

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee

Monday, 14 July 2025, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
N Alderson	
S Asghar (Vice-Chair)	
G Baker	
I Duxbury (Chair)	
J Hugo	
F Jackson	
J Tetlow (Substitute)	

Officers
S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS) E Sandiford, Director of People and Development (LFRS) M Hamer, Area Manager, Prevention, Protection and Road Safety (LFRS) S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)
In attendance
K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union

1-25/26	Apologies for Absence
	Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors U Arif, J Ash, L Hutchinson and E Worthington. With County Councillor J Tetlow in attendance as substitute.
2-25/26	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
3-25/26	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	Resolved: That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 3 February 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4-25/26	HMICFRS Update
	The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) updated Members regarding His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) activity and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) planning arrangements. Round 3 Overview LFRS HMICFRS Round 3 inspection commenced on 20 January 2025, initiated by a request for a collection of documents, a self-assessment proforma and three surveys (staff survey, human resources survey and a trade union survey) to assist with preparation for the fieldwork phase of the inspection. This was succeeded by a three-week period of staff engagement, during which two weeks were conducted on-site throughout the organisation. The final week was conducted remotely with department heads. On Friday, 28 March 2025, the strategic brief was presented by the Chief Fire Officer (CFO), Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO), and Director of People and Development (DoPD). It was an opportunity for the Service to brief the HMI and service liaison lead, provide a summary of performance, achievements, and work completed on previous areas of improvement. Following the brief, the Chair of the Fire Authority was interviewed. The feedback from the HMICFRS inspection acknowledged that every staff member they interacted with was highly engaging, and they felt genuinely welcomed throughout the organisation. The Service had recently received the draft inspection report, which afforded LFRS the opportunity to conduct factual accuracy checks. The release of the official final report was anticipated in early August, following this the service would focus on addressing any areas for improvement that may have been identified and continuing the services journey towards outstanding. HMICFRS had published 38 Round 3 inspection reports. A summary of the gradings for all 38 FRSs inspected so far were included in the report. 3 grading reports were due to be published on 15 July 2025 and the final 3 reports including LFRS's were due to be published in August. In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow in relation grade changes at other services, the DCFO explained that all HMICFRS reports were available online and he was unable to commend on individual services gradings. He also explained that the service monitored the publication of reports and identified areas of learning to be implemented at LFRS. HMICFRS Inspection 2025-2027 Update The 2025-27 inspection programme would involve a number of changes from the previous round. These included the following: a) Reduction in diagnostic questions: In previous rounds of inspections, HMICFRS assessed and gave graded judgments for 11 diagnostic questions. For the 2025-27 inspection programme HMICFRS had

reduced the overall number of diagnostic questions to 10 by combining the efficiency questions.

b) Characteristics of good:

In the 2025-27 inspections, the HMICFRS would measure fire and rescue services against the characteristics of good performance. These characteristics described the levels of performance a fire and rescue service (FRS) needed to achieve to be graded 'good'.

c) Impact of Governance on FRSs:

In the 2025-27 inspections, the HMICFRS would look more closely at the governance arrangements and how services were impacted by their governance. They would not inspect the governing authority, only the impact of governance on the FRS.

When assessing effectiveness, they would assess how governance impacted the effectiveness of the FRS and examine how FRS work with local communities to make them more resilient. In their assessment of efficiency, they would assess how each FRS was affected by its authorities governance, oversight and scrutiny arrangements.

In their assessment of how well the FRS looked after their people, they would assess whether the governance and scrutiny arrangements created a positive culture, and whether standards of conduct existed to support the health and well-being of the workforce.

d) Leadership:

The assessment of how each FRS looked after its people would focus on leadership at all levels of the organisation. They had enhanced the leadership questions, and as part of the overall summary, the HMI would set out the most important findings relating to the service's leadership.

The FRS Inspection Schedule for 2025-27 had been published, and the dates for the inspection program would be released in three phases. The initial phase of the schedule would commence with the inspection of Bedfordshire FRS in July 2025. Currently, LFRS were listed as the last service to undergo inspection, although this was subject to potential amendments.

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.

LFRS had been onboarded on to the HMICFRS Monitoring Portal and the service have completed the 15 recommendations and uploaded all evidence to the new Monitoring Portal.

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. LFRS had been onboarded on to the HMICFRS Monitoring Portal and had submitted evidence to close all recommendations applicable to the Service. Joint Fire and Rescue Service and Policing positive practise event The first joint Fire and Rescue Service and Policing positive practise event was held on 19 June 2025 at the College of Policing, Ryton-on-Dunsmore. The agenda focused on Culture, Leadership and Misconduct and provided opportunities for the different sectors to learn from one another to improve this mutually challenging area. The event was attended by Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Jon Charters, who presented alongside former CFO Justin Johnston on the LFRS journey. In response to a question from Councillor J Hugo in relation to the reports due to be published, the DCFO confirmed that Hampshire and Isle of Wight, South Yorkshire and Cumbria's HMICFRS reports were due to be published on 15 July 2025 and Lancashire, Kent and Durham and Darlington's HMICFRS reports were due to be published in August 2025. Councillor J Hugo asked a further question in relation to if the service raised any questions as part of the fact checking process. The DCFO explained that the service was unable to challenge the content of the report at the fact checking stage but did make some corrections to data and amended wording. Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the report.
5-25/26	Blue Light Collaboration 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 contributed 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) had continued to explore efficiencies and build professional working relationships across the Blue Light Services. 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 was organised and hosted by LFRS in October 2024 and 60 people attended across all three Services. LFRS staff consisted of Area Managers, Group Managers, and Heads of Service, similar audiences attended from NWAS and LanCon and included aspiring leaders. This session was on "Nourish to Flourish" and focussed on looking after yourself to be an effective leader. Session 2 was held in March, focussing on handling media as leaders in a Blue

Light Service. The two completed events were successful according to the evaluations. The final leadership event recently took place at Lancon and was around generational differences.

The group were also exploring an 'Outside-In' Leadership programme and looking to implement a cross-coaching network to develop shared learning, which may include a coaching exchange programme.

Health and Wellbeing

This was a new collaboration group involving the Health and Wellbeing leads from all three Services. The aim was to understand the health and wellbeing offer across the different blue light services and to explore opportunities to work together to look after our people in a collaborative way.

The starting point for the group was to share policies and procedures for good practice and learning. NWAS had delivered several sessions about menopause and LFRS had developed a workshop to raise awareness of suicide from a responder's point of view, elements of which could be shared across all services.

Estates and Co-location

The co-location initiative between LFRS, NWAS, and LanCon focused on identifying opportunities for shared site use to enhance collaboration and deliver better value for money. Successful co-location arrangements at Lancaster, St Annes, Darwen, Preston, and other fire stations had led to operational efficiencies and shared facilities. These joint working environments had also fostered stronger relationships and a deeper understanding of each service's role within the Blue Light community ultimately contributing to improved outcomes for the people of Lancashire.

The updated Blue Light Collaboration Project Initiation Document had given the Estates and Co-location sub-group leads renewed direction in exploring further collaboration opportunities. Quarterly meetings between the Heads of Estates from LFRS, NWAS, and LanCon had revealed that the benefits extended beyond co-location alone. The project's objectives, guiding principles, and expected benefits had been redefined, and the scope of work had been updated accordingly. In addition to site sharing, the group was exploring collaborative efforts such as system knowledge exchange, shared procurement specifications, and joint supplier framework opportunities.

Community First Responder (CFR)

A cost-benefit analysis by the New Economy confirmed that Emergency Medical Response (EMR) delivered a strong return on investment, £4.41 for every £1 spent. In areas where EMR co-responding had been practiced, when a person suffered a suspected cardiac arrest, firefighters were deployed in parallel to the ambulance service under blue-light conditions. Staff from whichever service arrived first immediately begin to provide potentially life-saving treatment before the other arrived. Not only did parallel mobilisation therefore facilitate the probability of a timely response; the additional on-scene activity also supported ambulance crews to undertake advanced clinical work while fire and rescue services (FRSs) operated in a support capacity. This scheme had been running successfully for many years in several parts of the UK, however, South Western Ambulance Service Foundation

	Trust had recently announced it was phasing out fire EMR to develop and strengthen its volunteer CFR scheme. This decision had been met with sadness and disappointment from FRSs involved in EMR, due to the improved outcomes for communities. The CFR workstream within Lancashire enabled LFRS staff volunteers to respond to life-threatening emergencies directly from their workplace. Since 2023, over 200 incidents had been attended, with LFRS staff delivering life-saving interventions before ambulance crews arrived. The operational model was structured in 3 phases: Phase 1: 8 Green book staff respond voluntarily while on duty. Phase 2: Flexi Duty Officers (FDOs) provide response while on duty. Phase 3: On Call staff provided response within their local communities. This phase was in development, with the assistance of a heat map from NWS. This identified areas within Lancashire that were proving difficult to recruit CFRs, and would enable LFRS to target local On-Call Firefighters who were interested in volunteering for the scheme. The DCFO explained that national work was ongoing with trade unions with a hope of implementing a national CFR agreement for firefighters. Councillor J Hugo added that nationally Labour were lobbying the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for a paid arrangement to be included in firefighter contracts. In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow in relation to the number of defibrillators within the service, the DCFO explained that each fire engine carried a defibrillator, some fire stations had them outside the station and some flexi duty officers and green book staff acting as CFR's carried defibrillators. County Councillor J Tetlow remarked that the fire service carried out a wide variety of roles. Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted the report.
6-25/26	Annual Service Report
	The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) presented the report. The Annual Service Report was produced annually by the Service as part of its accountability to measure progress against the items set out as deliverables as part of the Annual Service Plan. These actions were derived from the medium-term strategic goals highlighted in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). The Annual Service Report highlighted a number of key deliverables against the priority areas of: i) people, ii) prevention, iii) protection, iv) response and v) value for money related work streams: i) Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer • Create an organisational culture where diversity is encouraged and valued. • Deliver tailored learning and development opportunities

- Encourage and listened to employee voice
- Staff feedback leading to Service improvements
- Invest in training and technology to improve health and safety
- Service headquarters and leadership and development centre masterplan
- Upgraded fire station facilities
- A Celebration of LFRS's people
- Honours and awards

ii) Preventing fires and other emergencies from happening

- Lancashire led the way in reducing accidental house fires
- Invest in improvements to LFRS's home fire safety check service
- Deliver targeted fire prevention activity
- Fire engines displayed prevention messages

iii) Protecting people and property when fires happen

- Supported living care provider prosecuted for fire safety breaches
- Transform fire protection and business safety
- Strengthen LFRS's fire safety inspection programme to meet evolving standards

iv) Responding to fires and other emergencies quickly and competently

- Implement LFRS's emergency cover review
- Introduce more resilient crewing arrangements
- Review emergency cover in Preston
- Optimise emergency cover through dynamic cover software
- Strengthen firefighting and rescue capabilities in high-rise and commercial buildings
- Two new water towers joined the Service fleet
- Broaden on-call firefighting capabilities to strengthen operational response
- Lancashire's new on-call planning tool is a UK first
- Strengthen the services response to climate change emergencies
- Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service tests drones for wildfire prevention
- Invest in LFRS's Learning and Development Centre
- Drill tower replacement programme
- Invest in LFRS's fleet and operational equipment
- Lancashire firefighter delivered international flood rescue training in Malawi

The report included a summary of the Service's performance in relation to responding:

Overall activity

- 16,963 incidents attended
- 4,723 fires attended
- 678 road traffic collisions attended
- 85 missing person searches
- 948 gaining entry to property incidents in support of North West Ambulance

	Service Average attendance time • Overall - 8 minutes 20 seconds • Critical fire response – first fire engine attendance – 7 mins 38 seconds • Critical special service response – first fire engine attendance – 8 minutes 46 seconds Total availability of the first fire engine at each of LFRS's 39 fire stations - 87.97% v) Delivering value for money in how we use resources • Create a new rota management team • Review productivity and efficiency • Drive efficiencies through digitalisation • Introduce Microsoft Power BI dashboards • Collaborate with other public services • Community fire responder collaboration County Councillor J Tetlow congratulated the DCFO on his award of the King's Fire Service Medal, details of which were contained within the report. Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the Annual Service Report.
7-25/26	People Strategy The Director of People and Development (DoPD) presented the report. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England set out the government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue services. The framework stated that each fire and rescue authority should have a people strategy in place. The Home Office collected and published a range of workforce data that fire and rescue authorities were required to provide. The People Strategy for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) 2025 – 2027, as attached at Appendix A of the agenda pack, was a comprehensive three-year plan that outlines how the Service would manage and develop its workforce in alignment with its Community Risk Management Plan. It was a framework that ensured the right people were in the right roles, equipped with the necessary skills to contribute to the success of LFRS. The Strategy involved various aspects of human resources, including recruitment, training, development, engagement, effective utilisation of data, and retention. The development of the Strategy and its priorities was influenced by HMICFRS recommendations, Fire Standards, legislative changes, the changing nature of the services operating environment, as well as policy development and learning from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). The current people priorities were to:

	• Embed Service values, behaviours, and the Code of Ethics making LFRS a place where everyone felt valued and included. • Promote LFRS as an employer of choice, recruiting a workforce which was diverse, meet the needs of the people of Lancashire, and addressed any employment needs identified in the services workforce plan. • Continue to develop the capability and resilience of leaders who can energise their teams, who encourage flexibility, innovation and who promote continuous improvement. • Continue to embed talent management and succession planning, shaping the workforce to meet Service needs and support individuals to achieve their full potential. • Promote a resilient and healthy workforce. • Continue to actively engage with the LFRS workforce responding to feedback and involving staff in the shaping of the services plans and decision-making. Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the People Strategy for 2025/2027.
8-25/26	Protection Update
	Area Manager (AM) Matt Hamer gave a presentation to members to provide an overview of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Services (LFRSs) actions and investment in the services Protection (Fire Safety) department since the Grenfell Tower incident. Following the tragic incident at Grenfell Tower on the 14 June 2017 where 72 persons lost their lives, LFRS had invested significantly to adapt and innovate in strengthening the services Protection department which oversees LFRSs duties as the Fire Safety Enforcing Authority for the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and other fire safety legislation. With the introduction of new primary legislation (Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Act 2022) new statutory duties fell to LFRS to regulate. In addition, the creation of the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) saw LFRS act on behalf of the Health and Safety Executive in regulating relevant buildings. Alongside new legislation, changes impacting local authorities, the construction industry and competency requirements had required the service to adapt and train staff to regulate circa 65,000 commercial premises in the county. Further legislation was expected to continue to be released with Residential Personals Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) legislation expected in April 2026. Lancashire had 5238 high risk premises comprised of 72 high-rise, 166 mid-rise, 418 care homes and hundreds of hospitals and hotels. High-rise referred to buildings that were over 18 meters tall or over 7 storeys high, AM Matt Hamer explained that the number of high-rise buildings could fluctuate depending on changes to landscape and methods of measuring. Methods of measuring were now being standardised with trained inspectors and the potential use of drones.

Lancashire had around 65,000 medium and lower risk premises including shops, factories and offices. AM Matt Hamer explained that any live risks identified were inspected and the risks mitigated.

In response to a question from Councillor J Hugo in relation to the fluctuation in numbers, AM Matt Hamer explained that reasons for fluctuation could include changes to buildings such as adding additional storeys or conversion of buildings.

Councillor J Hugo asked a further question in relation to where empty properties sat on the risk ladder. AM Matt Hamer explained that buildings classified as empty were considered by the Community Safety Partnership to ensure they were secure, any specific fire risks identified would be brought to the attention of the local authority. If a building was to be considered under planning regulations LFRS would be involved to ensure any proposals were fire safety compliant. He added that LFRS was working with Blackpool Council in relation to empty buildings within the Blackpool area. Councillor G Baker asked if empty buildings needed a fire certificate, AM Matt Hamer confirmed that they did not. Councillor G Baker then asked if insurance companies considered the fire risk of empty buildings, AM Matt Hamer stated that he could not comment on insurance company regulations but added that LFRS could not carry out enforcement as an empty building would not have a responsible person, LFRS could put a notice on the building to request the service be updated if the building became occupied. The DCFO added that the Fire Precautions Act 1971 allowed the issue of a certificate until the implementation of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, with the onus then on the responsible person within the building.

Over the previous 8 years, LFRS had invested over £1 million of government uplift grant funding in the Protection function, restructuring, creating new roles, new guidance and new performance metrics to ensure that the service met its nationally leading, risk-based intervention programme (RBIP). LFRS had introduced dedicated leads for high-rise, mid-rise and hospitals ahead of the national direction towards mid-rise buildings.

Upskilling had also been undertaken with operational staff to allow them to both prevent incidents occurring, through the delivery of LFRS's Business Fire Safety Checks service, and respond more effectively if they did, through the provision of dedicated built environment training.

The investment in people was supported by an investment in digital systems to allow staff to work more effectively and efficiently. New hard and software had been developed and procured to enable staff to better share information and provide a more consistent regulatory programme.

In 2021 50% of LFRS's building regulation consultations were responded to within the set timeframe, in 2024 this had improved to 95%. Some submissions were more complex and had large volumes of paperwork or missing information which could lead to delays. The service averaged over 1000 consultations per year.

Councillor J Hugo commended the increase in response compliance by the protection team.

LFRS remained actively engaged locally, regionally and nationally to remain agile for further legislative changes along with significant changes to supporting guidance. Investment in the services Protection function continued, with further awareness training for operational crews and responding officers along with the procurement of a new digital system.

In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow in relation to fighting fires within high-rise buildings, the DCFO explained that the highest buildings in Lancashire were up to 30 stories high, crews would be able to safely use their breathing apparatus (BA) sets from the ground floor to the top. He explained that for taller buildings crew may be instructed to only use their BA once they were a few floors under the fire, however crews would be carrying gas sensors and be instructed to use their BA if this sensor began to indicate. He added that high-rises would often use sprinkler systems and the use of drones was being explored in other international countries. Additionally LFRS's tallest Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) could reach up to 45 meters, it was acknowledged that this would not reach the top of Lancashire's tallest buildings. AM Matt Hamer added that new buildings had been designed with Fire Safety Regulations in place however the quality of the build was important, LFRS would use different tactics for older buildings.

In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow in relation to the 'stay put' policy instructed at Grenfell Tower, the DCFO explained that generally flats were self-contained units that could stay safe for one hour. In Lancashire if immediate evacuation was required fire control would instruct residents who made contact to evacuate the building. He added that LFRS's high-rise evacuation was tested during an exercise with HMICFRS during its recent inspection and went well. It was noted that modern buildings now react very differently to older buildings.

County Councillor J Tetlow asked a further question in relation to evacuation of high-rise hotels, the DCFO explained that hotel rooms should be safe for one hour and hotels would have fire evacuation procedures in place.

In 2023/24 the service had two successful prosecutions with the outcomes being 11 month custodial sentences, 6 months suspended sentences, 200 hours community service and £10,414 to be paid in costs. In 2024/25 the service had 3 successful prosecutions with the outcomes being 14 months suspended sentences, 420 hours community service, 20 days rehabilitation, £142,500 fines and £44,225 costs. In 2025/26 the service had 1 prosecutions, 1 case in the court system and 16 case files in development with the outcomes being £30,000 fines, £18,000 costs and a £2,500 victim surcharge. AM Matt Hamer explained that 2 further cases had very recently been through court, the first case resulting in a suspended sentence and costs and the second case resulting in fines and costs. AM Matt Hamer added that LFRS was very robust with prosecutions and had one of the highest prosecution rates nationally, but it was important that individuals and businesses were not frightened of asking for help.

In response to a question from Councillor J Hugo in relation to the income from fine payments, AM Matt Hamer explained that any fines went to the CPS, Courts and Central Government and any costs were received by LFRS. AM Matt Hamer added that for any cases likely to lead to prosecution the service recorded all actions and costs from the commencement of the incident to allow them to be accurately

	submitted to court. He also explained that one of the cases taken to court in June 2025 had happened in 2021, as the service had had to work closely with police and the coroner. Prosecution cases could take anywhere between 150 to 500 hours of work. County Councillor J Tetlow asked if prosecutions were prepared within the service, AM Matt Hamer explained that cases were prepared by the Legal Protection Support Officer, then reviewed by the LFRS Solicitor before being sent to an external barrister. AM Matt Hamer explained that the journey for LFRS continued with further legislation expected, changing risks surrounding modern building methods and building operational knowledge. Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted the report and the contents of the presentation.
9-25/26	Date of Next Meeting
	The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday 17 November 2025 at 10:00 hours in the main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood. Further meeting dates were noted for 02 February 2026 and agreed for 13 July 2026. County Councillor J Tetlow remarked that there seemed to be a big gap between meetings. The DCFO explained that there were 3 meetings per year but additional meetings could be scheduled if required. The Chair thanked the DCFO, DoPD and AM Matt Hamer for comprehensive reports.

M Nolan
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood