

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 19 December 2022

Notes of Strategy Group held on Monday, 7 November 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, 7 November 2022.

Recommendation

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

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

Information

5/22	<u>CFO INTRODUCTION - NATIONAL CONTEXT</u>
	<p>The Chief Fire Officer welcomed everyone to the meeting which was a good opportunity for Officers and Members to engage and share information in a confidential forum.</p> <p>Central Government</p> <p>The Chief Fire Officer advised that central government was moving at pace and he was looking forward to meeting the new Fire Minister, Chris Philp MP who took up the role the previous week. Recent Ministerial changes presented a challenge in terms of knowledge of the sector and in particular, the Fire Service Reform White Paper.</p>

'Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service' White Paper Consultation

At the last meeting 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. The Chief Fire Officer advised that the consultation on the Fire Service Reform White Paper had now ended. He provided a brief update to Members and confirmed formal consultation outcomes were awaited.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS)

Members were aware that the last inspection by HMICFRS confirmed Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) had performed exceptionally well, scoring 'good' in all three pillars (effectiveness, efficiency and people) and receiving an 'Outstanding' grade in Culture and Values. The Chief Fire Officer advised that LFRS had taken learning from the last Inspection and continued its journey towards an overall 'outstanding' score. LFRS also provided peer support to other Services that had sought support.

It was noted that HMICFRS had confirmed they would be conducting round 3 inspections in a similar way to the previous inspections starting in early in 2023.

Pay and Industrial Action

Members were aware of the responsibilities of the Combined Fire Authority with regards to business continuity. The Chief Fire Officer gave an overview of the current approach to business continuity given the potential for industrial action by uniformed members of staff should the current nationally negotiated pay offer of 5% be rejected.

Manchester Arena Inquiry Report on the Emergency Response

The Chief Fire Officer advised that Volume 2 of the report from the Manchester Arena Inquiry into the deaths of 22 victims on 22 May 2017, which concerned the emergency response, had recently been published. The report set out 149 recommendations, some of which applied across the Fire Sector. Although it was recognised that improvements in the sector had been made since the incident, he confirmed that LFRS was considering the recommendations in detail.

Building Safety Regulator

The Chief Fire Officer advised that The Building Safety Act 2022 was now in force. The Act covered safety requirements for landlords of higher-risk buildings which were buildings over 18m or 7 storeys high, with 2 or more residential units. The Health and Safety Executive was named by the Act as the Building Safety Regulator. It was noted that the Government Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities had established a Building Safety Programme to ensure that buildings were safe and with the support of local fire and rescue services the Programme supported building owners / responsible persons to take immediate

	steps to ensure resident safety. Work was ongoing to assess fire safety risk in high-risk residential premises which met the criteria in the Building Risk Review.
6/22	<u>FINANCE</u>
	The Director of Corporate Services provided an update on the pressures on the agreed revenue budget 2022/23 from increasing costs from inflation, fuel, energy and property maintenance together with the potential costs associated with an increase in pay awards. Although LFRS regularly reviewed areas for delivering savings, the forecast outturn was a significant overspend at year end. It was noted that the expected 4-year government financial settlement was unlikely which left the Service unable to plan long term. The use of reserves to offset in-year pressures was a short-term measure only. A robust plan would be needed going forwards as there was no certainty around future austerity and pressures on the budget long-term.
7/22	<u>EMERGENCY COVER REVIEW - CONSULTATION OUTCOMES</u>
	<p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided a presentation on the Emergency Cover Review Consultation Outcomes.</p> <p>The 5 key proposals with the ECR were:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce more resilient and flexible crewing arrangements. 2. Optimise emergency cover through dynamic cover software. 3. Strengthen our response to climate change emergencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invest in fire appliances with off-road capabilities in areas at risk of wildfires and flooding. - Introduce specialist flood water incident management. 4. Strengthen firefighting and rescue capabilities in high-rise and commercial buildings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce a 45m aerial ladder platform into our fleet, our highest reach aerial capability to date. - Invest in two additional water tower appliances. 5. Broaden on-call firefighting capabilities to strengthen operational response. <p>The uncertainty in government funding along with national pay negotiations and increasing inflation rates had led to some amendments to the proposals which the consultation feedback supported. Details of the proposals would be presented to the Planning Committee on 21 November 2022 for Member consideration before submitting to the full Authority meeting on 19 December 2022.</p>
8/22	<u>GOVERNANCE ASPECTS OF MEMBER / OFFICER RELATIONS</u>
	The Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority reiterated the protocols and importance of Member interaction with each other and with officers as the Authority was responsible for the best performing Service in England and it had a legal responsibility to ensure resilience. Although Members represented different home Authorities, as a Combined Fire Authority, they worked together with Officers towards the common aims of making Lancashire safer. This included times where

	operational resilience was impacted because of resourcing issues or those involving a pay and other disputes.
9/22	<u>DEMONSTRATION - DRONE AND CANINE CAPABILITIES</u>
	The Chief Fire Officer thanked Members for their attendance and advised that the Wellbeing and Service dogs were in attendance. The Drone operators and drones were also in attendance for Members to view.

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

M NOLAN
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood