applied water and foam onto the fire. The drone team were utilised to monitor hotspots and to prevent any hidden fire spread within the scrap material.

Water run off was managed in conjunction with United Utilities, the environment agency and a LFRS Hazardous Materials Officer. Fire crews were in attendance for over 24 hours and the cause of the fire was recorded as accidental ignition.

Following the incident, the site has agreed to purchase a 1 million litre water tank which will assist LFRS with water supplies and reduce any potential impacts on surrounding premises in the event of another incident.

District council area:	Ribble Valley
LFRS area:	E91 Clitheroe
Date:	24/4/2022
Time:	17:12

LFRS Duty National Inter Agency Liaison Officer (NILO) was contacted by Lancashire Police, with a request for assistance to locate a missing person within Gisburn Forest.

LFRS is the only fire service in the country to have victim recovery (VR)/cadaver dogs, which are trained to detect deceased persons. The VR dog along with the LFRS drone were mobilised to the scene. Later that evening a further request was made for swift water rescue teams to search a pond for any signs of the person or evidence relating to the case.

LFRS had a NILO, VR dog and other resources at the scene for 6 consecutive days. The collaboration between LFRS and Lancashire Constabulary was highly effective with an excellent working relationship evident.

Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams from Bamber Bridge and Chorley also assisted, joining in with police teams during line searches for evidence. It is rare for LFRS staff to be so closely involved in a scene such as this, showing the trust and confidence that exists between LFRS and Lancashire Police. Each member of the team received a letter of thanks from the Chief Constable.

District council area:	Blackburn with Darwen
LFRS area:	E71 Blackburn
Date:	27/4/2022
Time:	16:23

Six fire engines from Blackburn, Burnley, Hyndburn, Darwen, and Preston, together with an ALP from Hyndburn and a stinger appliance from Blackburn, attended a commercial building fire on Croft Head Road, Blackburn.

The incident involved a quantity of recyclable waste inside a building approximately 30x50m in size. Firefighters used two breathing apparatus, firefighting water jets and a positive pressure ventilation unit to extinguish the fire.

Crews remained in attendance for over two hours. The cause of the fire is believed to be accidental.

District council area:	Burnley
LFRS area:	P92 Padiham
Date:	6/5/2022
Time:	12:35

Following reports of an RTC involving a HGV at Higher Shuttleworth, Altham, 2 fire engines from Burnley and Hyndburn were mobilised along with a flexible duty officer.

On arrival crews found the driver unconscious after the HGV had left the carriageway and hit several trees. Fire crews made the scene safe and used cutting equipment to free the casualty from the cab.

The attending medics declared this a fatal incident and the police locked down the scene for investigations. Fire crews were requested to reattend the incident so that they could release the deceased to the care of the undertaker. LFRS was in attendance for approximately 5 hours.

District council area:	Preston
LFRS area:	C50 Preston

There has been ongoing work between LFRS and Preston City Council for over 12 months, in relation to empty properties being broken into and used for rough sleeping and other activities. This has involved the crews from Preston carrying out arson vulnerability assessments at the known buildings in the city. However, there have been a number of fires within empty properties, requiring large resource deployments.

Most recently there have been fires impacting the city centre, posing significant challenges to the infrastructure and economy of Preston.

13/5/2022 at 19:48 Mount St Hospital, Preston

A building fire was attended by 8 fire engines and 2 ALPs from across the county. Firefighters utilised firefighting water jets and the high-volume monitors from the ALPs. Due to risk information in place for the premises, it was deemed too dangerous in some areas to fight the fire internally. LFRS resources were in attendance for over 24 hours.

The cause of the fire was recorded as deliberate ignition, but no suspects have been identified.

Multiple calls to Fishwick Golf Club

The derelict golf club has had 3 fires started within the empty club house during May. Council staff have been informed who are pursuing enforcement with the owners to secure the premises. The security of the building prior to demolition is being addressed by a multi-agency approach involving LFRS, police and council officials.

14/5/2022 at 13:08 Former Evoke Nightclub on Church Street

Four fire engines and a flexible duty officer were sent to an empty cinema building above the former nightclub. A large fire was discovered on the 3rd floor, which was tackled by 6 firefighters wearing breathing apparatus, utilising firefighting water jets. The fire service dog also searched the building due to the history of rough sleeping and youths entering the premises. Fire crews were in attendance for over 4 hours. The fire was recorded as deliberate ignition.

19/5/2022 at 18:43 Former Evoke Nightclub on Church Street

12 fire engines, 2 ALPs, drone team and an incident command unit attended a second fire in the space of the week at this premises.

A substantial fire had started in the former cinema, which spread into the nightclub. Such was the ferocity of the fire that the roof collapsed above the main dance floor making internal firefighting too dangerous. Water jets were fixed in place within the

building and water monitors from the aerial platforms were utilised to fight the fire and protect surrounding buildings from above.

The incident was dealt with by a multi-agency approach, with police and city council staff at the scene. As a result of the fire a cordon was put in place restricting vehicles and pedestrians to this section of Church Street and the surrounding area. This meant a number of businesses were forced to close and residential buildings within the cordon evacuated, with approximately 30 people in need of temporary accommodation.

Youths were witnessed on the roofs of the premises with reports of them still being inside the building. Police were able to quickly apprehend the youths and ascertain that they were all accounted for. Due to there being evidence of rough sleepers, the fire search dog covered the areas where it was safe to manoeuvre within the building.

LFRS protection staff were in the city centre the following morning to provide businesses with safety advice and reassurance.

Fire service resources were on scene for 4 days. The cause of the fire was recorded as deliberate ignition.

Post fire activity:

A letter was sent to all Preston schools warning of the dangers of exploring within empty buildings. A multi-agency approach has been adopted in relation to reducing the risks. This has involved all agencies identifying buildings that they are aware of and rating this on risk in relation to likelihood and severity. Those at greatest risk will be regularly audited by council staff, ensuring that they remain secure.

LFRS staff have also carried out visits to the buildings to report security issues and record information relevant to attending crews in the event of fire.

District council area:	West Lancashire
LFRS area:	S56 Skelmersdale
Date:	17/5/2022
Time:	18:06

Crews were mobilised to reports of a building explosion on Tanfields in Skelmersdale. The attendance was increased by 3 fire engines from Greater Manchester FRS, 2 fire engines, USAR and the drone team from LFRS.

An explosion had caused serious structural damage to a 3-storey flat, with several resultant casualties from those present in the premises at the time of the blast. None of these had serious injuries.

USAR staff carried out structural monitoring and created a search plan, whilst the drone team carried out aerial reconnaissance. The LFRS search dogs also attended to search for anybody that may have been trapped under the rubble.

The investigations with LFRS and Cadent identified that the explosion was not caused by the main supply. Fire service resources were at the scene for 2 days and

Police investigations into the incident are continuing. Two people have been arrested in connection with the blast.

Business Risk

There is an increased risk of fire in unsecure commercial premises and potential for disruption to local business.

Environmental Impact

Potential impact on local environment in relation to operational incidents. Significant incidents benefit from the attendance of specialist water tower resources (Stingers) which make a positive impact on firefighting operations and ultimately reduce the environmental impact.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None

HR Implications

None

Financial Implications

None

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate: N/A