

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Planning Committee

Meeting to be held on 20 November 2023

Emergency Cover Review

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Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the Emergency Cover Review (ECR) 2022 implementation.

Additionally, it provides information regarding when changes are anticipated to take place, the work that is ongoing and has been completed to date.

Recommendation

Planning Committee is requested to note and endorse the update.

Background

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) is required to review emergency response arrangements periodically to ensure that provision remains effective and commensurate with our dynamic risk profile. This process is a robust assessment of historic data and emergent risk and is delivered in the format of an Emergency Cover Review (ECR).

The changes identified in the ECR 2022 reflect the most effective and efficient use of resources for the whole of Lancashire. Lancashire's Combined Fire Authority agreed all the proposed changes on 19 December 2022. The changes will result in LFRS:

- Maintaining all 39 fire stations and 58 fire appliances;
- Maintaining our outstanding response standards;
- Creating an increase in overall firefighter jobs by eight

An ECR implementation plan was developed with five key workstreams; updates on the workstreams can be found below:

Introduce more resilient and flexible crewing arrangements

The Service had hoped to introduce more flexible crewing arrangements if agreement could be reached with trade unions. However, the proposed flexible wholetime duty system was not agreed by the trade union. The Service subsequently proposed a trial of flexible rota management and leave arrangements; however an agreement could not be reached. Therefore, changes of duty systems at some stations will still take place but with the re-introduction of the 2-2-4 wholetime duty system as opposed to flexible wholetime.

Engagement sessions have taken place with all the members of staff affected. Implementation of the changes to crewing arrangements have been led by people's preferences in terms of the duty system they wish to work, subject to skill requirements and the demands of the Service. Members of staff permanently employed on Day Crewing Plus (DCP) stations have been offered a role at an alternative DCP station or a position at their current station depending on their preference. Some members of staff have secured promotion opportunities. The Service continue to work with members of staff who are currently temporary on DCP to identify a suitable posting.

A training needs analysis has been completed and training is being commissioned and delivered to meet the needs of staff.

Property alterations at Morecambe, Fleetwood and Skelmersdale are currently being planned to accommodate an increase in staff at those stations.

It is anticipated that the go live date for implementation of the change of duty systems or establishment numbers will be 1 March 2024. All changes with the exception of Penwortham will take place at the same time:

- Morecambe, Fleetwood and Skelmersdale (changing from DCP to 2-2-4 Wholetime) increasing establishment numbers from 14 to 24
- St Annes (changing from DCP to Flexible Day Crewing) reducing establishment numbers from 14 to 13
- Hyndburn, South Shore and Lancaster (remaining 2-2-4 Wholetime) reducing establishment numbers from 28 to 24
- Darwen, Rawtenstall, Nelson and Bispham (remaining DCP) reducing establishment numbers from 14 to 13
- Fulwood, Bacup, Ormskirk and Leyland (remaining Flexible Day Crewing) reducing from 14 to 13
- Penwortham will remain as DCP whilst the Preston area review is carried out, the establishment number will reduce from 14 to 13 in line with other DCP stations

Optimise emergency cover through dynamic cover software

The dynamic cover software is now in use in LFRS, both within the Command Support Room at Service Headquarters and through the mobile devices of all Flexi Duty Officers. The software has been used successfully during a number of large-scale incidents and periods of high incident activity to move resources according to the risk.

The next phase of this project is to embed the software and its use at North West Fire Control (NWFC). A standalone facility is to be made available on the Lancashire pod at NWFC so that Control Room Operators can start to use the software.

Strengthen our response to climate change emergencies

Investing in Four Fire Appliances with Off-Road Capabilities

The Service is currently finalising the last stage of evaluation for the first large fire appliance with off-road capabilities and a contract award is expected by the end of November 2023. It is anticipated that this appliance will be delivered to LFRS within the next 12 months.

The smaller fire appliance will be explored once the contract for the large fire appliance is awarded. The procurement of this vehicle is anticipated to be quicker and is also expected to be in Service within the next 12 months. Both vehicles will then be evaluated prior to the purchase of two further vehicles (one large and one small).

Introduce Flood Water Incident Managers and Flood Water Tactical Advisors

Eight flexi duty officers have been trained as Flood Water Incident Managers. These officers will be informed of any incidents within the water or large area flooding, and they will either attend the incident or provide advice remotely depending on the nature of the incident.

Two Flood Water Tactical Advisors are yet to be trained as this is a nationally run accredited course and LFRS is awaiting availability.

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

Introduce a 45m Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP)

Our largest ever ALP is currently in build and is on track for delivery in January 2024. There will then be a period of familiarisation and training for operational crews prior to the appliance going on the run at Preston.

Invest in two Additional Water Towers

The project is currently on target with the new appliances due for delivery by the end of March 2024. Similar to the new ALP, there will be a period of familiarisation and training prior to the appliances going on the run, which are anticipated to be located at St Annes and Lancaster.

Broaden on-call firefighting capabilities to strengthen operational response

Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) Driving

On Call staff at Hyndburn are now trained to drive the ALP to incidents, they have already successfully utilised this skill on a number of occasions by driving the ALP to incidents. On Call staff at Morecambe are currently undertaking driver training which will be completed by the end of November 2023.

Command Support Unit (CSU)

The Command Support Unit (CSU) went live on 1 November 2023 and is crewed by On Call staff from Bolton-le-Sands and Carnforth. The CSU attended its first incident on 7 November 2023 at the large commercial building fire in Longridge.

On Call and Specials Review

The On Call review is progressing and has identified a number of additional options to strengthen operational response. These items alongside the implementation of the Specials Review, will see On Call staff being developed to support a number of specialist appliances in the future. The Service is currently exploring options around potentially training the On Call staff at Lancaster in the swift water rescue specialist skill.

Business risk

Production of the ECR is a business-critical planning function. LFRS must demonstrate a timely review of response arrangements in line with National Framework guidance issued by central government.

Environmental impact

A key driver of the ECR process is to align to our climate change response plan. This will drive our operational response through speed of attack and ensuring the most effective and efficient resource is deployed with the aim of reducing harm to the environment.

Equality and diversity implications

A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed alongside an independent third-party specialist to ensure any proposed changes do not impact negatively upon Lancashire's diverse community or LFRS' workforce.

HR implications

The changes of duty systems and associated operational resource continues to have a direct effect on HR functions. HR are managing this through relevant processes including consultation and engagement.

Financial implications

There are associated training and property expenditure due to the implementation of the ECR, however these are being managed within existing budgets. Any capital spends such as new appliances or dynamic cover software have allocated funds and are governed through individual projects reporting into the appropriate programme board.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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