

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 3 October 2022

Notes of Strategy Group held on Monday, 11 July 2022

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

Report on proceedings of Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Strategy Group held at the Service Training Centre, Euxton on Monday, 11 July 2022.

Recommendation

That the Authority note the proceedings as set out in this report.

PRESENT:	
<u>Councillors</u>	
D O'Toole (Chairman)	S Morris
J Shedwick (Vice-Chair)	M Pattison
L Beavers	P Rigby
S Clarke	J Singleton
N Hennessy	D Smith
A Kay	A Sutcliffe
H Khan	T Williams
Z Khan	R Woollam
J Mein	B Yates

Information

1/22	<u>CHIEF FIRE OFFICER INTRODUCTION - NATIONAL CONTEXT</u>
	<p>The Chief Fire Officer welcomed new Independent Persons Julie Byrom and Ann Highton to the meeting.</p> <p><u>Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service White Paper</u> Members considered the Home Office public consultation document 'Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service' which outlined proposals to reform the fire sector in England across the principal areas of: People, Professionalism and Governance. This sought:</p> <p><u>People</u> – to introduce changes that would allow fire professionals to further develop their skills and thrive in their work. To clarify the role of fire and rescue services and of the firefighter, unlock talent and improve diversity within services, taking action to ensure the creation of a positive culture was supported, and to further develop schemes to consistently identify and nurture talent. The government</p>

would also commission an independent review into the current pay negotiation process and consider if it was fit for a modern emergency service.

Professionalism – to modernise the fire and rescue service, to enable greater professionalism and to ensure that the government was recruiting and training fire and rescue services to be the best that they could be. To increase professionalism by moving from a Fire Standards Board to the creation of a College of Fire and Rescue. To develop a mandatory 21st century leadership programme for progression to senior roles, set clearer entry requirements for recruitment, and put in place a statutory code of ethics and a fire and rescue services oath.

Governance – to strengthen governance arrangements and transfer fire functions to a single, elected – ideally directly elected, individual who would hold their operationally independent Chief Fire Officer to account. This person could be a mayor (who could delegate day-to-day oversight to a deputy mayor), or a council leader (who could delegate to a cabinet member) or a Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. The intention would be to implement Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services’ (HMICFRS) recommendation to confer operational independence on Chief Fire Officers which could be alongside making Chief Fire Officer corporations sole, thereby making them the employers of fire professionals. The government proposed to clearly define the role and responsibilities of both the executive leader and chief fire officer with clear demarcation between the two.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that the White Paper had been informed by the National Fire Chief Council led ‘Fit for the Future’ initiative in association with key stakeholders. Fit for the Future aimed to create a future vision for the reform of fire and rescue services in England, using an evidence-based approach to drive improvement within the Sector in an integrated way which included recommendations from the Grenfell Tower fire; HMICFRS; Dame Judith Hackitt’s review and a number of previous reviews.

The consultation had commenced 18 May 2022 and would end 26 July 2022.

The Chairman encouraged Members to respond to the consultation. As agreed at the Authority meeting in June, the Chief Fire Officer would be drafting a response on behalf of the Authority in consultation with political leaders; alongside drafting a separate response on behalf of the Service.

2/22

HER MAJESTY’S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

The Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service was first inspected during the summer of 2018. The inspection focussed on: i) how effective was the Service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks; ii) how efficient was the Service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks; and, iii) how well did the Service look after its people. Across these 3 pillars, and under the 11 sub-categories the Service was rated as ‘Good’ across all areas with promoting the right values and culture rated as ‘Outstanding’.

The latest inspection by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services concluded on 24 January 2022. Although the Service had received its results these would not be made public by the Home Office until the

	<p>end of July. The Home Office assessment report would give an overview of the main findings from the 15 Services in England inspected in this tranche.</p>
3/22	<p><u>EMERGENCY COVER REVIEW PROCESS AND PROPOSALS</u></p>
	<p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented an overview of the Emergency Cover Review process, timeline and options which would be discussed under part 2 of the next Planning Committee meeting.</p> <p>Every 3 years the Authority considered a strategic review of fire and rescue service emergency response across the county which included fire appliances, stations and associated staffing arrangements.</p> <p>Following the Planning Committee in February 2022 the Service had undertaken a strategic examination of activity levels, changes in fire risk and availability of resources alongside an assessment of the number of front-line fire engines, fire stations, specialist appliances and associated staffing arrangements required to meet the activity levels and risk across Lancashire.</p> <p>Planning Committee in July 2022 would confidentially consider draft proposals and agree the option for public consultation. In November 2022 the Strategy Group would receive an update on the consultation prior to the Planning Committee meeting which would then formally consider consultation responses, whether the consultation had been adequate in scale and scope and agree recommendations for the Authority to consider at its meeting in December 2022.</p>
4/22	<p><u>COLLABORATION UPDATE</u></p>
	<p>The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the Policing and Crime Act provided for collaboration between emergency services to achieve closer working, collaboration and integration where appropriate in the interests of greater transparency, efficiency gains and improved value to the community.</p> <p>The Service worked collaboratively supporting the most vulnerable members of the public through information sharing agreements and partaking in safe and well visits. The Service also gained entry to premises on behalf of North West Ambulance Service for medical emergencies, it supported Police searches for missing persons using drones and it had a number of co-location agreements in place with the Police.</p> <p>Prior to the pandemic a Blue Light Collaboration Programme Board and a Collaborative Working Group were established to oversee collaboration activity.</p> <p>During the response to covid, blue light services worked together to respond at a local level through the Resilience Forum with the Service delivering: i) face fitting for masks to be used by frontline NHS staff; ii) casualty transportation; iii) vulnerable person contacts and visits for the delivery of essential items; iv) delivery of PPE and other medical supplies to NHS and care facilities; v) supporting the national vaccination programme including logistical support and the delivery of vaccinations.</p>

	As services moved from the emergency phase of the pandemic into recovery, there had been an opportunity to reconvene the Blue Light Collaboration Board meetings with update reports presented to Planning Committee.
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Business Risk

None

Environmental Impact

None

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