Lancashire Combined Fire Authority
Resources Committee

Wednesday, 29 November 2023, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
R Woollam (Chair)	
D O'Toole (Vice-Chair)	
G Baker	
L Beavers	
P Britcliffe	
T Hurn	
J Mein	
M Pattison	
S Serridge	
B Yates	

Officers
J Charters, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS) B Warren, Director of People and Development (LFRS) M Nolan, Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority J Meadows, Head of Finance (LFRS) T Cousins, Head of Fleet and Engineering Services (LFRS) D Brooks, Principal Member Services Officer (LFRS)

22/23	**Apologies for Absence**
	None received.
23/23	**Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**
	None received.
24/23	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting**
	Resolved: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 27 September 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
25/23	**Financial Monitoring**
	The Director of Corporate Services advised that this report set out the current budget position in respect of the 2023/24 revenue and capital budgets.

Revenue Budget
Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's 2023/24 revenue budget had been set at £68.493m. The forecast outturn position was £68.888m, an overspend of £0.395m; an overspend of £0.594m on non-pay activities and an underspend of (£0.199m) on pay.

The year-to-date and forecast positions within all departmental budgets were set out in the report with major forecast variances of note shown separately in the table below:

Area £'m	**Overspend/ (Under spend)**	**Reason**
Pay	(0.199)	The forecast was consistent with the position reported to the Committee in September: • There was a forecast pressure of £0.140m as a result of the Service meeting its legal responsibilities in relation to the Bear Fulton legal case regarding holiday pay; • Whilst the Emergency Cover Review (ECR) remained on target, there had been some initial timing delays compared to the budget which had resulted in an in-year pressure that had been offset through improvement in the management of overtime arrangements; and • Other savings included some vacancies particularly at the training centre of (£0.179m).
Fleet and technical Services - Non Pay	0.358	The forecast overspend was mainly due to inflationary pressures on the supply of parts and increase in repairs. It was hoped that this pressure would reduce in future years as inflation fell and the older fleet stock was replaced.
Apprenticeship Levy Funding – Non Pay	0.300	As previously reported the Apprenticeship Levy income for the year was forecast to be lower than budgeted resulting in an annual pressure of approximately £0.300m; this was due to a reduction in the number of recruits meeting the eligibility criteria for funding. On call fire fighters and recruits with significant prior learning did not attract levy funding.

Training Centre Courses – Non Pay	0.163	Due to vacancies in the Training Centre, as previously reported, the department had had to appoint more associate trainers than budgeted to meet the training needs of the service such Driver Training and specialist training such as swift water rescue as a result of the ECR. This pressure was offset by vacancies and the service was putting in place arrangements to try to increase the number of internal trainers.
Service Delivery / Heads of Service Delivery – Non Pay	0.108	As previously reported, there was a forecast overspend of £0.108m on protective equipment, including the roll out of wildfire kit and Urban Search And Rescue (USAR) kit.
Non – DFM – Bank Interest	(0.302)	There was a forecast saving on interest earned on cash balances invested.

Capital Budget
The Capital Programme for 2023/24 was £11.7m, after allowing for the year end slippage agreed at the last Resources Committee meeting. Spend to date was to date was £3.79m which was predominantly on pumping appliances.

Following a review of the current year end forecasts an in year spend of £9m was anticipated. This would lead to total slippage of £2.6m; an additional £1.566m slippage for approval by the Resources Committee. Details of capital projects are as outlined in the table below with the additional slippage for approval:

Area	**Budgeted Items**
Operational Vehicles Budget £5.991m Forecast £4.507m Approved Slippage £0.301m Additional Slippage £1.136m	The budget allowed for the remaining stage payments for 10 pumping appliances purchased in previous financial years. In addition, the budget allowed for the first stage payments of the 3 pumping appliances for the 2023/24 programme. It also included two climate change vehicles and three command units. All were on target in 2023/24, except for extended lead time of the smaller climate change vehicle. The following additional items had slipped to 2024/25 due to extended lead times: • 2 Water Towers (£1.027m) due for delivery quarter 1 2024/25; • 2 Prime movers (£0.260m) have slipped pending specification certification from the supplier.
Other vehicles Budget £1.03m Forecast £0.925m	This budget allowed for the replacement of various operational support vehicles. The supply of 3 rescue team vans had been delayed to 2024/25.

Approved slippage £0.123m	
Operational Equipment Budget £1.47m Forecast £1.22m Approved slippage £0.25m	As reported in September, this budget allowed for equipment purchases including thermal imaging cameras and cutting and extrication equipment 2023/24. Slippage on Ballistic Vest and Helmet PPE would enable exploration and pilot of equipment.
Building Modifications Budget £1.6m Forecast £1.6m	This budget included the continuation of Drill Tower replacements and an upgrade to the Wylfa prop facility. Completion of works was on target. There was a risk works may slip into early 2024/25.
IT systems Budget £1.7m Forecast £1.3m Approved slippage £0.3m Additional Slippage £0.430	This budget included for the upgrade Firewalls and digitisation of fire appliances. Slippage was expected on the following: • The national Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP) has paused to 2025 (£0.1m); • Upgrade of Asset Management (£0.1m) due to review of interdependencies; • WIFI (£0.135m) could only be completed after the Firewall scheduled in quarter 4 of 2023/24; • Incident ground radios (£0.23m) had slipped in line with helmet communications and the breathing apparatus replacement programme; and • RDS Alerters (£0.065m) had slipped due to period of soft market research.

Appendix 2 as now considered by Members set out the capital programme and the committed expenditure position against this, as reflected above. The committed costs to date would be met by revenue contributions and usage of capital reserves and capital receipts.

In response to a question from CC Pattison the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that firefighter apprenticeships were for a two-year period; this was broadly commensurate with the firefighter initial recruits course and development programme completed prior to the apprenticeship route being introduced into the Service. He confirmed that the apprenticeships scheme brought in income via a levy.

In response to a question from CC Woollam regarding staffing of Service Training Centre (STC), the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the change to shift patterns associated with working there sometimes deterred applicants, however, the Service was clear in the developmental benefits to staff of working at STC and that staff received payment of an additional responsibility allowance whilst undertaking instructional duties. He confirmed that there were contingency arrangements in place via the use of associate trainers who worked as trainers on their days off, to support the delivery of training required by the Service.

	Resolved: that the committee noted and endorsed the financial position and approved the additional slippage in the capital programme of £1.566m to 2024/25.
26/23	**Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2023/24**

The Director of Corporate Services presented the report. In accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Treasury Management Code of Practice and to strengthen Members' oversight of the Authority's treasury management activities, the Resources Committee received a treasury management mid-year report and a final outturn report. Reports on treasury activity were discussed on a quarterly basis with Lancashire County Council Treasury Management Team and the Authority's Director of Corporate Services and the content of these reports was used as a basis for this report to the Committee.

Economic Overview

Treasury management activity was taken within the context of prevailing and forecasted economic conditions. The first half of the year saw the continuation of high levels of inflation. As measured by the CPI, inflation was 10.1% in March 2023. Although the rates had fallen during the year to a level of 6.7% in September this was still above the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) target for inflation of 2%. In addition to high inflation there continued to be strong wage growth. As a consequence, the MPC raised the Base rate several times in the year. The rate on the 1 April was 4.25% which had increased to 5.25% in August.

Many economic forecasters considered that interest rates had reached a peak with the economy showing signs of low growth and the potential of a recession increasing. However, despite this and the Bank of England's expectation that inflation would continue to fall during the year it was not anticipated that there would be a fall in the Base rates in this financial year with the Bank stating that "we will keep interest rates high enough for long enough to ensure that we achieve our goal" (of meeting its 2% target).

A table in the report, now considered by Members showed the latest forecast for interest rates from Arlingclose.

Treasury Management position and policy

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes was measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital were the underlying resources available for investment. The treasury management activity was influenced both by the position at the beginning of the year and the plans in year. The position at the start of the financial year was summarised in the report indicating that the level of loans was above the borrowing requirement. This was the result of the Authority adopting a policy of setting aside additional Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) in order to generate the cash to repay loans either on maturity or as an early repayment. This had resulted in the CFR being reduced but due to early repayment charges it had not been financially beneficial to repay three loans.

It was not anticipated that the new capital expenditure would be funded from borrowing in the year while it was anticipated that there would be some reduction in the level of reserves held.

Borrowing

There had been no new borrowing in the first six months of the financial year. This was consistent with the position that the current borrowing was already above the CFR and that the capital programme did not include any expenditure to be financed from borrowing.

The long-term debt outstanding of £2m had been borrowed from the Public Works Loan Board. A table in the report showed the maturity profile of the Authority's borrowings, along with an interest rate paid.

If the loans were to be repaid early there would be an early repayment (premium) charge. Previous reports on treasury management activities had reported that the premium and the potential loss of investment income had been greater than the savings made on the interest payments therefore it had not been considered financially beneficial to repay the loans especially with the potential for increased interest rates. However, on 30 September 2023 the estimated premium charge to repay the three loans was minimal although rates and the premium changed on a daily basis. To offset the net savings on repaying the loans it was estimated that future interest on investments over the remaining period of the loans would need to be 4.5%. If it was estimated that investment interest rates would be lower than this figure, then it may be beneficial to repay the loans.

Investments

Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance required the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Authority’s objective when investing money was to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving low investment returns and having the value of reserves eroded by inflation.

The Authority principally invested in a call account provided by Lancashire County Council which paid the base rate. Each working day the balance on the Authority's Current Account was invested in this to ensure that interest was received on surplus balances within an acceptable risk framework. During the period all surplus balances were placed with the County Council via this arrangement. At 30th September there was a balance of £24.970m invested in LCC while the average for the period was £20.080m. The current rate for these investments was 5.25% in line with the increase in the Base Rate in August 2023. At the beginning of the financial year the rate was 4.25%.

In order to increase the rate earned on current balances, the Authority had placed fixed term investments with other local authorities. To attract a higher rate of interest than was available on the call account these investments would need to be fixed for a longer period of time. The report identified the investments that had been in place during the year. At 30 September there was £15m fixed term investment in place, therefore the total investment held at 30 September was £39.970m.

The overall rate of interest earned during this period was 4.06% which was less favourable when compared with the benchmark 7-day index which averaged 4.73% over the same period.

All investments were made in accordance with the current Treasury Management Strategy and the CIPFA treasury management code of practice.

Members noted that there had been a further three fixed term investments taken out with other Local Authorities during the period which only started later in the financial year as follows: -

Start Date	Finish Date	Principal £m	Interest Rate	Annual interest	Interest in 2023/24
14-Dec-23	12-Dec-24	3.5	5.05%	£176,750	£52,783
20-Nov-23	18-Nov-24	5	5.85%	£292,500	£106,582
17-Oct-23	15-Oct-24	5	5.55%	£277,500	£126,966

Current interest rates available for lending to other Local Authorities were: -

Period	Interest rate
6 months	5.30%
1 year	5.50%
2 year	5.10%
3 year	4.90%

Prudential Indicators

In order to control and monitor the Authority's treasury management functions, a number of prudential indicators were determined against which performance may be measured. The indicators for 2023/24 were approved by the Authority on 20 February 2023 which were detailed in the report alongside the current actual.

Revenue Budget Implications

The 2022/23 revenue budget for treasury management activity showed that anticipated income exceeded expenditure by £105k. Taking into account the activity for the first six months of the year and estimated cash-flow for the remainder of the year the latest forecast was as below:

	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24
	Budget	Forecast	Variance
	£m	£m	£m
MRP	0.000	0.000	(0.000)
Interest payable	0.090	0.090	(0.000)
Interest receivable	(1.300)	(1.520)	(0.220)
Net budget	(1.210)	(1.430)	(0.220)

The interest receivable was above budget as the balances and interest rates were

	higher than anticipated when setting the budget. The forecast assumed interest rates on the call account averaged 5.25% for the remainder of the financial year. Further to a comment from CC O'Toole regarding the difficulties to accurately forecast interest rates, Cllr Baker requested information which set out the Authority's level of investment and borrowing for the previous five years. The Director of Corporate Services agreed that this would be included in the next Treasury Management report. **Resolved:** that the Committee noted and endorsed the report.
27/23	**Fleet Asset Management Plan 2023 - 2027**
	The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented the report and introduced Tom Cousins, Head of Fleet and Engineering who was in attendance. The Fleet Asset Management Plan (FAMP) had been refreshed. It continued to build on a structured approach to the management of operational vehicles, equipment, breathing apparatus and hydrant assets and was designed to support the delivery of the Authority's Community Risk Management Plan and associated strategies, predominantly the response strategy. Therefore, the FAMP was key in determining strategic decisions regarding assets and defining how resources were efficiently and effectively utilised. This would ensure that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) vehicles and equipment provided a resilient service to meet the changing needs of a modern Fire and Rescue Service and the communities it served. Running a modern Fleet was a safety critical operation which must ensure employee and public safety. This was achieved through best practice in vehicle inspection, maintenance, operation and procurement. LFRS also ensured compliance to Department of Transport and Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency regulations on construction, use and roadworthiness. Whilst the FAMP projected asset replacement over the next eight years, the Plan sets out capital investment requirements over the next four years and would be refreshed over that period in line with risk, to ensure it continued to accurately reflect the operating environment. This approach secured stability in capital and revenue budgets and facilitated the introduction of new technologies through a staged approach. The FAMP also covered short to medium term business planning improvement objectives. The Service's Fleet and Engineering Services department would continue to strive for improvement by maintaining a strong focus on customer care. Key projects in the 2023-27 FAMP were: • Body worn and vehicle CCTV; • Battery Road Traffic Collision Tools; • Aerial Appliance provision; • Replacing Command Support Units; • Breathing Apparatus and Telemetry Equipment; • A Greener, more environmentally sustainable fleet;

- Suitable vehicles and equipment to meet the changing risk, in particular that resulting from climate change;
- Investment in modern firefighting technology, including introducing flow meters and larger diameter hose reels on our Fire Engine fleet;
- To continue our journey towards being the most innovative Fire and Rescue Service in the country by investing in technology, including drones and the potential for robotics to improve firefighter safety.

CC O'Toole queried whether the larger diameter hose reels meant all connections would need to be changed. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the larger diameter hose reels would only require changes on the lockers of fire appliances. He added that the changes followed the science in firefighting compartment fires, which continued to essentially centre around high pressure / low quantity of water, had proven very successful for fighting fires in domestic premises.

Running alongside the FAMP, the Fleet and Engineering Services department also held an improvement plan, which focused on four key performance areas:

- Customer – building stronger working relations and meeting requirements;
- Financial – achieve efficiency savings and maintain a healthy replacement plan;
- Systems – continued development of asset management systems;
- Development / Growth – invest in staff training and development.

The above, in conjunction with the FAMP ensured that Fleet and Engineering Services continued to provide the best possible support to Service Delivery.

The current spend was approximately £1.5m on vehicles and £0.5m on equipment and breathing apparatus assets per annum. Within the current revenue and capital budgets, the plan was affordable and ensured value for money. However, both revenue and capital budgets were subject to approval by the Authority at its budget setting meeting in February. Should the Authority approve the plan it would set the strategic direction for the Service and allow for longer term planning.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer drew Members attention to the following from the plan:

Life Expectancy and Efficiency

To improve efficiency, the current nominal lifecycle for an operational fire appliance would increase from 12 to 13 years, followed by 2 further years at Training Centre, achieving a total life of 15 years. The 15-year cycle equated to a fleet turnover of circa five appliances per annum. The lifecycles for special appliances range from 8 to 15 years. Their economic life was determined on whole life costs generated through operational use. To achieve a smoother asset replacement programme some flexibility regarding replacement was required to even out costs. However, equipment such as Breathing Apparatus needed to be replaced en-bloc due to the complexities of training introduced through having a wide product range.

The FAMP aimed to smooth out vehicle purchases over the period to ease pressures on capital and maintenance costs. However, extended lead-times over the past 2 years inevitably meant annual capital replacement costs were often carried over. To address this, 3-year contracts were normally awarded, which would address such slippages more effectively.

Capital Replacement Programme
The capital replacement programme for vehicles and major operational equipment were set out as appendices to the Plan (as now considered by Members). Each year the plan would be reviewed against the specific needs of the Service and the ever-changing fire and rescue service landscape. Smoothing the replacement plan was fundamental in providing equipment and vehicle assets when required, enabling capital profiling which was more predictable and aligned with the Service's procurement function.

Fleet and Engineering Services Procurement
The department continued to work closely with procurement colleagues in all capital replacement purchases, using mainly framework agreements to reduce the procurement timeline, while ensuring compliance. In addition, regional and national procurement partnerships were actively sought to improve economies of scale, at the same time offering value for money across the fire and rescue community.

Innovation
Climate change presented considerable challenges for the UK fire sector and remained a significant risk in Lancashire. The Service had invested in specialist all-terrain vehicles, fully equipped to address wildfire and flooding in the county. These vehicles had been developed by LFRS to meet the climate change conditions experienced locally, the first in the UK to do so. The units and specialist wildfire response teams were strategically placed to provide an efficient and effective response.

Wide area and localised flooding could devastate local communities, leaving lasting effects well beyond the event, and causing considerable financial loss. With the potential for flooding at any time of the year, there was a need to provide LFRS with an effective an appropriate equipment asset to address these challenges.

The Service had strategically positioned water rescue appliances and water incident units in preparation for flooding events. LFRS was a host service for a high-volume pump (HVP), as part of the national response capability. The HVP's were embedded into core business, with the capability of moving large volumes of water quickly. In addition, the Service continued to invest in staff training and development around flooding, including the use of climate change all-terrain vehicles to enhance the flood response.

The Service had continued to build on the Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) technology, introducing enhanced models to further improve their capability. Now, LFRS hosted some of the most sophisticated UAV operations within the sector, which included an underwater Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV) capability. The ROV, which was a UK first within the Fire and Rescue Service sector, was capable not only of detection using the latest sonar capabilities, but could also offer a grip and retrieval facility, which was of major benefit to the Service during waterborne search and rescue operations. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer added that the Service would continue to support this development including extending the scope to include research into potential use of robotics in firefighting and rescue response scenarios.

	Two of the new pumping appliances would undergo conversion into Technical Rescue Units providing a dual role of pumping appliance and enhanced rescue capability, thus removing the need to have both in the Service. As part of this project, the Service would reduce its pod capacity, ensuring a more efficient and effective deployment of heavy rescue assets when the need arose. CC Woollam was pleased that the Service was a sector leader for innovation particularly the remote operated vehicles. **Carbon Footprint and Environmental Impact** While the Service continued to reduce its carbon footprint by implementing electric vehicles, switching from diesel-powered light vehicles to hybrid technology to eliminate nitrogen oxide emissions, the environmental changes continued to affect LFRS operational demands. Over the lifespan of this FAMP, the existing Carbon Management Plan would be replaced with a revised Environmental Sustainability Plan. The new plan would set out environmental aspirations to move forward to a net zero carbon emissions position. Vehicle related emissions were a significant contributor to carbon emissions within the Service, and as part of ongoing commitments, reducing emissions from vehicles and improving the environmental performance of fleet vehicles remained a key aspect of revised aspirations. In response to a question from CC O'Toole, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the new appliances which were currently at Service Training Centre would replace vehicles across the fleet in line with the replacement programme after final refinements had been completed. CC O'Toole queried whether there was a policy of buying locally to support the local economy. In response, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that detailed specifications were produced and the Service went out to the market in a transparent manner to procure the best product however, sometimes the best technology was found outside UK borders. He confirmed that the procurement team ensured the Service was compliant with regulations. CC Mein agreed with a policy of local procurement and queried whether that could be built into the contract as a weighted part of the assessment criteria. In response the Head of Fleet and Engineering Services reassured Members that social value was included in the procurement process and there were a lot of local suppliers however, the UK fire and rescue vehicle market was limited. In response to Member requests for information on what was procured locally, the Director of Corporate Services agreed to bring details to the next meeting which was timely as there had been a change in public sector procurement regulations. In response to a request from CC Woollam for information regarding the use of body armour, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that this was something that the Service had been looking at for a while in response to risk in the community which had shifted over time. It was not uncommon to attend an incident where the address had a Police marker (for knife crime, alcohol or substance misuse etc) and attacks on firefighters had seen an increase nationally; quite often on bonfire night.

	He advised that suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) had been identified (similar to that used in other counties) for a proposed pilot in the Blackpool area. The PPE would be available for the crew to wear if they chose to do so during a heightened risk or to an incident at a flagged address. The pilot would be evaluated before making any commitment to a sizeable spend. In response to a question from Cllr Baker the Assistant Chief Fire Officer added that wearing the PPE would not increase the time of response or impede firefighter capabilities. The proposed PPE was a vest, secured by Velcro (similar to those worn by the Police over the top of their uniform). It would largely be down to the officer in charge to make the decision as to whether the PPE should be worn and it would not necessarily be needed to be worn by all staff; this would a dynamic judgement based on the situation. In response to a question from CC Woollam regarding whether there was any risk in extending the life of the vehicles the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that vehicle technology had moved on considerably over the last 10-20 years with vehicles now cleaner, more efficient, reliable and greener. He confirmed that vehicles were rotated around the fleet to balance usage and wear, to increase their longevity. The Service did benefit from a new fleet and had very reliable and well-maintained vehicles. He was confident therefore that by extending the nominal vehicle lifecycle by one year would not cause any significant risks. **Resolved:** that the Committee recommend to the Authority that the Fleet Asset Management Plan 2023-2027 be endorsed (subject to budget considerations) as part of the Budget approval process in February 2024.
28/23	**Property and Estate Assets Management Strategy 2023-2034**
	The Director of Corporate Services presented the report. The Property and Estate Asset Management 10-year Strategy had been updated to set out the approach for the management of property and estates assets over the medium to longer term. The aim of the strategy was to deliver property and an estate that supported the creation of positive, inclusive environments that were fit for purpose, encouraged best practice, innovation and continuous improvement and that promoted the right culture to meet the changing needs of a modern Fire and Rescue Service and the communities it served. The strategy was set over four parts which highlighted the medium to longer term approach, as follows: **Part 1 – Overview of the existing Property and Estate assets** The key functions of the Property Department included all aspects of estate maintenance, estate management, the majority of facilities management services and capital build projects related to the estate. The strategy included: i) reviewing the team structure to ensure the best service; ii) procurement, appointment and management of specialist consultants to support the services be delivered; and iii) investment in a new computer aided facility management system to enable better information management, improved service delivery and longer-term management of the property and estates assets.

Part 2 – Property and Estates Strategic aims and objectives

There was a need to provide a flexible and adaptable approach to the management of property and estate assets that continued to deliver and improve operational effectiveness while responding to changing risks and resources. The property and estate assets would be measured against four core objectives to inform the decisions made about revenue and capital budgets and areas of focus:

i) to provide functional and fit for purpose facilities, constructed, refurbished and maintained to fulfil Service and legislative requirements and standards and to ensure property assets supported skills and training for staff and community resilience, providing suitable training and educational facilities;
ii) to provide assets that were in optimal locations to achieve Service priorities set out in the community risk management plan;
iii) to provide assets that delivered better services and efficiencies through collaboration, to deliver best value and engagement with blue light partner agencies, fire service support agency groups and local communities;
iv) to make the most efficient use of property assets and manage workspaces effectively, efficiently, reding running costs and environmental impact and generating income including strategic rationalisation.

Part 3 – Property and Estates Priorities

While the primary focus was on ensuring property and estate assets met the four core objectives (listed above) the Property Department constantly sought to enhance and improve certain aspects of the property and estate assets for a modern fire service. However, given finite resources it was necessary to prioritise the enhancements and improvements to be made over the next 10 years which were:

i) to ensure the estate provided high quality welfare and dignity accommodation as standard;
ii) to understand the implications on staff and for buildings in relation to decontamination and contamination reduction;
iii) to ensure the estate provided safe and secure places of work for staff, visitors and site-sharing partners;
iv) to ensure the estate provided high quality training facilities which were aligned to the community risk management plan and upgrading facilities on stations which were deemed to fall below our minimum standards;
v) to provide good quality office working environments that support collaboration, provide modern accommodation and are fit for purpose;
vi) to understand long-term requirements for the reduction of carbon emissions;
vii) to ensure existing space is managed and utilised effectively and efficiently, meeting the needs of the Service to deliver against its core priorities and core values; and
viii) to ensure that staff understand the function of the department and estate assets through a set of property standards.

Part 4 – Delivering our Strategy

The projects identified in the 10-year capital programme were: i) Estate improvements; ii) upgrade WYLFA prop; iii) Blackpool Welfare; iv) drill tower

	replacements; v) Preston replacement station; vi) Service Training Centre props; and vii) SHQ relocation. These would be reviewed annually and were subject to CFA approval. They required significant investment by the Service to be successfully delivered to achieve long-term aspirations. The completion of these projects would reduce future revenue funding requirements by reducing existing maintenance backlog, predicted future maintenance and running costs. They would ensure that the Service had estate assets that were fit for purpose and enable the core priorities and core values to be achieved. The report also set out factors that would influence future projects and outlined the strategy's governance and implementation arrangements. To deliver the Strategy, revenue and capital funding was required to be allocated from the overall budget. The expenditure would be managed to ensure value for money was achieved at all stages of delivery. The revenue budget requirement to maintain the estate assets in their current condition was in the region of £3.7m per annum (which excluded the costs associated with PFI station assets, staff costs and waste management). It was noted that over recent years inflationary pressures had impacted on the budgets, particularly those relating ot the maintenance of contracts and consumption of energy (gas and electric). The capital allocation required to deliver the plan over the initial five-year period of the strategy was: £1.45m in 2023/24 and £8.350m in each of the years 2024/25 – 2027/28 an overall total of £34.875m). County Councillor O'Toole commented that it made sense to keep property in good order. He queried whether Preston station was in the right location (given the development of the retail park opposite the site meant travel to the station was hindered by traffic) and stated the need to make a decision regarding whether it should be redeveloped or relocated. The Director of Corporate Services advised that the redevelopment of the station was in years 3 and 4 of the capital programme. There had been a huge amount of work undertaken looking at alternative sites for potential relocation which remained ongoing. Training facilities and the relocation of Service Headquarters had been prioritised in the capital programme however, the Service needed to look at what that meant for Preston station in the short-term to ensure value for money. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer added that while priorities had been identified there needed to be flexibility and if suitable land became available in Preston the Service needed to be in a position to potentially move quickly to secure it. County Councillor Mein did think Preston station was in the right location however, work was needed with Lancashire County Council to ensure the road network was fit for purpose. She queried whether the fire station could be set back from its current location thereby potentially facilitating the road to be widened. In response to a question raised by CC Mein the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that all options were being considered as part of the Preston Review which included whether alternative site(s) provided an opportunity to improve incident response times.

	The Clerk to the Authority added that Member engagement was through the Member Working Group for Capital Building Projects. The Working Group had met twice and had received at the second meeting a summary project plan across a proposed six-year timeframe. The Working Group Terms of Reference setting out its composition and range of responsibilities would be taken to the next full CFA meeting. **Resolved:** that the Committee recommend to the Authority that the Property and Estate Assets Management Strategy 2023-2034 be endorsed (subject to budget considerations) as part of the Budget approval process in February 2024.
29/23	**Date and Time of Next Meeting**
	The next meeting of the Committee would be held on **27 March 2024** at 1000 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood. Further meeting dates were noted for 3 July 2024 and 25 September 2024 and agreed for 27 November 2024.
30/23	**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.
31/23	**Pensions Update**
	(Paragraphs 4 and 5) Members considered a report that provided an update on the various issues which had arisen in respect of the changes to the pension schemes applying to the uniformed members of the Fire Sector. **Resolved:** that the current situation be noted.
32/23	**Internal Dispute Resolutions Procedure - Stage 2**
	(Paragraphs 1, 4 and 5) Members considered a report regarding an IDRP Stage 2 application under the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure. The report outlined the facts of the case. **Resolved:** That the Committee declined the application presented.
33/23	**High Value Procurement Projects**
	(Paragraph 3) Members considered a report that provided an update on all contracts for one-off

	purchases valued in excess of £100,000 and high value procurement projects in excess of £100,000 including: new contract awards, progress of ongoing projects and details of new projects. **Resolved:** that the report be noted and endorsed.

M Nolan
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood