Appendix 1

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority
Performance Committee

Wednesday, 3 September 2025, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
S Asghar	
M Clifford	
J Hugo	
G Mirfin	
A Riggott	
J Tetlow (Vice-Chair)	
E Worthington (Chair)	

Officers
S Pink, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) S Collinson, Head of Media and Communications (LFRS) M Hamer, Area Manager, Prevention and Protection (LFRS) P Jones, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery (LFRS) J Rossen, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery (LFRS) J Nottingham, Group Manager, Community Protection Manager (LFRS) R Harvey, Station Manager, National Operational Guidance (LFRS) S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)
In attendance
K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union

8-25/26	**Apologies For Absence**
	Apologies were received from Councillor S Sidat and County Councillor M Ritson.
9-25/26	**Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**
	None received.
10-25/26	**Minutes of Previous Meeting**
	Councillor J Hugo raised a spelling error from the minutes on Page 9 of the agenda

	pack with the amendment being agreed by the Chair. **Resolved**: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on the 02 July 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the agreed amendment.
11-25/26	**Performance Management Information**
	The Chair reminded Members of the importance of political neutrality within the Performance Committee Meetings to ensure a cohesive approach for the benefit of the Service and residents of Lancashire. The Chair congratulated the Service on a fantastic HMI report, especially in the areas of prevention & protection, people, and culture. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) presented a comprehensive report to the Performance Committee. This was the 1st quarterly report for 2025/26 as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-2027. In quarter 1, three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), 1.2.1 Staff Absence Wholetime (WT), 1.2.3 Staff Absence Greenbook, and 2.9 Business Fire Safety Checks, were shown in positive exception and three KPIs were shown in negative exception. These were 2.5 ABF (Non-Commercial Premises), 2.6 Deliberate Fires Total: Specific performance measure of deliberate fires, and 2.6.3 Deliberate Fires – Other (rubbish, grassland, vehicles etc). Members examined each indicator in turn focusing on those KPIs in exception as follows: **KPI 1 – Valuing our people so that they can focus on making Lancashire safer** **1.1 Overall Staff Engagement** Members received an update on how staff were engaged during the period. Between April and June 2025, 15 station visits were carried out by Principal Officers and Area Managers as part of the service-wide engagement programme. In addition, two online events were held with flexi duty officers on the financial outlook. Forty-seven wellbeing interactions were undertaken ranging from workshops with crews to wellbeing support dog interactions. Four 'On the Menu' digital sessions were held on the following topics: development opportunities for operational and service support staff; supporting staff with neurodiversity; and using social media. Surveys were conducted in relation to social media use and a new operational welfare unit.

Four in-person workshops were held at Service Headquarters on how to use different apps and tools in Microsoft 365.

The Service engaged with staff over several topics which related to fleet and equipment including duty rig uniform, body worn cameras, and new water tower appliances. Staff engagement over the redevelopment of the Service's staff newsletter also took place.

As previously reported: A comprehensive staff survey was undertaken periodically to gain insight from all staff on a range of topics which included leadership, training and development, health and wellbeing, and equality, diversity, and inclusion. The feedback was used to shape future activity and bring about improvements and new ideas. The survey included a staff engagement index which was a measure of overall staff engagement based on levels of pride, advocacy, attachment, inspiration, and motivation. The current staff engagement score index was 74% (2023).

Year	Engagement Index	Response Rate
2023	74%	49%
2020	79%	44%
2018	70%	43%
2016	64%	31%

The engagement index was calculated based on five questions that measured pride, advocacy, attachment, inspiration, and motivation; factors that were understood to be important features shared by staff who were engaged with the organisation.

For each respondent, an engagement score was calculated as the average score across the five questions, where strongly disagree was equivalent to 0, disagree was equivalent to 25, neither agree nor disagree was equivalent to 50, agree was equivalent to 75 and strongly agree was equivalent to 100. The engagement index was then calculated as the average engagement score in the organisation. This approach meant that a score of 100 was equivalent to all respondents saying strongly agree to all five engagement questions, while a score of 0 was equivalent to all respondents saying strongly disagree to all five engagement questions.

During the survey period, the corporate communications department visited wholetime and on-call crews on 51 occasions to encourage participation in the survey. Five focus groups were held with on-call units by the Service's independent researcher to obtain qualitative feedback on on-call specific matters, to complement the survey data.

1.2.1 Staff Absence Wholetime

This indicator measured the cumulative number of shifts (days) lost due to sickness for all wholetime staff divided by the total average strength.

Annual Standard: Not more than 8 shifts lost.
Annual Shifts Lost ÷ 4 quarters = 2

Quarter shifts lost: 1.982
Cumulative total number of shifts lost: 1.982

The positive exception report was due to the number of shifts lost through absence per employee being below the Service target for quarter 1.

The element of that section of the report referred to sickness absence rates for the period 01 April 2024 to June 2025.

The agreed target performance level was 8 shifts lost per employee per year, and 2 shifts lost per quarter for wholetime staff. The actual shifts lost for the period for that group of staff was 1.98, which was 0.02 shifts below target. During the same period of the previous year, 2.14 shifts were lost which was a reduction of 0.16 shifts lost per wholetime employee compared to the same period of the previous year.

A total of 1,243 wholetime absence shifts lost = 1.98 against a target of 2.00.

The number of cases of long-term absence which spanned over the total of the 3 months increased from 1 case in Q4 of 2024-25 to 4 cases in Q1. The absence reasons were:

- Mental Health 2 cases
- Other absence types 2 cases

One Hundred and seventy-nine shifts were lost during quarter 1 as a result of the one case of long-term absence. This was in comparison to 80 shifts which were lost during the same quarter of 2024-25. Those cases accounted for 0.29 shifts lost per person over the quarter.

There were 27 cases of long-term absence which were recorded within the 3 months:

- Hospital/Post Operative Procedure 9 cases
- Musculo Skeletal 8 cases
- Mental Health 5 cases
- Unknown causes, not specified 2 cases
- Other absence types 3 cases

There were 61 shifts lost which related to Respiratory related absences including Coronavirus absence. This was compared to 117 shifts lost in the same quarter of 2024-25.

The Service had an Absence Management Policy which detailed its approach to how it would manage absence to ensure that staff time was managed effectively, but also members of staff were supported back to work or exited from the Service in a compassionate way.

The Human Resources (HR) system ITrent automatically generated monthly reports to line managers and HR Business Partners in relation to employees and the periods and reasons for absence, which were closely monitored. Where

employees were absent due to a mental health or stress related condition, they were referred to the Occupational Health Unit (OHU) as early as possible. Employees returning to work had a return-to-work interview and stress risk assessment, or individual health risk assessments were completed where required.

The Service had several support mechanisms available to support individuals to return to work or be exited as appropriate which included guidance from Occupational Health, access to Trauma Risk Management (TRiM), access to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), and the Firefighters Charity.

Where an employee did not return to work in a timely manner, an absence review meeting would take place with the employee, the line manager, and a representative from Human Resources. The meetings were aimed at identifying support to return an individual back to work which could include modified duties for a period, redeployment, but ultimately could result in dismissal, or permanent ill health retirement from the Service.

The Absence Management Policy detailed when a formal review of an employee's performance levels would normally take place. In terms of short-term absence, a formal review would take place where an employee had 3 or more periods of absence in 6 months, or an employee had 14 days absent. In terms of long-term absence, a formal review would normally take place at 3, 6, 9 and 11 months.

A key challenge for supporting operational staff return to work was that the threshold for fitness and return to work for operational firefighters was higher than in other occupations due to their hazardous working conditions.

In response to a question from County Councillor A Riggott at the last Performance Committee in relation to the possibility of including a breakdown of the 'other absence types category', the ACFO advised it would not be possible to provide the information because of confidentiality as it could identify individuals.

County Councillor M Clifford asked if any cases of sickness for firefighters were caused during their attendance at operational incidents. The ACFO explained that it was difficult to make a correlation between sickness and incidents, and in particular, long-term illness. There were some direct impacts from incidents, and it was acknowledged that firefighters could attend traumatic incidents. Robust support mechanisms were in place for staff with close monitoring taking place.

1.2.2 Staff Absence On-Call (OC)

This indicator measured the percentage of contracted hours lost due to sickness for all on-call contracted staff.

Annual Standard: No more than 2.5% lost as a % of available hours of cover.

Cumulative on-call absence (as a % of available hours cover) at the end of the quarter, 1.24%.

County Councillor G Mirfin queried how Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's (LFRS) figures for the KPI compared with the benchmark of other Fire and Rescue

Services (FRSs). The ACFO advised that LFRS compared favourably with the other Services which was evidenced in the National Fire and Rescue Service Sickness Absence Report where LFRS featured close to the bottom of the chart in relation to the number of sickness absence days. It was highlighted that the quarterly report could not be shared with Members due to confidentiality. The ACFO explained that On-Call firefighters worked less hours which impacted figures positively.

1.2.3 Staff Absence Greenbook

The ACFO explained that Grey book referred to operational staff and Green book referred to support staff who were generally non-operational. There were some dual contract green book staff who provided on-call cover whilst fulfilling their green book role.

This indicator measured the cumulative number of shifts (days) lost due to sickness for all green book support staff divided by the average strength.

Annual Standard: Not more than 8 shifts lost.
Annual Shifts Lost ÷ 4 quarters: 2

Quarter shifts lost: 1.848
Cumulative shifts lost: 1.848

The agreed target performance level was 8 shifts lost per employee per year across both Grey and Green Book staff. The actual shifts lost for Green Book staff for Q1 was 1.85 shifts lost per employee, which was 0.15 below target. During the same period of the previous year, 1.35 shifts were lost which was an increase of 0.50 shifts lost per green book employee compared to the same period of the previous year.

The positive exception report was due to the number of shifts lost through absence per employee being below the Service target for quarter 1.

The agreed target performance level was 8 shifts lost per employee per year for Green Book staff. The actual shifts lost for the period for this group of staff were 1.85, which was 0.15 below target. During the same period of the previous year, 1.35 shifts were lost which was an increase of 0.50 shifts lost per green book employee compared to the same period last year.

During April – June 2025, absence statistics showed non-uniformed personnel absence above target for the quarter with 1.85 shifts lost in the quarter against a target of 2.00 shifts lost.

425 non-uniformed absence shifts lost = 1.85 against a target of 2.00 during quarter 1. There was one case of long-term absence which spanned over the total of the 3 months which related to Mental Health – Stress.

The number of long-term absence cases recorded in the quarter reduced from 10 in Q4 of 2024-25 to 8 in Q1:

- Mental Health 2 cases
- Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory problems 2 cases
- Other absence types 4 cases

During the quarter, 245 shifts were lost as a result of the 8 cases of long-term absences, this was in comparison to 206 shifts lost during the same quarter of 2024-25. These cases accounted for 1.07 shifts lost per person over the quarter.

Respiratory related absences accounted for 27 lost shifts, which included Coronavirus absence. This was compared to 38 shifts lost in the same quarter of 2024-25.

The Service had an Absence Management Policy which detailed its approach to how it would manage absence to ensure that staff time was managed effectively, but also members of staff were supported back to work or exited from the Service in a compassionate way.

The Human Resources (HR) system ITrent automatically generated monthly reports to line managers and HR Business Partners in relation to employees and the periods and reasons for absence which were closely monitored. Where employees were absent due to a mental health or stress related condition, they were referred to the Occupational Health Unit (OHU) as early as possible. Employees that returned to work had a return-to-work interview and stress risk assessment, or individual health risk assessments were completed where required.

The Service had several support mechanisms available to support individuals to return to work or be exited as appropriate which included guidance from Occupational Health, access to Trauma Risk Management (TRiM), access to an Employee Assistance Programme and the Firefighters Charity.

Where an employee did not return to work in a timely manner, an absence review meeting would take place with the employee, the line manager, and a representative from Human Resources. The meetings were aimed at identifying support to return an individual back to work which could include modified duties for a period, redeployment, but ultimately could result in dismissal or permanent ill health retirement from the Service.

The Absence Management Policy details when a formal review of an employee's performance levels would normally take place. In terms of short-term absence, a formal review would take place where an employee had 3 or more periods of absence in 6 months, or an employee had 14 days absent. In terms of long-term absence, a formal review would normally take place at 3, 6, 9, and 11 months.

1.3.1 Workforce Diversity

This indicator measured diversity as a percentage.

Combined diversity percentage of grey book (operational) and green book (support) staff. The percentages outside of the brackets represented the current quarter, with the percentage within the brackets illustrating the same quarter of the previous year:

Gender:	Female 22%(22%)	Male 78%(78%)	
Ethnicity:	BME 4%(4%)	White 91%(93%)	Not stated 5%(3%)
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 5%(4%)	Heterosexual 62%(58%)	Not stated 33%(38%)
Disability:	Disability 3%(3%)	No disability 94%(95%)	Not stated 3%(2%)

Diversity percentage by Grey Book Staff and Green Book Staff. Counts included double counts if the member of staff was dual contracted between Grey and Green Book.

Separate diversity percentage of grey book (operational) and green book (support) staff:

Gender:	Female	Grey book 11%	Green book 61%
	Male	Grey book 89%	Green book 39%
Ethnicity:	BME	Grey book 3%	Green book 5%
	White	Grey book 92%	Green book 85%
	Not stated	Grey book 5%	Green book 10%
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT	Grey book 5%	Green book 3%
	Heterosexual	Grey book 60%	Green book 67%
	Not stated	Grey book 35%	Green book 30%
Disability:	Disability	Grey book 3%	Green book 5%
	No disability	Grey book 94%	Green book 88%
	Not stated	Grey book 3%	Green book 7%

1.3.2 Workforce Diversity Recruited

This new indicator measured workforce diversity recruited as a percentage.

Combined diversity percentage of grey book (operational) and green book (support) staff. The percentages outside of the brackets represented the current quarter, with the percentage within the brackets illustrating the same quarter of the previous year:

Gender:	Female 25%(90%)	Male 75%(10%)	
Ethnicity:	BME 0%(0%)	White 82%(40%)	Not Stated 18%(60%)
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 0%(0%)	Heterosexual 82%(90%)	Not stated 18%(10%)
Disability:	Disability 0%(0%)	No disability 89%(100%)	Not stated 11%(0%)

During quarter 1, there were a total of 28 new entrants.

	It was noted that a further breakdown of the data would not be provided as it may enable the identification of individuals, due to the small numbers of persons recruited during certain periods. The ACFO highlighted that the recruitment figure of 90% for the same quarter of the previous year for 'Female' was incorrect and would be amended. In response to a question from County Councillor S Ashar regarding the representation of BME and disabled staff in operational roles, the ACFO explained that individuals with disabilities were accommodated and supported through the recruitment process where possible i.e. neurodiversity, however, there were some limitations with the role in relation to some disabilities. The Service, supported by Corporate Communications carried out, and were involved in, community events whereby LFRS were promoted as the employer of choice for all members of the community. Applicants also had the option to join the On-Call duty system if they were unable to dedicate their time to the Whole Time role. County Councillor G Mirfin queried how Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's (LFRS) figures for the KPI compared with the benchmark of other Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs). The Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement (ADoCE), Steph Collinson, advised that the diversity figures for the Service were slightly above the UK average although, figures were low across the sector. The ACFO added that feedback from the HMI was that it recognised that BME communities were hard to reach, although the Service continued to make progress with diverse communities. The ADoCE stated that, in terms of Positive Action, the Service attempted to reach those who had never traditionally considered a career with the Fire Service and encourage them to contemplate joining. Community Safety Advisors and Operational staff assisted by engaging with communities, demonstrating that a role with the Fire Service was possible, and removing perceived barriers. Members noted that 10% of Firefighters nationally were women, and in Lancashire the figure was 11%. Nationally, 4% of Firefighters were from a BME background with 3% in Lancashire. County Councillor Joel Tetlow commented that Firefighters required a certain level of physical fitness compared to other types of jobs which could be the reason for the low disability recruitment figures across the sector. Regarding applicants with disabilities, County Councillor M Clifford, asked if buildings in the Service were accessible and if the Service Headquarters had a lift to other floors. The ACFO confirmed that there was no lift in Headquarters. Area Manager (AM), Matt Hamer explained that he was the Chair of the Disability Voice Group that had requested an Estates Review with the Head of Property which was currently in progress. It was recognised that some of the buildings had been built prior to disability regulations, however, there was a Directory of Accessibility within the Service whereby accessible spaces were available when required. Improvements in the accessibility of buildings were being investigated with the possibility of grant funding being sought. The proposed redevelopment at LDC would be built incorporating disabled access and requirements.

Councillor Jane Hugo acknowledged the ongoing work of the Service to improve facilities in relation to gender and encouraging more women to apply. The work to reconfigure station facilities at Blackpool Fire Station had taken place.

1.4 Staff Accidents

This indicator measured the number of accidents which occurred to staff members at work within the quarter: Wholetime, On-Call and Greenbook.

Total number of staff accidents, 9 for quarter 1; year to date 9; previous year to date 21. Quarterly activity decreased 57.14% (12 incidents) over the same quarter of the previous year.

KPI 2 - Preventing, fires and other emergencies from happening and Protecting people and property when fires happen

2.1 Risk Map Score

This indicator measured the fire risk in each Super Output Area (SOA), of which there were 941. Risk was determined using fire activity over the previous 3 fiscal years along with a range of demographic data, such as population and deprivation. The County risk map score was updated annually and presented to the Performance Committee in the quarter 1 reporting period.

Annual Standard: To reduce the risk in Lancashire – an annual reduction in the County risk map score.

(Dwelling Fires ÷ Total Dwellings) + (Dwelling Fire Casualties ÷ Resident Population x 4) + Building Fire + (IMD x 2) = Risk Score.

The current score was 30,532 and the previous year's score was 30,750 which meant that the fire risk continued to reduce.

The ACFO advised the Service's software was in the process of being updated to identify the changes to the boundary of wards over the period. It would be sometime before the wards were redefined.

County Councillor G Mirfin stated that an influential factor on the calculation for the Risk Score was Total Dwellings due to an increase in the number of houses being built in Lancashire and consequentially, a rise in the population. He asked if the risk profile for each district could be provided as he would like to identify how the risk profiles had changed in relation to the increase in the number of houses and the demographics. He commented that the Risk Map demonstrated that the Service had managed the changes well and he had written to MPs to emphasise the need for an increase in funding for the Service. The ACFO stated that funding was key to addressing the Service's £5m deficit. The Service managed staff in an effective way to ensure cover and attendance times were met which also assisted in reducing the overtime bill. The outcome of the budget would not be known until the end of the year but seemingly, the North of the country was financially disadvantaged compared to the South which could result in cuts for the Service. In

	consideration of the HMI report, the Service did not want to make cuts as the results had given emphasis to an effective working model, therefore any impact the Councillors could make towards funding would be crucial. The ACFO informed Members that the red, High Risk districts were located in Preston, Pendle, Chorley, with 9 in Blackpool. Area Manager (AM), Phil Jones added that the Risk Score was based on fire and more houses resulted in more people taking part in leisure activities with the unintended consequence resulting in a rise in incidents. Peoples' lifestyles also changed in the warm weather which needed to be taken into consideration with Special Service Calls for ambulance interventions and RTCs. Councillor J Hugo asked if a list of the districts could be added to the Risk Map to allow for easy identification of areas for analysis. She acknowledged the work of the Service in Blackpool around the Fire Station and areas of deprivation. The overall view was to locate areas of need, identify the type of population in those areas, and the work of the Service to minimise risk. County Councillor M Clifford queried why Chorley had moved to the High Risk category. AM, Matt Hamer explained that there were 941 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that underpinned the Risk Map which would change to 945 due to SOA boundary changes. The majority of the 12 areas in the Very High Risk Grade category were located in Blackpool and had been impacted by the number of dwelling fires versus the number of dwellings and the index of deprivation. Due to the number of areas within the spreadsheet, it was too large and complicated to share with Members, however, he had a simplified map diagram which he could share with Members on-screen, which showed risk reduction over the last years. In terms of location, Local Group Managers were provided with a District Intelligence Profile which contained information about local risk and informed targeted prevention activity in that area. Due to improved building regulations and standards, new housing did not necessarily constitute a higher number of fires. The Chair noted that in Blackpool, incidents were linked to deprivation and population and queried if there was a specific building type that was at a higher risk. AM, Matt Hamer explained that risks were related to human behaviour, but that mosaic data was used that categorised individuals within an area along with national data and work to tackle risk was carried out with partners. Those in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) tended to be at higher risk in Blackpool. However, in the east of Lancashire, it was those in terraced houses, but it was the same type of individuals, and it was those individuals who were targeted. It was a great achievement that Lancashire only had 12 small areas of High Risk. In response to a question from the Chair in relation to whether the owners of HMOs followed Fire Safety Regulations, AM Matt Hamer advised that, in Blackpool, a new Licensing Housing Scheme was being worked on by Community Fire Safety Team along with the Local Authority Housing Team. It was hoped that once landlords were aware of the work, they would be proactive in asking for help although it was acknowledged that not all would.

County Councillor A Riggott asked if information could be provided on those SOAs where the numbers had changed in the Very High and High Risk Grades on the Risk Map along with what support Members could provide in those areas. AM, Matt Hamer confirmed that he was happy to provide more details on those SOAs, and any support Members could give within their local district councils would be welcome. Councillor J Hugo highlighted that the CFA was a Combined Fire Authority which comprised of the Upper Tier authorities, Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council, and Blackpool Council. It was clarified that Lancashire County Council had districts, but the other authorities did not.

County Councillor A Riggott stated, in relation to HMOs, that there were a number of districts out to consultation on licensing schemes and he asked how well informed the Service was with regards to conversions of properties. AM, Matt Hamer explained that the Service received Building Regulation Consultations and had a relationship with Council Planning Departments which enhanced awareness. Protection Teams were then able to intervene when people moved into those buildings to deliver behavioural safety messages.

Councillor G Mirfin remarked that local authorities were not made aware of smaller HMOs with less than 5 people as they did not require a licence. Lancaster and Preston had the highest number of HMOs in Lancashire. He added that Blackburn and Burnley had the fewest number of houses built over the last 27 years and Blackpool's 'dilapidated stock' may have added to the risk profile as it was possible in terraced houses that fires would not be contained.

Councillor J Hugo commented that the reason Blackpool may not have built housing stock was because of its high-density population and lack of space.

County Councillor J Tetlow referenced Bed & Breakfast accommodation in Blackpool which may have been converted to HMOs and asked if the Service received a full list of registered HMOs. AM, Matt Hamer explained that Local Authorities were the custodians of building type and use data which was passed to the Service with approximately 80% accuracy, with legacy recording possibly being responsible for some inaccuracies. The Service also kept its own records which were shared with custodians but there were difficulties when landlords did not register property conversions to HMOs. Local work carried out by Prevention and Response teams constantly changed in terms of new build housing and property conversions.

In response to a query from the Chair as to whether the Service worked with universities in relation to information for student accommodation properties, AM, Matt Hamer advised that the Service had working relationships with UCLan, Lancaster University, and Ormskirk University. Engagement work took place with landlords and during Freshers week around students' behavioural risks. Some universities had representation on Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) where information was shared, and the Service worked proactively.

2.2 Overall Activity

This indicator measured the number of incidents that LFRS attended with one or more pumping appliances. Incidents attended included fires, special service calls,

false alarms and collaborative work undertaken with other emergency services i.e.: missing person searches on behalf of the Lancashire Constabulary (LanCon) and gaining entry incidents at the request of the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS).

Incidents attended, year to date 5,086; previous year to date 4,273. Quarterly activity increased 19.03% over the same quarter of the previous year.

In quarter 1, the Service attended 5,086 incidents. The report presented a chart which represented the count and percentage that each activity had contributed to the overall quarter's activity:

- Total False Alarm Calls (due to apparatus, good intent and malicious) – 1964, 39%
- Total Primary Fire Calls (accidental dwelling / building and deliberate dwelling / commercial fires and other primary fires) – 525, 10%
- Total Secondary Fire Calls (deliberate and accidental fires) – 1490, 29%
- Total Special Service Calls (critical incidents, gaining entry, RTCs, Flooding and other critical incidents) – 1100, 22%

The ACFO stated that the peak in activity and demand was due to the hot weather experienced throughout April and May.

2.3 Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a dwelling had been affected, and the cause of the fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

Members noted that a primary fire was one involving property (excluding derelict property) or any fires involving casualties, rescues or any fire attended by 5 or more pumping appliances.

Accidental Dwelling Fires, 193 in quarter 1; year to date 193; previous year to date 166. Quarterly activity increased 16.27% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.3.1 ADF – Harm to people: Casualties

This indicator reported the number of fire related fatalities, slight and serious injuries at primary fires where a dwelling had been affected and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental or Not known.'

A slight injury was defined as; a person attending hospital as an outpatient (not precautionary check). A serious injury was defined as; at least an overnight stay in hospital as an in-patient.

Fatal	1 in quarter 1; year to date 1; previous year to date 2
Injuries appear Serious	1 in quarter 1; year to date 1; previous year to date 0
Injuries appear Slight	8 in quarter 1; year to date 1; previous year to date 10

Quarterly activity decreased 16.6% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.3.2 ADF – Harm to property: Extent of damage (fire severity)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a dwelling had been affected, and the cause of fire had been recorded as ‘'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

Extent of fire, heat and smoke damage was recorded at the time the ‘stop’ message was sent and included all damage types.

The table in the report showed a breakdown of fire severity with a directional indicator that compared:

Current quarter, combined percentage of 86% against same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 86%.

Combined quarterly percentage remained static compared to the same quarter of the previous year.

2.4 Accidental Building Fires (ABF) (Commercial Premises)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a building had been affected (which was other than a dwelling or a private building associated with a dwelling), and the cause of fire had been recorded as ‘'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

ABF (Commercial Premises), 55 in quarter 1; year to date 55; previous year to date 72. Quarterly activity decreased 23.61% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.4.1 ABF (Commercial Premises) – Harm to property: Extent of damage (fire severity)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a building had been affected (which was other than a dwelling or a private building associated with a dwelling), and the cause of fire had been recorded as ‘'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

Extent of fire, heat and smoke damage was recorded at the time the ‘stop’ message was sent and included all damage types.

The table in the report showed a breakdown of fire severity with a directional indicator that compared:

- current quarter, combined percentage of 65% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 78%.

Combined quarterly percentage had therefore decreased 12.32% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.5 Accidental Building Fires (Non-Commercial Premises)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a private garage, private

shed, private greenhouse, private summerhouse, or other private non-residential building had been affected, and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known.'

ABF (Non-Commercial Premises), 39 in quarter 1; year to date 39; previous year to date 21. Quarterly activity increased 85.71% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The negative exception report was due to the number of accidental non-commercial building fires being above the upper control limit during April and May of quarter 1.

A high number of accidental fires involving private garden sheds were responsible for breaching the upper control limits in April and May, with 10 garden fires recorded each month, however, there was only 1 garden shed fire in following month of June.

The total number of incidents was 21 over the three-month period and equalled the 21 garden shed fires over the whole of the previous 2024-25 year.

Due to the nature of the construction, the majority of the sheds resulted in the extent of damage affecting the whole building. The most common cause of ignition was spread from a secondary fire due to the burning of garden or household waste.

Activity levels in June had now returned to below the previous three-year average.

Due to the prolonged period of dry weather in the first 2 months of quarter 1 (Met Office indicate that April 2025 was the sunniest on record), the Service saw a large increase in domestic accidental building fires, primarily sheds. The main reason for this was the lifestyle changes during periods of hot weather, such as spending more time outdoors, with activities using hot processes, such as barbeques, along with burning away of weeds and having fires to discard of garden waste and other waste.

The Key actions taken across all districts that saw an increase were:

- Utilising the virtual library to provide leaflets for Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs), warning of the dangers of garden fires and barbeques.
- Social Media posts by the Service and individual Service accounts.
- Post fire activity and leaflet drops in areas of accidental building fire activity.

AM, Phil Jones emphasised that the long period of hot, dry weather conditions, had exacerbated accidental fires caused by lifestyle changes and outdoor activities.

2.5.1 ABF (Non-Commercial premises: Private garages and sheds) – Harm to property: Extent of damage (fire severity)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a private garage, private shed, private greenhouse, private summerhouse, or other private non-residential building had been affected, and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known.'

Extent of fire, heat and smoke damage was recorded at the time the 'stop' message was sent and included all damage types.

The table in the report showed a breakdown of fire severity with a directional indicator that compared:

- current quarter, combined percentage of 28% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 38%.

Combined quarterly activity had therefore decreased 9.89% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.6 Deliberate Fires Total: Specific performance measure of deliberate fires

This indicator provided an overall measure of primary and secondary fires where the cause of fire had been recorded as deliberate.

Deliberate Fires – 868 in quarter 1; year to date 868; previous year to date 491. Quarterly activity increased 76.78% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The negative exception report was recorded under KPI 2.6.3.

2.6.1 Deliberate Fires – Dwellings

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a dwelling had been affected, and the cause of fire had been recorded as deliberate.

Deliberate Fires – Dwellings, 19 in quarter 1, year to date 19; previous year to date 25. Quarterly activity decreased 24.00% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.6.2 Deliberate Fires - Commercial Premises

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where the property type was a building, other than a dwelling or a private building associated with a dwelling, and the cause of fire had been recorded as deliberate.

Deliberate Fires – Commercial Premises, 42 in quarter 1; year to date 42; previous year to date 49.

Quarterly activity decreased 14.29% over the same quarter of the previous year.

A second incident activity line was shown on the graph which excluded Crown premises which fell outside of the Service's legislative jurisdiction.

2.6.3 Deliberate Fires – Other (rubbish, grassland, vehicles etc).

This indicator reported the number of primary and secondary fires where the property type was other than a building, except where the building was recorded as derelict, and the cause of fire had been recorded as deliberate.

The majority of deliberate fires were outdoor secondary fires and included grassland and refuse fires. Derelict vehicle fires were also included under secondary fires.

Deliberate Fires – Other, 807 in quarter 1; year to date 807; previous year to date 417. Quarterly activity increased 93.53% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The negative exception report was due to the total number of deliberate secondary fires being above the upper control limit during April and May of quarter 1.

April and May recorded an almost equal number of fires at 325 and 319 respectively, with both months recording a notable increase over the previous five-year April and May average.

Whilst a large number of property types were captured within this KPI, the largest increase was seen in the property type of loose refuse (incl. garden waste), which recorded 362 incidents in the quarter, compared to 151 in the same months of the previous year. Tree scrub recorded 52 fires, against 12 in the previous year's quarter 1, and grassland, pasture, grazing etc. 41 incidents against last year's 7.

Activity levels in June had since returned to near the previous three-year average. Fires of this nature were often seasonal, and followed periods of warm, dry weather.

Due to the prolonged period of dry weather in the first 2 months of quarter 1 (Met Office indicated that April 2025 was the sunniest on record), the Service had seen a large increase in deliberate fires primarily loose refuse, garden waste, tree/scrub, and grassland.

This increase was extremely sharp when compared to the same period in 2024 where April was the 6th wettest since 1836. Again, the warm protracted weather brought more people into the outdoors, and the environment was extremely dry.

Key actions:

- Increase In Environmental Visual Audits (EVA) and the reporting of waste.
- Increase in the reporting of insecure empty buildings.
- Targeting of businesses in the area of high Anti-social activity (ASB) fire activity with Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSC).
- Targeting of homes and businesses within the identified rural/urban interface for Home Fire safety Checks (HFSC) and BFSC.
- Social media post and reminders of the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in high-risk wildfire locations within Blackburn with Darwen.
- Proactive patrols from wildfire units and crews in high wildfire risk areas.
- Engagement with rural wildfire watch groups and Lancashire Fire Operations Group (LFOG) partners.

In response to a question from the Chair as to whether there was a specific area where those types of deliberate fires took place, AM, Phil Jones advised that wildfires tended to occur on larger areas such as West Pennine Moors, however,

the nuisance fires were more likely to occur in densely populated areas. He stated that more staff were using a system for data to identify ASB individuals and hotspot areas which allowed for proactive work to prepare for, and effectively manage, incidents. AM, Matt Hamer added that Community Protection Managers (CPMs) were provided with district intelligence and a map of the hotspots for antisocial behaviour in their areas, which were used in conjunction with those partners in the CSP to inform local joint working.

County Councillor M Clifford asked if Chorley was included in the social media post for reminders of the PSPO in high-risk wildfire locations within Blackburn with Darwen. AM, Phil Jones explained that the PSPO covered a large geographical range which included areas of Chorley.

2.7 Home Fire Safety Checks

This indicator reported the percentage of completed Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC), excluding refusals, carried out where the risk score had been determined to be high.

An improvement was shown if:

- the total number of HFSC's completed was greater than the comparable quarter of the previous year; and
- the percentage of high HFSC outcomes was greater than the comparable quarter of the previous year.

HFSCs completed, 5,966 in quarter 1; year to date 5.966; previous year to date 5,880. Quarterly activity increased 1.5% against the same quarter of the previous year.

HFSCs with high-risk outcomes, Quarter 1, 52%; previous year Quarter 1, 53%.

High risk outcomes decreased 1% against the same quarter of the previous year.

2.8 Numbers of prevention activities such as Childsafe, wasted lives etc

Members received an update on the number of sessions delivered against the following prevention activities during the quarter:

ChildSafe, 71 sessions delivered to 2,201 students;
RoadSense, 88 sessions delivered to 3,271 students;
SENDSafe, 5 sessions delivered to 175 students;
Wasted Lives, 17 sessions delivered to 1,389 students;
Biker Down, 6 sessions delivered to 162 attendees;
FIRES, 53 referrals opened prior to Q1 and carried over. 66 referrals received in Q1. 31 referrals closed in Q1. 79 referrals carried to 2025-26, Q2;
Partner Training (including care providers), 8 sessions delivered to 66 delegates;

Specific Education packages – delivered Water Safety, BrightSparx, ASB, Deliberate Fire Setting etc (Covers key stages 2, 3 and 4). 62 in-school water safety sessions delivered to 11,393 students, and 8 Virtual sessions delivered to

9,135 pupils.

Arson Threat Referrals – 209.

2.9 Business Fire Safety Checks

This indicator reported the number of Business Fire Safety Check (BFSC's) completed and whether the result was satisfactory or unsatisfactory. If the result of a BFSC was unsatisfactory, fire safety advice would be provided to help the business comply with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. If critical fire safety issues were identified, then a business safety advisor would conduct a follow-up intervention.

- The pro rata BFSC target was delivered through each quarter.

A +/-10% tolerance was applied to the completed BFSCs and the year to date (YTD) BFSCs, against both the quarterly and YTD targets. When both counts were outside of the 10% tolerance, they would be deemed in exception which enabled local delivery to flex with the needs of their district plan over the quarters.

BFSCs completed, 769 in quarter 1; Cumulative 769; YTD target, 625; previous YTD 924.

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being satisfactory, 692. Top 5 completed satisfactory premise types (Shops 240, Factories/Warehouses 100, Offices 89, Other Workplaces 88, Other Public Premises 53).

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being unsatisfactory, 77. Top 5 completed unsatisfactory premise types (Shops 31, Other Workplaces 18, Factories/Warehouses 10, Licensed Premises 5, Other Public Premises 3).

The positive exception report was due to the number of completed Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSCs) being greater than 10% of the quarterly target, and the cumulative year to date target.

Service delivery personnel had carried out BFSCs in their respective districts over the last 2 years, and BFSC work was now embedded into business-as-usual activity. The KPI dashboard and District Intel Profiles were used to identify and target both the business types and business locations for that activity.

2.9.1 Fire Safety Activity (including Business Fire Safety Checks)

This indicator reported the number of Fire Safety Enforcement inspections carried out within the period which resulted in supporting businesses to improve and become compliant with fire safety regulations or where formal action of enforcement and prosecution had been taken for those that failed to comply.

An improvement was shown if the percentage of audits that required formal activity was greater than the comparable quarter of the previous year.

Total Fire Safety Enforcement Inspections, Quarter 1, 402;

Formal Activity in Quarter 1, 5%, same quarter of the previous year 6%. Quarterly activity decreased 1% against the same quarter of the previous year.

Members noted the cumulative number of Fire Safety inspections undertaken for 2025/26 was 402.

2.10 Building Regulation Consultations (BRC) (number and completed on time)

Where the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applied to premises (or would apply following building work) the building control body must consult with LFRS for comments / advice regarding fire safety. LFRS should make any comments in writing within 15 working days from receiving a BRC.

This indicator provided Members with information on the number of building regulations consultations received during the period together with improvement actions.

In Quarter 1, Building Regulation Consultations received 104, of which 103 were completed within the timeframe (LFRS should make comments in writing within 15 working days of receiving a BRC).

KPI 3 - Responding to fire and other emergencies quickly

3.1 Critical Fire Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance

This indicator reported the 'Time of Call' (TOC) and 'Time in Attendance' (TIA) of the first fire engine arriving at the incident in less than the relevant response standard.

The response standards included call handling and fire engine response time for the first fire engine attending a critical fire, as follows: -

- Very high-risk area = 6 minutes
- High risk area = 8 minutes
- Medium risk area = 10 minutes
- Low risk area = 12 minutes

The response standards were determined by the risk map score and subsequent risk grade for the location of the fire.

Standards were achieved when the time between the 'Time of Call' (TOC) and 'Time in Attendance' (TIA) of the first fire engine arriving at the incident, averaged over the quarter, was less than the relevant response standard. Expressed in minutes & seconds.

Critical Fire Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance, Quarter 1, Very High 05:50 min; High 05:47 min, Medium 07:05 min, Low 09:08 min.

Q1 overall 07:40 min. Year to date overall 07:40 min. Previous year to date overall

07:47 min.

County Councillor J Tetlow stated that LFRS' response times must be some of the best in the country. The ACFO agreed that the response times were excellent and advised that there were nuances with the way other services recorded response times as some did not include call handling times which impacted on the accuracy of those figures.

In response to a question from the Chair as to how the Service had lowered the High response time from 7:04 mins to 5:47 mins, the ACFO explained that the Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT) assisted to place resources in the most appropriate areas of risk which was managed within North West Fire Control and positively impacted attendance times. Additionally, AM, Phil Jones advised that the Service had introduced pre-alerts whereby the nearest fire station was alerted to an incident ahead of the call which was particularly advantageous to the attendance times of On Call firefighters. The ACFO highlighted that the quicker resources arrived at an incident, the more damage and severity of fires were limited and survivability increased.

3.2 Critical Special Service Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance

This indicator reported the 'Time of Call' (TOC) and 'Time in Attendance' (TIA) of the first fire engine arriving at the incident in less than the relevant response standard.

The response standard included how long it took the first fire engine to respond to critical special service (non-fire) incidents where there was a risk to life such as road traffic collisions, rescues, and hazardous materials incidents. For these critical special service call incidents there was a single response standard of 13 minutes (which measured call handling time and fire engine response time).

Critical Special Service Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance, 08:43 min in quarter 1; year to date 08:43 min; previous year to date 08:22 min.

3.3 Total Fire Engine Availability

This indicator measured the availability of the 1st fire engine at each of the 39 fire stations. It was measured as the percentage of time the 1st fire engine was available to respond compared to the total time in the period.

Standard: to be in attendance within response standard target on 90% of occasions.

Total Fire Engine Availability, 89.26% in quarter 1; year to date 89.26%; previous year to date 86.91%.

Quarterly availability increased 2.35% over the same quarter of the previous year.

AM, John Rossen explained that On Call availability was a national challenge and, over the last 12 months, the On Call Improvement Programme (OCIP) had driven transformation across the Service with several workstreams to improve recruitment,

development, and retention, with expectations that fire engine availability would be sustained and improved upon. The ACFO stated that the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO), Steve Healey would host the National Fire Chiefs conference next month regarding On Call availability.

KPI 4 - Delivering value for money in how we use our resources

4.1 Progress Against Allocated Budget

Members received an update on spend against the approved budget for the year.

The annual budget for 2025/26 was set at £77.5 million. The spend of £18.2 million was broadly in line with allocated budget at the end of the first quarter with a small overspend on pay offset by similar underspend on non-pay. Looking ahead, there were some risks around inflation being higher than budgeted, and £0.5m savings were required within the year.

The annual revised capital budget for 2025/26 was £13.9 million and spend at the end of June was £1.2 million. To date no slippage to 2026/27 had been identified.

Quarter 1 variance 0.0% (Revenue budget variance).

4.2 Partnership Collaboration

Under the Policing and Crime Act 2017, blue light services were under a formal duty to collaborate to improve efficiency, effectiveness and deliver improved outcomes.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS), Lancashire Constabulary and North West Ambulance Service had met at both tactical and strategic levels and had agreed and signed a strategic statement of intent which contained the following aims:

- **Improved Outcomes** – The collaboration maintains or improves the service we provide to local people and local communities;
- **Reduce Demand** – The collaboration should contribute towards our longer-term strategic objective of decreasing risk in communities and reducing demand on services;
- **Better Value for Money** – The collaboration produces quantifiable efficiencies either on implementation or in the longer term;
- **Reduced inequalities within our communities** – The collaboration contributes towards reducing inequalities wherever possible.

The following were examples of partnership working from a number of departments across the Service. The aim was to increase efficiency and effectiveness of working practices whether this related to equipment, technology, appliances, or training.

The chair of both the Strategic and Tactical Blue Light Collaboration Boards had transferred to Lancashire Constabulary until 2026. Several workstreams were

	ongoing with subgroups for Leadership, Wellbeing Mental Health and Welfare, Estates, and Recruitment. The Chair advised Members that she welcomed any ideas to save money to meet the £0.5m required savings and any possible partnerships that would create an income. County Councillor J Tetlow questioned whether political pressure could be applied to government to provide funding for LFRS considering the Service's recent rating as the top FRS in the country. County Councillor G Mirfin confirmed that the standard way to apply pressure would be to lobby hard, but it had to be recognised that ministers were new in post, inexperienced, and would need to be convinced with robust arguments. He updated Members that he was currently investigating fair funding for FRSs across the UK and would compose a non-political letter to MPs in Lancashire which would draw on data and evidence. The ACFO advised that public funding and spending was high on the agenda at the NFCC Spring Conference. The Service did not want to make cuts; however, the largest outgoing was wages. LFRS was the best performing FRS in the country, and it was important that the Service had a solid business case, with evidence, for its requirement for funding and maintaining standards. Councillor J Hugo commented that it would be useful to know what cuts had historically been made for the Service. She also stated that the Local Government Association (LGA), had a Fire Policy Committee on which she had a seat on behalf of Blackpool, and they were lobbying the government about the best funding options for FRSs across the country so there was a process through the LGA. **4.3 Overall User Satisfaction** People surveyed included those who had experienced an accidental dwelling fire, a commercial fire, or a special service incident that the Service attended. The standard was achieved if the percentage of satisfied responses was greater than the standard. Annual Standard: 98.66% In quarter 1, 75 people had been surveyed and the number satisfied with the service was 73. The running total number of people surveyed was 3,946 with 3,893 of those people being satisfied with the Service; 98.66% against a standard of 97.50%; a variance of 1.16%. **Resolved: -** That the Performance Committee noted and endorsed the Quarter 1 Measuring Progress report, including three positive and three negative exceptions.
12-25/26	**Wildfire Prevention Campaign Presentation**
	The Chair welcomed Communications Officer, Lucinda Heavyside and Group Manager (GM), Community Protection Manager, Jonny Nottingham to provide the Committee with a presentation detailing the Service's response to wildfires. Station Manager (SM), Rob Harvey was also in attendance as a Subject Matter Expert in Wildfire. GM, Jonny Nottingham informed Members that the impact of wildfires was

changing and increasing, with a particular turning point being the Winter Hill fire of 2018. The incident began on 28 June, ended 6 weeks later on 08 August, and spanned 18 Square Kilometres of moorland. The Winter Hill TV transmitter, which served six million people in the North West, was located within the area. At the height of the incident, there were over 30 fire engines, 150 firefighters supported by multiple partners, specialist wildfire fighting teams, and Fire and Rescue Services from other areas of the country. The incident consequently led to a number of positive and significant changes with Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) leading the way with wildfire response.

Within Lancashire, 14 sites of risk had been identified with some sites known as Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) sites. Specifically, these sites were in Blackburn with Darwen, Chorley, and Bolton (as it bordered with Lancashire). LFRS had joined together with three local councils, using legal powers to protect the environment and prevent wildfire devastation to wildlife and reduce the risks of wildfire on the moors. When implemented in October 2023, the sites covered by the PSPO became the largest in the country with many of the sites crossing into, or bordering, neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services (FRS).

Wildfires were a nationally recognised issue, and a national reporting tool had been adopted. It was noted that nationally, there had been 995 wildfires in 2025 since January which was the highest ever recorded as 2022 had 994. The National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) had developed a working group for wildfires (chaired by the CFO, Jon Charters) and had also developed a wildfire awareness training programme to which LFRS was aligned. The Service had invested in new equipment and appliances to tackle wildfires. LFRS had a burns team and was leading the sector with equipment (haaglunds, drip torches, dams, blowers, and tactics). Wildfire Tactical Advisors (national assets / wildfire officers), were officers trained with additional skills and knowledge, specifically in wildfire tactics.

In terms of response, new tactics had been developed whereby enhanced resources were used at incidents in the early stages. This included a level 2 commander (Sation Manager and above), burns team, and a wildfire officer, where available. There were 14 polygons of risk areas which had been identified and shared with North West Fire Control (NWFC), preventing small fires from becoming wildfires, and which needed to be considered when mobilising appliances to wildfires.

The Climate Change Operational Response Plan 2022-27 was a long-term plan to address the issues prevented by Climate events. Wildfire risks typically increased during warm spring and summer months due to dry fuel loads being vulnerable to ignition. This could be caused by inappropriate land management, deliberate acts, or accidental human interactions. The plan looked to address the risk posed, long term and continually.

SM, Rob Harvey added that there were restrictions for burning vegetation under the Heather and Grass Burning Code. Under the code, burning season took place between the 01 October and 15 April. Historically, land was managed by burning and cutting, however, there were restrictions through Natural England around some areas in Lancashire for deep peat (over 40cm deep), and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), unless a specific licence was obtained. Aligning to climate change,

	the intensity and severity of wildfires had increased. County Councillor J Tetlow asked if the cause of the Winter Hill fire was known and if the Service carried out advanced burnings to prevent or stop fires. SM, Rob Harvey advised that, although there were no prosecutions, it was deemed a deliberate act, as an individual was seen in the area, however, there was no evidence or witnesses. In terms of burning, firefighting tactics had adapted over the years, and due to the prolonged dry spells, vegetation could be removed using a tactical burn. Two individuals were prosecuted for a significant deliberate fire on Darwen Moor in 2020; however, the incident provided the Service with the opportunity to deploy new, improved tactics. The Service struck the fire quickly, Burns Team tactics were deployed, collaboration took place with United Utilities and local land managers, resulting in the management of the perimeter and containment of the fire within a day. In response to a question from Councillor J Hugo regarding if, dependent on the weather, the timeframes within the Heather and Grass Burning Code could be changed, SM, Rob Harvey advised that times were managed through a risk assessment conducted by the land manager. Variants were dependent on vegetation, whether the areas were an Area Of Natural Beauty, SSSI, nesting birds etc. A licence could be applied for through Natural England. If the depth of deep peat was changed to 30cm, it could have a serious impact on Lancashire as it would expand the area of rotational controlled burning and increase fuel loading. There had been increased partnership working with Lancashire Fire Operations Group (LFOG), including Lancashire Constabulary (LanCon), United Utilities (UU), and other landowners. Heightened awareness had taken place through greater use of social media campaigns to inform the public and internal awareness through training, including NWFC mobilising due to more reports from the public. It was highlighted, in terms of operational activity, that the highest-ranking role in attendance at an incident had organisational accountability which included officers from a bordering FRS. This could present issues with prevention activity as many geographical areas crossed into neighbouring FRSs. However, LFRS undertook joint training and exercises which focused on wildfire events. Wildfires put a demand on pumps and put a strain on everyday operations such as incidents, and prevention and protection work. Climate change through continued global warming was projected to further intensify the global water cycle which included its variability, global monsoon precipitation, and the severity of wet and dry events. Additionally, a flood or wildfire could result in a loss of income from land due to the serious detrimental impact to agricultural land and livestock, eliminating income for many years. These events could also cause damage to property, disruption, and closure of local businesses adjacent to or within a risk area and have insurance impacts for landowners. Insect and animal life could be affected in catchment areas for drinking water. Wildfires were arduous and dangerous, and the welfare of staff was of primary significance, particularly when operating over protracted periods, in difficult conditions. In recent years, LFRS had made considerable advances, including the implementation of a dedicated welfare unit, the use of generators, powered cool

boxes, individual food ration packs, shelters, and sun creams. Those resources allowed for a forward control / welfare point to be established at an easily accessible location on the fireground.

County Councillor A Riggott stated that there was a benefit to public health of providing safety messages and gaining the support of the Directors of Public Health as it was an opportunity for funding. GM, Jonny Nottingham advised that early operational deployment of appliances and tactics was important to reduce the impact of wildfires. He could not comment on the opportunity for funding from Public Health. The ACFO explained that, from a Local Resilience Forum (LFRS) perspective, when significant incidents occurred, the Service worked closely with the Environment Agency and Public Health to deliver safety message around keeping windows closed. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) currently chaired the LRF, and through that forum joint work and planning tool place around prevention and preparedness.

County Councillor A Riggott clarified that where the areas surrounding the places for potential wildfires were densely populated, there was the opportunity to present a strong case in respect of accessing funding streams. The Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement (ADoCE), explained that significant wildfires were a relatively new phenomenon and therefore, national data collected was limited in relation to the impacts. SM, Rob Harvey concurred that UK wildfire data was minimal, and the UK Health Security Agency (HSA) used international data. Acid rain from the 80s and 90s was embedded within the moorland peat and the level of toxicity within wildfire smoke and impact on the public, was unknown. As the number of wildfires increased, so would the data. The ACFO informed Members that the Chief Fire Officer (CFO), was the Lead Officer for wildfire at NFCC and brought innovative research to the crossover work with the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) which created a challenge as some duties sat within their jurisdiction.

In response to a question from County Councillor J Tetlow as to whether data for the prevention and management of wildfires from hotter countries could be considered, SM, Rob Harvey explained that a lot of training was carried out in Spain with the Pau Costa Foundation with learning taken from continental partners. The approach they used was 'Massive Attack,' whereby a wildfire was hit hard and quickly. LFRS would now mobilise a full wildfire Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA) outside of the Heather and Grass Burning Code to the areas in the presentation. As the response was now much quicker, the national data showed fewer true definition wildfires. Drone technology could also be requested when required. Members noted that wildfires were caused by the behaviour of people.

County Councillor M Clifford stated that land use had changed over the years with many people investing in restoration projects and he asked whether the Service worked with United Utilities (UU) in respect of water levels and the draining of peatland, and the retainment of moss/heather in peatland restoration. SM, Rob Harvey advised that with regards to re-wetting the moorland, UU saved money by taking water out of water captured in the stagnant moss and using that for drinking water as there weren't as many chemicals to cleanse. In terms of Carbon offsetting, it was considered that trees being planted on the moorland before it had become rewetted could one day become fuel, but the Service worked closed with UU to

constantly review the position.

County Councillor Mirfin remarked that another element of Fair Funding was that a large percentage of Lancashire was rural and wildfires occurred on a regular basis. Additionally, he raised concerns regarding historical toxins and radiation in soils and referenced his experience of a 300-year-old elm tree which had died in the same year as the Chernobyl disaster. GM, Jonny Nottingham stressed the importance of putting fires out quickly in the early stages to prevent the release of toxins in smoke.

As agreed by NFCC, a wildfire was defined by meeting one of the following criteria:

- Involved a geographical area of at least one hectare (10,000 square metres).
- Had a sustained flame length of more than 1.5 metres.
- Required a committed resource of at least 4 appliances.
- Required resources to be committed for at least 6 hours.
- Presented a serious threat to life, environment, property, and infrastructure.

Public perception of the Service was very important in relation to its reputation although, wildfires could be difficult to tackle due to their nature.

Recent operational activity included:

- Flexible Duty Officer (FDO) training – thematic / FDO training took place in March.
- NWFC Training (Including 999 eye) – delivered by wildfire tacads to heighten awareness and response.
- Crew awareness – eLearning, EH articles, and social media.
- Prevention activity – banners and having presence.
- Campaigning – robust campaign plan.

Incident data from 2019 – 2024 showed that wildfire numbers fluctuated year on year, with hotspots consistently appearing in areas such as Rossendale, Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley and Hyndburn. Notably, 2024 saw a significant reduction, with incidents almost halved compared to previous years although there had been a 14% increase of rainfall. It was noted by Members that the data included all grass and wildfires.

Communications Officer, Lucinda Heavyside provided Members with an overview of the wildfires campaign. The 2025 campaign's key objectives were to make sure that prevention advice reached the right people, which meant running targeted safety advice to properties and individuals in high-risk areas. Another target was to increase public understanding of risks that included behaviours such as using disposable barbeques, lighting campfires, or something as simple as discarding a cigarette or leaving litter.

Work was conducted with Service partners and the public to simplify target audiences. Regarding partners, collaboration work took place on communications and included local authorities such as Blackburn with Darwen, Chorley, and Bolton in terms of the Public Space Protection Order. It also included the Police, Wildlife Trusts, Marketing Lancashire, and United Utilities. Those organisations were key as they either managed land, had direct influence with local communities, or helped

	the Service broadcast the message. Regarding the public, the focus was on people who were likely to enjoy Lancashire's great outdoors: walkers; cyclists; campers; families; and youth groups such as Scouts. The Service was particularly mindful of young people and visitors from outside the county, as they could be less aware of the risks. Properties and areas where PSPOs were already in place were targeted. The strategy was to make sure the Service's activity was highly targeted. The wildfire campaign was triggered by an amber wildfire warning which was caused by long, hot, and dry weather for a prolonged period. The campaign for 2025 had been extremely active due to one of the sunniest April's on record and Summer 2025 was the hottest on record in the UK, according to the Met Office. During those periods, crews would carry out prevention activity around 14 identified high-risk sites as they were places where the landscape, footfall, and history of incidents, made wildfires more likely. Communications would also be concentrated around those same sites. If those sites attracted visitors, the Service would endeavour to find out where they travelled from so messages could be adapted accordingly. The Service had developed a tailored wildfire home fire safety check, so that properties in those risk areas received advice that was relevant to them and not generic fire safety messages. Members were informed that 2025 was the busiest year on record, nationally, for wildfires (995). The 2025 campaign included a direct mail sent to 600 properties that had been identified as being located in high-risk wildfire areas with the intention of providing clear and tailored safety advice directly to the households most likely to be affected. The purpose was to ensure that residents in those areas had the right information at the right time to reduce risk and had the option to contact the prevention teams if they felt that they required further information. Additionally, 32 banners were ready to be fixed at key risk sites and high-footfall areas across Lancashire when there was a heightened wildfire risk. Social media had been central to the campaign, which ran from March through to September, but which only became active during periods of increased wildfire risk. Key messages were pushed out through the Service's social channels which had received fantastic engagement. That was thanks to the staff across the Service who had shared photos and videos, in real time, through the corporate Facebook page and local station pages. A post that showed a vole rescued from a wildfire highlighting the devastating effect wildfires had on animals and the environment. The post reached over 211,000 people on Facebook and almost 250,000 on Instagram with almost 8,000 engagements. Across all social media posts, the campaign had reached more than 1.4 million people and had been a powerful way to showcase the reality of wildfire incidents to raise awareness across a huge audience. The Service had also teamed up with Fire Services across the North West and EG On The Move to deliver joint safety messages. Adverts on wildfire prevention and water safety ran on digital petrol screens at petrol station forecourts across the region which were free of charge. The partnership meant that the Service could reach people directly at the roadside during the summer months. It was also a great way to target visitors and people travelling from outside Lancashire, who might not see or engage with messages through other channels. It was a strong example of collaboration with five Fire and Rescue Services speaking with one

	voice to deliver consistent, life-saving messages to a wider audience than LFRS could reach alone. The campaign was still ongoing, however, once the wildfire season had ended (at the end of September), the Service would analyse incident data in full and assess how objectives had been met. The next steps would be to build on data gained from the campaign and the previous polls on social media to deepen understanding of who was most at risk, and the behaviours that contributed to wildfires. The Service planned to capture behaviour insight directly from young people by speaking with participants on the King's Trust programmes and fire cadets, to better understand their awareness and the choices that increased or reduced risk. New creative content was also being explore. One idea was a video which showed that when a fire looked like it was out on the surface, it could still be smouldering underneath. Those hidden embers could reignite hours later and spark a much larger fire. It was a powerful way to demonstrate why people needed to take extra care during prolonged dry spells. County Councillor J Tetlow queried if, due to climate change over the last 10 years, there were more fires due to peat not being used as fuel for fires. SM, Rob Harvey explained that peat harvesting was not routinely conducted in Lancashire and it was more so, in Yorkshire. In Lancashire, the peat was vegetation build up through degrading stagnant moss. Peat was drying out more than expected through climate change and earlier in year which presented a risk. County Councillor M Clifford asked if there was any enforcement data in relation to PSPOs. The ADoCE advised that there were no prosecutions for the previous year but the evaluation for the current year had not yet been carried out. The Chair thanked officers for their fantastic presentation.
13-25/26	**Date of Next Meeting**
	The next meeting of the Committee would be held on **03 December 2025** at 10:00 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood. Further meeting dates were noted for 11 March 2026 and agreed for 08 July 2026.

M Nolan
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood