

# **Lancashire Combined Fire Authority**

## **Planning Committee**

**Monday, 17 November 2025, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters, Fulwood.**

### **Minutes**

<b>Present:</b>	
<b>Councillors</b>	
N Alderson	
U Arif	
S Asghar (Vice-Chair)	
J Ash	
G Baker	
I Duxbury (Chair)	
J Hugo	
L Hutchinson	
F Jackson	
E Worthington	

<b>Officers</b>	
S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)	
S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS)	
T Powell, Area Manager, Head of Service Improvement (LFRS)	
D Howell, Legal Services & Standards Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer (LFRS)	
S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS)	
L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)	

<b>In attendance</b>	
K Wilkie, Fire Brigades Union	

10-25/26	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
	No apologies were received but it was noted that County Councillor U Arif had been delayed.
11-25/26	<b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests</b>
	None received.
12-25/26	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>
	<b>Resolved:</b> That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 14 July 2025 be confirmed

	as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
13-25/26	<p><b>Strategic Assessment of Risk 2025/2026</b></p> <p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) presented a report on the Service's Strategic Assessment of Risk for 2025/26.</p> <p>Risk in Lancashire would always remain dynamic: it changed over time, differed by area and demographic, and needed different interventions to reduce the likelihood of the risk occurring or to lessen its consequences. These risks were identified in the Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAoR) which was refreshed annually and was also informed by the Lancashire Resilience Forum Community Risk Register and the services Political, Economic, Socio-cultural, Technological and Infrastructure, Environmental, Legislative and Organisational (PESTELO) analysis. Through its risk management framework, the Service continually assessed changing risk and prioritised its response framework.</p> <p>The Strategic Assessment of Risk reflected the knowledge and experience of a variety of specialist departments and utilised Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) Incident Recording System (IRS) data to derive a data driven methodology that highlighted the incident types that posed the greatest risk to the county of Lancashire and the individuals who lived and worked within it.</p> <p>This year's document built on previous iterations as LFRS sought to continually improve its risk management processes. Pages 13 – 76 of the agenda pack detailed a number of risks including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ UK Government Fire Reform White Paper</li> <li>◦ Wars, conflicts and political unrest</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Economic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Deprivation</li> <li>◦ Inflation/ Cost of living</li> <li>◦ Fuel Poverty</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Socio-Cultural <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Population changes</li> <li>◦ Dwellings and households</li> <li>◦ Cultural Diversity</li> <li>◦ Health and Wellbeing</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Technological (and Infrastructure) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Emerging Technology – Electrical vehicles (EVs) and energy storage systems</li> <li>◦ Emerging Technology – Hydrogen</li> <li>◦ Artificial Intelligence/ Robotics/ Autonomous Vehicles</li> <li>◦ Infrastructure</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Climate change – wildfires</li> <li>◦ Climate change – flooding</li> <li>◦ Built environment</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Legal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ The Building Safety Act 2022</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- The Fire Safety Act 2021
- Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023
- Organisational
  - Risk that service funding over the medium term was insufficient to achieve 2022-27 CRMP objectives
  - LFRS resilience issues e.g. staff availability, recruitment, retention, loss of key staff
  - Impact of public inquiries e.g. Grenfell and Manchester Arena

Pages 49- 73 of the agenda pack detailed the risk associated against the 32 incident types with commercial property fires identified as the highest risk.

In response to a question from County Councillor E Worthington in relation to types of commercial property, the DCFO explained that since the coronavirus pandemic there had been an increase in deliberate fires across commercial properties, this also included within prison environments. Additionally, there were a number of farm fires. Area Manager (AM) Tom Powell added that the risk was centred on the building type rather than the causation of the fire with a number of buildings derelict former commercial buildings.

In relation to the heat map on page 74 of the agenda pack, County Councillor E Worthington asked if deprivation was driving the increased risk. The DCFO explained that deprivation was a significant factor of the increased risk and added that some of the risk in Blackpool could be attributed to the number of derelict hotels within the Blackpool area since the pandemic. The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) explained that the fair funding review formula had not been updated since 2013/14 with 58% relating to population and 10% deprivation, due to bigger changes in population in other areas Lancashire would see a funding cut of 7%, although this was still in consultation.

At 10:18 County Councillors E Worthington left the meeting and U Arif joined the meeting.

In response to a question from County Councillor S Asghar in relation to additional resources and training for electric vehicle battery fires, the DCFO explained that there were high power 'cold cutting' systems that were used in some of the Scandinavian countries that were being explored along with the use of large fire blankets that could be used to restrict oxygen. However the use of a blanket could risk the battery reigniting once it had been removed. Manchester Fire and Rescue Service were using a mobile skip type vehicle to submerge cars allowing them to be towed away safely. AM Powell added that LFRS was working with recovery companies and educating partners in relation to the storage of electric vehicles following fires.

County Councillor E Worthington rejoined the meeting at 10:20.

Councillor G Baker asked how contaminated water was disposed of after use, the DCFO explained that the polluter was responsible for safe disposal of any contaminated water and in the case of electric vehicle fires this would be the responsibility of the car owner/ insurers. He added that LFRS would take all the

	<p>necessary steps to protect drains during incidents and would work with partners including the environmental agency to help contain and subsequently remove contaminated water.</p> <p>In response to a question from County Councillor E Worthington in relation to applying pressure to electric vehicle manufacturers, the DCFO commented that there were pros and cons to electric vehicles and explained that the National Fire Chief Council (NFCC) could lobby government in relation to this and he would report concerns into the appropriate NFCC workstream.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the Strategic Assessment of Risk for publication.</p>
14-25/26	<p><b>Business Continuity Planning and Testing</b></p> <p>County Councillor S Asghar left the meeting.</p> <p>AM Tom Powell presented the annual report to members.</p> <p>Significant progress had been made since the 2024 report, delivering on all of the developments previously presented to the Committee and embedding a mature, evidence-based Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) across Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS).</p> <p>A Business Continuity Management Group (BCMG), chaired by AM Tom Powell, provided central oversight of all business continuity activity. It had approved the updated Business Continuity Policy and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), endorsed the creation of an exercise and testing suite, and initiated the development of an LFRS-specific National Power Outage Plan.</p> <p>Following the introduction of standardised Business Continuity (BC) templates in 2024, all stations and departments had completed bespoke Business Impact Analyses (BIAs) and Business Continuity Plans (BCPs). An annual review cycle was now underway.</p> <p>The Business Continuity SharePoint system, live since April 2025, served as the single repository for all BC documentation.</p> <p>A comprehensive Exercise and Testing Suite, developed in 2024, was routinely used to validate operational plans. In November 2024, LFRS conducted its annual service-wide tactical and strategic exercise, simulating a wide-area power loss, which successfully tested escalation, decision-making, and interdepartmental coordination. Building on this, in 2025, the Service was participating in a Tier 1 national exercise, coordinated through the Lancashire Local Resilience Forum (LRF), focused on a pandemic scenario, alongside further tactical and strategic tests before year-end.</p> <p>Since the last report, there had been 51 BC exercises and 42 BC incidents across the Service. Of the 42 incidents, 9 triggered a tactical plan activation which included; major incidents such as significant fires, appliance degradation due to multiple incidents ongoing at once, and North West Fire Control in fallback</p>

conditions due to partial loss of communication methods. The 33 incidents which triggered an operational plan activation included; loss of utilities on LFRS premises such as water, power and heating, station break-ins, system outages and faults on fire alarms within LFRS premises.

A service-wide internal audit of Business Continuity commenced in 2025, providing positive initial feedback on governance, documentation, and exercising arrangements. The final report was pending publication and was expected to confirm continued assurance that the BCMS meets both ISO 22301:2019 and Civil Contingencies Act requirements.

At a national level, LFRS continued to lead the North West NFCC Business Continuity Group and had authored the national Fire and Rescue Service Business Continuity Guidance Document, due for formal NFCC adoption later this year.

During its most recent inspection, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) identified Business Continuity as an area of significant improvement, recognising the Service's strengthened policies, processes, and governance.

Areas of focus for 2025–26 included;

- Continuous improvement and assurance
- Lessons and learning integration
- External validation and peer review
- National and regional collaboration
- Scenario development and resilience forecasting
- People, training and awareness

**Resolved:** That members;

- (i) Noted the significant progress made in strengthening LFRS's Business Continuity arrangements.
- (ii) Acknowledged the positive feedback received from HMICFRS and early findings of the internal audit.
- (iii) Endorsed the continued embedding of the Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) and the forward exercise programme.

## 15-25/26 **Blue Light Collaboration Board Update**

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

### **Leadership Development**

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS), Lancashire Police (LanCon), and North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) continued to seek efficiencies and foster professional relationships across Blue Light Services.

Over the last 12 months, each Service had hosted a Leadership Event, covering

three shared themes identified using insights from each organisation. The first session, hosted by LFRS, saw 60 attendees from all three Services. The session, titled “Nourish to Flourish,” focused on self-care for effective leadership. The second session addressed media handling for Blue Light leaders. The final leadership event was held by LanCon and focussed on generational differences.

The group was exploring an ‘Outside-In’ Leadership program and the creation of a cross-coaching network for shared learning, potentially including a coaching exchange initiative.

County Councillor S Asghar rejoined the meeting at 10:37.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

A new collaborative group was formed earlier this year, bringing together Health and Wellbeing leads from all three Services. The group’s goal was to understand and align the health and wellbeing offerings across Blue Light organisations, exploring joint opportunities to support staff.

The group’s initial step was to share policies and procedures for best practice and learning. NWAS had delivered menopause awareness sessions, and LFRS had developed a workshop to raise awareness of suicide from a responder’s perspective elements of which could be shared across all services.

### **Estates and Co-location**

The estates and co-location initiative between LFRS, NWAS, and LanCon aimed to identify opportunities for shared sites, enhance collaboration and value for money. Successful co-location at Lancaster, St Annes, Darwen, Preston, and other Fire Stations had improved operational efficiency and fostered stronger inter-service relationships, ultimately benefiting Lancashire communities.

An updated Blue Light Collaboration Project Initiation Document had provided direction for the Estates and Co-location sub-group, which was exploring further collaboration. Quarterly meetings between Heads of Estates from LFRS, NWAS, and LanCon had shown that benefits extended beyond site sharing. The project’s objectives, principles, and expected benefits had been updated. The group was also considering system knowledge exchange, shared procurement specifications, and joint supplier frameworks.

### **Community First Responder (CFR)**

A cost-benefit analysis by the New Economy showed that Emergency Medical Response (EMR) yielded a return of £4.41 for every £1 invested. In areas with EMR co-responding, firefighters were dispatched alongside ambulance services for suspected cardiac arrests, with the first to arrive providing life-saving care. This parallel response increased the likelihood of timely intervention and supported ambulance crews in advanced clinical work.

While this model had been successful in parts of the UK, the South Western Ambulance Service Foundation Trust was phasing out fire EMR in favour of strengthening its volunteer Community First Responder (CFR) scheme, a decision met with disappointment by FRS’ involved in EMR.

	<p>In Lancashire, the CFR workstream enabled LFRS staff volunteers to respond to life-threatening emergencies from their workplace. Since 2023, over 200 incidents had been attended, with LFRS staff providing life-saving interventions before ambulance arrival.</p> <p>The operational model had three phases:</p> <p>Phase 1: Green book staff respond voluntarily while on duty.</p> <p>Phase 2: Flexi Duty Officers (FDOs) respond while on duty.</p> <p>Phase 3: On Call staff respond within their communities. This phase was being developed with NWAS and stations had been identified in the communities where NWAS required most support.</p> <p>The DCFO explained that collaboration with unions was ongoing and it was hopeful that national agreement would be reached in relation to CFR's.</p> <p>The DCFO explained two additional workstreams had been developed that would be considered in the future, relating to recruitment and retention, including sharing the cost of recruitment fayres and sharing best practice and fleet, including the potential development of shared fleet maintenance resources.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Planning Committee noted the report.</p>
16-25/26	<p><b>His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services Update</b></p>
	<p>AM Powell presented the report to Members regarding His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) activity.</p> <p><b>Round 3 Overview</b></p> <p>LFRS HMICFRS Round 3 inspection concluded in April 2025. The inspection lasted several weeks and included staff engagement across the organisation, from Firefighter to Chief Fire Officer, inspectors visited a number of fire stations and departments, hosted staff focus groups and analysed numerous data sets and documents. HMICFRS inspectors also engaged with some of LFRS's partner organisations and visited North West Fire Control.</p> <p>The feedback from the HMICFRS inspectors acknowledged that every staff member they interacted with was highly engaging, and they felt genuinely welcomed throughout the organisation.</p> <p>The official report was released publicly on 14 August 2025 along with a HMICFRS press release included on page 93 of the agenda reports pack.</p> <p><b>LFRS Round 3 Report</b></p> <p>The Service had been awarded an unprecedented six 'Outstanding' and five 'Good' ratings across all 11 inspection areas. This remarkable achievement included being the only service in the country to receive a minimum rating of 'Good' across every category. LFRS had received the best ratings of any fire and rescue service in England.</p>

LFRS attained two Outstanding ratings in the People pillar during the inspection, making it the only service in the country to receive Outstanding in this category. LFRS were among only 3 services, out of a total of 44, that attained an outstanding rating in protection, understanding risk, and making best use of resources. Five areas of promising practice were also recognised in the report.

The inspectorate praised the Service for its excellent performance and recognised LFRS's commitment to continuous improvement, collaborative approach with partners, and ability to adapt to new challenges and legislation. The Service's commitment to inclusivity, staff wellbeing, and community engagement were also highlighted as sector leading.

Councillor G Baker left the meeting at 10:45.

### **HMICFRS Inspection 2025 – 27**

HMICFRS had published their inspection schedule for 2025-27, the dates for the inspection programme would be released in three phases. The first inspections of the new round had recently concluded. Currently, LFRS were listed as the last service to undergo inspection, which was anticipated to take place around Spring 2027, although this was subject to potential amendments.

The 2025-27 inspection programme would involve a number of changes from the previous round, there would be some focus on the impact of governance on fire and rescue services, leadership, and a reduction in inspection areas from 11 to 10. The Service continued to engage with the Service Liaison Lead from HMICFRS.

### **HMICFRS Activity**

A formal letter was sent to HMI Michelle Skeer, officially closing the six Areas for Improvement (AFIs) identified during the Round 2 inspection. The inspectors for Round 3 expressed their satisfaction with the progress made to address the AFIs that were previously identified.

The service would provide a quarterly report on the progress of its AFI regarding Equality Impact Assessments and work was already underway to progress this area. The Round 3 report had also been scrutinised to gather any further areas identified that may assist the service in elevating any aspects from good to outstanding. Department engagement was taking place to address any findings and actions would be tracked by the Organisational Assurance Team on the Assurance Monitoring System (AMS).

### **State of Fire and Rescue**

The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2024–25 was published on 5 November. This was His Majesty's Chief Inspector's third annual report to the Secretary of State under section 28B of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

It was his first annual report on fire and rescue since the new Government came into power in July 2024. The report contained his assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of fire and rescue services in England, which was based on the inspection reports published between February 2023 and August 2025.

Between March 2023 and August 2025, the HMICFRS carried out their third full round of inspections of all 44 fire and rescue services in England. Several services made improvements in the Round 3 inspections. They closed 416 of 695 outstanding areas for improvement (AFIs) and issued fewer AFIs in this round. They also identified 67 examples of promising and innovative practice across 25 services.

Overall, 73 percent of the graded judgments awarded in Round 3 were 'adequate', 'good' or 'outstanding'. This meant services were able to show at least some of the characteristics of good performance in most areas and 43 percent of all grades met or exceeded the benchmark for good performance, where they issued good or outstanding grades. Overall, in this round, the HMICFRS gave the following proportion of grades:

- 4 percent outstanding
- 39 percent good
- 30 percent adequate
- 24 percent requires improvement
- 3 percent inadequate.

Councillor G Baker rejoined the meeting at 10:47.

LFRS were identified for positive practice on several occasions within the national report.

The full report could be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-state-of-fire-and-rescue-2024-to-2025>.

### **HMICFRS Chief and Chairs event**

The annual Chiefs and Chairs event was held in Nottingham on 4 November 2025. Chief fire officers, authority chairs (and equivalents), sector leaders, and Government representatives were brought together to discuss key issues facing the sector. Chief Fire Officer Jon Charters and County Councillor Usman Arif attended on behalf of LFRS.

The day consisted of several presentations that were delivered by sector leaders, and the new Minister for Building Safety, Fire and Democracy Samantha Dixon MBE MP was also in attendance to deliver the keynote speech. The presentations and discussions focussed on:

- Key findings from the round 3 inspections
- Internal Governance
- Protection and Risk Based Inspection Programme
- Use of technology

### **HMICFRS Data Collection**

The HMICFRS had discontinued the collection of Autumn data returns and transitioned to an annual return, which would next be requested in Spring 2026. The information included in the return was expected to be similar to the information requested in Spring 2025.

The DCFO encouraged members to read the state of fire and rescue report and

explained that of seven national recommendations, four remained in progress;

- The Home Office, in consultation with the fire and rescue sector, should review and with precision determine the roles of: (a) fire and rescue services; and (b) those who work in them.
- The Home Office, the Local Government Association, the National Fire Chiefs Council and trade unions should consider whether the current pay negotiation machinery requires fundamental reform. If so, this should include the need for an independent pay review body and the future of the 'Grey Book'.
- The Home Office should consider the case for legislating to give chief fire officers operational independence. In the meantime, it should issue clear guidance, possibly through an amendment to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, on the demarcation between those responsible for governance and operational decision making by the chief fire officer.
- By 1 March 2025, the Home Secretary should introduce amendments to Parliament concerning the inspectors of fire and rescue that:
  - place a requirement on fire and rescue authorities to publish comments, within 56 days, in response to HMICFRS inspection reports on their fire and rescue services; and
  - allow fire and rescue authorities, as well as mayors, county councils and police, fire and crime commissioners, to request that HMICFRS inspects the fire and rescue services in their areas.

**Resolved:** That the Planning Committee noted the report.

**17-25/26 Community Risk Management Plan and Service Review**

The DCFO presented the report to members.

As required by the government's Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, each Fire and Rescue Service must produce a high-level Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) which explains how they will use their resources to respond to and reduce the risks they have identified in their local area.

As part of LFRS's planning process, the service identified and assessed all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks across Lancashire and used this information to plan how to control these risks, respond to emergencies and deliver fire prevention and protection activities in the most efficient and effective way.

This CRMP would set out the priorities, which supported LFRS's vision of 'making Lancashire safer', and would in turn be supported by its six key strategic documents:

- Response Strategy
- Prevention Strategy
- Protection Strategy
- People Strategy
- Digital Strategy
- Finance Strategy

**Proposed approach**

## **Phase I**

From January 2026, for a minimum of eight weeks. The service would explain the challenges and drivers for change and invite views on its proposed direction of travel.

Phase I would allow the service to listen and learn about its communities' and workforce priorities, before detailed options were developed ahead of Phase II.

A pre-consultation document would be submitted to December's full CFA meeting for approval to engage with communities and staff in early 2026.

## **Phase II**

Following feedback from the pre-consultation, a draft CRMP and strategic strategies would be developed alongside options for how LFRS's services could be delivered in the future. A full consultation would then take place during summer 2026 where the service would present and seek feedback on the CRMP 2027-2032 and options for shaping the future of LFRS. The new CRMP would go live and the implementation of any proposed changes would take place from April 2027.

## **Timeline**

- 17 November 2025 Planning Committee: CRMP 2027-32 development overview and timeline for approval
- 15 December 2025 Combined Fire Authority (CFA): Pre-consultation approval
- January - February 2026: 8 week CRMP Pre-consultation engagement
- January to June 2026: Review of core strategies, develop CRMP and Service Review documents
- 13 July 2026 Planning Committee: Draft CRMP and Service Review documents approval to consult
- July – October 2026: CRMP and Service Review full stakeholder consultation
- 16 November 2026 Planning Committee: Final draft CRMP and Service Review proposals for consideration and recommending to full CFA
- 14 December 2026 CFA: Final CRMP & Service Review proposals for approval
- 1 April 2027: CRMP 2027-32 published
- 1 April 2027 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2032: Service Review implementation

**Resolved:** That the Planning Committee noted, endorsed, and approved the approach taken for the production of the CRMP 2027-2032 alongside a Service Review.

## **18-25/26 Council tax precept consultation**

The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) presented the report to members.

LFRS was required to consult the public on the proposed council tax precept for 2026-27.

The draft local government finance settlement, which set out government funding

	<p>and to what extent the precept could be raised, was usually announced in late December. Due to the timing, the Service would not be able to seek approval for consultation from the Planning Committee in sufficient time to undertake consultation prior to the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) annual budget meeting in February.</p> <p>For this reason, members had previously agreed to delegate approval to undertake consultation to the Chair in consultation with the Treasurer and the Chief Fire Officer. It was intended to consult the public between late December and early February.</p> <p>A report detailing consultation activity would be taken to the Planning Committee at its meeting on 2 February 2026 ahead of the final results being discussed at the budget meeting on 25 February 2026, where CFA members would consider and agree a final budget and the resultant council tax implications.</p> <p>The precept increase in 2024/25 was 5.9%, which was the equivalent of £5 per year on a Band D property, and in 2023/24 it was 2.99% which were the maximum precept increases permitted.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Planning Committee noted the report.</p>
19-25/26	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on <b>Monday 2 February 2026</b> at 10:00 hours in the main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.</p> <p>Further meeting dates were noted for 13 July 2026 and 16 November 2026.</p>

**M Nolan**  
**Clerk to CFA**

**LFRS HQ**  
**Fulwood**