

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee

Meeting to be held on 3 February 2025.

Blue Light Collaboration Board Update

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Executive Summary

This paper provides an update regarding Blue Light Collaboration.

Recommendation

Planning Committee to note the report.

Information

The Police, Fire and Rescue Service (FRS), and Ambulance Service are required to collaborate under the Policing and Crime Act 2017. The goals are to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and deliver better outcomes.

This paper provides an update on the progress of key workstreams being advanced under the Blue Light Collaboration Board (BLCB). These workstreams are effectively managed through Strategic and Tactical level meetings and contribute to improving outcomes, providing better value for money, reducing demand, and addressing inequalities within communities.

Leadership Development

Collaboration between Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS), Lancashire Police (LanCon) and North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) has continued to explore efficiencies and build professional working relationships across the Blue Light Services. The potential for a collaborative coaching and mentoring network has also been identified, leading to shared learning on a more regular basis and improved on-the-ground relationships when working together.

It was agreed for each Service to host a Leadership Event, and through intelligence from each organisation, three common themes were identified.

The first session, 'Nourish to Flourish', focussed on well-being and self-care and was hosted by LFRS. This aims to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of

staff, which will have positive effects for each organisation. Several efficiencies were enabled for this session, by using our Leadership and Development Centre and the cost for the guest speaker was shared between all three services.

The Services are planning the next session which will be hosted by NWS in February 2025, where the focus for this event will be on 'Media'.

The final session will be hosted by LanCon in Spring 2025. The group are considering an interesting area around 'Generational Differences'.

Missing From Home

This collaboration between LFRS and LanCon focusses on supporting high-risk missing person searches. The partnership led to the development of a Standard Operating Procedure and training for front-line personnel. LFRS assets, such as drones and search dogs, have proved effective in locating missing persons and improving public perception whilst maximising effectiveness and the potential for successful outcomes to the people of Lancashire.

Empowering trained resources from LFRS to respond to such incidents with partner agencies ensures that missing persons are located earlier, using the best available technology such as LFRS drones. Furthermore, the use of LFRS trained dogs enhances the canine capabilities for other fire specific deployments both within the UK (through Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and other requests) and overseas (International Search and Rescue (ISAR) deployments). Real life incident exposure for the dogs is invaluable and without which, their ability to develop becomes limited. Where required, LFRS recover costs under the nationally agreed National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) / National Resilience recharge protocol and locally agreed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

LFRS receive around 200 drone requests each year from LanCon, with most requests for missing persons searches.

Estates and Co-location

The co-location of estates between LFRS, NWS, and LanCon aims to identify opportunities for site sharing to improve collaboration and value for money. Successful site-sharing arrangements at Lancaster, St Annes, Darwen, Preston and Lytham Fire Stations has resulted in efficiencies and shared facilities. The shared working arrangements have also built positive relationships and a greater understanding of the differing roles across the Blue Light community. In an operational context this will no doubt have improved outcomes for the people of Lancashire.

The revised Blue Light Collaboration Project Initiation document has provided the Estates and co-location sub-group leads with a renewed focus for potential areas of collaboration. The quarterly Estates sub-group meetings between Heads of Estates Departments at LFRS, NWAS and LanCon has identified that the potential benefits are greater than just co-location. The project objective, principles and benefits have been redefined and in-scope works updated. Examples of areas of collaborative working, in addition to site sharing, are knowledge sharing in relation to systems, sharing of procurement specification documents, along with supplier framework procurement and opportunities.

Community First Responder

UK FRS have been providing Emergency Medical Response (EMR) services to the public in recent years. According to a cost-benefit analysis conducted by the New Economy, the benefits of EMR far outweigh the initial investment required. The analysis estimates an overall financial return on investment of £4.41 per £1 invested.

The Community First Responder (CFR) workstream involves LFRS staff volunteers responding to life threatening emergencies in their communities from the workplace and administering life-saving interventions in the initial vital minutes before NWAS colleagues arrive, including patients that are unresponsive/ collapsed, not breathing, cardiac arrests, seizures, strokes, and choking. In providing additional CFRs in areas that currently see extended response times from NWAS, LFRS has improved outcomes for Lancashire communities. This has been achieved by ensuring a quicker response to those people requiring help with a medical emergency – and our staff have delivered lifesaving interventions whilst awaiting the arrival of ambulance colleagues, with around 200 incidents attended since 2023.

Going forward, with the assistance of a heat map from NWAS, which identifies areas within Lancashire that are proving difficult to recruit CFRs through the current traditional model, will enable LFRS to target local On-Call Firefighters who are interested in volunteering for the scheme.

Evaluation

Through evaluation LFRS has considered the value and benefits of several workstreams and has considered how the BLCB contributes to LFRS' aim of "Making Lancashire Safer".

Two new Blue Light Collaboration Workstreams are currently being established – ‘Wellbeing (Mental Health and Welfare)’, and ‘Recruitment Initiatives’.

Financial Implications

All collaboration projects within this update are included within existing agreed revenue and capital budgets.

LFRS have reviewed the policy for recharging other organisations and agencies for use of LFRS personnel and equipment at non-statutory incidents. The policy provides decision-makers with guidance on how and when charging is appropriate and is aligned to the NFCC published guidance on recharge costs.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

N/A

Equality and Diversity Implications

N/A

Data Protection (GDPR)

N/A

HR Implications

N/A

Business Risk

Risk if there is limited evidence regarding the duty to collaborate.

Legal implications

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduced a statutory duty to collaborate on the Police, Fire, and emergency Ambulance Services where it is in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness. The duty to collaborate is non-prescriptive and locally enabling.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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