Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee

Monday, 3 February 2025, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
G Baker	
N Hennessy (Vice-Chair)	
J Hugo (Chair)	
F Jackson	
D O'Toole	
S Serridge	
J Shedwick	
J Singleton	

Officers
S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)
S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS)
E Price, Group Manager - Planning, Performance & Assurance (LFRS)
S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS)

L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)

In attendance

K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union S Pilkington, Fire Brigades Union

20/24	Apologies for Absence
	The start of the meeting was delayed until 10:07.
	Apologies were received from County Councillors S Clarke and H Khan.
21/24	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
22/24	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	Resolved: That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 18 November 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

23/24 **Consultation Strategy** The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) presented the Consultation Strategy report. The Authority had a consultation strategy which provided a framework through which it could seek public opinion on major change issues. Each year the Planning Committee reviewed the strategy, to assure continued compliance with guidance or legislation and to incorporate learning from any public consultation exercises undertaken. The review concluded that the strategy continued to be legally compliant and in line with good practice. Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) would undertake public consultation on a range of issues on behalf of the Authority to ensure that the views of communities, partners, and stakeholders were used to inform decision-making. Any requests to consult with the public would be made to the Authority's Planning Committee. The committee would be provided with details about the issue and options being considered and permission to consult with the public sought. In response to a question from County Councillor N Hennessy in relation to the terminology used within the strategy, the DCFO confirmed that the report had been reviewed by the Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement and Director of People and Development to ensure it was correct and inclusive. County Councillor J Shedwick remarked that the strategy had been developed over a number of years and was robust. Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the consultation strategy. Annual Service Plan 2025/26 24/24 The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) presented a report on the Service's Annual Service Plan (ASP) 2025/26. The ASP continued to provide Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) with the platform to highlight the priority activities and projects the Service intended to deliver over the coming year; leading improvements and innovation in the sector with some of the best firefighting equipment and training facilities in the country and a highly skilled and motivated workforce. The ASP was built around the Service's 5 corporate priorities as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). As in previous years, detailed under each corporate priority was a series of priority activities and projects with a brief description of each item to give further clarity and context, these were: -1. Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer; Create an organisational culture where diversity is encouraged and valued;

- Develop leaders who build and maintain trust in the Service;
- Tailor training and development for on-call firefighters;
- Invest in safety, health and wellbeing initiatives;
- Encourage and listen to employee voice;
- Service headquarters and leadership and development centre masterplan;
- Upgrade fire station facilities.
- 2. Preventing fire and other emergencies from happening;
- Deliver targeted fire prevention activity;
- Evaluate Year 2 education package; and
- Expand fire safety community engagement.
- 3. Protecting people and property when fires happen;
- Transform fire protection and business safety;
- Deliver tailored protection advice in diverse business communities:
- Implement operational learning in response to national events;
- Address mid-rise premises risk across the county; and
- Support national activity to address unsafe cladding on buildings.
- 4. Responding to fire and other emergencies quickly and competently;
- Review emergency cover in Preston:
- Optimise emergency cover through dynamic cover software;
- Strengthen our response to climate change emergencies:
- Strengthen firefighting and rescue capabilities;
- Adapt on-call response to increase emergency cover; and
- Invest in our fleet and equipment.

Kev Wilkie joined the meeting at 10:17.

- 5. Delivering value for money in how we use our resources;
- Review how we use our resources;
- Maximise productivity and efficiency:
- Drive efficiencies through digitisation;
- Improve performance management culture; and
- Collaborate with other public services.

In response to a question from County Councillor D O'Toole in relation to tailoring training for on-call fire fighters, the DCFO explained that the service was exploring the possibility of delivering on-call training to fire fighters locally on stations, as opposed to the Leadership and Development Centre (LDC),to improve speciality training for roles and availability as less time would be spent away from stations.

County Councillor D O'Toole asked a question in relation to the smoke detectors that were provided by LFRS, the DCFO confirmed that the service carried out over 20,000 home fire safety checks (HFSCs) each year and provided smoke detectors where appropriate. These were sealed units with a battery life of 10 years and when installed, advice was given on replacement of the alarms with revisits conducted. Councillor G Baker queried the Service's choice for the model of smoke detector to install as he had used this model in the past and the battery had not

lasted 10 years. Additionally, the battery could not be changed manually and the detector had to be returned to the manufacturer. The DCFO confirmed that the smoke detectors were procured nationally but he could suggest this be reviewed.

County Councillor S Serridge joined the meeting at 10:26.

County Councillor D O'Toole asked a further question in relation to LFRS's use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the DCFO confirmed that the services ICT and Digital Lead was exploring AI use within the service. Some departments within LFRS were using Microsoft Co-pilot to assist in report writing.

Councillor G Baker and Sean Pilkington left the meeting at 10:30.

County Councillor J Shedwick remarked that the ASP set out exactly the Service's position and would be a useful tool for the upcoming HMICFRS inspection. He then asked if the service would be moving on-call training to the Leadership and Development Centre (LDC) once it had been developed. The DCFO confirmed that due to the nature of on-call and the competing demands of primary employment and personal lives, the Service was looking to take training into stations to improve accessibility and provide a work/life balance.

Councillor G Baker and Sean Pilkington rejoined the meeting at 10:32.

County Councillor J Singleton asked how progress on activities within the report would be reported back to members and in particular the mid-rise premises risk as referenced on page 33 of the agenda pack. The DCFO confirmed that work had begun on the risk based inspection programme with progress on this and other activities reported through committee meetings, the full CFA, and Strategy Group meetings.

In response to a question from Councillor F Jackson in relation to improvements at Blackpool Fire Station, the DCFO confirmed that work had started to provide individual dormitories within the station. The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) added that work was due to be completed in July 2025. The Chair remarked that both she and Councillor G Baker had attended Blackpool station recently and viewed the plans.

County Councillor N Hennessy asked a question in relation to expanding fire safety community engagement, the DCFO confirmed that this was a 12 month trial to ensure constant engagement and allow more work to be completed with mosques and different faiths. Upon completion of the trial period the role would be reviewed. County Councillor N Hennessy remarked that County Councillor H Khan was keen to engage women within her community and had done some great work in partnership with LFRS around cooking safety during Ramadan.

County Councillor Hennessy asked a further question in relation to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) exploring the use of AI, the DCFO confirmed that the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) of Bedfordshire was leading in this area. The DCFO confirmed that more information on the use of AI would be brought to a future Strategy meeting for members.

County Councillor D O'Toole remarked that it had been 7 years since the Grenfell Fire tragedy and asked if fire chiefs had a voice on ensuring changes needed were prioritised by government. The DCFO confirmed that the NFCC were ensuring that the fire sectors voice was heard. The Chair added that Grenfell was on the agenda of the Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Safety Management Committee and had been on the agenda of the LGA Safer Stronger Communities Committee.

County Councillor N Hennessy remarked that the Service had received a letter for thanks from the Minister of State for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention for its response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's phase 1 recommendations.

In response to a question from Councillor G Baker in relation to the service receiving feedback following identifying risks regarding unsafe cladding, the DCFO confirmed that the service would take appropriate action to make buildings safe when risks were identified, implement fire safety measures, and would send additional resources to buildings deemed as high risk as set out in the Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA). The DCFO confirmed that more information on prevention would be brought to a future Planning Committee or Strategy meeting for members.

The Chair expressed her thanks for the detailed report.

Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the Annual Service Plan for publication.

25/24 Blue Light Collaboration Board update

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) advised that the report updated on progress of the ongoing workstreams that were being progressed under the Blue Light Collaboration Board (BLCB). The workstreams were being managed effectively through both the Strategic and Tactical Boards and were contributing towards improving outcomes, providing better value for money, reducing demand, and reducing inequalities within communities.

Leadership Development

Collaboration between Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS), Lancashire Police (LanCon) and North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) had continued to explore efficiencies and build professional working relationships across the Blue Light Services. The potential for a collaborative coaching and mentoring network had 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', focused on well-being and self-care and was hosted by LFRS. This aimed to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of staff, which would have positive effects for each organisation. Several efficiencies were enabled for the session, by using LFRS's Leadership and Development Centre and the cost for the guest speaker was shared between all three services.

The Services were planning the next session which would be hosted by NWAS in

February 2025, where the focus for this event would be on 'Media'.

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

Missing From Home

This collaboration between LFRS and LanCon focussed 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, had 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 ensured that missing persons were located earlier, using the best available technology such as LFRS drones. Furthermore, the use of LFRS trained dogs enhanced the canine capabilities for other fire specific deployments both within the UK (through Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and other requests) and oversees (International Search and Rescue (ISAR) deployments). Real life incident exposure for the dogs was invaluable and without which, their ability to develop would become limited. Where required, LFRS recovered costs under the nationally agreed National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) / National Resilience recharge protocol and locally agreed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

LFRS received 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, NWAS, and LanCon aimed 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 had resulted in efficiencies and shared facilities. The shared working arrangements had also built positive relationships and a greater understanding of the differing roles across the Blue Light community. In an operational context this would no doubt have improved outcomes for the people of Lancashire.

The revised Blue Light Collaboration Project Initiation document had 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 had identified that the potential benefits were greater than just co-location. The project objective, principles and benefits had been redefined and in-scope works updated. Examples of areas of collaborative working, in addition to site sharing, were knowledge sharing in relation to systems, sharing of procurement specification documents, along with supplier framework procurement and opportunities.

The DCFO explained that there may be further opportunities for collaboration as part of the Preston area review.

Community First Responder

UK Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) had 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 outweighed the initial investment required. The analysis estimated an overall financial return on investment of £4.41 per £1 invested.

The Community First Responder (CFR) workstream involved 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 arrived, including patients that were unresponsive/ collapsed, not breathing, cardiac arrests, seizures, strokes, and choking. In providing additional CFRs in areas that saw extended response times from NWAS, LFRS had improved outcomes for Lancashire communities. This had been achieved by ensuring a quicker response to those people requiring help with a medical emergency – and LFRS staff had delivered lifesaving interventions whilst awaiting the arrival of ambulance colleagues, with around 200 incidents attended since 2023. The DCFO confirmed that there were 5 non-operational staff and 8 officer CFR's.

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

Evaluation

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

Two new Blue Light Collaboration Workstreams were being established – 'Wellbeing (Mental Health and Welfare)', and 'Recruitment Initiatives'.

County Councillor J Shedwick remarked that he had seen first-hand the collaboration between blue light services with a medical break in and a missing person. He then asked a question about the LFRS drone being utilised to support LanCon and recharging for this. The DCFO confirmed that the number of requests for drone usage had increased, and the MOU had been reviewed to ensure that the LFRS drone was only being utilised when needed and that recharges were sought where appropriate. The DCFO also confirmed that the MOU reflected that should LFRS cause damage in good faith the cost would lie with the appropriate blue light service rather than LFRS.

In response to a question from County Councillor N Hennessy in relation to estates and co-location, the DCFO confirmed that co-location had been successful at Lancaster, St Annes, Darwen, Preston and Lytham Fire Stations. The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) added that he was unsure when the most recent colocation agreement was implemented but he would confirm this outside of the meeting. The DCFO confirmed that under the Policing and Crime Act 2017 Police, Fire and Rescue Service (FRS), and Ambulance Service were required to collaborate, therefore co-location would be considered in the future and as part of the Preston area review.

County Councillor N Hennessy asked a further question in relation to LanCon acting as CFRs, the DCFO confirmed that some police officers were trained to act as CFR's and carried defibrillators. He advised that he would confirm how LanCon manage this and provide an update to members. The DCFO further advised that within LFRS 7% of firefighter time was spent responding to primary incidents, it was therefore important to ensure that LFRS continued to collaborate with other services and provide support whenever possible.

County Councillor N Hennessy asked a further question in relation to consultation with trade unions in relation to CFR, the DCFO confirmed that all trade unions had been consulted, some unions fully supported CFRs and all unions saw the value. The DCFO emphasised that CFR roles were not mandated and were on a voluntary basis with LFRS working to support anyone who wished to be involved. It was agreed that County Councillor N Hennessy and the DCFO would discuss this further outside of the meeting.

Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted the report.

26/24 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Update

Group Manager (GM) Emma Price presented the report to Members regarding His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) activity and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Services (LFRS's) planning arrangements.

Kev Wilkie left the meeting at 11:05.

Round 3 Overview

HMICFRS commenced Round 3 inspections in early 2023, the three pillars; effectiveness, efficiency, and people remained the same as Round 2. Likewise, the 11 diagnostics under each pillar which inspectors made graded judgements against.

LFRS's inspection would commence on 17 February 2025. The inspection team would work remotely for the first three weeks whilst they reviewed service documentation and data. The inspection team would physically be in service for weeks 4 and 6 (w/c 10 and 24 March) and conduct interviews, reality testing and further reviews, weeks 5, 7, and 8 were all remote, inspection activity would conclude early April. The strategic brief was the opportunity for the Chief Fire Officer and executive board to brief the HMI, service liaison lead and inspection team, setting out an overview of performance and any successes or areas for improvement. The chair of the fire authority would also attend and following the brief they would be interviewed. This would take place on Friday 28 March.

On Monday 20 January 2025, HMICFRS issued LFRS with a document request and self-assessment which would be returned by Friday 14 February 2025. HMICFRS had also issued three surveys; staff survey, human resources survey and a trade union survey.

Area Manager (AM) Tom Powell and GM Emma Price had continued to hold weekly engagement meetings with Phil Innis, LFRS's Service Liaison Lead (SLL).

Phil was unable to complete LFRS's inspection due to leading Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) inspection; a handover process had commenced with the services temporary SLL for this inspection, Vicky Lowry.

Kev Wilkie rejoined the meeting at 11:07.

Vicky was new to HMICFRS, starting on the 6th January, Vicky was currently Head of Admin, Policy, and Strategy – Prevention and Protection at London Fire Brigade. Vicky would be supported by Spencer Rowland who was an SLL and had led Cheshire, West Yorkshire and Cleveland FRS inspections during round 3. Vicky and Spencer had visited LFRS within the last week.

The Organisational Assurance Team within the Service Improvement Department continued to track progress against the service's previous inspection, monitor national themes and prepare LFRS for its Round 3 inspection.

HMICFRS had published 26 Round 3 inspection reports. A summary of the gradings for all 26 FRSs inspected so far in Round 3 were included in the report.

Positive Practice

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Positive Practice Portal provided details about interventions, which had been developed by one or more Fire and Rescue Service to address a particular need, concern or organisational change recognised by the NFCC or HMICFRS as an innovative or positive practice. These practices were in different functional areas and may include operational and non-operational responses, business practices and good ideas.

LFRS actively engaged with the positive practice process and had made two further submissions since the previous report, taking the total submissions published on the portal to 11:

- ROV/Underwater Drone
- On Call Stations Work Hubs
- Safety during Hajj Campaign
- Climate Response Partnership Working
- Climate Response Innovation
- Composite Fencing
- NFCC BCP E-learning package
- SSRI Info Risk Based Calculator
- Public Space Protection Order
- New Assurance monitoring system
- New Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP)

A further 3 submissions were in progress:

- Organisational Development Developing current and new leaders
- Management of PPE
- Responding to trauma and emotions / wellbeing programme

LFRS would continue to monitor positive practice submissions and attend future

events, benchmarking the services progress against areas identified, and exploring potential areas for improvement.

HMICFRS Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services

HMICFRS published their Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services report in August 2024. This followed the detailed inspection of 10 FRSs, as well as analysing data provided by all 44 FRSs in England about their grievance and discipline cases. The service was making progress through the reports 15 recommendations which were virtually all completed.

Values and culture in Fire and Rescue Services

Values and culture in Fire and Rescue Services remained a focus for HMICFRS, LFRS continued to work proactively in terms of promoting its values and engendering an organisational culture where all employees could thrive.

The HMICFRS had asked FRS not to provide any written updates at this point, as they were introducing their interactive monitoring portal. LFRS was due to be onboarded on to the portal prior to the services inspection, the Organisational Assurance Team had attended online briefing sessions in preparation for this change in reporting.

The role of the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group had been expanded to include culture, the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion Culture Board (EDICB) provided the governance and monitoring of the Service in relation to EDI and culture, annual reports were also submitted to the Fire Authority.

HMICFRS Chief and Chairs event

As previously reported, the latest HMICFRS Chief and Chairs event took place on 14 November 2024, with the then CFO, Justin Johnston, ACFO Jon Charters and CC Nikki Hennessy attending.

Presentations and discussions focused on the following topics:

- Fire protection and the Grenfell Tower Inquiry
- The 2025-27 inspection programme
- Staff misconduct
- Leadership and improving performance

HMICFRS Autumn Data Collection

The Autumn Data collection closed on Friday 22 November. LFRS submitted the return on time with no issues or queries received.

County Councillor D O'Toole asked for clarification of how the round 2 and 3 data was presented, GM Emma Price confirmed that the round 3 data was the most recent and the round 2 data was the prior inspection information.

County Councillor D O'Toole remarked that a number of services had seen a drop in gradings since the round 2 inspections with a number of services 'requiring improvement' in relation to ensuring fairness and promoting diversity. The DCFO advised that any areas for improvement (AFI's) identified could move a Service

from 'good' into an 'adequate' grading, and he confirmed that LFRS had 6 AFIs in their last inspection. The DCFO further commented that there had been a number of hard-hitting national reviews in relation to people and culture within FRSs but LFRS had done a vast amount of work in that area along with the areas where AFIs were previously identified.

GM Emma Price confirmed that LFRS's previous AFI's were;

- 1. Evaluation of prevention activity LFRS had strengthened the evaluation process including online campaigns.
- 2. Collaboration evaluation As covered in the Blue Light Collaboration Board Update report.
- 3. Resource risk based intervention programme LFRS had restructured the prevention team, ensuring that the highest risk areas were reviewed by the highest qualified officers.
- 4. Test continuity plans LFRS had reviewed its business continuity plan (BCP) policy, strengthened its BCPs, introduced a process for testing and exercise of the BCPs and if a BCP was implemented the effectiveness was reviewed and fed back.
- 5. North West Fire Control (NWFC) access to risk information 3 out of the 4 services within the area received an AFI in this area which related to NWFC being able to see high risk detailed plans, a mobile data terminal had been provided to NWFC to allow them to access all risk information if required.
- 6. Turnaround time on building consultation LFRS had improved its building consultation process and ensured that the right level of protection officer was dealing with each consultation.

In response to a question from County Councillor N Hennessy in relation to AFIs in other FRSs, the DCFO confirmed that the Organisational Assurance Team reviewed and evaluated AFIs from all FRSs to implement organisational learning as required. The DCFO remarked that LFRS was as prepared as it could be for its round 3 inspection and reminded members that the HMICFRS round 4 inspection would focus on governance.

County Councillor N Hennessy remarked that as chair to the authority she had recently attended a number of employee voice groups and asked if this area of work could be considered for submission to the positive practice portal. The DCFO confirmed that most services had employee voice groups similar to LFRS and the positive practice portal was focusing on exceptional examples of work, although the services work with employee voice groups was something to be proud of. County Councillor N Hennessy agreed that the discussion around issues and life experiences within the employee voice groups was very important.

The DCFO confirmed that LFRS should receive a hot debrief at the end of April which would provide insight into the possible outcome of the inspection with a draft report expected in June 2025.

The Chair thanked GM Emma Price and the DCFO for the report and acknowledged the hard work that had gone into it.

Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the report.

27/24	Council tax precept consultation
	The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) presented the report to Members regarding the services Council tax precept consultation.
	A consultation plan was being implemented to consult the public on Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's (LFRS's) council tax precept for the year ahead. The consultation aimed to understand levels of support for a proposed increase in 2025-26 which equated to £5 per year (on a Band D property).
	An online consultation was launched on 7 January 2025 at www.lancsfirerescue.org.uk/budget .
	320 stakeholders from organisations including local authorities, town and parish councils, and community groups had been invited to take part in the consultation, along with 79,752 subscribers to the Service's In The Know email newsletter. It was also publicised on social media platforms and internal communication channels within the organisation.
	The consultation closed at 5pm on Monday 3 February 2025. A full report would be provided to the Authority as an appendix to the budget report at its budget meeting on Monday 17 February 2025.
	Approval to undertake the annual budget consultation was delegated to the Chair of the CFA in consultation with the Treasurer and the Chief Fire Officer, due to the limited amount of time between the announcement of the local government financial settlement and the Authority's budget meeting.
	The DoCS advised that at 20 January 2025 there had been 548 responses with 77% of responses supporting an increase.
	County Councillor N Hennessy confirmed that Lancashire County Council had put the consultation onto the C-First Member site on the intranet and reminded members to share the consultation to increase participation.
	Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted the report.
28/24	Date of Next Meeting
	The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday 14 July 2025 at 10:00 hours in the main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.
	Further meeting dates were noted for 17 November 2025 and 2 February 2026.

M Nolan Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ Fulwood