

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee

Meeting to be held on 21st November 2022

Emergency Cover Review – Consultation analysis and summary (Appendices 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 refer)

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Executive Summary

In the early part of 2021, work commenced to research, analyse, and develop proposals that would shape a 3-year Emergency Cover Review (ECR) covering 2023-2026 and which would be consulted upon in summer 2022.

During this time Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) engaged and consulted with its employees, along with external specialists, to help develop and shape these proposals.

Various working groups were established to look at distinct elements of LFRS' response arrangements, which worked alongside and were supported by sector specialists, Process Evolution through their analysis and modelling of the Service's risk profile and response data.

Final proposals were submitted to Strategy Group and Planning Committee in July 2022 where approval was sought, and approved, to publicly consult on the proposed changes to the response arrangements within Lancashire.

An independent third-party organisation, Pearson Insight, was commissioned to support a public and staff consultation on behalf of LFRS to gather views on the proposals within this ECR. This commenced on 22 July 2022, supported internally by support teams and service delivery staff.

The consultation period spanned 12-weeks and concluded on 14 October 2022. The consultation report that has been provided by Pearson Insight details the feedback that has been received from the public, stakeholders as well as LFRS staff, along with specific data around the geography and demography of those who responded.

Since the consultation commenced there has been a shift in the national and global economic position. Government funding statements are likely to include a reduction in public sector spending, this alongside increasing inflation rates and ongoing national Firefighter pay negotiations must be factored into future spending and efficiencies.

Recommendation(s)

- i) Endorse the consultation process and analysis as effective and accurate.
- ii) Approve the ECR final proposals following consultation feedback, with recommendations to the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) to agree the changes at its meeting on 19 December 2022.

Information

At the Planning Committee meeting of the Combined Fire Authority on 18 July 2022, Members authorised the Service to begin consultation on proposals as part of an Emergency Cover Review (ECR) which would span 2023 to 2026.

The consultation would cover a 12-week period from 22 July 2022 to 14 October 2022. The consultation plan was created in line with the Service's consultation strategy, with the aim of consulting local communities, stakeholders and staff on the proposals contained within the ECR. The key proposals included:

- a) The introduction (subject to relevant negotiations with Trade Unions) of a new duty system, Flexible Whole-Time (FWT), to replace the Day Crewing Plus (DCP) duty system at several fire stations, whilst introducing Flexible Day Crewing (FDC) at two stations;
- b) The introduction of a Dynamic Cover Software package to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of how we position our resources across Lancashire during periods of high incident and resource demand
- c) Introducing new and enhanced vehicles to support our response to incidents linked to climate change (i.e. Flooding and Wildfire), as well as Flood Water Incident Managers to support flooding incidents;
- d) The introduction of the Service's very first 45m Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP), whilst investing in 2 further Water Towers to enhance our response to the expanding high rise, built environment, and increasing risk of fire in high rise buildings. Note: This was to ensure a holistic view of emergency cover was included within the consultation, as previous decisions have been taken by the CFA to approve procurement of these three vehicles;
- e) Exploring opportunities, and seeking feedback on how best to broaden the role of our On-Call Firefighters to strengthen the service we offer to our communities.

These key initial consultation proposals have a clear link to, and underpin, the values as set out in the Service's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), ensuring that LFRS can continue to:

- a) **Value our People** through a growth in the staffing establishment, and through the Service's commitment to the On-Call duty system;
- b) **Prevent fires** from occurring yet **Respond quickly and effectively** when they do happen through the introduction of new assets, and by exploring ways in which the On-Call can expand their skills;
- c) **Protect people and businesses** from fire by introducing new duty systems that increase and enhance the Service's ability to undertake important Prevention and Protection work through a reduction in recovery periods;
- d) **Deliver value for money** by effectively researching and assessing new ways of working, such as a FWT duty system, which enables the Service to maintain all 39 Stations and 58 Appliances, continue to deliver excellent response standards (a reduction of 0.1%), whilst increasing the staffing establishment for c.£200,000 additional investment per annum.

At the start of the consultation period, draft documents were published across various online and physical platforms, which all linked to an online survey. Printed copies were shared on request, and a separate and dedicated consultation email address was set up to offer an alternative method of providing feedback.

Identified stakeholders included: Service employees, local authorities, emergency services and other public agencies, town and parish councils, third sector partners such as voluntary groups and charities, businesses, representative bodies, landowners, community groups and members of the public. Communication activity was tailored to target audiences and ranged from writing directly to partner organisations and staff engagement sessions, to digital advertising and email marketing. Feedback was collected via an online survey, by email and in comments on social media platforms.

Pearson Insight, a third party, independent specialist in consultation were employed by the Service to deliver a professional and impartial analysis of the feedback received via the various channels. Their consultation reports are attached as Appendices 3 and 4.

It is important to highlight at this point, that during the consultation period, significant global and national challenges have arisen which must be taken into consideration when contemplating changes to LFRS' response arrangements following this ECR. The economic crisis will most likely have a profound impact on public sector budgets. This along with ongoing pay negotiations and uncertainty in medium term funding has led to amendments to the initial ECR proposals. Consultation feedback also supports these amendments.

Summary of Feedback

Statistical analysis

Following the conclusion of the 12-week consultation, there has been a total response of **1,224**. This includes **928** from local residents, **234** from staff and **62** stakeholder responses. A breakdown of responses is available in the consultation report produced by Pearson Insight in Appendices 3 and 4.

Strength of importance was highest for:

- a) Meeting our response standards for the time it takes to reach incidents in every area of Lancashire;
- b) Ensuring we have effective and resilient crewing arrangements to deliver our service;
- c) Ensuring we have the right equipment and technology, so we are fit for the future.

Strength of importance was lower for:

- a) Considering changes in the environment and the impact of climate change on the incidents we are called to.

Our staff had a similar strength of agreement for the principles in the public consultation. General themes identified through the consultation included:

- a) Roads and parking in the context of responding to incidents (*this was a key theme highlighted through the CRMP consultation process*);
- b) Consideration of population, demographics, housing, and how these are changing;
- c) From a financial context, is the ECR placing an emphasis on Value for Money or is it a streamlining/ money saving exercise?

Proposals for recommendation

Following conclusion of the 12-week consultation period, all feedback and responses have been analysed and taken into consideration. This, along with the shifting financial position and increasing uncertainty has resulted in refinements of some proposals.

1. Introduce more resilient and flexible crewing arrangements

The introduction of a Flexible Wholetime duty system and replacing some Day Crewing Plus stations will have a positive impact on the delivery of prevention and protection services.

Nationally, the Fire Brigades Union do not support DCP as a shift system. Currently, DCP is our most prominent shift system, the resilience of DCP is impacted during major incidents, or when simultaneous incidents occur. The upgrade of some DCP stations to FWT will provide greater resilience, effective emergency cover, and increased flexibility for individuals. The following proposals are recommended to be progressed and the Service will work with staff and trade unions to manage the change in line with staffing profiles:

- a) Upgrade Day Crewing Plus with a new Flexible Whole Time duty system at **Morecambe, Fleetwood and Skelmersdale**. The type of duty system may be dependent on whether agreement can be reached with Trade Unions, therefore LFRS will either:
 - i. Introduce a new FWT duty system (shift times and durations to mirror existing 2-2-4) increasing establishment on these stations to 24 members of staff, or;
 - ii. Re-introduce a variation of the traditional 2-2-4, increasing station establishments from 14 to 24.
 - b) **Bispham** to remain as DCP instead of a change to FWT
 - c) Reduce the staffing establishment on remaining DCP stations from 14 staff to 13 staff (excluding Chorley and Bamber Bridge due to USAR requirements).
 - d) To balance staffing numbers and budgets, replace the existing 2-2-4 duty system with a new Flexible Whole Time duty system (shift times and durations to mirror existing 2-2-4) at **Lancaster, Hyndburn and South Shore** or reduce the staffing establishment on the existing 2-2-4 duty system to 24 should an agreement not be reached with the Trade Unions.
 - e) Change St Anne's and Penwortham to Flexible Day Crewed, as the risk and demand within the areas, along with modelling provided by Process Evolution, supports the proposal consulted upon. However in response to the perceived challenges around affordability and availability of housing within 5-minute catchment areas, consult internally with staff and Trade Unions to identify the most appropriate on-call type duty system to operate at night. Possible alternatives could include:
 - i. Introducing Day Crewing only, and use on-call firefighters to cover the appliances at night;
 - ii. Continuing with the proposal to introduce FDC, which would require staff working that system to live/relocate to within 5 minutes of the fire station.
- The final decision after internal consultation is to be agreed with the Chief Fire Officer and CFA Chairman.
- f) An additional proposal is recommended following feedback received through the consultation for the establishment of 14 staff on FDC stations to be reduced to 13 to align and be consistent with the reduction to 13 staff on DCP stations. This will assist with balancing staffing and budgets across the Service.

Future review recommendations:

- g) Following consultation feedback around wider Penwortham pump activity, a further review of emergency cover across the **Preston area** and the potential replacement of Preston fire station (in line with the capital programme) is recommended. In addition, maintaining DCP at Bispham should be further considered as part of a wider **Blackpool area** response review; these two reviews to be specifically analysed as part of any future review of emergency cover across Lancashire.

2. Optimise emergency cover through Dynamic Cover Software

It is recommended to introduce Dynamic Cover Software in our command support room in 2023-24, followed by wider rollout at North West Fire Control thereafter. The Service to use this software to inform dynamic decision making of the optimum location to locate fire appliances based on current levels of risk, demand and staffing profiles, to ensure an efficient and effective deployment of resources across Lancashire.

3. Strengthen our response to climate change emergencies

Our strategic assessment of risk identifies the increasing risk of flooding and wildfires, which is already having a significant impact on homes, businesses and environments in Lancashire. As a result, we have produced a Climate Change Operational Response Plan which details how we are mitigating and responding to these types of incidents. The following proposals are recommended to be progressed to support our response:

- a) Replace 4 current 'type B' standard fire appliances and replace with 4 fire appliances with off road capabilities in areas at risk of wildfires and flooding. A project group will be established to develop the finer detail around how LFRS can make the best use of these vehicles through a pilot scheme;
- b) Introduce specialist Flood Water Incident Managers.

4. Strengthen firefighting and rescue capabilities in high-rise and commercial buildings

These proposals formed part of the consultation to ensure a holistic view of emergency cover however, previous decisions have been taken by the CFA to approve procurement of three vehicles. Therefore, the following proposals will be progressed:

- a) Introduce a 45m Aerial Ladder Platform, our highest reach aerial to date;
- b) Invest in two additional Water Tower appliances.

5. Broaden On-Call firefighting capabilities to strengthen operational response

Of the 58 fire appliances in Lancashire, 32 are crewed by on-call firefighters. To ensure we are getting the best value out of our 400 On-Call firefighters and to strengthen our operational response and resilience, it is recommended to support broadening the capabilities of On-Call staff:

A pilot will be undertaken, initially expanding the skills of On-Call staff at Hyndburn and Morecambe (Aerial Ladder Platform driving), then the skills of staff at stations where new water towers are to be introduced. Further consultation will take place via the On-Call Practitioners group to fully understand the capability, limitations, and impact of broadening the role of On-Call firefighters.

Summary of proposals

These options for change provide the best package of measures with the least impact on our ability to provide an effective county-level emergency response (overall county impact 0.1% on response performance).

- Maintain 6 Day Crewing Plus – best fit and pending future response area reviews;
- Change 5 Day Crewing Plus and replace with:
 - o 3 Flexible Wholetime or 2/2/4 with 24 staff;
 - o 2 Flexible Day Crewed or Day Crewed only with On Call cover at night;
- Change 3 existing 2-2-4 stations to Flexible Wholetime or keep 2-2-4 but with 24 staff;
- Realign establishment levels on FDC stations to 13, the same as DCP;
- Introduce Dynamic Cover Software;
- Invest in 4 new all-wheel-drive fire appliances, replacing 4 standard type B fire appliances;
- Introduce Flood Water Incident Managers;
- Introduce a 45m Aerial Ladder Platform;
- Invest in 2 additional Water Tower appliances;
- Broaden the capabilities of On-Call Firefighters.

This will ensure that we:

- Maintain all 39 fire stations;
- Maintain our outstanding response standards and all 58 fire appliances;
- Provide efficiency savings of c.£400k;
- Increase the overall fire-fighter establishment by 8 and provide more flexible crewing arrangements.

Impact of changes on annual revenue budget

The original proposals that have been consulted upon required an additional £214,951 committing to the budget to deliver the ECR proposals.

Having considered the global and national challenges that LFRS face as described above, the revised proposals take account of this, along with the feedback received from the consultation, and seek to deliver efficiencies, not only in the way LFRS distributes its operational resources but in the way it spends public money. Despite these revisions, there still remains the potential need to revisit the proposals in light of the eventual funding settlement.

The recommended changes to staffing establishments is in line with many other fire and rescue services as detailed within the National Fire Chiefs Council Working Patterns project (<https://www.ukfrs.com/working-patterns>) and helps to maintain the total number of wholetime crewed appliances across the county and our fast response performance. The challenge within Lancashire is to ensure that where there is a reduction in staffing numbers at some stations, this is managed to ensure that it does not result in an increased overtime cost.

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) still seek the withdrawal of the system within Lancashire. As part of the FBU's response to this consultation, the FBU welcome the reduction of DCP stations in LFRS. There has been some significant challenge through the consultation period around the increasing cost of living, mainly cited by staff at DCP stations that are proposed to change duty system and subsequently lose the additional 32% allowance received. Those staff that are permanently contracted to the DCP duty system will have the option to continue working it, albeit potentially at a different location.

The wholetime staffing establishment proposed will support the efficient and effective deployment of our wholetime appliances across the county. Continuing to maintain staffing levels of 14 on all remaining DCP and FDC stations and 28 at each of the six wholetime (single pump) stations would require an additional £1.7million of investment per annum.

Through a reduction of the staffing establishment to 24 at the existing single (wholetime) pump stations (Lancaster, South Shore and Hyndburn); implementing a staffing establishment of 24 at Morecambe, Fleetwood and Skelmersdale (somewhat regardless of whether it is traditional 2-2-4 or FWT); reducing the staffing establishment at the remaining DCP stations, and the 4 FDC stations from 14 to 13; along with the options for change as described above (reducing the number of FWT stations by one and maintaining DCP at Bispham), will not only maintain the excellent response standards LFRS deliver, but generate efficiencies of around £400,000 per annum.

Impact of changes on staffing establishment

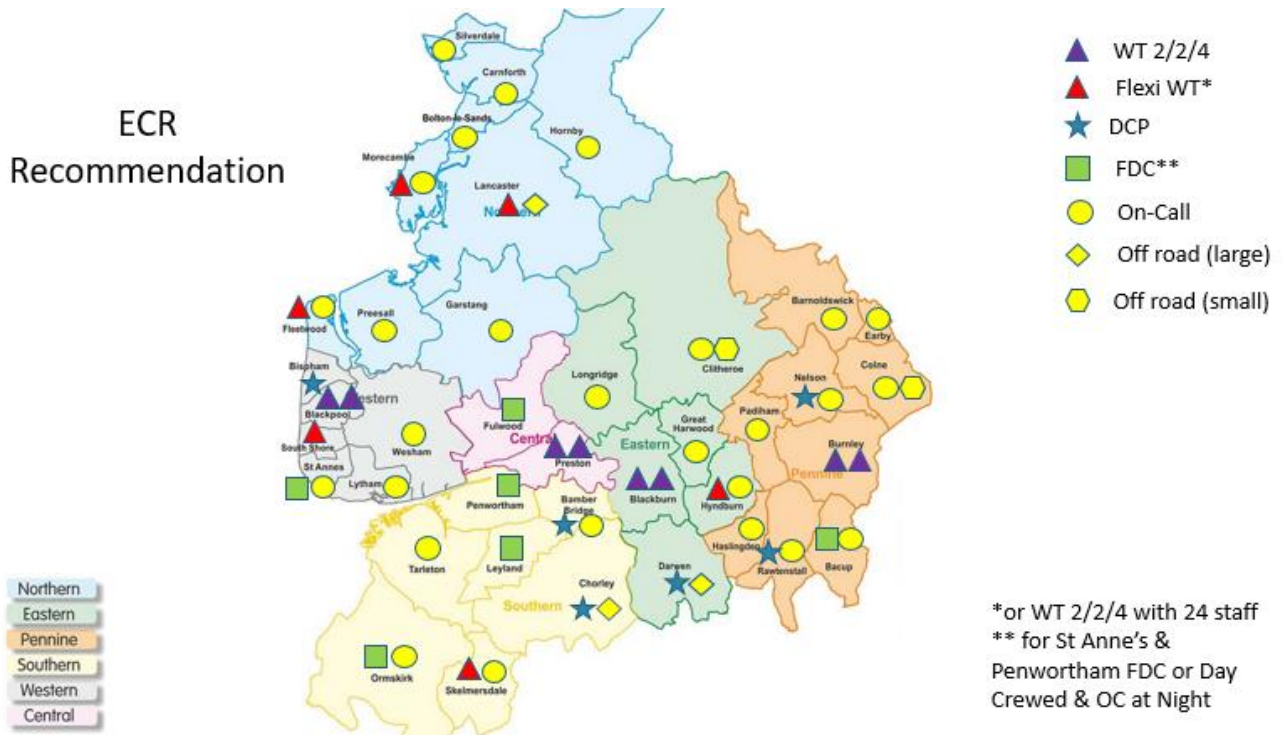
The proposals that were presented to Planning Committee in July, and subsequently went to consultation, resulted in an expansion of the staffing establishment by 25 Firefighter posts.

The changes of six DCP stations, to be replaced by four FWT and two FDC stations was the main contributing factor leading to an increase in Firefighter post across LFRS.

The consultation feedback has led to a review of some of the proposals and as described above, there are revised proposals which result in a decrease in the number of FWT stations (Bispham to remain as DCP requiring 13 FTE, not 24 if upgraded to wholetime).

The result of this, should the revised proposal be accepted, is there would be an overall increase in Wholetime Firefighter posts to 8 across LFRS.

County view of response resources based on recommendations within this report.



Associated documents attached as appendices:

- Appendix 1 - ECR Public Consultation document
- Appendix 2 - ECR Staff Consultation document
- Appendix 3 - Consultation report – Public
- Appendix 4 - Consultation report – Staff
- Appendix 5 - FBU consultation response
- Appendix 6 - FOA consultation response
- Appendix 7 - Equality Impact Assessments (People & Community)

Business Risk

Emergency Cover Reviews form an integral part of the Service’s Risk Management Framework as detailed within the Community Risk Management Plan. It is essential that the Service reviews its emergency resource provision to ensure it is best placed to respond to the ever-evolving environment LFRS operates in. Failure to effectively review, at appropriate intervals, the composition of our response arrangements could result in the delivery of an ineffective or inefficient service to the communities of Lancashire, which also fails to meet our five key priorities.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

Albeit negligible, increasing our staffing establishment by 8 (as per the proposals) could result in a minor increase in the consumption of utilities and increase in waste production.

The ability for fire appliances to travel ‘off-road’ may result in minor, limited damage to wildland terrain however, it is anticipated this will be offset by the positive impact of the new assets in reducing the damage caused by Wildfire/Flooding.

The impact of introducing new duty systems could result in significant movement of staff and therefore an increase or change in travel patterns for staff. Work is underway as part of the ECR to limit the impact as far as reasonably practicable.

The introduction of new Climate Change Response assets will enable LFRS to respond more effectively and efficiently to incidents that occur because of Climate Change.

Equality and Diversity Implications

Initial Equality Impact Assessments have been completed (attached as appendix 7) with, a full EQIA being undertaken by a 3rd party organisation who have been provided with all the necessary resources and information to enable them to produce an EQIA following consultation. The full EQIA will be made available for review and amendment as necessary, prior to approval of final ECR proposals at the full CFA meeting in December.

Data Protection (GDPR)

The proposals will not involve the processing of personal data.

HR Implications

There will be a significant impact on the Service's HR department due to the breadth of changes and impacts that have a HR implication. Factors such as pay (DCP Allowance), duty systems (contracts), workforce profile, rank/role, travel, are just some of the significant aspects that will require HR input and support.

Financial Implications

The purpose of the ECR is to ensure LFRS is not only placing its resources according to the risk in Lancashire, alongside demand, but also ensure that the disposition of LFRS resources offer value for money achievable within an allocated budget.

There will be financial implications involved in the purchase of some of the specialist assets detailed within the ECR, although this will mainly be funded through the existing capital investment plan some capital funds will need to be brought forward. There will also likely be costs associated with upskilling the workforce which will incur additional costs. Costs are likely to be incurred as a result of the movement/displacement of staff following implementation of the proposals. There may be property costs associated with some of the proposed changes and costs have been incurred through the appointment of independent third-party organisations that have supported the data analysis and consultation.

Training Implications

There is a possibility that the impact of the changes, and subsequent movement of staff, will place a significant burden on LFRS Training and Operational Review (TOR) to achieve the pre-requisite specialisms at each station across Lancashire.

Should the proposals be implemented, there may also be a need to increase the annual intake of recruits which will subsequently place an additional burden on TOR. The aspiration to broaden the role of On-Call will also result in an additional training burden across LFRS.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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