

Welcome to our annual service plan

The year ahead will see the fruition of a series of improvements, innovations, and investments intended to provide the best possible services for the people of Lancashire.

Sweeping changes to building fire safety standards, the increasing impacts of climate change emergencies, and opportunities and risks posed by new technology have altered the ways fire and rescue services keep people safe.

We have been determined to adapt to these challenges, often leading innovation in our sector and influencing national fire and rescue service policy.

From advanced fire appliances better equipped to respond to flooding and wildfires and incidents in tall buildings and businesses, to pioneering technology that will have an impact on everything from operational firefighting to performance reporting, the Service is continuously improving.

This year we are focussed on embedding and evaluating these new ways of working to ensure they are tailored to local need and deliver the most effective interventions and responses to local risks.

Our people are central to everything we set out to achieve. They display the highest levels of professional standards, operational excellence, and dedication. Investing in their training, equipment, wellbeing, and safety is a long-held priority that will continue this year.

With that in mind, we intend to design a masterplan for the proposed redevelopment of our training centre site in Chorley incorporating the relocation of Service headquarters from Fulwood, new and improved training props, and modernised learning and office space.

We are proud of our culture in Lancashire and the high regard in which the Service is held by others. The trust and confidence of the public is essential for us to deliver effective services that make a difference to people's lives. For that reason, we are committed to building a more inclusive service for our own staff and for the communities we serve.

Financial challenges lie ahead to ensure that the Service is affordable in the future. However, we have a strong history of making efficiencies without impacting on services to the public. We will continue to use our resources in ways that represent value for money and provide the best services for the whole of Lancashire.

We aspire to be outstanding in all that we do by being the best trained, best equipped, best accommodated, and most professional fire and rescue service in the country.

Justin Johnston

Chief Fire Officer

Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer

The Service relies on the collective expertise and experience of its staff to achieve our purpose of making Lancashire safer. Investing in their training, development, facilities, and wellbeing is at the core of creating a workplace where everyone feels valued and empowered to contribute their views and ideas.

Create an organisational culture where diversity is encouraged and valued

Our STRIVE values and the national Core Code of Ethics guide the professional behaviours of all our staff. We are proud of our culture in Lancashire and the high levels of trust the public have in our Service. However, we remain focussed on building a more inclusive service where diversity is nurtured and valued.

We will:

- Recruit and develop a workforce that is resilient, highly skilled, flexible, diverse and which can deliver the Service's aim of making the people of Lancashire safer.
- Explore different methods of recruiting to the role of firefighter.
- Implement relevant learning from values and culture reports related to the fire and rescue service to ensure we maintain the highest standards and levels of public trust.
- Review and embed our approach to undertaking equality impact assessments.

Deliver tailored learning and development opportunities

We are committed to providing learning and development that supports people to reach their full potential and equips them with the skills, knowledge, and resilience to achieve the Service's ambitions and face future challenges.

We will:

- Strengthen leadership skills in identifying and developing talent to support individuals and meet workforce planning challenges.
- Develop more flexible models of training to meet the needs of on-call firefighters.
- Streamline and implement more efficient and effective methods of assessment to demonstrate leadership competency.
- Deliver bespoke project management training to a range of staff.

Encourage and listen to employee voice

We recognise the positive influence on both our employees' wellbeing and organisational success when people at all levels can contribute their views, expertise, and ideas.

We will:

- Analyse staff survey findings to identify areas of good practice, understand where improvements can be made, and inform future activity.
- Pilot a new firefighting tactics staff group to support operational excellence by evaluating frontline policies, practices, and equipment.
- Create more ways for people to voice their views by expanding our programme of digital and face-to-face engagement opportunities and consulting the newly formed staff focus group.

Invest in training and technology to improve health and safety

We aspire to the highest standards of health, safety, and wellbeing for our staff. This year we will continue our work to improve mental health and invest in new technology to support operational learning.

We will:

- Develop new training to support staff dealing with the impact of challenging operational incidents involving awareness of self-destructive behaviours and mental health.
- Trial and evaluate body worn cameras to enhance operational learning, improve firefighter safety, and provide increased transparency during incidents.

Service headquarters and training centre masterplan

A review of options for Service headquarters in Fulwood, which was built in 1891, has highlighted relocation to our training centre in Chorley and redeveloping that site including training facilities as the preferred option for the future. Creating a central hub in one location will bring operational and support staff together from across the county and lead to collaboration, efficiency, and sustainability gains.

We will:

- Create a masterplan for the redevelopment of our training centre in Chorley to include the relocation of Service headquarters, new and improved training props, and modernised learning and office space.

Upgrade fire station facilities

Investment in fire stations is part of our commitment to ensuring our people have the best facilities to support their health and wellbeing by providing a safe and positive working environment.

We will:

- Complete improvements to the rest and welfare facilities at Blackpool Fire Station to better meet the needs of an increasingly diverse workforce.

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Preventing fires and other emergencies from happening

We constantly endeavour to prevent fires and other emergencies from happening. Prevention is always preferable to response and is by far the most effective way to make Lancashire safer. Our approach recognises life's different stages, and we focus our efforts on helping people start safe, live safe, age safe and be safe on our roads and around water, targeting those most vulnerable.

Invest in improvements to our home fire safety check service

Bringing about positive change in behaviours within people's homes is central to improving community safety. Our core offer is the home fire safety check (HFSC) service targeted to those most at risk, as identified in local risk profiles. We will continue to improve the service to make it easier for people and partners to make referrals, to ensure a person-centred approach, and to address new and emerging risks within homes.

We will:

- Identify ways our contact centre could be more effective and efficient in supporting partner agencies and scheduling visits by crews and community safety staff.
- Develop our web and phone services for self-referrals and referring family and friends to align with national principles and products.
- Evaluate ways to develop the service to take account of emerging trends and changes in society, maintaining our focus on those most at risk.

Deliver targeted fire prevention activity

Evaluation of fire prevention activity is giving the Service greater understanding of which activities and interventions are most successful. Combined with local risk profiles, we are able to better target those most vulnerable and focus resources on reducing risk in our communities.

We will:

- Embed local evaluation of prevention activities to ensure alignment with district plans, which are delivered in communities by local teams.
- Share key prevention messages on our fleet of new fire engines tailored to risk in the areas they are based.

Protecting people and property when fires happen

Our fire protection services aim to reduce the number of fires that occur in commercial premises and the impact on life, property, and business disruption when fires do occur. We support businesses, employers, and landlords to meet their legal duties and keep people safe in their buildings with a county-wide inspection programme.

Strengthen our fire safety inspection programme to meet evolving standards

We take a risk-based approach to inspecting businesses to make sure they are complying with fire safety laws. Fire safety inspectors focus their activity on complex high-risk premises and operational crews check lower risk premises such as schools, shops, and offices.

We will:

- Deliver enhanced built environment training across the Service to strengthen the connection between fire protection and frontline service delivery, to improve risk reduction outcomes.
- Develop the BFSC service to be delivered more flexibly within communities at the point of need and with less reliance on central systems.

Transform fire protection and business safety

Significant changes to fire safety and building control standards continue to change the way fire and rescue services and our partners work. New legislation and a pivotal role with the Building Safety Regulator have resulted in additional responsibilities for fire and rescue services. To ensure we remain well-placed to support those responsible for fire safety in buildings, we will continue to invest in and develop our protection services.

We will:

- Deliver digital solutions to streamline the working practises of our fire safety inspectors and improve the flow of information with partner organisations, to drive productivity and efficient use of resources.
- Invest in mobile devices for our fire safety teams to support remote working and generate more efficient working practices.

Responding to fires and other emergencies quickly and competently

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service strives to deliver the highest standards of operational response to a wide range of incidents. Risks in communities are changing and the types of emergencies we attend are increasingly varied. We constantly review our approach to providing and deploying resources and invest in the right appliances, skills, and equipment to respond to any incident safely.

Implement our emergency cover review

Periodically we review the locations, numbers and types of fire stations and appliances against community risks and incident levels across the county. We then propose ways to improve how we respond to emergencies and ensure that we are well equipped to respond to future challenges. Following an emergency cover review (ECR) in 2022, several improvements were approved by the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority and are being implemented during the period 2023-2026. The changes maintain all 39 fire stations and 58 fire appliances in the county, strengthen resilience by increasing the number of wholetime firefighters in the Service by eight, and at the same time generate efficiencies.

Introduce more resilient crewing arrangements

A number of changes to crewing arrangements formed part of the ECR, including the replacement of the day crewing plus duty system at some stations, and are designed to provide greater resilience across the Service.

We will:

- Evaluate the impact of the changes and benefits realised following the implementation of duty system changes at Fleetwood, Morecambe, Skelmersdale, and St Annes.
- Continue to deliver additional specialist training required as a result of duty system and personnel changes.

Review emergency cover in Preston

Preston Fire Station has been identified for long-term redevelopment and we intend to create a new, modern station either in the same place or another location that services both our staff and the local community well.

We will:

- Continue to review emergency cover across the Preston area, conducting a land review and exploring options to replace or relocate the station. In the

short-term we will make improvements to the station so it remains fit for purpose and better meets the needs of a diverse workforce.

Optimise emergency cover through dynamic cover software

Dynamic cover software provides operators with visual data on community risks and emergency cover in real-time to inform decision-making on how best to deploy resources. This innovative software helps us to position firefighters and appliances dynamically and with greater precision to improve emergency cover and response times, particularly during periods of high demand.

We will:

- Introduce dynamic cover software at North West Fire Control following successful implementation within Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service to deploy resources more effectively and efficiently.

Strengthen our response to climate change emergencies

Our climate change operational response plan aims to address the increasing threat of flooding and wildfires, lessen the impacts on communities and public services, and improve firefighter safety when dealing with these emergencies.

We will:

- Roll out one large all-wheel-drive appliance suitable for off-road travel and procure a second smaller appliance.
- Following staff training, trial the appliances for 12 months in areas of the county at high risk of flooding and wildfires. Following the trial and additional research we intend to procure two additional appliances.
- Deliver education and training to key partners in Lancashire's wildfire arena.
- Strengthen partnerships locally and nationally with landowners and review our climate change prevention offering aligned to national developments.

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

To strengthen our response to fires in tall buildings we intend to introduce additional special fire appliances to our fleet that provide extended reach and the ability to penetrate slate, tiles, and other building materials at height to inject large volumes of water onto a fire within a building.

- Bring into operation our new, highest ever aerial appliance, the 45 metre aerial ladder platform at Preston fire station following staff training.
- Bring into operation two additional water towers, Scorpion appliances with an increased reach of 20 metres.

Broaden on-call firefighting capabilities to strengthen operational response

Lancashire has 32 fire appliances crewed by on-call firefighters, who often have another job outside Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service. They are trained to deal with a wide range of incidents and work alongside wholetime firefighters, responding to emergencies in their communities from home or work.

We will:

- Produce a data-driven recruitment and skills-based strategy.
- Develop a new recruitment and workforce planning tool, the first of its kind across the sector, to improve sustainability of on-call fire engine availability.
- Train on-call firefighters to operate special appliances to increase levels of resilience during periods of high demand.

Invest in our training centre

We remain committed to ensuring that our people have the best equipment and training available to deliver quality services now and in the future with a programme of significant, long-term investments. A review of training props, which allow firefighters to learn in a realistic and safe environment, will be incorporated into a wider plan for the redevelopment of the training centre site.

We will:

- Complete improvements to our working at height rope and rescue training prop.
- Develop options to enhance existing training facilities at our training centre in Chorley as part of the new Service headquarters and training centre masterplan.

Drill tower replacement programme

As part of a service-wide programme to replace drill towers at fire stations, site investigations, construction design services, and planning consent are progressing for phase two and three of the replacement work.

We will:

- Begin construction to replace four drill towers in line with our service-wide programme.

Invest in our fleet and operational equipment

The Service conducts extensive research and development to ensure we continue to invest in appliances and equipment with superior technology and systems, that will

lead to a more effective response to emergencies and increased firefighter safety. Several investments will be implemented this year as part of our special appliances review.

We will:

- Introduce two new technical rescue units as enhanced fire appliances with heavy rescue equipment at Preston and Chorley fire stations.
- Introduce a second state-of-the-art incident command unit at Blackburn Fire Station following the recent introduction of the first at Fulwood.
- Trial a firefighting robot, an innovative multi-functional crawler vehicle which can be deployed in places that are too dangerous for people, therefore reducing the risk to our firefighters.
- Support the procurement of a replacement mobilising system at North West Fire Control which is fit for the future, serves the needs of Lancashire's communities, and provides value for money.
- Evaluate our recent investment in a state-of-the-art underwater sonar scanner, a remotely operated search and rescue device and the first of its kind in the UK fire and rescue service.

Delivering value for money in how we use our resources

We aim to use our resources efficiently to provide the best possible fire and rescue service for the people of Lancashire and to ensure the Service is affordable, now and in the future. Continuous learning and innovation, with a particular focus on digital transformation, drives efficiencies and wherever possible we re-invest savings into frontline activity.

Create a new rota management team

A new, dedicated rota management team is being established to manage the range of duty systems in operation across the Service more effectively and drive more efficient use of our resources.

We will:

- Go live with the new rota management team alongside system upgrades that will optimise rota administration.

Review productivity and efficiency

Through continuous learning, review, and innovation we seek to understand and deliver activities that increase efficiency and productivity. This enables the Service to invest savings and resources in frontline activity that delivers long-term improvements and value for money.

We will:

- Produce and deliver a productivity and efficiency plan for 2024-25, setting out our direction of travel towards delivering cashable and non-cashable efficiencies, focussing on innovation and digital transformation
- Develop a decarbonisation strategy for our buildings and activities by undertaking a programme of specialist site assessments to understand our options for carbon reduction.

Drive efficiencies through digitisation

Building on our digital first culture, we will continue to empower our people to access information and data easily on a range of systems and devices, and drive efficiencies through digitisation.

We will:

- Explore alternative fleet management software solutions to digitise on-station daily vehicle and equipment checks.

- Introduce a scrutiny process for all procurement requests of systems, applications, and data related solutions, scoping the potential for bringing multiple systems together.
- Continue to roll out ICT and mobile devices on our fire engines to maximise productivity when crews are away from fire stations and working within communities.

Introduce Microsoft Power BI dashboards

Microsoft Power BI offers an opportunity to collate and interrogate performance data via a single platform which can be developed specifically to the user or department's needs through dashboards. This will allow for improved data visualisation, interactive exploration, data consolidation, and data driven decisions.

We will:

- Identify new and existing performance measures which can be automated or streamlined by the use of Power Bi dashboards.
- Improve performance management culture through the roll out of Power-Bi dashboards.
- Create local performance dashboards tailored to meet department requirements, prioritising station-based performance, on-call activity, human resources, finance, protection, and prevention.

Collaborate with other public services

Through our Blue Light Collaboration Board with Lancashire Constabulary and North West Ambulance Service, and by working jointly with other partners, we aim to collectively improve services to the public.

We will:

- Ensure value for money through collaboration with other fire and rescue services on procurement and the use of regional and national procurement frameworks wherever possible.
- Develop and deliver blue light collaboration projects in the following areas: estates and co-location, Community First Responders, leadership development, incident command units, and equality, diversity, and inclusion.