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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

CFA strategy group terms of reference

It is envisaged that the Group will meet twice a year, without a fixed timetable, to remain flexible to respond to any need for urgent change.

The purpose of the Strategy Group is to provide a private discussion forum for all Members of the Combined Fire Authority – in essence it is a 'think tank'.

The Strategy Group is also a forum in which to share proposals for strategic and operational developments outside of the constitutional structure, in order to obtain general viewpoints and reactions to proposals and to promote healthy discussion and member engagement about some of them.

Senior officers need to discuss and share strategic proposals and information with members to obtain views and consider responses and best practice, in the best interests of efficacy, efficiency and effectiveness for the communities in which members serve. Members are reminded to ensure that strict confidentiality is maintained regarding the contents of discussions and proposals discussed during the Strategy Group or Strategy Day meetings, and that no information is divulged outside the Group, whatsoever, including to colleagues who are not members of the Combined Fire Authority, until such time as the issues discussed are tabled at a formally constituted meeting and/or in the public domain.

Members are reminded that they are still bound by the requirements of the Authority's Code of Conduct, as they attend the Strategy Group in accordance with their duties as an elected member of the Authority. Should any member fail to comply with this requirement of confidentiality, this could result in potential adverse consequences for the operational resilience and damage to public confidence.

The proposed terms of reference are:

- To consider and make appropriate recommendations to the Authority on the contents of reports submitted by: Committees, Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer and Clerk in relation to new policy areas, taking into account the impact of such proposals on the staff and financial resources of the Authority;

- To consider and make appropriate recommendations to the Authority on the:

  o Formulation of the Authority's objectives;
  o Priority of those objectives.

- To consider and make appropriate recommendations to the Authority or the appropriate Committee on significant changes to the:

  o Committee Structure;
  o Terms of Reference of Committees;

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- o Powers of Committees;
- o Scheme of Delegation;
- o Constitutional Standing Orders.

- To consider proposals of government departments and other national or regional bodies which have national or regional implications which would affect the Authority in its relationship with other bodies and make appropriate recommendations to the Authority or appropriate Committee;

- To consider presentations from any organisation/individual it feels would be useful in achieving the role of the Strategy Group.

The Strategy Group will not have decision-making powers; it will only be able to make recommendations to the Combined Fire Authority or a Committee. For it to have decision making powers it would need to be a Committee covered by 'openness and transparency rules'. Meetings of the Strategy Group will not therefore be open to the public. Notes of the meetings should not be disclosed to the public or any third parties outside of the Combined Fire Authority, including other elected officials who are not members of the Authority, as proposals may not be taken forward, voted up or ultimately adopted. This is an important requirement to ensure the respect for the free flowing dialogue within the Strategy Group is maintained.

The LFRS Executive Board will be responsible for identifying issues to be considered by the Strategy Group. However, the Fire Authority, individual committees and individual members may on occasions wish to refer items, should they wish to contribute towards effective dialogue to discuss issues with a view to positive change, in the event they wish to do so.