

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee

**Monday, 2 February 2026, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room,
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.**

Minutes

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

Officers
S Healey, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) S Pink, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) S Collinson, Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement (LFRS) T Powell, Area Manager, Head of Service Improvement (LFRS) D Howell, Legal Services and Standards Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer (LFRS) S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)

20-25/26	Apologies for Absence
	Apologies were received from County Councillors L Hutchinson and E Worthington.
21-25/26	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
22-25/26	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	The minutes of the previous meeting were moved by County Councillor J Ash and seconded by Councillor G Baker. Resolved: That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 17 November 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

23-25/26	<p>Consultation Strategy - Annual Review</p>
	<p>The Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement (ADoCaE) presented the Consultation Strategy report. The Authority had a consultation strategy which provided a framework through which it could seek public opinion on matters such as its services, council tax precept, and proposals for changes that impact on communities.</p> <p>The strategy had been reviewed to ensure that it continued to meet statutory requirements; incorporated good practice; and provided the public and stakeholders with timely opportunity to influence development of their fire and rescue service.</p> <p>The review concluded that the strategy continued to be legally compliant and in line with good practice.</p> <p>The following amendments had been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 4 had been added to explicitly state the legal principles which governed consultation. • In section 5, a paragraph had been added to provide further clarity about the approach to determining whether consultation would take place. • In section 7, service users / those most at risk of fires and other emergencies had been added as a distinct stakeholder in the list of potential stakeholders. • In section 8, reference had been made to the information provided in consultations being available, accessible, and interpretable for consultees. <p>The planning committee had previously reviewed the strategy every year to assure continued compliance with guidance or legislation and to incorporate learning from any public consultation exercises undertaken. It was proposed that next year, the strategy would be aligned with the new community risk management plan which would cover the period 2027-2032 and would only be brought back for review within that five-year period if a material change was required.</p> <p>The report was moved by Councillor J Hugo and seconded by Councillor G Baker.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the consultation strategy and approved the proposal to create a five-year strategy next year, aligned with the next community risk management plan.</p>
24-25/26	<p>Blue Light Collaboration Board Update</p>
	<p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) advised that the report updated on progress of the ongoing workstreams that were being progressed under the Blue Light Collaboration Board (BLCB). He explained that it was proposed that this be the final update brought to Planning Committee as the same content was being reported to Performance Committee. The workstreams were being managed effectively through both the Strategic and Tactical Boards and were contributing towards improving outcomes, providing better value for money, reducing demand, and reducing inequalities within communities.</p>

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.

Following the success and positive feedback from the three leadership events held in 2025, one hosted by each blue light service, planning was underway for another series of events in 2026. It was proposed that they would follow a similar format, with each blue light service hosting one of the events.

The group was also continuing to progress a cross-service coaching and mentoring network where people with similar roles at a comparable level were identified to link with each other in the role of either a coach or a mentor. The events that ran in 2025 provided an opportunity for the attendees to be briefed on the benefits of this and indicate whether they would be willing to enter into a coaching or mentoring arrangement. This received a positive response.

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 and explore joint opportunities to support staff. It was led by LFRS. It was recognised that there were a number of similarities in the challenges faced by personnel across the three services, such as dealing with distressing incidents and shift work. By collaborating and sharing mechanisms to support staff, interventions could be optimised.

The group's initial step was to share policies and procedures for best practice and learning. Work planned for the group included continuing to develop the idea of a Tri-service wellbeing event for any member of blue light staff and continuing to explore the possibility of a joint blue light fitness and nutrition support offer. LFRS and LanCon were developing an online module for mental health awareness, to be available to all staff and shared more widely once completed.

Estates, Co-location & Fleet

The estates and co-location initiative between LFRS, NWAS, and LanCon aimed to identify opportunities for shared sites, enhancing 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.

The updated Blue Light Collaboration Project Initiation Document continued to provide 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 continued to consider system knowledge exchange, shared procurement specifications, and joint supplier frameworks.

Fleet had now been added as part of the group and had started work to explore

the opportunities around joint servicing of vehicles across the blue light services. The group were also assessing the viability of sharing the use of vehicle maintenance unit (VMU) facilities in cases of high demand or business continuity. Work had already been carried out to reduce the number of notices of intended prosecution (NIPs) sent to blue light partner agencies, where appropriate. Further workstreams would be identified as the group matured such as electric vehicles and supporting infrastructure, collisions and driver management.

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. While this model had been successful in parts of the UK, the steer was now to phase out EMR in favour of supporting the CFR volunteer framework.

In Lancashire, the CFR workstream enabled LFRS staff volunteers to respond to life-threatening emergencies from their workplace. Since April 2025, nearly 300 incidents had been attended by LFRS personnel acting within phases 1 and 2.

Phase 1: Green book staff respond voluntarily while on duty.

Phase 2: Flexi Duty Officers (FDOs) respond while on duty.

Phase 3: On Call staff respond within their communities.

LFRS were currently at the point of developing phase 3. Stations had been identified to align with NWS data indicating greatest demand for CFR and where implementation of the scheme would maximise the positive impact.

Recruitment

Recruitment was the most recent subgroup to be set up and was still in its infancy. This group was looking at opportunities for joint recruitment initiatives, exploring ways to improve the vetting and references protocol, reviewing best practice for supporting applicants with neurodiverse conditions and considering cost saving collaboration through shared recruitment events and material.

Evaluation

Through evaluation, LFRS had considered the value and benefits of several workstreams and had considered how the BLCB contributed to LFRS's aim of "Making Lancashire Safer". The evaluation of the three leadership events held over the last 12 months found that all events were positive, with future events being planning to build on this success. CFR continued to be evaluated as part of the delivery framework.

In response to a question from County Councillor J Ash in relation to the rank of coaching and mentoring, the DCFO explained that he understood coaching and mentoring would take place from supervisory level upwards with reverse mentoring also taking place, this was being led by HR.

The report was moved by County Councillor J Ash and seconded by Councillor J Hugo.

	<p>Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted the report and agreed for this to be the last update into Planning Committee due to the same content being reported into Performance Committee.</p>
25-25/26	<p>His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Update</p>
	<p>Area Manager (AM) T Powell presented the report to Members regarding His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) activity.</p> <p>HMICFRS 2025-27 Inspection: The 2025-27 HMICFRS inspection process was well underway; there was a greater focus on governance arrangements and their effects on services. HMICFRS would not evaluate the governing authority itself; instead, they would assess how CFA governance directly influences Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS). The people assessment would consider whether governance and oversight frameworks promoted a positive organisational culture, as well as whether established code of conduct standards effectively supported workforce health and well-being. Leadership at all levels, values and culture, and a more detailed review of major incident preparedness would also be examined by HMICFRS. HMICFRS planned to share key insights from the fire and rescue services (FRS) inspected so far during their next External Reference Group (ERG) meeting, scheduled for 24 February 2026. The inspection timetable for Phase 1 and Phase 2 had now been published: Phase 1 would include inspections of 14 FRSs, and Phase 2 would cover another 15, making 29 in total. LFRS would be included in Phase 3, with dates yet to be confirmed.</p> <p>Changes at the Inspectorate: His Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) Sir Andy Cooke would leave office in March 2026, HMICFRS had assured the sector that the inspection programme would continue without disruption during the process to appoint his successor.</p> <p>Digital and Cyber Thematic Inspection: His Majesty's Inspector (HMI) Michelle Skeer wrote to all Chief Constables and Chief Fire Officers to announce that the HMICFRS would be conducting a joint thematic inspection examining police forces' and FRSs' response to increasing areas of cybersecurity risk. Three FRSs had already been chosen for this process. Although Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) volunteered to participate in the inspection to help refine its procedures and identify both strengths and areas needing improvement, HMICFRS clarified that the selection of the three FRSs was already complete. Nevertheless, they expressed interest in holding engagement sessions with LFRS and reviewing documentation related to its cyber security practices. As this was a thematic inspection, the evidence would be used to inform the HMICFRS's understanding of the management of cybersecurity in FRS's generally. The HMICFRS would not be publishing reports on individual services or making graded judgments but would highlight positive practice when identified.</p> <p>National HMICFRS Report Themes:</p>

The Organisational Assurance Team would continue to monitor national patterns and insights from all HMICFRS reports, adding essential findings to the theme tracker. The tracker would provide the Executive Board, Service Management Team (SMT), and Department Heads with a “real-time” overview of sector-wide key themes that were emerging from the HMICFRS inspections. The Organisational Assurance Team were anticipating the first reports to be published around April 2026 having been delayed from February.

Characteristics of good:

The HMICFRS had updated the characteristics of good performance. These characteristics described the levels of performance a Fire and Rescue Service needed to achieve to be graded ‘good’. They helped the HMICFRS to make consistent assessments across all services and show services what they were being graded against.

Round 3 Area for Improvement (AFI):

The Service received one AFI in the report concerning Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs). The service should make sure it had robust processes in place to carry out Equality Impact Assessments and review any actions agreed as a result.

AFI Update:

1. The EIA Form and Guidance had been updated and published on the intranet.
2. The mechanism for administering EIAs had been built into a SharePoint site, this was currently being tested and should make it easier from a quality assurance and tracking of actions perspective.

Forward Look:

HMICFRS required quarterly updates on progress against this AFI through their online portal, and progress would also be reported into the SMT Performance and Assurance meeting for review. While LFRS only received one AFI, the report included several recommendations and observations for ongoing development. The Organisational Assurance Team had identified 13 actions from these suggestions, which they would monitor and track.

The Organisational Assurance Team had conducted engagement sessions with a number of departments to review the areas highlighted within the report and clarify expectations for future actions. After the engagement sessions concluded, the Organisational Assurance Team entered the actions into the Assurance Monitoring System and assigned them to the appropriate stakeholders for updates.

Service Liaison Lead (SLL) Visit to Lancashire:

Phil Innis, the services HMICFRS SLL, conducted a session with the Organisational Assurance Team on 26 November 2026, to highlight the changes and expectations regarding the 2025-2027 inspection. A presentation had been prepared to capture some of this essential information. This had been forwarded to the SMT along with a copy of the updated characteristics of good. Phil Innis had also attended the SMT Development Day on 29 January 2026.

In response to a question from Councillor J Hugo in relation to the three areas taking part in the Digital and Cyber Thematic Inspection, AM Powell confirmed that this had not been announced but it was anticipated it would be a range of different geographic areas and governance models, he would provide an update at the next meeting. The DCFO added that the service had engaged with the HMICFRS team in relation to a Digital and Cyber Inspection last week and the service appeared to be in a strong position.

Councillor J Hugo asked a further question relating to the improvements made to the EIAs, AM Powell confirmed that the detail of the improvements made could be shared.

Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted the report.

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

The Assistant Director of Communication and Engagement (ADoCaE) presented the report to Members regarding the services Council tax precept consultation.

A consultation plan was being implemented to consult the public on Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's (LFRS's) council tax precept for the year ahead. The consultation aimed to understand levels of support for a proposed increase in 2026-27 which equated to £5 per year (on a Band D property).

An online consultation was launched on 11 December 2025 at www.lancsfireandrescue.org.uk/budget.

Stakeholders from organisations including local authorities, town and parish councils, and community groups had been invited to take part in the consultation, along with approximately 100,000 subscribers to the Service's In The Know email newsletter. It was also being publicised in news outlets, on social media platforms and through internal communication channels within the organisation.

In a mid-point review on 15 January 2026, there had been 934 responses, on 2 February 2026 there had been 962 responses. Of the 962 responses to date, 76% supported the proposal and 18% did not support the proposal.

The consultation closed at 5pm on Wednesday 4 February 2026. A full report would be provided to the Authority as an appendix to the budget report at its budget meeting on Monday 23 February 2026.

Approval to undertake the annual budget consultation was delegated to the Chair of the CFA in consultation with the Treasurer and the Chief Fire Officer, due to the limited amount of time between the announcement of the local government financial settlement and the Authority's budget meeting.

County Councillor U Arif commented that 962 seemed a low number of responses, the ADoCaE explained that this was a higher response rate than last year, with feedback received that a £5 increase was lower than increases for other services which resulted in fewer respondents. Additionally, service users were more likely to respond to the consultation and the service had a smaller number of

	<p>service users than other services.</p> <p>In response to a question from Councillor F Jackson in relation to the reasons for respondents not supporting the increase, the ADoCaE explained that this information was not available at present but would be included in the budget report at the authority's budget meeting on Monday 23 February 2026.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted the report.</p>
27-25/26	<p>Annual Service Plan 2026/2027</p>
	<p>The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) presented a report on the Service's Annual Service Plan (ASP) 2026/27.</p> <p>The ASP continued to provide Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) with the platform to highlight the priority activities and projects the Service intended to deliver over the coming year; leading improvements and innovation in the sector with some of the best firefighting equipment in the country and a highly skilled and motivated workforce.</p> <p>The ASP was built around the Service's 5 corporate priorities as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). As in previous years, detailed under each corporate priority was a series of priority activities and projects with a brief description of each item to give further clarity and context, these were: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service headquarters and leadership and development centre masterplan • Upgrade fire station facilities • Invest in firefighter safety • Create more efficient people processes • Improve how the service assesses the impact of its decisions 2. Preventing fire and other emergencies from happening; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review how prevention services were delivered 3. Protecting people and property when fires happen; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt services to support new safety measures and increase efficiency 4. Responding to fire and other emergencies quickly and competently; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on availability, preparedness, and operational competence • Strengthen on-call fire engine availability • Review specialist appliances • Invest in fleet and equipment <p>Members noted a proposed amendment under the review specialist appliance section on page 46 of the agenda pack, to broaden the review from aerial appliances and water rescue resources to all specialist assets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead drone modernisation in fire and rescue

The DCFO explained that the services Drone Manager was also the Drone Lead for the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). As the national fire and rescue service lead for drones, the Service had received a grant and was a partner in a project to ensure emergency services were included in future changes to UK airspace. Modernisation included using drones to take aerial imagery from the incident ground prior to arrival of fire engines, the 'drone in a box' concept which negated the need for a human operator, and heavy lifting drones. The services participation would keep it at the forefront of innovation, development, and operations.

5. Delivering value for money in how we use our resources;
- Increase operational competence to strengthen resilience
 - Drive efficiencies through digital innovation
 - Maximise productivity and efficiency

In response to a question from Councillor J Hugo in relation to collaboration with other services in relation to specialist assets, the DCFO explained that national arrangements were in place under the NFCC but each service must assess its risk and have sufficient provisions to meet this risk. He explained that services supported each other, with Lancashire a lead for things like fire dogs, providing support to other services with recharge arrangements in place. Additionally, services reviewed training arrangements and collaborated to ensure all training resources were available to all services, citing an example of high rise training with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service. The service also worked with the Environment Agency to provide resources to stop pollution at incidents. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) added that various services would be visiting Lancashire following the services outstanding HMICFRS report, where the service would share best practice. She explained that the service was always looking to improve and researched best practice across the country before making decisions, recently this had included for the procurement of 4x4 type fire engines. Lancashire's Chief Fire Officer was the national lead for wildfires and was developing the introduction of wildfire assets across the country. AM Powell added that there were a number of internal groups in relation to equipment and regional procurement that contributed to collaboration and efficiency within the region.

County Councillor U Arif remarked that the drone technology was very impressive and the service was getting ahead of the curve. The ACFO added that the use of drones and the services' robot reduced the risk to firefighters and fire dogs by allowing access to areas whilst crews maintained a safe distance from the incident.

The report was moved by Councillor J Hugo and seconded by County Councillor U Arif.

Resolved: That the Planning Committee noted and endorsed the Annual Service Plan for publication.

28-25/26 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on **Monday 13 July 2026** at 10:00 hours in the main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service

	Headquarters, Fulwood.
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	Further meeting dates were noted for 16 November 2026 and 8 March 2027.
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M Nolan
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood