

# Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee

Monday, 6 February 2023, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room,  
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

## Minutes

<b>Present:</b>	
<b>Councillors</b>	
S Clarke (Chair)	
J Singleton (Vice-Chair)	
M Dad	
N Hennessy	
F Jackson	
D O'Toole	
S Rigby	
J Shedwick	
T Williams	

<b>Officers</b>
S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) J Charters, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) M Hamer, Area Manager, Prevention Protection and Road Safety (LFRS) D Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)

16/22	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
	Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Hugo.
17/22	<b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests</b>
	None received.
18/22	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>
	<b>Resolved:</b> - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 21 November 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
19/22	<b>Annual Service Plan and Strategic Assessment of Risk</b>
	The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented a report on the Service's Annual Service Plan and Strategic Assessment of Risk for 2023/24.

## **Strategic Assessment of Risk**

Risk in Lancashire would always remain dynamic: it changed over time, differed by area and demographic, and needed different interventions to reduce the likelihood of the risk occurring or to lessen its consequences. These risks were identified in the Strategic Assessment of Risk (SaoR) which was refreshed annually and was also informed by the Lancashire Resilience Forum Community Risk Register. Through its risk management framework, the Service continually assessed changing risk and prioritised its response framework.

The Strategic Assessment of Risk reflected the knowledge and experience of a variety of specialist departments and utilised Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) Incident Recording System (IRS) data to derive a data driven methodology that highlighted the incident types that posed the greatest risk to the county of Lancashire and the individuals who lived and worked within it.

This year's document built on previous iterations as LFRS sought to continually improve its risk management processes. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer drew Members attention to the final paragraph of the introduction (page 43 of the agenda pack) particularly that "the environment in which we operate is constantly changing and new risks to our communities will always emerge". He advised that significant changes had been made to the 'About Lancashire' section, which had been refreshed to ensure the Service was using the most up-to-date data sources available and most notably the section now used 2021 census data. The report also detailed risks relating to: Deprivation (and the correlation to fire risk); the wide range of Infrastructure risk within Lancashire in terms of operational response (including to: reservoirs, dams, wind turbines, ports and rail networks); the Built Environment (from the newer forms of construction materials and the ongoing work following the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017 supporting future buildings to be as safe as they could be); Technology (including electric vehicles and bulk/battery energy storage systems); and Wildfire Incidents (and the impact of climate change. This in turn informed the Climate Change Operational Response Plan that detailed how LFRS would respond to increased flooding and wildfires). Pages 53 – 55 of the agenda pack presented data analysis that fed into the risk methodology used and how the Service resourced to risk. A heat map on page 56 of the agenda pack showed centres of high incident activity alongside fire station locations which reassured Members that resources were aligned to risk. From page 58 onwards the report detailed the risk assessment methodology used and the risk associated against the 32 incident types which had resulted in some movement in the ranking of the highest risk incident types.

In response to a question from County Councillor S Rigby concerning his county council division of St Annes, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the heat map showed high level activity across Lancashire and the Strategic Assessment of Risk drove robust Service, district and local station level response to risk thereby enabling LFRS to tailor prevention, protection and response activities to the identified risks. This process had been commended by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services.

County Councillor Rigby also queried why there was an increase in special service incidents (as detailed under the historical data section of the report on page 53 of the agenda pack). The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that special service calls related to non-fire related incidents where the Service offered support, for example to blue light colleagues (ie: gaining entry into properties and missing persons' searches), in addition to incidents such as road traffic collisions. In response to a further question regarding whether this was reflected in the spending profile the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that investment (for example in drone technology) had been made which supported the broader response of keeping the communities in Lancashire safer. He advised that the Service was considering a recharge policy to recover costs when specialist assets such as our drones and dogs were used outside of Lancashire and/or with other Blue Light partners.

With reference to County Councillor Rigby's query, County Councillor Shedwick confirmed he would welcome the Deputy Chief Fire Officer's proposal for a presentation at a future Strategy Group on how the Service used data to assess risk.

Councillor Williams queried the level of incidents attended that included lithium-ion batteries. In response, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that there had been a national increase in response to fire from power sources in road vehicles and solar panels and these could be difficult to extinguish. Power generated by renewable energy sources was being stored in lithium-ion battery solutions (including large battery energy storage systems, one of which is located in Preston; typically housed in a bank of what looked like shipping containers). Modern solar panels were increasingly linked to a domestic battery storage systems which created additional hazards for firefighters attending these types of incidents. Details regarding the number of incidents attended was available and could form part of the presentation to the Strategy Group.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer added that there was national recognition that emerging technology was a risk. The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) had a working group which looked to link with industry and suppliers of technology to understand what was being produced and consider how to alter operational response arrangements to respond appropriately to those risks. More locally, Area Manager John Rossen was the lead for the north west's emerging technology group on behalf of the NFCC and work was ongoing with other North West Fire and Rescue Services to analyse data and identify emerging local risks.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Hennessy regarding the highest risks, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the table on page 61 of the agenda pack showed all incident categories which ranked the highest risk in red, down to the lowest risk for each of the risk areas based on the risk assessment methodology. Property fires both domestic and commercial were at the top of the risk table, followed closely by climate change challenges and road traffic collisions. The risk calculation was complicated and could change. It depended on the number of incidents as well as the outcome of those incidents ie: wildfires and flooding did not occur regularly but did have a massive impact on communities and the environment. In response to a further question the

Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that communication campaigns were linked to these risks. National prevention campaigns were led by NFCC and local campaigns were based on local intelligence and delivered in line with local plans.

Councillor Jackson advised that the 'new urban design approach' referred to on page 48 of the report had been in operation in Blackpool for several years. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the wording in the report would be amended before publication.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer then referred to the Annual Service Plan.

### **Annual Service Plan**

The Annual Service Plan continued to provide Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) with the platform to highlight the priority activities and projects the Service intended to deliver over the coming year; leading improvements and innovation in the sector with some of the best firefighting equipment and training facilities in the country and a highly skilled and motivated workforce.

The Annual Service Plan was built around the Service's 5 corporate priorities as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan. As in previous years, detailed under each corporate priority was a series of priority activities and projects with a brief description of each item to give further clarity and context as now considered by Members, these were: -

1. Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer;
  - Create an organisational culture where diversity is encouraged and valued;
  - Introduce peer support ambassadors;
  - Explore the future of Service headquarters;
  - Upgrade fire station facilities;
  - Improve learning and development systems; and,
  - Deliver firefighter pension changes.
2. Preventing fire and other emergencies from happening;
  - Invest in digital improvements to our home fire safety check service;
  - Improve evaluation of fire prevention activity; and
  - Strengthen operational risk information.
3. Protecting people and property when fires happen;
  - Expand our business fire safety check service;
  - Strengthen our fire safety inspection programme to meet evolving standards;
  - Introduce a revised automatic fire alarm attendance policy; and
  - Transform fire protection and business safety.

4. Responding to fire and other emergencies quickly and competently;

- Implement our emergency cover review which includes:
  - Review emergency cover in Preston;
  - Introduce more resilient and flexible crewing arrangements;
  - Optimise emergency cover through dynamic cover software;
  - Strengthen our response to climate change emergencies;
  - Strengthen firefighting and rescue capabilities in high-rise and commercial buildings; and
  - Broaden on-call firefighting capabilities to strengthen operational response.
- Invest in our training centre;
- Build 4 new drill towers;
- Invest in our fleet; and
- Implement operational learning in response to national events.

5. Delivering value for money in how we use our resources.

- Review productivity and efficiency;
- Replace performance and analysis software;
- Collaborate with other public services; and
- Install CCTV on fire engines and other service vehicles.

Activities that were planned to be delivered also informed the staff performance appraisal process, so all staff understood plans and were involved in helping to deliver key activities.

The aim was to continually improve and refine the planning process and this year's Plan aimed to add focus on achievable objectives to be delivered within the year, acknowledging that a proportion of items were continued from the 2022/23 Plan, reflecting the commitment to a number of long-term projects.

With reference to the scored incident categories on page 61 of the agenda pack, County Councillor O'Toole was proud that the risks were transparent. He was pleased that the Plan included the need to redevelop Preston Fire Station and to explore the potential relocation of headquarters which had been discussed by the Authority for many years. He suggested that a previously constituted Task and Finish Working Group be re-established to support both of these building projects. This was supported by County Councillor Shedwick who commented on the need for a review of Service requirements across Preston given the level of change. In response the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the redevelopment of Preston Fire Station would be reviewed which would include options to rebuild in situ or at an alternate site in Preston whereby consideration would be given to the impact on nearby stations. He confirmed that options would come back to Members for consideration. In addition, the review of capital projects would look at potential improvements at the Service training centre and the potential relocation of service HQ to the training centre. These 3 key areas all impacted on the capital programme which Members would be reviewing at the next Authority meeting.

	<p>In response to a comment from County Councillor Hennessy the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that wording in the introduction to the Annual Service Plan (page 28 section 2) regarding the introduction of more resilient and flexible crewing arrangements could be amended to be clear this would be through engagement with staff and trade unions.</p> <p>County Councillor Singleton thanked officers for the detailed report and for outlining a very challenging service plan. He commented that the plan would be impacted from any strike action and welcomed the plans for Preston station, supporting the establishment of a task and finish working group proposed by the Authority Chairman.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the Annual Service Plan and Strategic Assessment of Risk for publication.</p>
20/22	<p><b>Consultation Strategy - Annual Review</b></p>
	<p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report. The Authority had a consultation strategy which provided a framework through which it could seek public opinion on major change issues.</p> <p>Each year the Planning Committee reviewed the strategy, as now considered by Members, to assure continued compliance with guidance or legislation and to incorporate learning from any public consultation exercises undertaken.</p> <p>The review concluded that the strategy continued to be legally compliant and in line with good practice.</p> <p>It was noted that in the most recent inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services the report commented that the service had improved in the way it communicated with the public and internal and external interested parties about its community risk management plan. The strategy was also implemented to good effect during the public consultation on the emergency cover review proposals in summer 2022.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the consultation strategy.</p>
21/22	<p><b>Blue Light Collaboration Board Update</b></p>
	<p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the report updated on progress of the Blue Light Collaboration Board. The current Membership was himself as Chair together with the Director of Response for North West Ambulance Service and the Deputy Chief Constable.</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer updated Members on progress regarding the initial 5 collaboration projects as follows: -</p> <p><b>1. Missing Persons</b></p> <p>Members of the Authority and Service sent their thoughts to family and friends of</p>

Nicola Bulley who was currently missing. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reassured Members that the Service had provided overhead and underwater search drones, search dogs, firefighters and boat teams to support the multi-agency response assisting Police colleagues in the search.

Following a review of mobilisation data, it was identified that the opportunities to provide Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) support to these incidents had reduced. Therefore, the main project objective was to improve the existing collaborative approach to the identification of the location of missing persons. Learning had been identified from the original process and improvements had been made. LFRS support for the 'Missing from Home' Manager training for Lancashire Constabulary staff would be continued in terms of LFRS assets available. Furthermore, Lancashire Constabulary had provided training to control staff to raise awareness.

The initial plan included a small number of LFRS personnel from the Urban Search and Rescue team and Drone team to undertake the 'Missing from Home' Manager course. This would develop knowledge and understanding regarding aspects of planning and undertaking a search. Additional LFRS crews had been identified as specialist teams and would receive a bespoke training programme which was currently being mapped out. These teams would develop an increased knowledge of managing missing person incidents within the context of potential crime scene management. All LFRS assets would remain available regardless of the additional skills imparted to the specialist teams.

## **2. Estates and Co-location**

This was a longer-term work stream with interdependencies as there were several internal projects within Lancashire Constabulary to review current building stock. This included Lancashire Constabulary headquarters, and various police stations. Property leads from all three agencies were in contact with each other and plans were being developed to organise a monthly catch-up meeting. This would ensure that each Blue Light Service was sighted to internal findings and provided with awareness in terms of future opportunities. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that, should it be decided to relocate Preston Station or build in situ this would be done through the Collaboration Board to provide opportunities for collaboration.

## **3. First Responder**

A phased approach was agreed in terms of volunteers signing up to the scheme. Phase 1 was being rolled out to non-operational LFRS staff, such as Community Fire Safety. Subsequently, phase 2 would consider the roll out to operational staff.

Progress on phase 1 had resulted in the success of one non-operational member of LFRS responding to category 1 incidents. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the LFRS First Responder volunteer had recently responded to a cardiac arrest which resulted in the person's life being saved. The North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) reporting system had been modified to include LFRS staff, so it was possible to analyse data and monitor mobilisations.

There were 4 additional volunteers identified who would undertake training shortly. Once the 5 initial volunteers had been operating for 3 months, the data would be analysed, and regular welfare checks would be completed. The findings would be used to inform plans for phase 2.

In terms of technology, an NWS application was used to mobilise First Responders and there was an option for them to accept or decline the request forwarded to them. This data would also be used to report on the overall number of calls and responses received.

Further discussion would take place with Lancashire Constabulary to review if there were any suitable non-operational roles that could be added as First Responders. It was noted that operational staff did attend cardiac arrests alongside NWS and that collaboration to this effect was already taking place.

In response to a question from County Councillor O'Toole the Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that North West Ambulance Service did support the Collaboration Board. He advised that there were challenges in establishing the scheme which had now started locally with non-operational staff volunteers. The greater challenge was how front-line crews could respond without compromising the availability of fire engines. It was noted that there had been a national pilot trialled in the past but this had paused and work was ongoing at national level to work through this with the Trade Unions.

#### **4. Leadership Development**

Initial scoping had been completed, in terms of what each organisation currently delivered for leadership development. The project was being delivered in two phases. Phase 1 covered some short-term objectives, seeking to maximise existing courses and events, and provide opportunities for staff from all three organisations to utilise places on these courses. An example of this was the 'Inside Out' programme, which was offered by Lancashire Constabulary. A benefit would be improved efficiency, through utilisation of unfilled places. Additionally, it would provide a platform for discussing ideas and sharing learning, as many of the leadership challenges were cross cutting in all three organisations.

Phase 2 would scope opportunities to collaborate on specific elements of supervisory and middle manager leadership programmes. This would lead to some efficiencies, as well as a platform to share ideas.

#### **5. Command Units**

The aim of this project was to establish and deliver additional collaborative uses of the command units in LFRS in line with Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Programme principles. The key objectives were to improve operational effectiveness and in line with LFRS' mission; 'Making Lancashire Safer'.

County Councillor Shedwick commented on the high level of collaboration provided by the Service including road safety. Councillor Jackson supported



	<p>County Councillor Shedwick’s comment and added that staff should be commended on their work in this area given the injuries and fatalities witnessed at some of the incidents they attended. He added that, although it was difficult to prove, he genuinely believed that the delivery of road safety education had saved lives.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the update.</p>
22/22	<p><b>His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services - Update</b></p>
	<p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer updated Members regarding the inspection methodology and framework for His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services and LFRS planning arrangements.</p> <p><b>Round 2 gradings summary</b></p> <p>Since the previous meeting, the Services in tranche 3 (of the current round of inspections) had received their reports. A summary of the gradings awarded from the completion of round 2 inspections for each pillar was detailed in the report. Whilst some more ‘outstanding’ grades were awarded in round 2, the greater detail and scrutiny in assessment meant that most fire and rescue services lost grading against the 11 diagnostics. This was likely to continue to be the approach going forward, which meant that to maintain the same gradings in the next round of inspections it was expected that a demonstration of progress would be made.</p> <p><b>Round 3 Overview</b></p> <p>Members noted that the next round of inspections, known as ‘Round 3’ would start in February 2023. HMICFRS would continue to inspect how effective and efficient Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) were at carrying out their principal functions of fire safety, firefighting, and responding to road traffic collisions and other emergencies. All 44 FRSs in England would be inspected in round 3 over a two-year period, using a similar methodology to the Round 2 inspections. It was noted that HMICFRS had moved away from grouping services in to three tranches, to a more rolling approach. It was anticipated that this would ensure that publication of the reports was sooner after the inspection had concluded, which would enable FRSs to be able to react to feedback in a timelier way. Whilst it was still not certain, planning assumptions were that Lancashire would likely be inspected either late 2023 or early 2024.</p> <p>HMICFRS had stated they wanted to maintain the focus of the sector on the areas that had been identified for improvement through the inspection process, therefore, moving forward they would continue to inspect the effectiveness and efficiency of FRSs and how well they looked after their people. However, to identify more precisely where it was considered improvement was needed, and how FRSs should achieve it, HMICFRS would move to a common grading approach throughout both FRS and Police inspections.</p> <p>The 5 judgement categories would be: i) <b>Outstanding</b> (the FRS had</p>

substantially exceeded the characteristics of good performance; ii) **Good** (the FRS had substantially demonstrated all the characteristics of good performance); iii) **Adequate** (the FRS had demonstrated some of the characteristics of good performance, but areas had been identified where the FRS should make improvements); iv) **Requires improvement** (the FRS had demonstrated few, if any, of the characteristics of good performance, and a substantial number of areas where the FRS needed to make improvements had been identified); v) **Inadequate** – HMICFRS had cause for concern and had made recommendations to the FRS to address them.

In the previous rounds of inspections, HMICFRS assessed and provided summary judgments for the three principal questions of the inspection methodology (efficiency, effectiveness, and people) and for 11 diagnostic questions. They would now assess and give graded judgments only for the 11 diagnostic questions only. This better served the aims of promoting improvements in fire and rescue and highlighting where a FRS was doing well and where it needed to improve.

In future reports, HMICFRS would comment on progress made by the service since its last inspection. However, these changes meant it would not be possible to make direct comparisons between the grades in Round 3 inspections with those in previous rounds of inspection.

The assessment of effectiveness would continue to consider how well each FRS was performing its principal functions of preventing fires from happening, making sure the public was kept safe through the regulation of fire safety and responding to emergency incidents. They would continue to provide the public with clarity on how well FRSs were prepared to respond to major incidents with other FRSs and partner agencies.

The assessment of efficiency made a clear distinction between the way each FRS used its resources to manage its current risks and how well it was securing an affordable way of managing its risks in the future. During Round 3, there will be a greater focus on assessing how productive a service was and what productivity improvements it had made since its last inspection. HMICFRS would also continue to improve how they inspected value for money.

The assessment of how each FRS looked after its people would remain focused on leadership at all levels of the organisation. HMICFRS would continue to look closely at training, values and culture, and there will be a particular emphasis on diversity and how services were trying to overcome inequalities.

### **State of Fire 2022**

His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services', Mr Andy Cooke was required to report to the Secretary of State under section 28B of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 on an annual basis. The State of Fire and Rescue Annual Report 2022 contained HMICFRS' assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of fire and rescue services in England during the second full round of inspections, which were carried out between February 2021 and August 2022. This report drew on findings from inspections of FRSs in England, to provide an

overall view of the state of the fire and rescue sector.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer drew Members' attention to Mr Cooke's first annual assessment of England's fire and rescue services since being appointed in 2022, where he found that:

i) only two of the inspectorate's previous six recommendations for reform of the fire service had been implemented, which he described as extremely disappointing; ii) the Home Office, the Local Government Association, the National Fire Chiefs Council and trade unions should work together to consider reforming structures for negotiating pay, terms and conditions, which would reduce the risk of industrial action; and iii) many services needed to improve their culture, and there were still some unacceptable levels of bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Mr Cooke said: "I am continually struck by the dedication of firefighters and other staff, and I know the public feel the same – they are enormous assets to our communities. The fire service faces a difficult year ahead against the backdrop of industrial action. Some may see these challenges as a reason not to risk further change. On the contrary, reform of the fire service is still urgently needed – and until all our recommendations are addressed in full, fire and rescue services won't be able to provide the best possible service to the public. "I am frustrated at the lack of progress since we first started inspecting fire and rescue services in 2018. Only two of our six recommendations for national reform have been completed. I expect to see further commitments from the Government – including timescales for completion – very soon. Both the public and fire and rescue services deserve better."

The Inspectorate's 4 remaining recommendations were:

1. the Home Office should precisely determine the role of fire and rescue services, to remove any ambiguity;
2. the sector should remove unjustifiable variation, including in how they define risk;
3. the sector should review how effectively pay and conditions were determined; and
4. the Home Office should invest chief fire officers with operational independence, whether through primary legislation or in some other manner.

In response to a question from County Councillor Hennessy regarding the above national recommendation 2 "that the sector should remove unjustifiable variation including how they define risk" the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that LFRS was working with colleagues in the sector towards a definition of risk to enable HMICFRS to compare Service performance effectively.

In response to a question from County Councillor Rigby regarding the above national recommendation 4 "the Home Office should invest chief fire officers with operational independence, whether through primary legislation or in some other manner" the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that he understood that HMICFRS would like to see a response to the 'Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service' White Paper from the Home Office by the end of March 2023, part of

	<p>which considered the operational independence of chief fire officers and the potential for different governance models. The Authority had responded to the consultation on the White Paper the previous year (resolution 12/22 refers) that “the Fire Authority remained resolute that the current governance arrangements represented the best for Lancashire, evidenced by an excellent Fire and Rescue Service”.</p> <p>Members noted that the Inspectorate had also confirmed that it would produce a new report on values and culture in England’s fire and rescue services, which would be published later this year.</p> <p>In response to a query from County Councillor O’Toole the Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that LFRS had been graded ‘good’ in 10 areas and ‘outstanding’ in one area. He advised that the summary (on page 101 of the agenda pack) was of the round 2 gradings from the 44 Services inspected. This showed that 2 services were ‘inadequate’ for efficiency and 2 services were ‘inadequate’ for people. He confirmed that each of those Services would receive a detailed report that set out where HMICFRS found them to be inadequate.</p> <p>In response to a question raised by County Councillor Hennessy the Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that a report could be presented to Members at a future Strategy Group meeting on progress made towards areas of improvement identified by HMICFRS.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the update.</p>
23/22	<p><b>Automatic Fire Alarm Attendance Policy - Nine Month Review and Forward Proposals</b></p>
	<p>The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented the report.</p> <p>On 28 June 2021, the Fire Authority endorsed for public consultation (resolution 14-20/21 refers), a recommendation by the Performance Committee to remove attendance to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) at non-sleeping premises (unless presence of fire was confirmed) on the basis of a staged implementation over two years; during the day in year one and during the night from year two.</p> <p>The resulting consultation commenced on 12 August and concluded on 21 September 2021. It was noted that in accordance with committee terms of reference, the consultation outcomes and associated recommendations were considered by the Planning Committee at its meeting held 15 November 2021 where it was resolved (15-20/21 refers) to make recommendations to the Authority. At its meeting on 13 December 2021 the Authority approved the recommendations (resolution 46-20/21 refers) with the launch of the new policy from 1 April 2022.</p> <p>Prior to implementing the revised AFA policy (which aimed to reduce the volume of Unwanted Fire Signals) a significant amount of engagement was completed over a six-month period, with North West Fire Control (NWFC), Alarm Receiving Centres (ARC), members of the public, operational and fire protection staff, to ensure that the policy changes were understood by all concerned, and that they</p>

could adapt working practices and procedures to manage the change.

In addition to premises that contained sleeping risk, a number of other premises types were exempted from the policy due to the inherent risks posed and the consequences of a fire occurring, namely:

- Single private domestic dwellings.
- Sheltered accommodation.
- Other residential premises such as hostels, hotels, student accommodation, care/nursing homes etc.
- Registered Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) sites, and nuclear sites covered by the REPPiR legislation.
- High rise buildings.
- Hospitals.
- Prison/Young Offenders' institutions.
- Police stations, military barracks.
- Infant, primary, or secondary education premises.
- Grade 1 or Grade 2\* heritage premises.

The policy also permitted that non-sleeping premises, which would not normally receive an attendance during the above hours, be granted a fire alarm exemption, if they provided evidence that their premises had an Enhanced Reliability Alarm System<sup>1</sup>. To date one property had requested a fire alarm exemption and provided the necessary documentation for this to be implemented.

### **Data Analysis (9-month review)**

In April 2022 the revised AFA policy was introduced to non-sleeping premises types between the daytime period of 0800 to 1900. Since implementation, the Service had seen significant reductions (42.3% decrease on the previous 5-year average) in the overall number of AFA attendances to premises covered by the policy. During the months of April 2022 to December 2022, 14.1% of the total initial AFA incidents occurred within daytime period which favourably compared against an average of 55.8% during the preceding 5 years.

Incidents at property types to which the new AFA policy applied, between the daytime period, had reduced 85.5% during the comparative first nine months of 2022/23, to the previous 5-year average. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer commented that mobilisation to unwanted fire signal activations used a great deal of operational response resources and interrupted other business activity (such as: training, the delivery of Home Fire Safety Checks and Business Fire Safety Checks etc). By reducing unwanted and unnecessary mobilisations would demonstrate to HMICFRS both improved efficiency and effectiveness.

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<sup>1</sup> *Enhanced Reliability Alarm System*

*To be considered for this exemption, the fire alarm system must meet specific criteria; Certification confirming that the fire alarm system has been installed to BS 5839 Part 1 or equivalent. Evidence that the fire alarm system is serviced and maintained in compliance with the recommendations of BS 5839 Part 1 or equivalent. Certification confirming that a fire signal is only obtained when at least two independent triggering signals are present at the same time. This is referred to as a 'Coincidence Alarm' or that the origin of alarm is a sprinkler system, other fixed installation, or call point*

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer drew Members attention to first paragraph on page 110 of the agenda pack “No incidents occurred during the 9-month period where the initial AFA daytime non-attendance, was subsequently followed up by a 999 call to a primary fire” which provided assurance to Members that the policy had been accurate and effective over the preceding period.

### **Retrospective Analysis (had the policy been applied 24/7 since April 2022)**

From April 2022 to December 2022 there were a total of 740 AFA attendances with 104 during the day-time hours (subject to the new policy) and 636 during the night-time hours (1900 – 0800). Through analysis of these attendances, it was possible, with a high-level of accuracy, to identify the premises which would and would not have resulted in an attendance had the new policy been applied 24 hours per day.

By discounting relevant premises there would have been c.109 night-time incidents attended and c.527 not attended - unless there was a confirmed fire. A reduction of 527 would have seen an 82.9% decrease in night-time attendances from April 2022 to December 2022. The 5-year average was 565 incidents occurring during night-time hours which would equate to an 80.70% decrease in night-time incidents.

For greater comparison, had the policy been applied 24 hours against a 5-year average of 1281 incidents it would equate to an 83.4% decrease in incident attendances to premises covered by this policy.

### **Regional Approach**

NWFC serves Cumbria, Greater Manchester, and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) and all have AFA policies which include a non-attendance option for certain premises via call challenge:

- Greater Manchester FRS operate their non-attendance policy between 08:00 and 20:00.
- Cumbria FRS and Cheshire FRS operate their non-attendance policy 24-hours per day.
- The Authority’s initial decision was to approach implementation on the basis of daytime implementation in year 1 moving to proposed 24/7 application from year 2.

### **Future efficiencies**

Members noted that in the HMICFRS inspection report dated 2019, the inspectors highlighted that:–

*“[...] the service has not taken advantage of the call-challenging protocols which the other fire and rescue services that share the North-West Fire Control centre use. This means that Lancashire FRS may attend more false alarm calls than it needs to”.*

The data demonstrated that the change to the AFA policy had resulted in a

reduction in the number of mobilisations for LFRS and produced a reduction in UWFS incidents between the hours of 0800 and 1900. These reductions represented tangible efficiencies in the use of resources and avoided unnecessary disruption to other aspects of service delivery activities. Based on data held, it was estimated that in applying the policy over a 24-hour period it was highly likely to result in overall reduction of c.83.4% in mobilisations to AFA's in these types of premises.

The revised AFA policy did require premises to significantly adapt their policies and procedures to take ownership of the management of activations to their fire alarm system. The transitional nature in which the Service had implemented the policy change made the proposed expansion of the policy to 24-hour application realistic and manageable for those premises concerned. Learning from the first 9-months of implementation had highlighted however, that despite extensive engagement and consultation having taken place, several organisations had not either fully understood, or properly considered the impacts of the change and were still caught unawares. This underpinned the requirement for further extensive engagement over the coming months to support businesses, and those responsible for them, to be the best equipped to manage the impacts of this policy change.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer highlighted the business risks outlined in the report. He advised that, should the Service not act to continually refine the Automatic Fire Alarm and Unwanted Fire Signal Policy there was a high probability that the next HMICFRS inspection could see a deterioration in LFRS grades in the Efficiency pillar and in respect of Operational Response aspects. In addition, it was acknowledged changing the policy inevitably increased responsibility and risk with businesses. However, fire safety legislation was clear that the responsibility sat with the premises' responsible person not the Fire Authority. Therefore, as previously undertaken for the implementation of changes to the Policy in the first year during the day, there would be further extensive engagement undertaken with commerce and owners of non-sleeping risk premises to inform of the new approach which would be applied overnight.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Hennessy the Assistant Chief Fire Officer provided reassurance that there was no correlation that efficiencies gained through the adoption of the Policy change would directly lead to job losses and station closures as these were predicated via the emergency cover review process. He advised that the Service was getting busier (as demonstrated through the data presented to the Performance Committee) and as mentioned earlier, in the provision of support to other blue light services to deliver benefits to communities. In addition, the adoption of the Automatic Fire Alarm policy would increase productivity to deliver broader activities known to be effective in reducing risk.

In response to a further question from County Councillor Hennessy, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer provided reassurance that following this policy change the Service would undertake evaluation to understand whether the change had been positive or negative, reviewing and adjusting the policy as appropriate.

County Councillor O'Toole queried whether actuations at hospitals could be monitored and Chief Executives be contacted if there were too many false alarm calls. In response, The Assistant Chief Fire Officer provided reassurance that any alarm actuations from exempt properties were monitored by Business Safety Advisors who had a systematic approach to engagement and support to businesses through continued dialogue with the aim of reducing activations (which could be due to nuisance activations, an incorrect system design, staff training requirement etc). It was recognised however, that it would not be possible to eradicate false alarm calls altogether. In addition, Area Manager Matt Hamer advised that NHS Chief Executives had been contacted. He confirmed that the Service had a dedicated Fire Safety Manager, as Hospitals' lead who was currently in London meeting with National Fire Chiefs Council and the national NHS estates team to discuss aligning remediation fire safety work with general estates management.

Based on the detailed analysis set out in the report County Councillor O'Toole was pleased to move the proposal as recommended particularly, given HMICFRS inspection report (as detailed on page 111 of the agenda pack) had referred to LFRS not taking advantage of the call-challenging protocols which other members of North West Fire Control centre used.

County Councillor Shedwick supported County Councillor O'Toole's comments. He thanked officers for the detailed report and research undertaken and based on the assurance there would be further extensive engagement he seconded the proposal as recommended.

Councillor Williams congratulated officers on a comprehensive report. He commented that although the benefits were obvious cost savings were not identified. He was delighted that jobs were not at risk and that capacity would be generated for more prevention work. He therefore endorsed the proposal. County Councillor Rigby would also have liked to see the financial implications of the benefits from the change in policy. In response the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that most of the efficiencies gained were non-cashable as the bulk of the incidents occurred in areas where the Service had wholtime fire crews, therefore capacity would be created for crews to undertake other prevention work.

**Resolved:** That the Planning Committee noted the analysis provided and endorsed that the Service continue with the roll out of the revised Automatic Fire Alarm policy across the full 24-hour period.

24/22

**Protection Inspection Programme - Forward Proposals**

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented an overview of the report. The three main drivers in the report were: i) to ensure the Service was effectively deploying resources (using the most qualified and knowledgeable inspectors) to review the most complex premises in Lancashire; ii) to make sure that as the delivery of services changed, those changes were integrated into the risk based inspection programme as appropriate; and iii) the Service, teams and individual officer targets were largely driven by the risk based inspection programme therefore targets needed to be realistic and achievable to ensure that the



Service could effectively deliver against the requirements of Lancashire's risk based inspection programme.

The Assistant chief Fire Officer introduced Area Manager Matt Hamer who presented the report.

Nationally, the terminology '*Risk Based Inspection Programme*' (RBIP) was predominantly applied to a list of commercial premises which had undergone some form of scoring, triage or consideration by the Fire Safety Enforcing Authority to deem it warranting an audit by a competent Fire Safety Inspector (FSI). There was no one piece of guidance that Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) could use as the 'how to' for RBIP and there was no national scoring mechanism however, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) had led on this for several years and continued to shape national thinking.

LFRS existing 'risk based' methodology applied to circa 65k+ premises which, when additional criterion was applied, set an inspection target of the top c.7.4k premises over a 3-year period; equating to c.2.5k audits per annum. This list of 7.4k premises was then referred to as the RBIP.

Issues with inspection programmes being discussed nationally included how best to discharge resources towards i) 'assumed risk' (derived from data) versus ii) 'live risk' (known risks) i.e. Business Fire Safety Check (BFSC) outcomes, complaints, local knowledge, district planning etc. The changes within this proposal were developed with this in mind to afford LFRS the capacity to remain agile to both elements of risk. It was also noted that nationally, the application of a purely assumed weighting or score applied to a premises to determine its level of risk, would result in the same premises being audited time and again. For LFRS this would result in the top c.7.4k premises being audited repeatedly.

The existing weighting/scoring methodology had been strength tested by Lancaster University and was aligned to national guidance and best practice<sup>2</sup>.

The methodology was applied in such a way that focus was driven towards:

- Occupant's sleep - those unfamiliar with the premises and unable to escape without significant assistance and pre-planning (e.g. Hospitals, Nursing & Care Homes)
- Occupants sleep - those unfamiliar with the premises (e.g. Hotels and Hostels)
- Occupants sleep - those familiar with the premises (e.g. blocks of flats)
- Occupants were awake - but unfamiliar with the premises (e.g. theatres, pubs, clubs)

To undertake this work, LFRS Protection department currently had 41 roles with differing levels of responsibility for auditing premises, ranging from:

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<sup>2</sup> IRMP GN.4 '*A risk assessment-based approach to managing a fire safety inspection*' (2009) along with NFCC guidance – '*Preliminary Guidance Technical Note Higher Risk Occupancies*' published in 2021.

- 'Developing' Business Safety Advisors (BSA) – no qualifications
- BSA – Level 3 (L3) competent
- 'Developing' Fire Safety Inspector – L3 competent, developing to Level 4 (L4).
- Fire Safety Inspector – L4 competent.
- Fire Safety Manager – developing towards Level 5 (L5) or L5 competent.
- Fire Engineers – Level 6/7 competent or developing.

Aligned to each role, LFRS applied a Performance Framework which outlined the inspection targets for each role.

From 1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022, the department had undertaken 6,081 fire safety interventions ranging from audits, building regulation consultations, licensing applications and peak risk inspections out of hours with partner agencies.

As the regulatory environment changed, the requirements placed upon Fire Safety Enforcing Authorities continued to emerge and grow. The laying of new legislation and the creation of the Building Safety Regulator (lead by the Health and Safety Executive) were a few examples which created further demands on the Authority's ability to inspect against existing practices.

LFRS inspection activity (against its own performance criteria) was reported to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), National Fire Chief Council (NFCC) Protection Policy Reform Unit (PPRU) and in turn the Home Office on a quarterly basis.

With a full complement of competent staff, the current workforce profile could complete c.3k inspections per annum. However due to the demands of recruitment, limited training providers, time to attain competency, new legislation/directives etc. the current capacity could undertake c.1.9k. Under the existing programme, focus was driven to the top c.7.4k premises with only inspections on these premises being reported upon. This resulted in a significant amount of work (c.40% of all inspection activity) being under-reported, purely by virtue of it not being deemed as 'risk based'. One area which highlighted this was the development of the Business Fire Safety Check (BFSC). As operational crews identified 'live risk' which required follow up enforcement activity, the current reporting method did not reflect this work as those premises were not within the top 7.4k of premises within the RBIP.

Likewise, with improvements to strategic relationships with Local Authority Housing teams, Care Quality Commission and care commissioners, further referrals were drawing inspectors away from the top premises deemed as being the RBIP, therefore serving significantly to reducing 'live', known risk in other premises types.

With the current trend in new demands, along with the impacts on workforce planning, it was foreseen that LFRS current inspection methodology and performance criteria required redefining to ensure they remained cognisant of 'live risk', rather continuing to service residual or consequence risk and drift further from the present performance targets.

#### Summary of current issues:

- Little scope within capacity, to action 'risk' outside the existing 7.4k RBIP premises.
- Performance reporting was aligned only to the top 7.4k premises.
- The existing methodology and direction would result in the same premises being audited time and again due to 'residual risk' or perceived 'consequence'.
- The requirement to audit these premises on a cyclical basis, resulted in other known-risk premises not being audited.
- The target set for the 3-year period (c.7.4k) was being impacted by competency, staffing numbers and 'other work' which was not being reported or recognised as part of broader risk reduction. As such we would always be under reporting our activity against our target.
- If the existing methodology was applied to existing datasets the current approach would see the target number grow from 7.4k to an estimated 9k premises to audit in 3 years' time, outstripping inspectors' capacity.
- Currently, capacity to achieve improved performance in other aspects of work was limited e.g. responding to Building Regulation consultations within the statutory 15-day timescale.

#### Forward Plan

It was not proposed that any significant change occurred to the existing RBIP weightings within the methodology. This meant the underpinning (tested) methodology (as now considered by Members under appendix 1) remained, however, it was further strengthened by refining the data and defining more realistic and achievable targets. In time, as systems improved, 'previous outcome' would be included as a weighting. This would see premises with a history of poor or non-compliance being rated as higher risk, and it was in line with emerging guidance.

Following significant work with the premises dataset, moving forward the number of premises in Lancashire to which the Fire Safety Order applied could be greatly refined. By aligning the premises type/use, with both the primary regulator and the competency of staff (in line with the Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators) it was possible to more accurately define which premises LFRS was the primary regulator for; along with the level of intervention required. This, in turn, provided a refined list of c.5k higher risk premises<sup>3</sup> which LFRS inspectors should audit. Using the refined dataset, this equated to c.3.7k of premises to be audited by a Level 4 qualified inspector and 1.3k of premises to be audited by a Level 3 qualified inspector.

This methodology had been applied across the entire Lancashire commercial premises dataset (c.65k premises) and this new ethos effectively provided a risk-based list of commercial premises. Importantly, it also provided improved granularity to enable the most appropriate fire safety intervention for that

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<sup>3</sup> 'Higher risk premises' are those whose classification/use is such that, in line with the Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators, requires either a L3 or L4 inspector to audit initially.

premises type to be provided, making the most efficient and effective use of resources and competency. This, for example, may be the completion of a BFSC at a very low risk premises, or a Level 4 inspector at a higher risk premises. The tiered intervention approach to the entire inspection programme would enable LFRS to remain 'risk based' and deploy resources across a range of premises types rather than simply focusing on the top 7.4k.

Over the coming months, the Protection department would complete the final elements of the transformation process which would include the proposed changes to the inspection programme. This would also see the area-based teams reshaped to support the delivery of the inspection programme, the Building Safety Regulator and the ongoing delivery and development of the BFSC.

The ongoing development of the dataset would continue over many years as business as usual to ensure resources remained managed efficiently and effectively.

The redefined c.5k higher risk premises would be the key focus for Area-based teams in line with both the performance framework and competency, with a completion target of 36-48 months.

The proposed changes to both the inspection programme targets and performance framework would ensure LFRS remained well placed to meet its inspection programme over the 36–48-month period, whilst also ensuring that it was best placed to service a projected c.3k of BFSC follow on visits by inspecting officers, meet the statutory requirement for completion of Building Regulations submissions, and additionally continued the development of fire safety staff to achieve competence.

### **Summary of Proposed Changes**

- Rename the 'Risk Based Inspection Programme' to the 'Inspection Programme' (IP) incorporating all c.65k commercial premises.
- Apply a tiered fire safety intervention methodology to all commercial premises.
- Define new performance target for the higher risk premises (c.5k over 36-48 months) to balance 'known risk' vs 'unknown risk'.
- Define new performance targets for each role.
- Define the primary regulator for premises types.
- Share LFRS dataset with local authorities (as primary regulator) to assist in their inspection programmes.
- Redefine LFRS inspection programme to both HMICFRS and PPRU as 'defined higher risk premises'.
- Update LFRS recording system to better reflect its approach and enable better reporting into the Combined Fire Authority, HMICFRS and PPRU.

### **Benefits**

Reframing our methodology and changing targets would:

- Allow LFRS to apply a new policy to auditing frequency (up to 48 months for

	<p>higher risk premises) and move away from current targets and align to more realistic figures which reflect all the risk-based work undertaken.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply the ‘risk based’ methodology to the 65k+ commercial premises however apply a tiered intervention approach (competency-based) i.e. BFSC, L3, L4, L5 inspections etc.</li> <li>• Clearly define LFRS inspection programme methodology to other regulators.</li> <li>• With current capacity (2k audits) LFRS would achieve or over-achieve its yearly performance target.</li> <li>• Create capacity within teams to undertake work in line with the local district planning i.e. peak risk inspections, inspections based upon local KPI issues, joint inspections.</li> <li>• Improve performance in terms of meeting the statutory requirements of Building Regulation consultations.</li> <li>• Be better prepared for future changes and/or direction from central Government e.g. a medium-rise risk review.</li> </ul> <p>County Councillor Hennessy queried whether this work presented an income generation opportunity and would provide a better incentive for staff to be retained in the Service. In response the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that over the last 10 years, some fire and rescue services had set up a commercial arm of the business but all had determined these were not viable as income generated did not cover costs. In addition, there was the need to ensure there was no conflict of interest (where the regulator assessed itself). LFRS was therefore creating opportunities for all staff at all levels to develop across an agreed pathway in this specialist subject.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor Shedwick regarding the proposed changes of ‘sharing LFRS data sets with local authorities to assist in their inspection programmes’, AM Hamer advised that the Service had a Manager that sat on the Housing Leads Forum. It was recognised that the local authorities worked differently however, as this was a new initiative which would evolve, it also presented an opportunity to share best practice.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Planning Committee noted the information provided and endorse to the Fire Authority that the Service refine the Fire Safety Inspection Programme.</p>
25/22	<p><b>Business Continuity Planning and Testing</b></p>
	<p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report.</p> <p>In line with the Business Continuity Policy (BCP), Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) was required to test Business Continuity Plans annually. As such, the Service exercised and tested multiple tactical and strategic level BCPs in a Service-wide BCP exercise in November 2022. Consequently, 14 recommendations were identified through a structured debrief and these were in the process of being implemented; namely embedding business continuity within LFRS was highlighted as a priority.</p> <p>Numerous other BCP exercises were being planned to take place in 2023 to validate BCPs created for recent increased or new risks, as well as maintaining</p>

	<p>the annual November BCP exercise for 2023.</p> <p>As a named Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. LFRS was required to maintain robust Business Continuity Plans (BCP). In order to achieve this LFRS had taken steps to align with both the Business Continuity Institute's Good Practice Guidelines and the Business Continuity ISO 22301 standard by updating the Business Continuity Management System supporting documents and suite of plans accordingly. The overarching principles of both frameworks required LFRS to review, update and test plans at predetermined intervals based on a Business Impact Analysis for each identified critical activity or process.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Planning Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Accepted the arrangements for the Business Continuity Plan exercising 2023; and</li> <li>ii) Supported strengthening LFRS' resilience through the development, embedding and implementation of a Business Continuity Management System.</li> </ul>
26/22	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on <b>Monday, 17 July 2023</b> at 1000 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.</p> <p>A further meeting date was noted for 20 November 2023 and agreed for 5 February 2024.</p>

LFRS HQ  
Fulwood

**M Nolan**  
**Clerk to CFA**