

# Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

## Planning Committee

Meeting to be held on 18 November 2024

### **Environmental Sustainability Plan 2024-29** (Appendix 1 refers)

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#### **Executive Summary**

Climate change is already having an impact on the Fire and Rescue Service; we are responding to new and evolving risks, such as wildfires, and new technologies designed to address climate change, including electric vehicles, lithium-ion batteries and highly insulated buildings. Rising temperatures will have the greatest impact on the most vulnerable, such as reducing food and water availability. Changing heating systems, insulating buildings, moving to an alternatively fuelled fleet and planting trees is essential in contributing to net zero, however, environmental sustainability is so much wider.

The Climate Change Act 2008 commits the UK government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050 whilst the Paris Agreement commits the UK and other countries to a global temperature rise this century of below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Since launching our Carbon Management Plan in 2009 we have made good progress in terms of reducing our carbon footprint, however we recognise there's more work to do. Environmental enhancements on Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) premises have been made as part of business-as-usual (BAU) investment into our locations, for example new build premises meeting Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM) standards, boiler replacement, LED light installs. The Service has not used dedicated funding for aspects such as photovoltaic installations, so to make further process this approach needs to be reconsidered in conjunction with our wider Estates Strategy. A similar approach has been taken to the LFRS fleet, with BAU investment providing environmental enhancements as technology has changed.

A new Environmental Sustainability Plan is proposed for LFRS and this plan outlines the initial actions we must take as a Service in order to continue to play our part in reducing our environmental impact as an organisation. This plan aims to outline LFRSs commitment to minimising its impact on the environment and to provide a clear approach to the progress of actions that will contribute to the long-term achievement of becoming a Net Zero organisation. This is the first of five, 5-Year Plans in the journey to Net Zero by 2050.

#### **Recommendation(s)**

The Authority is requested to support the revised approach with the adoption of the new plan with the long term net-zero aspirational vision for the Service.

## Information

The existing carbon management plan was launched in 2009 following the Service becoming involved in the Nottingham Declaration on climate change for local authorities.

The original Carbon Management Plan (CMP) was agreed by the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Resources Committee in March 2009. The aim was to reduce costs associated with energy prices as they continue to rise together with reducing carbon emissions from use in buildings and transport. An initial target of 20% reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> by March 2013 was set with a visionary target of 40% by March 2020 which included the closure of SHQ and a move to new premises and replacement of key ageing buildings such as Preston Fire station and Lancaster House at STC.

Since 2009 LFRS have been monitoring use of gas, electricity, fleet vehicle fuel and water on all our sites. Conversion factors were applied using a toolkit to generate a carbon emissions total with the target of reducing this by 40% (initially by 2020 and then extended to 2030 following CFA approval). The conversion factors for emissions were kept constant and therefore never fully reflected any changes such as decarbonisation of the grid, however based on this toolkit, as of 31st March 2024, fuel, gas and electric emissions had reduced by 25.4%. Water emissions had reduced by 30.1%.

All this had been achieved within departmental budgets and part of business as usual with no specific additional funding for works to reduce carbon emissions.

The actual reductions in use over this period are as follows:

- Gas (kWh) 43%
- Electric (kWh) 15%
- Vehicle Fuel (litres) 15%
- Water (m<sup>3</sup>) 30%

During 2023/24 the Safety, Health and environment (SHE) Department have been reviewing options to move forwards and revise our approach, collaborating with Property Department on the cross-over with the building condition work and overall Estates Strategy for the Service. A new 5-year Environmental Sustainability Plan has been produced by SHE, which is proposed to replace the Carbon Management Plan. This will be the first of five 5-years plans as we move towards the longer-term carbon reduction and sustainability aspirations.

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) have published an Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change Toolkit for use by the Fire and Rescue Sector. The aim is to enable the sector to share a range of research, data, information, good practice and case studies. This toolkit vision is to “Protect our communities, protect our planet, protect our future.” In developing the new Environmental Sustainability Plan, LFRS have made extensive use of the NFCC toolkit, which is structured against the United Nations Sustainability Goals.

The new plan outlines aspirations in the following areas:

- Buildings
- Transport and Travel
- Procurement
- Operational Response

- Training and Communication
- Biodiversity and Habitat Protection

In this, the first 5-Year Plan, our focus will be on understanding where we are now and what our immediate next steps might be. This involves understanding our current emissions and the opportunities for reductions and to share this information to inform appropriate decision making as we look to move forwards.

The overarching target for this Environmental Sustainability Plan is to reduce carbon emissions to net zero no later than 2050. Net-Zero refers to a state in which greenhouse gases going into the atmosphere are balanced by removals out of the atmosphere. This aligns with the UK legislative target, and overall direction of travel. We do not propose a faster transition which is being sought by some local authorities, acknowledging the longer-term implications of investment into the estate across all of our sites.

It is proposed that we maintain our interim carbon reduction target, set against the current Carbon Management Plan aspirational target, as this aligns with the proposed developments within the capital investment plan which had previously been on hold (SHQ replacement etc).

To achieve net zero, fire services can take several steps:

- **Energy Efficiency:** Improve energy efficiency in fire stations and offices by retrofitting buildings, using LED lighting, and optimising heating and cooling systems.
- **Renewable Energy:** Invest in renewable energy sources such as solar panels or wind turbines for on-site power generation.
- **Fleet Transition:** Transition to low-emission or electric vehicles for fire appliances and support vehicles. Consider hybrid or hydrogen-powered options as this technology develops.
- **Behavioural Changes:** Educate staff about energy conservation, waste reduction, and wider sustainable practices.
- **Supply Chain:** Encourage suppliers to adopt net zero practices and consider environmental aspects/emissions when procuring goods and services.

The governance of the revised plan will be overseen through the Health, Safety and Environment Advisory Group (HSEAG) and annual reporting to the CFA as part of the Annual SHE Report.

The Carbon Management Team has been renamed the Environment and Sustainability Group and will continue to be responsible for practical implementation and delivery of the areas outlined within the plan, as they are with the existing Carbon Management Plan.

### **Business risk**

The LFRS Register of Environmental Legislation details the growing amount of legislation which impacts on LFRS and its activities, this is increasingly mandating environmental requirements which LFRS must adhere to. This is particularly evident with regards to our estate and requirements for new build and large-scale refurbishment of any sites.

Local authorities in the UK face several risks if they do not adapt to climate change and embrace a longer-term net zero vision:

- **Global Commitment and Government Regulation Direction:** The UK signed the Paris Agreement, committing to a net zero greenhouse gas emissions target by 2050. Aligning with this commitment demonstrates responsible approach and prepares the Service for any future mandated requirements as a public body within the UK.
- **Energy Security and Cost Increases:** Transitioning to net zero will help protect our energy security and reduce reliance on fossil fuels for our sites. It also strengthens the UK's position in the global green economy.
- **Poor Environmental Stewardship:** Leading by example, public authorities inspire businesses, communities, and individuals to take climate action. Their influence over energy, housing, and transport sectors is pivotal in achieving net zero for the UK.

In summary, adopting net zero ambitions not only contributes to the UK's global commitment but also drives economic growth, environmental protection, and societal well-being from a Lancashire focus.

## **Sustainability or Environmental Impact**

Whilst the Climate Change Operational Response Plan provides the driver for enhancement of LFRS response activities, revising our carbon reduction journey and introducing environmental technologies wider within the LFRS estate this will provide enhanced energy security for LFRS which supports our activities and contributes to our overall resilience.

Reductions in utilities usage is the overall aim of the plan and moving to more sustainable energy sources in the longer term.

LFRS continues to strive to reduce wastes, and the plan will focus our attention beyond the current service waste contractors and strengthen considerations about waste and product life cycles within our procurement activities.

Our ISO 14001 arrangements require us to have measures to protect the environment from our activities on LFRS sites.

Biodiversity requirements are a key part of future planning requirements and will impact on the developments planned within the LFRS capital expenditure plans.

Whilst the nature of our activities restricts options on staff or local community travel patterns in this area, LFRS supports measures to reduce emissions from staff travel.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

Full EIA has previously been completed covering the LFRS Safety, Health and Environment policy which the new Environmental Sustainability Plan will support. This has recently been re-approved by the CFA.

## **Data Protection (GDPR)**

Will the proposal(s) involve the processing of personal data? Y/N

If the answer is yes, please contact a member of the Democratic Services Team to assist with the appropriate exemption clause for confidential consideration under part 2 of the agenda.

## **HR implications**

No direct implications.

## **Financial implications**

To date since our carbon reduction journey began, LFRS has not directly invested in carbon reduction projects, reductions have been achieved as part of planned expenditure during projects such as boiler replacements, insulation, and light replacements.

This approach has served us well, but essentially we have reached the limit of this approach and investment will be required to make further progress. Some of this will remain as part of BAU activities, such as the ongoing fleet replacement under the Fleet Asset Management Plan but particularly for our buildings structured investment is needed.

Key to this first period under the new plan is the technical assessment of LFRS sites to understand what environmental technologies are possible for our sites, and linking in with the wider site condition surveys will allow us to start to develop a plan for investment.

Whilst the requirement to make provisions for further electric vehicle use within LFRS has been delayed due to the extension of the transition period for ICE vehicles, we need to grow our electrical vehicle infrastructure to prepare for this change.

Costing net zero involves assessing various factors including:

- **Infrastructure Investments:** Evaluate costs related to retrofitting buildings, transitioning to clean energy, and upgrading transport.
- **Whole-Life Costs:** Consider not only upfront costs but also long-term savings, particularly in relation to the renewables which can be used across our estate.
- **Net Zero Support Programs:** There is a need to access government initiatives on environmental funding, to reduce the burdens on LFRS budgets. These provide funding and expertise to develop net zero projects.

The Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund provides grants for public sector bodies to access specialised advice and expertise in developing robust heat decarbonization plans. By having a solid plan, organisations can strategically prepare for future decarbonisation opportunities, including applying for grants under the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. Both schemes aim to reduce emissions from public sector buildings and promote energy efficiency. The fund is administered by Salix Finance.

LFRS has recently made an application under this scheme to seek funding to support our environmental site surveys, however we received notification due to the demand on

this funding scheme, the Service had not been successful. An alternative approach is now being considered to deliver these assessments of LFRS premises as they are critical to being able to plan and cost a way forwards.

### **Legal implications**

The LFRS Register of Environmental Legislation details the growing amount of legislation which impacts on LFRS and its activities, this is increasingly mandating environmental requirements which LFRS must adhere to. This is particularly evident with regards to our estate and requirements with regards to new build and large-scale refurbishment of any sites.

## **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

### **List of background papers**

Paper:  CFA Resources Committee Meeting – 87/19 Carbon Management Plan	Date:  September 2020
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Date: 01/11/2024

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