

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Monday, 24 April 2023 at 10.00 am in Washington Hall, Service Training Centre, Euxton

Minutes

Present:

D O'Toole (Chair)

Councillors

J Shedwick (Vice-Chair)
L Beavers
S Clarke
M Dad
N Hennessy
J Hugo
T Hurn
F Jackson
A Kay
H Khan
J Mein

S Morris
M Pattison
J Rigby
P Rigby
S Rigby
R Scott
S Serridge
J Singleton
R Woollam
B Yates

80/22	Chairman's Welcome and Introduction
	<p>The Chair welcomed Mr Steven Brown as the new Director of Corporate Services and Treasurer to the Authority.</p> <p>The Clerk undertook a roll call and reminded Members that the Authority was in the pre-election period (known as purdah).</p>
81/22	Apologies for Absence
	<p>Apologies were received from County Councillor David Howarth and Councillors Zamir Khan and Dave Smith.</p>
82/22	Disclosure of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interests
	<p>None received.</p>
83/22	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	<p>Resolved: That the Minutes of the CFA held on 20 February 2023 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.</p>
84/22	Presentation - UKs International Search and Rescue Team - deployment to Turkey
	<p>The Chief Fire Officer introduced Group Manager Mark Warwick and Crew Manager Lindsay Sielski who had been invited to provide a presentation to</p>

Members on the UKs International Search and Rescue Team (ISAR) deployment to Southern Turkey which had been discussed at the last meeting.

GM Warwick advised that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) had been a member of UK International Search and Rescue (ISAR) for a number of years and had been deployed to many countries to provide humanitarian support to unexpected disasters.

This incident was a quick, same day deployment to Turkey following a huge earthquake on the morning of 6 February 2023. The team consisted of 77 firefighters from across the UK, 4 dogs, structural engineers and medical teams. There were around 6,000 ISAR personnel attending from across the world to help, working alongside local people who provided intelligence and aid.

LFRS had 6 firefighters who were part of the UK ISAR team. These volunteers were vaccinated, had undergone rigorous and ongoing training (on processes and equipment) to gain specialist knowledge and skills to operate in hazardous conditions and were available to respond at short notice on behalf of the Government Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office. For example, CM Sielski's specialist role was the management of the canine team.

GM Warwick advised that on arrival the team set up base, electronic communications were down and moving around the collapsed buildings and rubble was a challenge. In addition, Turkey continued to be hit by thousands of after-shocks with risk assessments needing to be fluid.

CM Sielski advised that she co-ordinated the national canine response and she had chosen the 4 strongest dogs (which included Davey who was present at the meeting). On arrival, senses were overwhelmed by dust and people in disarray. The dogs were a great asset and did not let the team down. They were able to cover large areas of ground which reduced the risk to firefighters, and they were able to find signs of life to provide those searching with information to assist with digging locations. They did sadly find a number of bodies however, on his first day, Davey undertook 40 searches including the successful extraction of a survivor shown by the media.

GM Warwick advised that Lancashire received calls from the families and friends of those who were trapped. Unfortunately, overall there have been over 60,000 fatalities and 130,000 people injured with over 18 million people affected by the disaster.

GM Warwick expressed his pride in the UK ISAR team and advised that a member of the team had recently been deployed to East Africa.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Singleton regarding any communication barriers, CM Sielski advised that the predominant language used was English alongside the use of interpreters. She paid tribute to one interpreter who had an understanding of search and rescue, had empathy when speaking with local people and had translated for the team. Undoubtedly support from these unsung heroes helped to find people alive.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Hennessy, CM Sielski advised that sites for training were difficult to find however, as the UK ISAR team

	<p>was Government funded it was possible to travel to sites across the country to re-create realistic training for example in rubble piles, disused buildings and woodlands.</p> <p>In response to a further question raised by County Councillor Hennessy, CM Sielski advised that although it was a hot, dusty and difficult environment for the dogs there was a vet available at the base, the dogs wore paw protectors and saw their searches as play.</p> <p>The Authority applauded the efforts of the highly motivated and dedicated ISAR teams.</p> <p>Resolved: That the report be noted.</p>
85/22	Reports from Members on Outside Bodies
	<p>The Clerk presented a report received on behalf of County Councillor Hennessy which detailed key points raised at Local Government Association meetings of the Fire Service Management Committee attended on behalf of the Authority and of meetings of the Fire Commission.</p> <p>Resolved: That the report be noted.</p>
86/22	Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 15 March 2023 of Performance Committee
	Resolved: That the proceedings of the Performance Committee held on 15 March 2023 be noted and endorsed.
87/22	Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 28 March 2023 of Audit Committee
	Resolved: That the proceedings of the Audit Committee held on 28 March 2023 be noted and endorsed.
88/22	Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 29 March 2023 of Resources Committee
	Resolved: That the proceedings of the Resources Committee held on 29 March 2023 be noted and endorsed.
89/22	Member Champion Activity Report
	<p>The concept of Member Champions was introduced in December 2007. A review of the areas of focus for Member Champions was considered at the Authority meeting held in June 2017 where new areas of responsibility were agreed. The current Member Champions and their areas of responsibility were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Safety – Councillor Jean Rigby • Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Councillor Zamir Khan; • Health and Wellbeing – County Councillor Andrea Kay; • Road Safety – County Councillor Ron Woollam. <p>Reports relating to the activity of the Member Champions were provided on a regular basis to the Authority. This report related to activity for the period up to</p>

	<p>31 March 2023. During this period all had undertaken their respective role in accordance with the defined terms of reference.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Authority noted the report and acknowledged the work of the respective Champions.</p>
90/22	<p>Fire Protection Report</p>
	<p>The report summarised Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service prosecutions pertaining to fire safety offences and set out convictions resulting from arson incidents which had progressed via the criminal justice process.</p> <p>An update on fire protection and business support was included in the report to provide Members with an update on how the Service was adapting delivery whilst developing the workforce to ensure it kept pace with regulatory changes in building fire safety and improve public and firefighter safety.</p> <p>The Assistant Chief Fire Officer drew Members' attention to the number of Business Fire Safety Checks that had been undertaken to the end of March 2023, which was c2.5k, with 462 identifying significant fire safety concerns resulting in follow up action by Fire Safety teams which had resulted in both enforcement and prohibition activity thereby highlighting the significant value of this service.</p> <p>In response to a question raised by County Councillor O'Toole regarding the action taken at a Business Fire Safety Check, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that all visits were undertaken by operational crews. Some visits resulted in the identification of defects which were passed through to the fire safety teams. Action taken under the Fire Safety Order could range from the provision of advice or light touch support to enforcement, prohibition and prosecution of the responsible person in the most serious of cases, and in line with the Fire Safety Concordat.</p> <p>In response to a further question raised by County Councillor O'Toole regarding houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs), the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the responsibility for HMOs was shared with the relevant local authority housing departments. Under the Fire Service Act, the Service was responsible for communal areas only. He reassured Members that the Service worked in partnership, undertaking joint visits with any enforcement action being taken by either the Service or local authority housing team.</p> <p>In response to a comment from County Councillor Mein regarding the depth of partner knowledge of what was involved in a home fire safety check the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service worked extensively with all partner organisations to ensure they were kept informed of what the Service delivered including interventions.</p> <p>In response to a question from Cllr Scott regarding Airbnb properties, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that there were wide variations in the types of properties offered from full houses to rent, to house shares or individual rooms. Nationally NFCC recognised this is an emerging area of risk; the Assistant Chief Fire Officer went on to highlight that in the main such properties were covered by local authority housing guidance and legislation. One of the</p>

	<p>challenges for the regulating authorities was in being able to identify the locations of such properties and incorporate them into risk reduction activities.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Authority noted and endorsed the report.</p>
91/22	<p>Operational Incidents of Interest</p>
	<p>The report provided Members with information relating to operational incidents of note over the period 1 February 2023 – 31 March 2023.</p> <p>Members discussed the waste fire attended in Preston (as detailed on page 87 of the agenda pack) and noted the increased likelihood of lithium-ion power sources finding their way into waste recycling plants which thereby increased fire risk.</p> <p>The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that this issue was a challenge for the industry given lithium-ion batteries emitted toxic gasses, were unstable when damaged and could auto-ignite. Battery packs used in electric vehicles were large however, incidents were often from smaller batteries such as used in e-cigarettes, e-scooters and many other household devices. He added that many waste sites screened waste to identify the presence of power sources and sift them out, however, the prevalence from a myriad of appliances which used them, resulted in some finding their way into the system. In response to a question from County Councillor Woollam, he advised this was a national issue which required end-to-end analysis to improve processes together with support from the Fire Sector and Environmental Agency to reduce fire risk.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor Hennessy regarding the Chorley fire (detailed on page 86 of the agenda pack) the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service always endeavoured to identify the cause of a fire however, where there were hundreds of tonnes of waste alight, and sometimes deep seated, there were cases where the cause could not be determined due to the extent of damage. Nonetheless even in such cases, certain possible causes could often be eliminated.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor Mein regarding a further lithium-ion batteries fire (as detailed on page 87 of the agenda pack), the Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that as part of the follow-up work, the Fire Protection team met with lead members of such establishments to provide advice, check fire risk assessments and ensure that risk control measures were suitable and in place.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Authority noted the report.</p>
92/22	<p>Member Complaints</p>
	<p>The Monitoring Officer confirmed that there had been no complaints since the last meeting.</p> <p>Resolved: That the current position be noted.</p>

93/22	Date of Next Meeting
	The next meeting of the Authority would be held on Monday 26 June 2023 at 10:00am at the Training Centre, Euxton.
94/22	Exclusion of Press and Public
	Resolved: That the press and members of the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there would be a likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the appropriate paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, indicated under the heading to the item.
95/22	Business Continuity - Industrial Action
	<p>(Paragraph 4)</p> <p>The Chief Fire Officer confirmed to Members that members of the FBU had accepted a revised pay offer which formally closed down the potential for Industrial Action.</p> <p>Resolved: The report was noted.</p>

**LFRS HQ
Fulwood**

**M Nolan
Clerk to CFA**