

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee

Monday, 20 November 2023, at 10.00 am in the Washington Hall, Service Training Centre, Euxton.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
S Clarke (Chair)	
J Singleton (Vice-Chair)	
G Baker	
M Dad BEM	
N Hennessy	
J Hugo	
F Jackson	
D O'Toole	
P Rigby	
J Shedwick	

Officers
S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS) E Price, Group Manager, Planning, Performance and Assurance (LFRS) D Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)

12/23	Apologies for Absence
	None received.
13/23	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
14/23	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	Resolved: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 17 July 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
15/23	Emergency Cover Review - Implementation Update
	The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report. He introduced Group Manager Emma Price from the Planning, Performance and Assurance team and advised that the team had been working hard towards achieving the changes identified from the Emergency Cover Review (ECR).

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

The changes identified in the ECR 2022 reflected the most effective and efficient use of resources for the whole of Lancashire. The Authority agreed all the proposed changes on 19 December 2022 which would result in LFRS:

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

An ECR implementation plan was developed with five key workstreams, with updates on the workstreams detailed as follows:

1. 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 whole-time 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 would still take place but with the re-introduction of the 2-2-4 whole-time duty system as opposed to flexible whole-time.

Engagement sessions had taken place with all the members of staff affected. Implementation of the changes to crewing arrangements were led by people's preferences in terms of the duty system they wished to work, subject to the skill requirements and the demands of the Service. Members of staff permanently employed on Day Crewing Plus (DCP) stations were offered a role at an alternative DCP station, or a position at their current station depending on their preference with some members of staff securing promotion opportunities. The Service continued to work with members of staff who were currently temporary on the DCP system to identify a suitable posting. A training needs analysis had been completed and training was being commissioned and delivered to meet the needs of staff.

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

It was anticipated that the go live date for implementation of the change of duty systems, or establishment numbers, would be 1 March 2024. Changes for each station (with the exception of Penwortham) would take place at the same time as follows:

- Morecambe, Fleetwood and Skelmersdale (changing from DCP to 2-2-4 Whole-time) 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 Whole-time) 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.

In response to Member questions the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that one of the main areas in the ECR had been the need to reduce the number of stations on the DCP system. The above changes were across each station and would result in an overall increase of 8 firefighter roles. He confirmed that the Service had worked hard liaising with Union representatives and with individuals who would be changing stations or roles. The proposed flexible rostering system could have affected circa 100 staff however agreement could not be reached with the FBU.

Changes to St Annes had provided opportunities for a number of on call firefighters to pick up wholetime roles and there had not been the need for anyone to move their home into the area. Changes on single pump stations (such as Hyndburn, South Shore and Lancaster) had meant a slight difference in establishment numbers with crews that currently had seven dropping to six to support a balanced budget.

CC Hennessy requested information regarding firefighter promotion opportunities. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service ran annual promotional boards for aspiring crew and watch managers. Current DCP stations had one watch manager B and three crew managers which when the stations returned to wholetime, would become four watch manager A roles. He agreed to bring a breakdown to the next meeting.

In response to further questions from CC Hennessy, the Deputy Chief Fire officer provided reassurance that skill requirements across all stations had been analysed. He confirmed that training was delivered in-house at the training centre with some specialist training (such as swift water rescues) being out sourced.

2. Optimise emergency cover through dynamic cover software

The dynamic cover software was 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 had 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 was to embed the software and its use at North West Fire Control (NWFC). A standalone facility would be made available on the Lancashire pod at NWFC so that Control Room Operators could start to use the software.

In response to a question raised by CC Hennessy, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that currently spate flooding or large fires were managed by the LFRS command support room, crewed by group and station managers who used the dynamic software to assist North West Fire Control to move appliances across the county to spread fire cover based on current risk, availability and demand. He added that flexi duty officers were based across the county and worked a rota system to cover at night and during the weekends.

In response to a comment from CC Shedwick the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that of the Fire and Rescue Services within NWFC, LFRS was currently the only Service that used the dynamic cover software.

In response to Cllr Hugo who had received a query regarding why one of the appliances from Blackpool had been moved to Burnley to provide cover, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that he was not aware of that occurrence but could look into it. The software was designed to provide efficient and effective cover across the fifty-eight fire appliances, of which thirty-two were crewed by on call staff. It was therefore possible on occasion that one of the four appliances at Blackpool would be relocated elsewhere to provide efficient and effective cover. Members were aware that on call availability had been an issue for the fire sector for a number of years and that the Service was investigating ways to improve this. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer added that the use of the dynamic cover software provided for an effective deployment of resources.

3. Strengthen our response to climate change emergencies

Investing in Four Fire Appliances with Off-Road Capabilities

The Service was currently finalising the last stage of evaluation for the first large fire appliance with off-road capabilities and a contract award was expected by the end of November 2023. It was anticipated that this appliance would be delivered to LFRS within the next 12 months. The smaller fire appliance would be explored once the contract for the large fire appliance had been awarded. The procurement of this vehicle was anticipated to be quicker and was also expected to be in Service within the next 12 months. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that these vehicles were not in addition to the current fleet but would be replacing standard fire appliances. Both vehicles would 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 had been trained as Flood Water Incident Managers. These officers would be informed of any incidents within the water or large area flooding, and they would either attend the incident or provide advice remotely depending on the nature of the incident. Two Flood Water Tactical Advisors were yet to be trained as this was a nationally run accredited course and LFRS was awaiting availability.

CC Shedwick commented that he was pleased to see more swift water training and asked whether liaison was made with local mountain rescue teams and flood forums (such as the Wyre flood forum which was very active in his area). The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that multi-agency responses were provided and the Service would always respond even though there was not a statutory duty under the Fire Services Act nor funding received from government.

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

Introduce a 45m Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP)

The Service's largest ever ALP was currently in build and was on track for delivery January 2024. There would 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 was currently on target with the new appliances due for delivery by the end of March 2024. Similar to the new ALP, there would be a period of familiarisation and training prior to the appliances going on the run, which were anticipated to be located at St Annes and Lancaster.

5. Broaden on-call firefighting capabilities to strengthen operational response

Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) Driving

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

Command Support Unit (CSU)

The CSU went live on 1 November 2023 and was 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.

In response to a query raised by CC Rigby, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that in addition to the small CSU mentioned two large CSUs were currently in build for replacement at Fulwood and Blackburn.

On Call and Specials Review

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

The Authority Chairman commented that over the last decade, in a rapidly changing world, investment had been made in equipment and software and he was pleased that there was much better co-operation with neighbouring authorities to provide cross-border support at incidents. He advised that it was not for Members to get involved in operational matters as that was for the Service who had excellent Officers.

The Authority Chairman also commented that the reduction in highway services provided by local authorities (ie: the lack of litter picking or removal of grass-cuttings) resulted in blocked drains which added to difficulties the multi-agencies faced during flooding incidents. He therefore asked Members to take this issue back to their local authorities.

Resolved: that the report be noted and endorsed.

16/23

Blue Light Collaboration Board Update

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report that updated Members the progress against the five key workstreams being progressed under the Blue Light Collaboration Board (BLCB). It was noted that the workstreams were effectively

managed through the Strategic and Tactical Collaboration Boards.

1. Missing Persons (Missing from home)

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) continued to support Lancashire Constabulary (LanCon) with this successful collaboration and a closure report was now in development for this workstream.

It was noted that there were over 220 police requests into North West Fire Control (NWFC) for the Service's specialist drone team within the last 12 months and most of these incidents were for missing persons.

The Missing Persons project was being enhanced further with the aim of training teams from several on-call stations within Lancashire. The locations were identified from data and analysis which showed where people were most likely to go missing from home, and where LanCon's resources were limited. This enabled LFRS' specialist teams to search familiar ground in reduced time and improve the likelihood of a positive outcome. This training developed the knowledge of what was required by LanCon in the management of a missing from home incident: including intelligence gathering, record keeping, search areas, and ensuring a crime scene wasn't contaminated.

Training was also planned for the contact centre staff in LanCon to increase their knowledge of LFRS' search capabilities.

A Memorandum of Understanding had been developed to provide a framework to further support the collaborative use of LFRS and LanCon drones. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service would be starting to recharge to cover costs.

CC Shedwick commented that the fire service played a major part in collaboration and given the level of support to the Police was pleased the Service would be making a recharge.

In response to a further comment from CC Shedwick the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the drone team were on call and dependent on the level of incident it was not always necessary to mobilise a fire engine.

2. Estates and Co-location

This was a long-term workstream which may deliver significant efficiencies and effectiveness where co-location sites were identified.

A set of principles were being developed in relation to co-location sites and a mapping exercise of the current co-location sites and benefits had commenced.

Blue Light partners were currently reviewing their strategic property asset plans to coordinate the future development plans over the next 5-10 years. The development plans would consider the potential for co-location, and with a view to further developing the integration of services at co-location sites to enhance the shared ethos and principles.

All Blue Light partners were included in the scoping work for the LFRS' Preston

area review.

3. First Responder

As part of the Annual Service Plan priorities this year, the Service was running a trial involving staff volunteering as community first responders, supporting North West Ambulance Service (NWAS). Volunteers respond to life threatening emergencies in their communities from the workplace and administer first aid in the initial vital minutes before NWAS colleagues arrive. This collaboration aimed to save lives in Lancashire's communities.

Phase 1 of the first responder scheme involved 5 non-operational LFRS' staff from various departments across the Service volunteering to take part in the scheme. At least one life has been saved by LFRS' volunteers.

Phase 2 had commenced which has enabled operational staff to volunteer for the scheme. Eight Flexible Duty Officers had so far volunteered to be a community first responder and were currently progressing through the onboarding process with NWAS.

In response to a question raised by CC Hennessy, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the FBU locally would not agree to a first responder scheme without agreement at national level; however, it was supported by the other grey book union bodies Fire Officers Association and Fire and Rescue Services Association. He confirmed that discussions were ongoing and that staff currently on the trial were volunteers. There was a benefit to the community given fire engines carried defibrillators and could often attend a cardiac arrest incident quicker than an ambulance. He also stated that fire and rescue mobilisations would be in addition to an ambulance / NWAS response, not instead of. There was also a duty under the Policing and Crime Act to collaborate and provide more effective and efficient public services.

4. Leadership Development

The Learning and Development leads from each of the Blue Light partners were investigating leadership development collaboration opportunities.

An analysis of leadership development was ongoing between the three organisations, with the services currently exploring an additional mentorship programme for command and control.

5. Command Units

The aim of this project was to establish and deliver additional collaborative uses of the command units in LFRS to support effective multi agency working amongst emergency responders. The key objectives were to improve operational effectiveness and in line with LFRS' mission; 'Making Lancashire Safer'.

LFRS' Command Support Unit (CSU) project was listed in this year's Service Plan and aims to upgrade not only the vehicles but to take advantage in recent technological advances to support operational incidents. The first new CSU went live on 1st November, crewed by on-call staff from Carnforth and Bolton-le-Sands fire stations. As part of the agreed capital vehicle replacement project, two larger

command units would also be in service by the end of 2023.

It was expected that the initial benefits to be realised would be technological advances that would further develop information sharing and situational awareness aligned to improving and embedding the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles. Further scoping and development would be overseen by the Blue Light Collaboration Board to ensure opportunities for joint working were effectively coordinated and delivered.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

17/23

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided an update on His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) activity.

HMICFRS had commenced Round 3 inspections in early 2023. The three pillars of effectiveness, efficiency and people remained the same as Round 2 as did the 11 diagnostics under each pillar which the inspectorate graded judgements against.

It was noted that HMI Michelle Skeer, recently retired Chief Constable of Cumbria Constabulary, had three meetings planned with the Chair of the Authority, the Chief Fire Officer and Trade Union officials / staff network group representatives at the start of December. In addition, the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer had recently attended a HMICFRS' Chief and Chairs event in London.

Early engagement with the Service's liaison lead, Dominic Mika had taken place with Chief Fire Officer Justin Johnston and Area Manager Tom Powell (Service Liaison Officer). Dominic would start to be introduced into the Service over the coming months in the build up to LFRS' inspection which was anticipated would take place around late spring / early summer 2024. The Organisational Assurance Team within the Service Improvement Department continued to track progress against our previous inspection, monitor national themes and prepare LFRS for our Round 3 inspection.

HMICFRS was publishing reports on a rolling basis for Round 3 and had so far published eight reports on fire and rescue services (FRS). With the introduction of the 'adequate' grading, many FRS's had seen 'good' gradings from Round 2 change to 'adequate' gradings in Round 3 due to identified 'areas for improvement'. A summary of the gradings for all eight FRSs inspected so far in Round 3 was detailed in the report.

Misconduct within fire and rescue services

Members noted that HMICFRS had commissioned Crest Advisory to carry out research on misconduct within fire and rescue services in England. The goal was to better understand misconduct within the fire sector so its processes and policies could be strengthened and improved.

Crest Advisory was conducting two online surveys; one aimed at current members of staff and the other aimed at former members of staff who had worked in a fire and rescue service within the last five years. Current members of staff could take part in the survey which was open until 4 December 2023. Former members of staff could register their interest to take part in research interviews with registration open

until 11 December 2023. LFRS had shared details of the surveys with both current and former members of staff. Information shared in the research would typically remain confidential, unless there were safeguarding, or criminal issues raised that require it to be shared with a third party (e.g., the police). Reporting of data obtained via surveys and interviews would be anonymised. The findings would be reported by HMICFRS in June 2024.

Values and culture in fire and rescue services

Values and culture in fire and rescue services remained a focus for HMICFRS and LFRS had already been working proactively in terms of promoting its values and engendering an organisational culture where all employees could thrive.

Members noted that the Authority’s Resources Committee had recently received a report on the progress the Service had made in relation to equality diversity and inclusion (EDI) as part of our EDI Annual Report.

The Resources Committee was also updated on progress the Service was making regarding the HMICFRS and National Fire Chiefs Council recommendations in relation to values and culture. In response to Member questions, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that there were 35 recommendations and 20 of those were for Chief Fire Officers to implement which included: methods for individuals to raise concerns (including an anonymous reporting line), the review of background checks, the implementation of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and a 360° feedback process for leaders and managers in the Service.

The Principal Member Services Officer confirmed that the progress report to the Resources Committee was publicly available on the Service website and agreed that this would be circulated separately to Members of the Committee for information.

The Authority Chairman commented that collaboration was discussed at a national conference he had attended where the vast majority of attendees were against governance of fire by a Police and Crime Commissioner; this was something that the Authority had previously unanimously opposed.

Resolved: that the report be noted and endorsed.

18/23

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on **5 February 2024** at 1000 hours in the main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Further meeting dates were noted for 15 July 2024 and agreed for 18 November 2024.

**M Nolan
Clerk to CFA**

**LFRS HQ
Fulwood**