

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Performance Committee

Wednesday, 6 March 2024, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room,
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
T Hurn (Chair)	
P Britcliffe	
Z Khan MBE	
J Rigby	
M Salter	
D Smith	
D O'Toole (Substitute)	
J Shedwick (Substitute)	

Officers
J Charters, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS) S Collinson, Head of Media and Communications (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS) J Rossen, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery (LFRS) N Taylor, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery (LFRS)
In attendance
K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union

20/23	Apologies For Absence
	Apologies were received from County Councillors, Lorraine Beavers, Hasina Khan, Paul Rigby and Barries Yates.
21/23	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
22/23	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	Resolved: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on the 13 December 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23/23

Performance Management Information

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer introduced Stephanie Collinson (Head of Media and Communications), Steven Brown (Director of Corporate Services), John Rossen and Neil Taylor (Area Managers, Head of Service Delivery), to Members.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented a comprehensive report to the Performance Committee. This was the 3rd quarterly report for 2023/24 as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-2027.

This quarter, one Key Performance Indicator (KPI), 2.9 Business Fire Safety Checks, was shown in positive exception and four Key Performance Indicators were shown in negative exception. These were 1.2.1 Staff Absence Wholetime (WT), 1.2.3 Staff Absence Greenbook, 3.1 Critical Fire Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance, and 3.3 Total Fire Engine Availability.

Members examined each indicator in turn focusing on those KPIs in exception as follows:

KPI 1 – Valuing our people so that they can focus on making Lancashire safer

1.1 Overall Staff Engagement

Members received an update on how staff were engaged during the period.

From October to December 2023, 23 station and department visits were carried out by principal officers, directors, and area managers as part of the service-wide engagement programme. Seven service delivery briefings were delivered across the Service by area managers and middle managers, and three station visits involving the property and ICT departments took place to engage with members of staff affected by duty system changes as part of the emergency cover review. Forty-six wellbeing interactions were undertaken ranging from wellbeing sessions with crews, to support dog interactions. The Service engaged with staff over several topics that related to fleet equipment which included incident command tabards, appliance tool boxes, and remote-control water rescue vessels.

The Head of Media and Communications explained that a comprehensive staff survey was carried out periodically which gained insight from staff on a range of topics such as health and wellbeing, leadership and management, training and development, and equality, diversity, and inclusion. The survey was anonymous and only asked for an individual’s rank and role. The feedback was used to shape future activity and initiate improvements and new ideas.

Engagement was measured because staff who were engaged with the Service felt more informed, valued, knew how to access support, and felt able to deal with difficulties at work. High engagement was associated with a lower number of accidents; sickness absence levels; conflicts; and grievances.

Year	Engagement Index	Response Rate
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2023	74%	49%
2020	79%	44%
2018	70%	43%
2016	64%	31%

Data was collected from the latest survey which had been undertaken in September and October 2023 and the engagement index was calculated based on five questions that measured pride, advocacy, attachment, inspiration, and motivation; factors that were understood to be important features shared by staff who were engaged with the organisation.

For each respondent, an engagement score was calculated as the average score across the five questions, where strongly disagree was equivalent to 0, disagree was equivalent to 25, neither agree nor disagree was equivalent to 50, agree was equivalent to 75 and strongly agree was equivalent to 100. The engagement index was then calculated as the average engagement score in the organisation. This approach meant that a score of 100 was equivalent to all respondents saying strongly agree to all five engagement questions, while a score of 0 was equivalent to all respondents saying strongly disagree to all five engagement questions.

An engagement score of 74% for 2023 showed an improvement on surveys in 2016 and 2018. The engagement score of 79% in 2020 was considered an anomaly due to the Covid-19 pandemic when there were higher levels of communication and a focus on wellbeing. This corresponded with other organisations at that time. The response rate for 2023 was 49% which was equivalent to half of the workforce across all ranks and roles.

During the survey period, the corporate communications department visited wholetime and on-call crews on 51 occasions to encourage participation in the survey. Five focus groups were held with on-call units by the Service's independent researcher to obtain qualitative feedback on on-call specific matters, to complement the survey data.

It was noted that a high level of engagement during the Emergency Cover Review and the changes to the Day Crewing Plus duty system reflected the level of communication and support provided prior to its implementation.

In response to a question from County Councillor Salter regarding the comparability of the response rate of the Service to other Fire and Rescue Services, the Head of Media and Communications explained that there was no standard across Fire and Rescue Services to measure the response rate, so it was difficult to benchmark. She had liaised with other Fire and Rescue Services that measured similar things, but rates were calculated differently.

County Councillor Salter commented that the wellbeing dog visits were a positive measure as it was a good opportunity to mitigate stress compared to wellbeing interventions when at crisis point and asked for more information. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service had noted research that suggested that dogs were beneficial for many people's mental health and could lessen stress and anxiety. Several years ago, Bekki Ford, Safety, Health and Wellbeing Advisor, and Lindsay Sielski, Watch Manager and Canine Lead, worked with an external canine

training school to create a wellbeing support dog function which comprised of interested members of staff who provided their dogs for assessment and training that ensured suitability for the role. It was acknowledged that some staff would not access the function due to allergies and for cultural reasons but, overall, it had been successful and well received.

In response to a query from County Councillor O'Toole in relation to the number of surveys given to staff, changing the content of the surveys, and the provision of feedback, the Head of Media and Communication advised that, the last survey had been conducted 3 years ago. However, in addition to the survey, engagement work with staff was carried out continuously. Some of the questions in the survey remained the same to provide the opportunity to benchmark progress, although new areas were introduced as the results influenced future provision for staff. Action plans were created from the answers given and the results were provided to staff.

1.2.1 Staff Absence Wholetime

This indicator measured the cumulative number of shifts (days) lost due to sickness for all wholetime staff divided by the total average strength.

Annual Standard: Not more than 5 shifts lost.

Annual Shifts Lost ÷ 4 quarters: 1.25

Cumulative total number of shifts lost: 6.899

The negative exception report was due to the number of shifts lost through absence per employee being above the Service target for quarter 3.

During quarter 3, October to December 2023, absence statistics showed whole-time personnel absence above target for the quarter.

1,633 Wholetime absence shifts lost = 2.65 against a target of 1.25 which equated to 1.4 shifts over target. During the same quarter of the previous year 2.2 shifts were lost which was an increase of 0.45 shifts lost per wholetime employee. Cases of long-term absence (over the whole quarter) had decreased by 0.17 shifts from the previous quarter.

The data had been split between long-term and short-term absences.

The number of cases of long-term absence which spanned over the total of the 3 months remained the same at five cases in both Q2 and Q3.

As a result of the five cases of long-term absences, 261 shifts were lost during Q3 compared to 139 shifts lost during the previous quarter. These cases accounted for 0.41 shifts lost per person over the quarter.

There were 26 other cases of long-term absence also recorded within the 3 months:

- Mental health – 9 cases

- Hospital/Post Operative – 7 cases
- Musculo skeletal – 7 cases
- Other absence types (small or single returns) – 3 cases

In Q3, 302 shifts lost were related to respiratory related absences, which included Coronavirus absence and equated to 0.477 shifts lost per person, which was in comparison to 101 shifts lost in Q2.

The Service had a robust Absence Management Policy which detailed the approach to managing periods of workplace absence to ensure that staff were supported back to work at the appropriate time based upon their individual needs and in a compassionate way.

The Human Resources (HR) system, I-Trent, automatically generated monthly reports to line managers and HR Business Partners in relation to employees and their periods and reasons for absence, and these were closely monitored. Where employees were absent due to mental health, or a stress related condition, they were referred to the Occupational Health Unit (OHU) as early as possible. Employees returning to work had a return-to-work interview and stress risk assessment, or individual health risk assessments were completed where required.

The Service had several support mechanisms available to support individuals to return to work or be exited as appropriate including guidance from Occupational Health, access to Trauma Risk Management (TRiM), an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), and the Firefighters Charity.

Where an employee did not return to work in a timely manner, an absence review meeting would take place with the employee, the line manager and a representative from Human Resources. The meetings were aimed at identifying support to return an individual back to work which could include modified duties for a period, redeployment, but ultimately could result in dismissal, or permanent ill health retirement from the Service.

The Absence Management Policy detailed when a formal review of an employee's performance levels would normally take place. In terms of short-term absence, a formal review would take place where an employee had 3 or more periods of absence in 6 months, or an employee had 14 days absent. In terms of long-term absence, a formal review would normally take place at 3, 6, 9 and 11 months.

A key challenge for supporting operational staff returning to work was that the threshold for fitness and returning to work for operational firefighters was higher than in other occupations due to their hazardous working conditions.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer went on to advise Members that Planning Committee had agreed changes to KPI's 1.2.1 and 1.2.3 as discussed at the last meeting of the Performance Committee and that these would be enacted from Quarter 4 onwards.

1.2.2 Staff Absence On-Call (OC)

This indicator measured the percentage of contracted hours lost due to sickness for

all on-call contracted staff.

Annual Standard: No more than 2.5% lost as a % of available hours of cover.

Cumulative on-call absence (as a % of available hours cover) at the end of the quarter, 1.32%.

1.2.3 Staff Absence Greenbook

This indicator measured the cumulative number of shifts (days) lost due to sickness for all green book support staff divided by the average strength.

Annual Standard: Not more than 5 shifts lost.

Annual Shifts Lost ÷ 4 quarters: 1.25

Cumulative shifts lost: 6.218

The negative exception report was due to the number of shifts lost through absence per employee being above the Service target for quarter 3.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised Members that Wholetime Staff were those in a firefighter, uniformed, grey book role. Green book staff were typically those in non-uniformed, support roles such as Human Resources and Health and Safety etc.

The agreed target performance level was 5 shifts lost per employee per year for green book staff which equated to 1.25 shifts lost per employee per year for quarter 3. The actual shifts lost for the period for this group of staff was 2.33 which was 1.08 above target. During the same quarter of the previous year, 2.38 shifts were lost which was a reduction of 0.05 shifts lost per Greenbook staff.

During quarter 3, October to December 2023, absence statistics showed non-uniformed personnel above target for the quarter.

415 non-uniformed absence shifts lost = 2.33 against a target of 1.25

During the quarter there were no cases of long-term absence which spanned over the total of the 3 months. There were eight cases of long-term absence which were recorded within the 3 months:

- Mental Health – 5 cases
- Other absence types (small or single returns) – 3 cases

During quarter 3, 267 shifts were lost as a result of the eight cases of long-term absences, in comparison to 322 shifts lost during the previous quarter. These cases accounted for 1.38 shifts lost per person over the quarter, which was an increase of 0.21 shifts lost from the previous quarter.

In quarter 3, 11 shifts lost were related to Respiratory related absences, this included Coronavirus absence and equated to 0.05 shifts lost per person. This showed a decrease of 0.5 shifts lost from the previous quarter.

The Service had an Absence Management Policy which detailed its approach to how it would manage absence ensuring that staff time was managed effectively, but also members of staff were supported back to work or exited from the Service in a compassionate way.

The Human Resources (HR) system, ITrent, automatically generated monthly reports to line managers and HR Business Partners in relation to employees, with the periods and reasons for absence, and those were closely monitored. Where Employees were absent due to a mental health, or stress related conditions, those employees were referred to the Occupational Health Unit (OHU) as early as possible. Employees returning to work had a return-to-work interview and stress risk assessment, or individual health risk assessments were completed where required.

Where an employee did not return to work in a timely manner, an absence review meeting would take place with the employee, the line manager, and a representative from Human Resources. The meetings were aimed at identifying support to return an individual back to work which could include modified duties for a period, redeployment, but ultimately could result in dismissal, or permanent ill health retirement from the Service.

The Absence Management Policy detailed when a formal review of an employee's performance levels would normally take place. In terms of short-term absence, a formal review would take place where an employee had 3 or more periods of absence in 6 months, or an employee had 14 days absent. In terms of long-term absence, a formal review would normally take place at 3,6,9 and 11 months.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the policies and procedures relating to absences were consistent for both green book and grey book staff.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer highlighted that, at the previous Performance Committee meeting, the Assistant Director of Human Resources advised Members that there had been deteriorating attendance levels within LFRS and nationally since the Covid-19 pandemic. This benchmarking had been carried out using figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

The absence reasons were complex, and Members agreed to a review of the targets that were more realistic and achievable for the absence KPIs. Members of the Planning Committee approved the proposed adjustments which were: Staff Absence Wholetime (KPI 1.2.1) be uplifted from a standard of no more than 5 shifts lost per annum, to a new standard of no more than 8 shifts per annum, and; Staff Absence Greenbook (KPI 1.2.3) be uplifted from a standard of no more than 5 shifts lost per annum, to a new standard of no more than 8 shifts per annum.

The KPI standard was for performance measuring purposes only and would not be reported to staff as a sickness absence allocation. It would be reviewed periodically with a view to a gradual return to previous target levels as and when performance improved. Approved adjustments to the KPIs would begin from quarter 4.

1.3.1 Workforce Diversity

This indicator measured diversity as a percentage.

Combined diversity percentage of grey book (operational) and green book (support) staff. The percentages outside of the brackets represented the current quarter, with the percentage within the brackets illustrating the same quarter of the previous year:

Gender:	Female 20%(20%)	Male 80%(80%)	
Ethnicity:	BME 4%(3%)	White 94%(94%)	Not stated 2%(3%)
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 4%(4%)	Heterosexual 56%(51%)	Not stated 40%(45%)
Disability:	Disability 3%(3%)	No disability 94%(94%)	Not stated 3%(3%)

Diversity percentage by Grey Book Staff and Green Book Staff. Counts included double counts if the member of staff was dual contracted between Grey and Green Book.

Separate diversity percentage of grey book (operational) and green book (support) staff:

Gender:	Female	Grey book 9%	Green book 59%
	Male	Grey book 91%	Green book 41%
Ethnicity:	BME	Grey book 3%	Green book 5%
	White	Grey book 95%	Green book 88%
	Not stated	Grey book 2%	Green book 7%
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT	Grey book 4%	Green book 3%
	Heterosexual	Grey book 55%	Green book 58%
	Not stated	Grey book 41%	Green book 39%
Disability:	Disability	Grey book 3%	Green book 3%
	No disability	Grey book 95%	Green book 90%
	Not stated	Grey book 2%	Green book 7%

1.3.2 Workforce Diversity Recruited

This new indicator measured workforce diversity recruited as a percentage.

Combined diversity percentage of grey book (operational) and green book (support) staff. The percentages outside of the brackets represented the current quarter, with the percentage within the brackets illustrating the same quarter of the previous year:

Gender:	Female 29%(26%)	Male 71%(74%)	
Ethnicity:	BME 6%(2%)	White 89%(94%)	Not Stated 6%(4%)
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 4%(11%)	Heterosexual 89%(82%)	Not stated

7%(7%)

Disability:
4%(2%)

Disability 2%(2%)

No disability 94%(96%)

Not stated

During quarter 3, there were a total of 49 new recruits. It was noted that a further breakdown of the data would not be provided as it may enable the identification of individuals, due to the small numbers of recruits during certain periods.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer stated that the recruited workforce diversity statistics had improved largely due to positive action work undertaken by the Service.

In response to a question from the Chair regarding female applicants, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that, as a modern fire and service, LFRS carried out engagement work in local communities to encourage job applications from the broadest group of candidates which included prospective female applicants.

1.4 Staff Accidents

This indicator measured the number of accidents which occurred to staff members at work within the quarter: Wholetime, On-Call and Greenbook.

Total number of staff accidents, 12 for quarter 3; year to date 46; previous year to date 44. Quarterly activity increased 9.09% over the same quarter of the previous year.

KPI 2 - Preventing, fires and other emergencies from happening and Protecting people and property when fires happen

2.1 Risk Map Score

This indicator measured the fire risk in each Super Output Area, of which there were 942. Risk was determined using fire activity over the previous 3 fiscal years along with a range of demographic data, such as population and deprivation. The County risk map score was updated annually and presented to the Performance Committee in the quarter 1 reporting period.

Annual Standard: To reduce the risk in Lancashire – an annual reduction in the County risk map score.

$(\text{Dwelling Fires} \div \text{Total Dwellings}) + (\text{Dwelling Fire Casualties} \div \text{Resident Population} \times 4) + \text{Building Fire} + (\text{IMD} \times 2) = \text{Risk Score}$.

The current score was 31,170 and the previous year's score was 31,576 which meant that the fire risk continued to reduce.

2.2 Overall Activity

This indicator measured the number of incidents that LFRS attended with one or more pumping appliances. Incidents attended included fires, special service calls,

false alarms and collaborative work undertaken with other emergency services i.e.: missing person searches on behalf of the Lancashire Constabulary (LanCon) and gaining entry incidents at the request of the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS).

Incidents attended, year to date 13,716; previous year to date 14,978. Quarterly activity decreased 10.68% over the same quarter of the previous year.

In quarter 3, the Service attended 4,191 incidents. The report presented a chart which represented the count and percentage that each activity had contributed to the overall quarter's activity:

- Total False Alarm Calls (due to apparatus, good intent and malicious) – 1982, 48%
- Total Primary Fire Calls (accidental dwelling / building and deliberate dwelling / commercial fires and other primary fires) – 456, 11%
- Total Secondary Fire Calls (deliberate and accidental fires) – 472, 11%
- Total Special Service Calls (critical incidents, gaining entry, RTCs, Flooding and other critical incidents) – 1264, 30%

2.3 Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a dwelling had been affected and the cause of the fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

Members noted that a primary fire was one involving property (excluding derelict property) or any fires involving casualties, rescues or any fire attended by 5 or more pumping appliances.

Accidental Dwelling Fires, 175 in quarter 3; year to date 549; previous year to date 604. Quarterly activity decreased 11.62% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.3.1 ADF – Harm to people: Casualties

This indicator reported the number of fire related fatalities, slight and serious injuries at primary fires where a dwelling had been affected and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental or Not known.'

A slight injury was defined as; a person attending hospital as an outpatient (not precautionary check). A serious injury was defined as; at least an overnight stay in hospital as an in-patient.

Fatal,	1 in quarter 3; year to date 2; previous year to date 5
Injuries appear Serious	2 in quarter 3; year to date 9; previous year to date 10
Injuries appear Slight	7 in quarter 3; year to date 19; previous year to date 33

Quarterly activity decreased 41.18% over the same quarter of the previous year.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Salter in relation to the rise

in the number of casualties towards the end of the year, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the spike followed the pattern of the previous 3 years. Trends were difficult to identify as targeted prevention activity had led to a low number of overall incidents and casualties. Additionally, all casualties were investigated to identify emerging trends which informed future prevention activity. LFRS was rigorous in the recording of casualties which would include slight smoke inhalation potentially being recorded as a slight injury. Neil Taylor, Area Manager Head of Service Delivery, explained that a checkup by a medical technician would be recorded as a precautionary check, whereas any medical treatment (such as a painkiller or provision of oxygen therapy), would result in recording as a slight injury.

2.3.2 ADF – Harm to property: Extent of damage (fire severity)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a dwelling had been affected and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

Extent of fire, heat and smoke damage was recorded at the time the 'stop' message was sent and included all damage types.

The table in the report showed a breakdown of fire severity with a directional indicator that compared:

Current quarter, combined percentage of 90% against same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 83%.

Combined quarterly percentage had therefore increased 7.01% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.4 Accidental Building Fires (ABF) (Commercial Premises)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a building had been affected (which was other than a dwelling or a private building associated with a dwelling), and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

ABF (Commercial Premises), 56 in quarter 3; year to date 183; previous year to date 196. Quarterly activity increased 1.82% over the same quarter of the previous year.

It was noted that the number of accidental building fires was affected by the seasons as there were typically more nuisance fires during warmer periods.

2.4.1 ABF (Commercial Premises) – Harm to property: Extent of damage (fire severity)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a building had been affected (which was other than a dwelling or a private building associated with a dwelling), and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

Extent of fire, heat and smoke damage was recorded at the time the 'stop' message was sent and included all damage types.

The table in the report showed a breakdown of fire severity with a directional indicator that compared:

- current quarter, combined percentage of 79% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 71%.

Combined quarterly percentage had therefore increased 7.7% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.5 Accidental Building Fires (Non-Commercial Premises)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a private garage, private shed, private greenhouse, private summerhouse, or other private non-residential building had been affected and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known.'

ABF (Non-Commercial Premises), 13 in quarter 3; year to date 62; previous year to date 68. Quarterly activity decreased 18.75% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.5.1 ABF (Non-Commercial premises: Private garages and sheds) – Harm to property: Extent of damage (fire severity)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a private garage, private shed, private greenhouse, private summerhouse, or other private non-residential building had been affected and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known.'

Extent of fire, heat and smoke damage was recorded at the time the 'stop' message was sent and included all damage types.

The table in the report showed a breakdown of fire severity with a directional indicator that compared:

- current quarter, combined percentage of 0% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 19%.

Combined quarterly activity had therefore decreased 18.8% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.6 Deliberate Fires Total: Specific performance measure of deliberate fires

This indicator provided an overall measure of primary and secondary fires where the cause of fire had been recorded as deliberate.

Deliberate Fires – 363 in quarter 3; year to date 1,508; previous year to date 1,893. Quarterly activity decreased 13.98% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.6.1 Deliberate Fires – Dwellings

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a dwelling had been affected and the cause of fire had been recorded as deliberate.

Deliberate Fires – Dwellings, 22 in quarter 3, year to date 71; previous year to date 58. Quarterly activity remained static against the same quarter of the previous year.

2.6.2 Deliberate Fires - Commercial Premises

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where the property type was a building, other than a dwelling or a private building associated with a dwelling, and the cause of fire had been recorded as deliberate.

Deliberate Fires – Commercial Premises, 34 in quarter 3; year to date 106; previous year to date 89.

Quarterly activity increased 3.03% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that 15 out of the 34 incidents during the quarter occurred in prisons, and often featured electronic smoking materials as an ignition source. Managing these types of incidents fell within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice and the Crown Inspectorate whereas other commercial premises types fell within the regulatory responsibility of the Service. If prison related incidents were set aside, the Service performance against this KPI was highly positive and showed a marked reduction.

Councillor Smith queried whether prisons were classed as commercial premises or dwellings, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that, for Home Office reporting purposes, prison were classed as commercial properties.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed that the Ministry of Justice and Crown Inspectorate had long term strategies in place to tackle deliberate fires in prisons and although fires using electronic materials were a risk factor, prisons were complex environments with conflicting demands and the Service would continue with support.

2.6.3 Deliberate Fires – Other (rubbish, grassland, vehicles etc).

This indicator reported the number of primary and secondary fires where the property type was other than a building, except where the building was recorded as derelict, and the cause of fire had been recorded as deliberate.

The majority of deliberate fires were outdoor secondary fires and included grassland and refuse fires. Derelict vehicle fires were also included under secondary fires.

Deliberate Fires – Other, 307 in quarter 3; year to date 1,331; previous year to date 1,746. Quarterly activity decreased 16.35% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.7 Home Fire Safety Checks

This indicator reported the percentage of completed Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC), excluding refusals, carried out where the risk score had been determined to be high.

An improvement was shown if:

- the total number of HFSC's completed was greater than the comparable quarter of the previous year; and
- the percentage of high HFSC outcomes was greater than the comparable quarter of the previous year.

HFSCs completed, 5,691 in quarter 3; year to date 17,232; previous year to date 16,349. Quarterly activity decreased 3.4% over the same quarter of the previous year.

HFSCs with high-risk outcomes, Quarter 3, 54%; previous year Quarter 3, 50%.

High risk outcomes remained static against the same quarter of the previous year.

2.8 Numbers of prevention activities such as Childsafe, wasted lives etc

Members received an update on the number of sessions delivered against the following prevention activities during the quarter:

ChildSafe,	246 sessions delivered to 7,835 attendees;
RoadSense,	177 sessions delivered to 5,459 attendees;
SENDSafe,	7 sessions delivered to 130 attendees;
Wasted Lives,	37 sessions delivered to 5,617 pupils, 34 in person sessions to 4,972 students, and 3 virtual sessions delivered to 645 students;
Biker Down,	3 sessions delivered to 75 attendees;
FIRES,	22 referrals opened prior to Q3 and carried over. 40 referrals received in Q3. 14 referrals closed in Q3. 41 referrals carried into Q4;
Partner Training,	15 sessions – 92 staff.

Specific Education packages – delivered Water Safety, BrightSparx, ASB, Deliberate Fire Setting etc (Covers key stages 2, 3 and 4). 72 BrightSparx sessions delivered in person to 10,946 attendees & 11 virtual sessions delivered to 7,515 students. 5 sessions of Choice and Consequences delivered to 602.

Arson Threat Referrals - 176.

2.9 Business Fire Safety Checks

This indicator reported the number of Business Fire Safety Check (BFSC's) completed and whether the result was satisfactory or unsatisfactory. If the result of a BFSC was unsatisfactory, fire safety advice would be provided to help the business comply with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. If critical fire safety issues were identified, then a business safety advisor would conduct a follow-up intervention.

- The pro rata BFSC target was delivered through each quarter.

A +/-10% tolerance was applied to the completed BFSCs and the year to date (YTD) BFSCs, against both the quarterly and YTD targets. When both counts were outside of the 10% tolerance, they would be deemed in exception which enabled local delivery to flex with the needs of their district plan over the quarters.

BFSCs completed, 862 in quarter 3; Cumulative 2,558; YTD target, 1,875; previous YTD 806.

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being satisfactory, 2,210. Top 5 completed satisfactory premise types (Shops 880, Other workplaces 263, Factories/Warehouses 221, Offices 192, Licensed premises 182).

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being unsatisfactory, 348. Top 5 completed unsatisfactory premise types (Shops 179, Licensed premises 35, Factories/Warehouses 33, Other workplaces 28, Schools 20).

The positive exception report was due to the number of completed Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSCs) being greater than 10% of the quarterly target, and the cumulative year to date target.

Crews continued to embed built environment knowledge and understanding. The first of two Built Environment Virtual Training (BEVT) sessions were delivered in 2023 and the second phase of BEVT roll out was due to begin from April 2024.

Protection had delivered the first 5 day-built environment training on the Wholetime (WT) recruits course which prepared them to undertake BFSCs when they arrived on their watches.

Under the intervention programme for fire safety, the Service focused resources on the most vulnerable and high-risk premises with associated sleeping risk such as hospitals and care homes which were serviced by the Fire Safety Officers. Operational crews provided extra capacity and would inspect lower risk premises.

If follow-up intervention had taken place following the identification of critical fire safety issues and the responsible person would/could not comply with fire safety law, they would be moved from an advisory remit into regulatory where an enforcement notice could be issued, and possibly then prohibit or prosecute the responsible person.

County Councillor Shedwick stated that it was evident from the statistics that the operational crews were now involved as well as the Fire Safety Officers.

2.9.1 Fire Safety Activity (including Business Fire Safety Checks)

This indicator reported the number of Fire Safety Enforcement inspections carried out within the period which resulted in supporting businesses to improve and become compliant with fire safety regulations or where formal action of enforcement and prosecution had been taken for those that failed to comply.

An improvement was shown if the percentage of audits that required formal activity was greater than the comparable quarter of the previous year.

Total Fire Safety Enforcement Inspections, Quarter 3, 452;
Formal Activity in Quarter 3, 5%, same quarter of the previous year 9%.
Quarterly activity decreased 4% over the same quarter of the previous year.

Members noted the cumulative number of Business Fire Safety Check follow-up visits undertaken for 2023/24 was 1,572.

In response to a question from County Councillor Salter regarding recent changes in Fire Safety Legislation, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the changes placed more responsibility on persons responsible for premises. These premises were known to the Service as they were included within the risk-based intervention programme and were recorded in a database with the level of risk calculated by a risk matrix. In the last 12 months the Service, as regulator, had conducted extensive engagement with businesses to raise awareness of the changes to the Fire Safety Order and to inform persons responsible of their duty to fire safety management.

2.10 Building Regulation Consultations (BRC) (number and completed on time)

Where the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applied to premises (or would apply following building work) the building control body must consult with LFRS for comments / advice regarding fire safety. LFRS should make any comments in writing within 15 working days from receiving a BRC.

This indicator provided Members with information on the number of building regulations consultations received during the period together with improvement actions.

In Quarter 3, Building Regulation Consultations received 268, of which 256 were completed within timeframe (LFRS should make comments in writing within 15 working days of receiving a BRC).

Improvement Actions were noted as follows:

To comply with the NFCC Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators, consultations must be completed by Level 4 qualified Fire Safety Inspectors. It was the same inspectors who were required to complete the more complex audits required by the risk-based intervention program, consequently use of finite resources must be fully co-ordinated and balanced. To achieve this and ensure consultation timelines were achieved:

- The implementation of centralised building regulations onto the Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS) and assigning dedicated resource to consistently input new applications, continued to improve the Services efficiency at responding to the majority within statutory timescales.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer emphasised that the Service response to Building

Regulation Consultations within the statutory timescales had improved over the past year with an improvement to 95.5% completed within the timeframe of 15 days in quarter 3. A small number of consultations were out of the timeframe due to being complex in nature or awaiting further information from the relevant local authority.

County Councillor David O'Toole joined the meeting.

KPI 3 - Responding to fire and other emergencies quickly

3.1 Critical Fire Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance

This indicator reported the 'Time of Call' (TOC) and 'Time in Attendance' (TIA) of the first fire engine arriving at the incident in less than the relevant response standard.

The response standards included call handling and fire engine response time for the first fire engine attending a critical fire, as follows: -

- Very high-risk area = 6 minutes
- High risk area = 8 minutes
- Medium risk area = 10 minutes
- Low risk area = 12 minutes

The response standards were determined by the risk map score and subsequent risk grade for the location of the fire.

Standards were achieved when the time between the 'Time of Call' (TOC) and 'Time in Attendance' (TIA) of the first fire engine arriving at the incident, averaged over the quarter, was less than the relevant response standard. Expressed in minutes & seconds.

Critical Fire Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance, Quarter 3, Very High 06:55 min; High 06:40 min, Medium 06:44 min, Low 08:31 min.

Q3 overall 07:24 min. Year to date overall 07:24 min. Previous year to date overall 07:15 min.

The negative exception report was due to the critical 1st fire engine appliance average response time to a very high response standard, being above the limit during quarter 3.

The standard within a very high risk area was 6 minutes. The average time achieved during quarter 3 exceeded that by 55 seconds.

The monthly average response times to very high risk areas were:

- October 04:47,
- November 05:50, and
- December 09:48.

- Quarter 3 06:55.

Only December exceeded the 6-minute average. The average time of 09:48 was made up of just three incidents, of which, two recorded a response longer than six minutes. This resulted in the quarter average of 6.55 falling into exception.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the overall very high-risk critical response time had been affected by the high average response time in December. During December, a major incident occurred at the SupaSkips site in Lancaster which required a large number of resources to be dispatched whilst, at the same time, there had been a number of simultaneous incidents in the east of the county. As resources from the east had been dispatched to the incident at Lancaster, the next available pumps in the east of the county had to travel further to incidents which affected the response times. Members noted that it had been an unusual occurrence that would not be expected to recur under normal business conditions.

3.2 Critical Special Service Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance

This indicator reported the 'Time of Call' (TOC) and 'Time in Attendance' (TIA) of the first fire engine arriving at the incident in less than the relevant response standard.

The response standard included how long it took the first fire engine to respond to critical special service (non-fire) incidents where there was a risk to life such as road traffic collisions, rescues, and hazardous materials incidents. For these critical special service call incidents there was a single response standard of 13 minutes (which measured call handling time and fire engine response time).

Critical Special Service Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance, 08:34 min in quarter 3; year to date 08:34 min; previous year to date 08:15 min.

County Councillor Salter acknowledged that the response times were very impressive and queried whether the response standard of 13 minutes should be lowered. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed that the response standard of 13 minutes included the call handling time and time taken for the fire engine to attend an incident. As special service incidents often occurred in more remote areas of the county, this could result in slightly longer call handling times. It was noted that 'What 3 Words', and '999Eye' were tools used by North West Fire Control to assist in locating incidents and assessing resource needs for them.

3.3 Total Fire Engine Availability

This indicator measured the availability of the 1st fire engine at each of the 39 fire stations. It was measured as the percentage of time the 1st fire engine was available to respond compared to the total time in the period.

Standard: to be in attendance within response standard target on 90% of occasions.

Total Fire Engine Availability, 88.46% in quarter 3; year to date 88.59%; previous

year to date 89.32%.

Quarterly availability decreased 1.87% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The negative exception report was due to the 1st fire appliance availability percentage being below the lower control limit during quarter 3.

Overall availability across all stations for the quarter recorded 88.46%, which was 1.54% below the 90% standard.

The availability by each of the stations designated first pump crewing type:

Wholtime – 99.30%

Day Crewing Plus – 99.07%

Flexi Day Crewing – 99.23%

On-Call – 74.60%

Total – 88.46%

Whilst all of the Whole-Time appliances achieved exceptional availability, the 1st appliance at the wholly On-Call stations contributed to the availability falling below the 90% standard. As such, the exception report was focused on On-Call availability.

On-Call recruitment, development, and retention was a national challenge which had seen a downward trend in availability over several years.

A shortage of staff with the Officer in Charge (OIC), Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) and Emergency Response Driver (ERD) skill was a significant contributing factor to low On-Call availability. On-Call Support Officers (OCSOs) were working with station-based staff and management, together with Training Centre, to support those in development and identify opportunities for staff to acquire those skills earlier in their career.

The Breathing Apparatus (BA) skill was another factor contributing to low On-Call availability and the Service was working towards redesigning the timing of training delivery, to enable demand for the skill to be met more rapidly.

Actions being taken to improve performance:

- The Service had invested in a dedicated team to support the recruitment, development, and retention of On-Call staff. A Station Manager post responsible for On-Call & Blue Light Collaboration had been created in 2023, to lead a team of On-Call Support Officers (OCSOs) and the LFRS project workstreams for On-Call improvement. These significant workstreams would enable continuous improvement across all key elements of On-Call recruitment, development, and retention.
- The Service were developing a data-driven recruitment and skills-based strategy and a new recruitment and workforce planning tool, the first of its kind, to improve availability of On-Call fire engine availability.

KPI 4 - Delivering value for money in how we use our resources

4.1 Progress Against Allocated Budget

Members received an update on spend against the approved budget for the year.

The annual budget for 2023/24 was set at £68.5 million. Spend at the end of December 2023 was £50.5m, £0.4m less than budget. The majority was attributable to non-pay costs which included a shortfall on apprenticeship levy funding, an increase in repair and maintenance on operational vehicles, and an increase in external training.

Quarter 3 variance 0.58%.

4.2 Partnership Collaboration

Under the Policing and Crime Act 2017, blue light services were under a formal duty to collaborate to improve efficiency, effectiveness and deliver improved outcomes.

LFRS, Lancashire Constabulary and North West Ambulance Service had met at both tactical and strategic levels and had agreed and signed a strategic statement of intent which contained the following aims:

- **Improved Outcomes** – The collaboration maintains or improves the service we provide to local people and local communities;
- **Reduce Demand** – The collaboration should contribute towards our longer-term strategic objective of decreasing risk in communities and reducing demand on services;
- **Better Value for Money** – The collaboration produces quantifiable efficiencies either on implementation or in the longer term;
- **Reduced inequalities within our communities** – The collaboration contributes towards reducing inequalities wherever possible.

This indicator provided Members with an update on partnership collaboration during the period.

Missing Persons (MisPer)

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) had provided significant support to LanCon with its aerial drone assets, supported by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). LFRS Drone Team had also supported other organisations, including the Environment Agency (EA).

LFRS received around 200 drone requests on average per year from LanCon, with most requests for Missing Persons searches. LFRS had commenced discussions with LanCon in relation to recharging for some services, given the On-Call nature of the drone team and each deployment had a budgetary impact for LFRS. Nationally, an MoU was being developed between the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and EA to better co-ordinate future drone activity.

The Service also provided an underwater search capability, and assistance had recently been requested by HM Coastguard. LFRS had responded, and the

underwater deployment immediately de-escalated the incident, which significantly reduced the number of resources required from several agencies for what could normally be, a protracted incident.

Estates and Co-location

This project was a long-term work stream which could deliver significant efficiencies and effectiveness where co-location sites were identified.

A set of principles were being developed to identify high level areas of opportunities. Blue Light partners were currently reviewing their strategic property asset plans to identify areas for co-ordinating future development plans over the next 5-10 years.

All Blue Light partners were included in the discussions and options in relation to Preston area provision.

First Responder

A trial had commenced in 2023 that involved LFRS volunteering as Community First Responders (CFR) to support NWS. LFRS staff volunteers undertook an initial CFR training programme at LFRS Training Centre. Once qualified, they could shadow existing CFR practitioners to develop their clinical abilities and build confidence in their newly acquired skills.

Five LFRS staff volunteers were now responding to life threatening emergencies in their communities from the workplace and would administer first aid in the initial vital minutes before NWS colleagues arrived. During 2023, LFRS responded to more than 80 CFR incidents which included unresponsive/collapsed, not breathing, cardiac arrests, seizures, strokes, and choking.

The Service was expanding its support to NWS as it was a successful, lifesaving initiative and 10 LFRS Flexible-Duty Officers (FDOs) were progressing through the onboarding process with NWS.

Leadership Development

The Learning and Development leads from each of the Blue Light partners were considering 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.

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 the LFRS mission; 'Making Lancashire Safer.'

The new Command Support Unit (CSU) project was listed in this years' Annual Service Plan and aimed to upgrade not only vehicles, but to take advantage of recent technological advances to support operational incidents. On-Call firefighters from Carnforth and Bolton-Le-Sands crewed the CSU.

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 (JESIP). Further scoping and development would be overseen by the Blue Light Collaboration board to ensure opportunities for joint working were effectively co-ordinated and delivered.

John Rossen, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery would carry out an evaluation across the projects to measure the benefits the Service delivered with partners for the people of Lancashire.

4.3 Overall User Satisfaction

People surveyed included those who had experienced an accidental dwelling fire, a commercial fire, or a special service incident that the Service attended. The standard was achieved if the percentage of satisfied responses was greater than the standard.

Annual Standard: 98.77%

In quarter 3, 75 people had been surveyed and the number satisfied with the service was 73. The running number of people surveyed for the year was 3,492 with 3,449 of those people being satisfied with the Service; 98.77% against a standard of 97.50%; a variance of 1.30%.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Fire Officer for a positive report.

Resolved: - That the Performance Committee noted and endorsed the Quarter 3 Measuring Progress report, including one positive and four negative exceptions.

24/23

Lithium-Ion Batteries Campaign

Stephanie Collinson, Head of Media and Communications presented a report to Members which detailed the outcomes of the Lithium-Ion Batteries Campaign.

Fires in the home were a growing risk nationally, particularly with the growth in popularity of e-bikes and e-scooters. A campaign had been delivered in December 2023 to gain more insight into those most at risk and the behaviours contributing to fires, and to help people adopt safer practices to prevent fires.

Lithium-ion batteries were the rechargeable batteries found in a wide-range of electrical items, such as e-scooters and e-bikes, mobile phones, and laptops. They stored a significant amount of energy in a very small space and were much more powerful than other types of battery.

In the UK, fires caused by lithium-ion batteries in e-scooters and e-bikes had multiplied fourfold since 2020, which had resulted in deaths, hospitalisation, homelessness, and staggering financial losses. Since 2020, over 190 people had been injured, and at least 13 lives had been lost due to this concerning trend.

In Lancashire, there had been a year on year rise in lithium-ion battery related fires in the last three years, and three quarters of those involved a charger. When batteries were charged in communal areas or escape routes, a fire could quickly block the way out. On occasions, batteries could fail catastrophically; they could explode and lead to a rapidly developing fire.

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total
Number of Incidents	14	27	35	76

Insight the Service determined from the incident data included:

- 29% of incidents involved e-bikes, e-scooters, or hoverboards.
- Fires had mainly started in a bedroom or living room.
- The most fires had occurred in Preston, Blackpool, and Lancaster but all districts in Lancashire had seen these types on incidents.
- Half of incidents occurred between 3pm and 11pm.

The campaign had been implemented during December in the run up to Christmas, when people were expected to buy electrical goods, e-bikes, and e-scooters in particular, as presents.

Campaign objectives

- To raise awareness of safety risks associated with e-charging.
- To educate the public on how to safely charge e-scooters and e-bikes.
- To gain insight into those most at risk and practices that increase risk.

Target audience

- Households that had e-scooters/bikes to use as fun for teenagers.
- Students who used this as a cheaper alternative method of transport (which was an increasing trend) aged 18-30.
- Those aged between 25-45 and were most likely to have children covering a range of ages and most likely to use or purchase electric goods.

Key messages

- Always use the charger that came with the device.
- Never charge lithium batteries on escape routes. If possible, charge and store them away from living areas.
- If there was a need to buy a replacement battery or charger, always choose a branded, genuine product from a trusted supplier. There were lots of fakes out there, and it could be difficult to spot the difference.
- Never store lithium batteries together, there was a potential issue with battery short circuits if, for example, the box was contaminated with a metal item, like a paper clip. Ensure terminals had been taped up before mixing with other items.
- Always read the safety instructions that came with the device.
- Ensure there were working smoke alarms on every floor.

Competition to win an iPad.

The first part of the campaign involved a competition to win an iPad. To enter,

members of the public had to answer three short questions about charging practices. The entry process gave all participants the correct answers to the questions to highlight the safest practices.

The competition resulted in over 1,700 entries and gave valuable insight into charging habits across different age groups. It showed that 25–34-year-olds were more likely to charge devices in the hallway. This insight was used in the second part of the campaign to target 25–34-year-olds with a specific message about the risk of charging in hallways.

Campaign activity

The creative materials for the campaign featured real images of e-bike and e-scooter fires the Service had attended to demonstrate that these incidents did occur and could happen to anyone. A short, animated video was also created in the style of a text message conversation and featured an image of a e-bike fire which broke out the first time the owner charged it, aimed at attracting the attention of the younger target audience.

The animated video was played to Members.

The following channels were used to share the content and key messages:

- Social media platforms: Facebook, X, TikTok, Instagram, and Nextdoor.
- Lithium-ion battery safety page on the Service's website (www.lancsfirerescue.org.uk/batteries).
- Media release to local news outlets.
- 20,000 leaflets and posters distributed to local schools, colleges, and communities containing QR code linked to lithium-ion battery safety page on the website.

Bin wagons in Lancaster

During the campaign, the Service partnered with Lancaster City Council to create artwork to highlight the risk of e-charging, which now appeared on 43 vehicles across Lancaster.

Evaluation

In total, the campaign reached 494,850 people and generated 23,247 engagements (comments, shares, website clicks etc). Social media alone reached 301,389 people and generated 22,441 engagements. Advertising on TikTok boosted competition entries from 18–24-year-olds by 197%. Social media posts sparked a lot of debate, with some people sharing their surprise to learn about the risk of e-charging and others sharing their own experiences. Some people stated that they normally charged items in living areas and would now change this.

1,789 people entered the competition and took part in the quiz which allowed the Service to promote the key safety messages and highlight unsafe practices. 4,062 people visited the lithium-ion battery safety page on the website during the campaign and 450 visits came directly from the QR code on campaign leaflets. Five news articles appeared in the local media.

Next steps

The next steps were to build on insight gained from the campaign to develop the picture of who was most at risk and the behaviours that contributed to fires, alongside analysing incident data at the end of the year.

Nationally, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), had backed charity Electrical Safety First's calls for improved safety standards of e-bike and e-scooter batteries. A change in legislation was needed to help prevent fires and ensure that the products in people's homes were safer.

The safe disposal of lithium-ion batteries was also a key issue, as batteries thrown in household rubbish bins had been linked to an increase in waste fires. Research had shown that lithium-ion batteries were responsible for around half of all waste fires that occurred in the UK each year, which costed the UK economy some £158 million annually.

In response to a question from Councillor Smith regarding the regulation of e-bikes, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the NFCC, alongside a number of other organisations were actively involved in lobbying government.

Members discussed the possibility of lobbying the government for a Lithium-ion battery return scheme with which an additional fee would be charged when a battery was purchased and would be redeemed when returned which would ensure proper disposal of them. It was mentioned that the owners of e-bikes and e-scooters would not use the many waste sites in Lancashire that had measures in place for the safe disposal of batteries and the responsibility should be on the seller.

In response to a question from County Councillor Salter regarding the value of having a CE Safety Mark on rechargeable batteries, the Head of Media and Communications explained that one of the key messages was to use batteries supplied by the manufacturer and not to buy second-hand or from online websites. Additionally, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer stated that cost of parts was an issue, as cheap replacement products were available online. As Trading Standards were the authority on regulatory issues, the Service and sector were actively linked in with them on Lithium-ion battery matters.

County Councillor Salter raised the possibility that too many safety messages would become confusing. The Head of Media and Communications stated that a phased approach was being used for key safety messages and, when more insight had been gained, the safety messages would become more focused.

County Councillor Salter asked why Lancaster had been chosen for its bin wagons to display artwork that highlighted the risk of e-charging and whether bin wagons in other cities would be used for the campaign. The Head of Media and Communications advised that Lancaster City Council had been eager to work with Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS), but the Service would be happy to work with any of the Local Authorities. The Service had provided the artwork and Lancaster City Council had wrapped the vehicles. The campaign was in its infancy and other initiatives were being developed.

In response to a query from County Councillor Salter as to the reason that the most

	<p>fires occurred in Preston, Blackpool, and Lancaster, the Head of Media and Communications advised that from the data and national research, students and people from that age group were more likely to use e-bikes and e-scooters for affordable travel. Safety material had been distributed to schools, colleges, and universities. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer added that population density and city lifestyles could also be prevalent factors in the number of fires.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor Shedwick in relation to dealing with electric vehicle fires, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that it was very challenging as electric vehicle fires were very difficult to extinguish and there was no current solution globally. The Service had purchased a range of new products to help manage electric vehicle fires which were being trialled to discover their benefits, and as different tactical options for commanders to use at scene. Global research was underway to develop a solution. It was noted that the volume of electric cars and therefore, potentially, the number of fires, could increase in future.</p> <p>County Councillor Salter commented that the government should be lobbied for a safer infrastructure for the increase in electric cars such as sprinklers in car parks.</p> <p>County Councillor O'Toole stated that, at the next full council meeting at Lancashire County Council, he had put a question forward about Lithium-Ion batteries, waste sites and waste fires. The portfolio holder had been briefed and would answer the question which would raise awareness. He asked, and the Head of Media and Communications agreed, to be provided with leaflets to distribute to Councillors and Senior Officers at the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Head of Media and Communications for her report.</p> <p>Resolved: - That Members noted the content of the report.</p>
25/23	Date of Next Meeting
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on 26 June 2024 at 10:00 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.</p> <p>Further meeting dates were noted for 04 September 2024 and 04 December 2024 and agreed for 05 March 2025.</p>

M Nolan
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood