

# Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 17 February 2025

## Climate Change Operational Response Plan 2022-27 – Interim Report

(Appendix 1 refers)

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### Executive Summary

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) Climate Change Operational Response Plan (CCORP)(Appendix 1) was published in 2022 and spans 5 years to 2027 in line with our current Community Risk Management Plan.

It provides an overview of our intentions to strengthen the provision of services to our communities in response to the impacts of climate change.

This report aims to provide the Authority with a mid-point review of progress against the aspirations contained within the CCORP across the key themes.

As the extremes of foreseeable weather events become increasingly evident, our CCORP considers flooding and wildfire as two separate areas of focus, whilst recognising that several of the proposed actions we will take, will serve to mitigate elements of both risks in tandem.

In delivering against this plan, we continue to aim to:

- Reduce the threat posed to citizens of Lancashire.
- Improve firefighter safety.
- Reduce costs and impact upon our communities, partners and the Service.

### Recommendation

That the Authority note the progress delivered as detailed within this report.

### Background

The integration of activities across preparedness, prevention, protection and operational response forms the basis of the CCORP.

The CCORP was developed around 6 key principles:

1. Working in partnership with other agencies and/or private bodies to make our communities safer.
2. Delivering prevention activities serves to educate and inform and thereby reduce potential risks.
3. Empowering communities to play their part can increase local resilience and assist planning and response.
4. Utilising operational debriefing and learning supports continuous improvement in the delivery of our services.
5. Working to support local, regional, and national policy design through learning and sharing areas of best practice.
6. Responding effectively when required, with the right vehicles, trained staff, best equipment, and operational tactics.

The overarching aim is to strengthen our plans in relation to risks posed by both Flooding and Wildfires across the key areas of:

- Prevention, protection and education
- Emergency Planning
- Training
- Operational Response
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Welfare

## **Progress against the CCORP**

### **Prevention, protection and education**

Completed:

- Implementation of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's) in collaboration with local authorities and Lancashire Constabulary. This restricts the use of barbecues and open fires in high-risk areas, such as moorlands and woodlands, to prevent wildfires. PSPO's were launched with partners on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Corporate Communications team have new leaflets with QR codes linked to the LFRS website containing specific wildfire information and prevention advice. The team used targeted social media to support the wildfire prevention campaign.
- Mainstreamed engagement with local volunteer groups, such as Darwen Moorwatch, Rivington Heritage Trust and Rooley Moor Neighbourhood Forum, to encourage use of their patrols and inspections in these areas.

- Provision of advice and guidance to landowners and visitors on fire prevention and safety. These measures have contributed towards a significant reduction in the number of wildfires and the area of land affected by them. For example, in 2023, LFRS attended 143 wildfires, compared to 256 in 2020, and the total area burned was 1,234 hectares, compared to 3,456 hectares in 2020.
- Engagement with, and education of, public and stakeholders, through campaigns, events and social media, on the risks and impacts of climate change and the actions they can take to protect themselves and their properties from climate-related incidents.
- Distribution of leaflets, posters and stickers to raise awareness and provide tips on flood-related prevention and safety. In 2023, LFRS reached over 1-million people through campaigns, events, and social media, and received positive feedback and support from public and stakeholders.
- Established a Lancashire Water Safety Partnership (LWSP) which was officially launched in April 2023. LWSP has identified high risk locations for the installation of water safety boards and is scoping the potential for use of PSPO's for two high risk water sites in Lancashire.

Ongoing:

- Strengthening data collection to improve our intelligence-led education and communication strategy for wildfire prevention and safety.
- Support of the Firewise strategy, with further work planned by the Corporate Communications team, to improve accessibility to wildfire prevention information.
- Collaboration with landowners and Natural England to contribute to the effective application of the Burn Code.
- We have established a meeting structure with major landowners including United Utilities via Lancashire Fire Operations Group (LFOG). This focuses upon land and fuel management techniques to support prevention and mitigation activities.
- Properties within urban interface areas with wildfire risk have been identified and Fire Protection and Community Fire Safety Teams will work together to deliver appropriate advice. We will deliver targeted Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) in domestic premises for known wildfire risk areas.
- Embedded representatives in several district Flood Action Groups; we will continue to support communities that wish to replicate these arrangements in areas of high flood risk.

## Emergency planning

### Completed:

- Collaborated and shared best practice with other fire and rescue services, local authorities, and partner organisations, through networks, forums, and working groups, such as the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Climate Change Coordination Committee, the Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF) Climate Change Group, the Northwest Fire and Rescue Services (NWFRS) Climate Change Network and NW Region Wildfire Group chaired by Group Manager (GM) Caroline Harrison.
- Participated in joint exercises and operations with other agencies to evaluate and enhance interoperability and coordination. These partnerships have improved LFRS capacity and capability to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change. For example, in 2023, LFRS contributed to the development and implementation of the NFCC Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, the LRF Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan, and the NWFRS Climate Change Charter and Toolkit.
- Reviewed our reporting and monitoring process to demonstrate the impact of weather related (wildfire) incidents.
- Created heat maps of wildfire and flooding activity for each district to guide prevention and protection activity.
- Undertaken Operational Risk Assessments, which underpin tactical plans for known high-risk locations. Produced plans for 11 high-risk locations and uploaded onto mobile data terminals (MDT's) on fire engines.
- Developed and updated operational guidance and procedures to reflect the changing nature and complexity of climate-related incidents. These initiatives have improved LFRS performance and safety in responding to wildfires and flooding.
- Our National Wildfire Tactical Advisors are signed up to the UK Danger Rating System and receive updates on forecasted impacts to the Service.

### Ongoing:

- We will contribute to the development and implementation of the new UK wildfire prediction system as the project progresses.
- Delivering training and development programmes for LFRS staff and volunteers, to increase awareness and skills in dealing with climate-related incidents and hazards, such as wildfire behaviour, flood rescue, and water safety.

## **Training**

### Completed:

- Increased our cohort of level 5 trained Flood Water Incident Managers (FWIM's), from 6 to 8 to provide additional resilience across the Service.
- Trained an additional Level 4 Wildfire Tactical Advisor, enhancing our capability to respond both within Lancashire and nationally.

### Ongoing:

- Consideration for further training to upskill P74 Rawtenstall, to improve resilience for the Burns Team capability.
- Develop several officers presently qualified to FWIM standard, to level 6 Flood Water Tactical Advisors, for use in county or as part of National Resilience arrangements.
- LFRS officers are involved with the NFCC Wildfire Group, led nationally by CFO Charters, and are currently working with colleagues from Northumberland FRS to develop a new wildfire training framework which will guide training standards and provide standardisation of training materials for use across the country.

## **Operational response**

### Completed:

- Two Hagglund offroad vehicles have been introduced into Service. They have undergone additional modifications for use at both flooding and wildfires.
- Developed and trained staff to provide an additional water rescue pump and swift water rescue team in Morecambe to supplement the existing team at Lancaster. This unit went live in January 2025.
- Increased the number of National Wildfire Tactical Advisors from 2 to 3 to improve local and national resilience in this function.
- Invested in rescue sleds and floatation devices for the Hagglund vehicles. These were successfully used to rescue people stranded in their vehicles during recent flooding in December 2024.
- Contributed towards the NFCC Asset register and maintained the Lancashire Fire Operations Group (LFOG) Asset register.
- The specialist wildfire Burns Team is now fully established at P73 Bacup, with additional specialist training completed for P74 Rawtenstall.

Ongoing:

- Colleagues within the NFCC Wildfire Group are linked into the project to refresh the wildfire prediction system, which gives early warning of likelihood of wildfire incidents. Once the new system is established, we aim to adopt the new information / alerting system.
- Working with neighbouring FRS, researchers and manufacturers, utilising technology and equipment to develop enhanced solutions.
- Work continues to procure two large and two smaller 4x4 fire engines with off-road capabilities. One of each size will be purchased in the coming year with the other two following in the next business year.

### **Personal protective equipment (PPE)**

Completed:

- Dedicated Wildfire PPE and protective footwear rolled out to all operational staff. In addition, tactical backpacks have been issued to all operational staff to increase welfare provision at incidents.
- Reviewed national guidance regarding the use of personal flotation devices for evacuees during flooding incidents. This has led to lifejackets being made available on Hagglunds for use by members of public during flooding incidents.

### **Welfare**

Completed:

- Enhanced our Welfare provision at incidents, improving quality and meeting the needs of a diverse workforce with vegan, vegetarian, halal, kosher options amongst others.

Ongoing:

- Procurement of a new Welfare Unit, which when purchased, will be operated by LFRS staff and will supplement existing arrangements. A project has been launched and a specification drafted and is pending approval.

### **Summary**

The Climate Change Operational Response Plan 2022/2027 is a comprehensive and ambitious document that demonstrates LFRS's commitment and leadership in adapting to and mitigating effects of climate change both locally and nationally.

The Service has delivered extensive progress to date and continues work to deliver against the remaining activities in the plan, which underpins the ambitions within our CRMP and our aim of making Lancashire safer.

### **Financial Implications**

Capital requirements associated with vehicle asset procurements are factored into the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Fleet Asset Management Plan.

Implications for revenue expenditure are dynamically considered against other Service priorities as and when proposals are made into the relevant internal meeting structures, or absorbed within existing budgets.

### **Sustainability or Environmental Impact**

The CCORP aims to build resilience and capabilities in responding to climate-related incidents. The enhanced equipment and training facilitates us dealing with incidents in a more efficient and effective manner, often with less resources and over shorter durations.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

Any areas to be progressed under the plan are subject to Equality Impact Assessments as appropriate as part of the project / policy development.

### **Human Resource Implications**

None identified at this time.

### **Business Risk Implications**

It is important that LFRS reacts to changing climatic conditions in line with the findings of our Strategic Assessment of Risk. Whilst no statutory duty exists for flooding, opportunities do exist to enhance the reputation of the Service where we are able and equipped to respond effectively alongside partners to these types of incidents.

## **Legal Implications**

None arising from this paper.

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

### **List of background papers**

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

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