Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Performance Committee

Meeting to be held on 03 December 2025

Dynamic Resource Management

(Appendix 1 refers)

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Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of Dynamic Resource Management (DRM) recently implemented within Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS). The report and attached three-month evaluation focusses on its application, frequency, and effects across operational and financial areas.

The report also reviews the impact of DRM on response standards, availability, prevention and protection activities, and impacts on mobilisations.

In summary, this report provides assurance that DRM has provided efficiency savings whilst maintaining excellent operational response performance within the standards set by Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Recommendation

The Performance Committee is asked to note the report and evaluation.

Information

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service has robust systems in place to monitor, manage, and dynamically deploy our fire engines and firefighters to respond to emergencies across Lancashire. There are 58 fire engines and a number of specialist appliances in the county however some are often unavailable due to many reasons: ongoing incidents, training, maintenance, leave or sickness absence; unavailability of on-call staff; and other operational reasons.

When there is a crewing shortage, we take steps to keep a fire engine or specialist appliance available, by bringing in firefighters from other stations (we call this detaching) or on overtime. With improved technology and access to more comprehensive data, we now have a greater understanding of fire risk across Lancashire. As a result, we have changed this approach to ensure sufficient resources are available in the areas that need them and reduce unnecessary overtime.

Firefighters who crew a second fire engine may be detached to maintain the availability of a first fire engine somewhere else, making that fire engine temporarily unavailable. This only occurs when the first fire engine is available as well as other fire engines in the area and this ensures we maintain a balanced level of fire cover across the county.

Dynamic Resource Management

Dynamic resource management has introduced smarter and more efficient deployment of firefighters based on county-wide risk and it is used for advance planning.

There are 39 fire stations across Lancashire: 22 of these have at least one wholetime crewed fire engine and 17 have at least one on-call fire engine. Additional wholetime, day-crewed or on-call fire engines are also available at some of these stations which means they have two fire engines.

There are four fire stations with two wholetime crewed fire engines in the county: Blackburn, Blackpool, Burnley, and Preston. All four also have other fire stations close by, with additional fire engines ready to respond.

Previous policy was that when one of the two fire engines at our four stations with two wholetime engines was unavailable due to training or maintenance, it was not replaced or backfilled. However, if one was unavailable due to a crewing shortage (for example, due to leave or sickness) it was kept available by bringing in firefighters from other stations (we call this detached duties), or on overtime once detached duty options have been exhausted.

On 1 July 2025, the Service changed this approach to ensure sufficient resources are available to cover all risk areas across the county, using the latest technology and data. This provides the most effective and efficient use of resources for all communities across Lancashire. On some occasions, this also reduces costs through overtime requirements.

For example, firefighters at the four stations which have two wholetime fire engines may be detached, making the second engine temporarily unavailable, to maintain availability of a first fire engine somewhere else in the county. This is a methodical and strategic decision that ensures that we maintain a balanced, risk-based level of fire cover across the whole of Lancashire.

Before detaching firefighters from a station with two fire engines and making one temporarily unavailable, the first fire engine must be available as well as other fire engines in the area. We ensure a fire engine is available at every wholetime station in the county as a minimum.

Detachments are always used where possible before overtime, although overtime is still required on some occasions.

Dynamic Cover Tool

Dynamic resource management is underpinned by a dynamic cover tool (DCT) which continuously assesses community risk and fire engine availability in real-time. This software provides officers and control room operators at North West Fire Control (NWFC) with visual data in real-time to make decisions on how best to deploy resources.

We can see at any given time where live incidents are located, which fire engines are attending, which fire engines are available, and which are temporarily offline for training, maintenance, or crewing.

The position changes all the time as incidents occur and our crews attend, so the DCT enables us to respond quickly to a changing picture of risk and demand, positioning firefighters and fire engines in precisely the locations they are needed.

This model of 'dynamic cover' has replaced a static model of pre-arranged fire engine moves which did not take live incidents and availability of other resources into account. It allows us to respond flexibly to changing circumstances while continuing to meet our response standards.

Response Standards

Our response standards are among the fastest in the country for building fires and critical special service calls.

We have robust, data intelligent systems in place to monitor, manage, and dynamically deploy our fire engines and firefighters to respond to emergencies across Lancashire.

Our mobilising systems know the exact location of every fire engine, based on automatic vehicle locations systems, so that the nearest and quickest fire engine is sent to all critical incidents.

We are committed to ensuring that every community in Lancashire receives a fast and effective emergency response.

Dynamic Resource Management Evaluation

LFRS have undertaken a three-month initial evaluation of DRM, the full evaluation is attached as Appendix 1. Key findings are presented below:

Since 1 July 2025, DRM has been used a total of 124 times in quarter 2 (Q2). This represents that DRM has been enacted 17% of available shifts across the four stations.

Critical fire response times at DRM stations have increased by 6 seconds in Q2 2025 compared with Q2 2024, whereas response times across all stations over the same period have increased by 20 seconds, highlighting that DRM has not had detrimental impacts on response times.

Critical special service call response times at DRM stations have increased by 52 seconds in Q2 2025 compared with Q2 2024, whereas response times across all stations over the same period have increased by 11 seconds. Whilst this is a higher increase than overall, our response times remain substantially under the 13-minute average response time target, and our Key Performance Indicator demonstrates that performance levels continue to be met since the introduction of DRM.

The average number of Wholetime fire engines available has reduced by one from 1 July 2025, which has been offset by an increase in On-Call fire engine availability over the same period. Combined availability has resulted in LFRS maintaining an average of 48 fire engines available at any one time since DRM has been instigated, which is higher than the average availability over the same period last year.

The total cost of overtime shifts across Q2 2025 was £24,166. For the same period in 2024, the overtime bill was £289,342, this equates to a saving of £265,175. This figure

includes on-costs (such as national insurance) and is for overtime shifts directly related to maintaining fire engine availability. To enable direct comparison, one pay figure has been used (2025), therefore the 2024 cost will be slightly over reported.

The numbers of detachments in Q2 2025 rose by 19% from 1197 in 2024, to 1420 in 2025. In Q2 2025 the cost of detachments was £11,200, in 2024 the cost of detachments in Q2 was £10,000 (equivalent including pay rise), representing a 12% increase in 2025.

Enacting DRM and temporarily removing a resource from a two-pump station for a shift was anticipated to reduce the available time to complete prevention and protection activity. Overall, LFRS operational crews carried out 20% less Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSC) in Q2 2025 compared with Q2 2024, and 14% less Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) over the same period. Stations where DRM occurs have experienced a similar drop in BFSC numbers but a higher drop in HFSC numbers (-28%).

It was also anticipated that enacting DRM will impact the activity at neighbouring stations due to an increase in mobilisations. Whilst mobilisation numbers have increased for some surrounding fire engines, activity levels remain within tolerable levels, and most are within standard deviation. We have also seen a similar drop in BFSC and HFSC at those neighbouring stations aligned to increased operational activity.

Business Risk

In light of the requirement for LFRS to achieve substantial savings, there is a requirement to reduce spending where possible. Overtime was previously used to supplement shortfalls in crewing where any wholetime appliance would have otherwise been unavailable, effectively maintaining 100% of LFRS wholetime assets at all times. This approach was incongruent with other established procedures which frequently see appliances from both one and two pump stations being unavailable for an entire shift due to training. This happens routinely without the any backfilling of that resource to maintain availability. Nationally, there is a requirement to become more efficient and effective utilising risk and demand to align resources. This process ensures that LFRS maintain sufficient resources whilst reducing spending. Whilst temporarily making a second appliance unavailable may have an impact on response times, this process ensures there is a minimum level of cover provided by other fire appliances prior to being made unavailable.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

There is a potential for a slight environmental impact associated with DRM as there may be both increases and decreases in the movement of staff due to not requiring all appliances to be protected all of the time, however conversely moving staff around to maintain availability where it is needed.

Equality and Diversity Implications

A full equality impact assessment has been undertaken; it did not identify any potential discrimination or adverse impacts.

Data Protection (GDPR)

Will the proposal(s) involve the processing of personal data? No

HR implications

There are no human resource implications arising from this process.

Financial implications

The financial implications of DRM have been analysed and are reported on within the report which detail significant cost efficiencies.

Legal implications

The DRM process is in line with our Community Risk Management Plan 2022-27, supporting strategies, and performance indicators. The Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) went through full consultation as part of its development, as is envisaged by the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:
Date:
Contact:

Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate: Insert Exemption Clause