

30 March 2016

## **COUNCIL APPOINTED COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVE - REPORT TO THE COUNCIL – COUNCILLORS JACKSON, MATTHEWS AND T WILLIAMS**

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This report updates the Council on the work of the Combined Fire Authority. The Fire Authority is made up of 25 Councillors (19 representatives from Lancashire County Council three from Blackburn and Darwen Council and three from Blackpool Council).

Since the last report to Council, the Combined Fire Authority has met on three occasions, 7 September 2015, 7 December 2015 and 15 February 2016. The Combined Fire Authority has produced a summary of those meetings and the appointed representatives will update the Council on any issues.

### **REPORT OF THE LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY (CFA) 7 SEPTEMBER 2015**

#### **1. CHAIRMAN'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The Authority gave thanks to Mr Max Winterbottom for his valued work and dedication in the role of Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority since 2005 and wished him well in his retirement at the end of September 2015.

#### **2. COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDER SCHEME LAUNCH**

The Authority received a presentation from the Deputy Chief Fire Officer who was pleased to announce that after much work between Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service (LFRS) and North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) and their respective trade unions the first National Joint Council approved Community Responder Pilot in the country had been agreed in Lancashire. On 24 August 2015, fire crews in Morecambe and Ormskirk formally started operating the pilot, which after 6 months would be reviewed with a view to extending the initiative to other areas across Lancashire.

Members viewed a video, which had been produced for the launch of the Scheme which had received good media coverage and which was accessible from the following link:  
<https://vimeo.com/137256138>.

Firefighters would be mobilised by NWAS to 'Red 1' and 'Red 2' (serious and life-threatening) medical emergencies simultaneously alongside Ambulance crews if they were closer to a patient than an ambulance when the call came through. In the event of a fire call while on the way to a medical incident, the LFRS appliance would be redirected to respond to the fire. The crews involved in the Scheme had received a high standard of life support training and were able to respond using blue lights. The crews had additional medical equipment and carried oxygen in addition to the defibrillator already installed on all appliances.

Since the Scheme had commenced the Service had attended 45 calls across the two stations involved. Feedback so far had been very positive from both members of the public and

NWAS staff. A formal report would be brought to Members at a future meeting for a decision on whether to extend the pilot.

### **3. BREAKING AND ENTRY PILOT**

The Authority was advised that the Service was responding as part of another pilot in association with NWAS, replacing the Police when the Ambulance Service required access to a casualty given they did not have powers to effect an entry. This pilot involved all fire stations and had commenced six weeks ago.

The first quarter activity, which was reported recently to the Performance Committee under the Service's Key Performance Indicator for Preventing and Protecting, showed there had been 69 occasions during the first quarter of 2015/16 where the Service had gained entry. The Service's response time had been between 6½ – 8 minutes whereas the average Police response time had been 24 minutes. In addition, the Service was entering in a way which better left the premises secure. On occasions the Service had arrived before the Ambulance Service therefore, should the community first responder scheme be rolled out across the Service this would complement that work very well.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service took a risk-based approach and that there was a risk in doing both the pilots. There could be occasions when fire engines might be unavailable to attend a fire from the nearest station due to undertaking the additional activity and in these situations, the fire engine would be despatched from the next nearest station. The benefits however, of responding to the additional activities outweighed this risk. Also as a consequence of this extra workload, there would also be an increase in incident numbers, which would be reflected in the Service's performance information.

### **4. FIRE RELATED PROSECUTIONS**

Under this item Area Manager Phil Cox updated the Authority on the support the Service was giving to private rented sector landlords to ensure they were ready for the new regulations which made it compulsory for all landlords to fit smoke alarms in rented homes. The regulations were expected to come into effect from October 2015, subject to Parliamentary approval. Under the new laws, smoke alarms must be fitted on every floor of the property as well as carbon monoxide alarms in properties, which burned solid fuels. Landlords must check the alarms were working at the start of every new tenancy with potential penalties for non-compliance of up to £5,000.

To support local landlords to improve the safety of their tenants a new dedicated business support plus section had been created on the Service's website. This explained what landlords needed to do to make their properties safer from fire risk, carbon monoxide and other hazards and provided completely free access to a comprehensive, fully mobile enabled and intuitive online fire risk assessment. This provided a one-stop-shop tool to assess risk, evidence precautions taken by uploading photographs and storing relevant certification and documents all in one place online. Registration on the site enabled private rented property landlords to access a limited number of free smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors that had been supplied to LFRS by the government. Members viewed the site, which could be accessed via the following link: <http://www.lancsbusinessplus.org.uk/>. In addition, the

Service was running area business forums throughout Business Safety Week (7 – 14 September 2015) to publicise this and provide advice.

## **5. COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY REPORTS**

Under this item, the Area Manager Ben Norman updated the Authority on the Services' response to a 4-storey building collapsed at Wood Flour Mills on Tunstall Road in Bosley, Cheshire on 17 July 2015 where, following explosions there were large fires at the scene and people reported missing. The Service provided assistance through its Urban Search and Rescue Team (USAR) based at Bamber Bridge and Chorley stations whose staff were mobilised to support Manchester Fire and Rescue Service at the major incident. The team consisted of a Station Manager, 10 USAR team members, specialist equipment and the canine unit. In Lancashire, the logistics were managed by a small incident room to ensure adequate cover and relief for the staff both in Cheshire and in Lancashire at the Bamber Bridge and Chorley stations. This was the largest USAR deployment in the country since the inception of national resilience arrangements. One of the main constraints was the surrounding dangers from burning silos and unstable structures. It was a real test of the resilience and operational planning arrangements. The team brought back a lot of learning which would be evaluated and which would inform future training policy thereby making any future responses more effective.

### **REPORT OF THE LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY (CFA) 7 DECEMBER 2015**

#### **1. WELCOME TO NEW CLERK AND MONITORING OFFICER TO THE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY**

At the Authority meeting, Members welcomed Mr Mark Nolan as the new Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Combined Fire Authority.

#### **2. STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE – 2014/15**

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2012) provides overall strategic direction to English Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs). It sets out the Government's priorities and objectives and places a requirement on all FRA's to provide assurance to their communities and to the Government on financial, governance and operational matters.

The Statement of Assurance was considered and approved by Members. It provides the necessary accountability and transparency to the people of Lancashire and evidences that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service continues to deliver the expectations detailed within both the National Framework and the Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

The Statement sits alongside the Service's IRMP, Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and recently redesigned Annual Service Plan and Annual Progress Report. It details what measures are in place to assure that the Combined Fire Authority's performance remains efficient, economic and effective.

### **3. CAPITAL BUDGET 2016/17 – 2020/21 AND REVENUE BUDGET 2016/17 – 2019/20**

The Authority noted and endorsed the draft Capital Programme for 2016/17 - 2020/21 and Revenue Budget for 2016/17 - 2019/20.

The Authority also authorised consultation with representatives of non-domestic ratepayers and Trade Unions on the budget proposals and agreed to give further consideration to both at their Budget Fixing Meeting scheduled for 16th February 2016.

### **4. URGENT BUSINESS – FLOODING IN LANCASHIRE**

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members of the Service's response to flooding-related incidents over the weekend.

Initially calls in Lancashire were to support stranded motorists and vulnerable people. North of Lancaster city centre an electrical sub-station, on Caton Road became surrounded by rising water. To prevent an outage in the Lancaster area, Electricity North West decided to isolate the supply, which serves over 50,000 properties. The Service brought in a high volume pump from Burnley to assist pumping operations into the canal. The water rescue teams were also brought in to assist. As the rain continued to fall, the River Lune burst its banks flooding the centre of Lancaster, which necessitated the evacuation of buildings including the Fire Station on Cable Street.

Gold command was set up at the Police Headquarters in Hutton with a co-ordinating room set up at Service HQ to match capacity to the volume of calls being received through North West Fire Control. Overall, over 400 emergency calls were received of which 278 were within the Lancaster area.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that he had attended the multi-agency Gold command meetings, which continued currently in the emergency phase although it was expected to move into the recovery phase within 24 hours. This had been relayed to Peter Holland, Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser who attended the Government's contingencies committee Cobra, to discuss the current situation.

Members praised the efforts of staff who had worked exceptionally hard to protect the people of Lancashire. The Authority asked that their appreciation be put on record and communicated to all staff.

## **REPORT OF THE LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY (CFA) 15 FEBRUARY 2016**

### **1. BLUE LIGHT TIME TO CHANGE PLEDGE**

Mental health problems affect 1 in 4 people every year, and 9 in 10 of those experiencing a mental health problem say they have faced negative treatment from others as a result.

The Chairman of the Fire Authority and the Chief Fire Officer has signed the "Blue Light Time to Change Pledge". This is supported by an action plan which details some of the activity and

objectives the Service is going to do to support mental health and mental wellbeing amongst staff and their families.

A programme of training for managers through the “Managing Mental Health at Work” course provided by the mental health charity MIND has already been delivered and the Service supported the “Time to Talk Day” on the 4th February to help spread the word that you don’t have to be an expert around mental health to talk about it. Sometimes a text, a walk or a simple ‘how are you?’ can make a real difference.

## **2. REVENUE BUDGET 2016/17 - 2019/20**

The Authority considered a report of the Treasurer that presented a gross revenue budget requirement for 2016/17 of £55.611m. After allowing for a council tax increase of 0.99% and allowing for the increase in council tax base and improved council tax collection rates, this resulted in a net budget requirement of £55.176m for 2016/17 and a council tax of £65.50 per Band D Property.

## **3. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON EMERGENCY SERVICES COLLABORATION**

On 11 September, the Government commenced a six-week consultation entitled ‘Enabling Closer Working Between Emergency Services’. This was considered by the Resources Committee on 25 September 2015 and a position statement established. Delegated authority was given to the CFA Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Leader of the main opposition party to agree a final response. This was subsequently agreed and returned before the close of the consultation.

In addition, a meeting was held between the CFA Chairman, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and chief officers of the Police and Fire in Lancashire to establish a common understanding and agree a direction of travel. This recognised both services were high performing and were collaborating effectively. As such, there was no evidence that a change in governance structures would deliver any tangible benefits. The position of being content with current governance arrangements was also endorsed by Lancashire County Council on 22 October 2015.

It is, however, recognised that different parts of the country with different economic, geographical or political pressure may seek alternative solutions. The CFA position was clearly that any changes to governance structure must be agreed between the Fire Authority and the PCC, rather than as the result of independent action.

The Government has now considered the 318 responses to the consultation commenting on some or all of the 16 questions posed. Their intention is to:

- introduce a high level duty to collaborate on all three emergency services, to improve efficiency or effectiveness;

- enable PCCs to take on the functions of fire and rescue authorities (FRAs), where a local case is made;
- where a PCC takes on the responsibilities of their local FRA, further enabling him or her to create a single employer for police and fire personnel;
- in areas where a PCC has not become responsible for fire and rescue services, enabling them to have representation on their local FRA with voting rights, where the local FRA agrees; and
- abolish the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and give the Mayor of London direct responsibility for the fire and rescue service in London.

Implications for the Authority include a new duty to collaborate between all three emergency services. This would not be exclusive and existing partnerships with other agencies could still continue. The Government's intention was to enable the PCC to have representation on the CFA or its committees with voting rights. This would be subject to the PCC making clear their reasons for seeking membership and the CFA agreeing the request. There would be further implications if the PCC moved to independently make a case to take control of fire. This position would need to be reviewed in light of the forthcoming PCC elections in May 2016.

#### **4. FIRE RELATED PROSECUTIONS**

The Authority received a report detailing prosecutions in respect of fire safety management failures and arson related incidents within the period 1 October 2015 to 31 December 2015. One fire safety conviction was noted with 11 further cases / investigations ongoing.

In addition, fire protection and business support information had now been included in the report. This included an update for Members on the support provided by the Service to landlords to support their responsibilities in line with the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations, which required landlords to install smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in their properties from 1 October 2015.

There were no completed arson cases to report on this occasion. Members noted that arson detection rates for Lancashire continued to stay at over 3 – 4 times the national average. The continually improving standard of stage 1 fire reports submitted to the Police was resulting in early guilty pleas, which negated the need for officers to present evidence in court. This report informed Members of only the cases that went to a full hearing. It was noted therefore that during the last fiscal year 19 cases had been reported to Members however, an additional 136 cases had realised an early guilty plea.