

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

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 two occasions 19 September 2016, 19 December 2016 and 20 February 2017. 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)
19 SEPTEMBER 2016

1. FLOODING DEBRIEF OUTCOMES AND INVESTMENT

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service had actively taken the opportunity to learn from significant events through multi-agency debriefing sessions with partners and hot debriefing sessions on fire stations. He introduced Area Manager Mark Hutton who presented Members with an overview of the learning from Storms Desmond and Eva, which occurred in December 2015 and advised how the Authority's investment would support future improvements.

AM Hutton reminded Members of the impact on Lancashire of the storms which had had the greatest impact in the North of the county. He gave an overview of the Service contribution to the response phase, the debrief processes and lessons learned, including how these had influenced the next Integrated Risk Management Plan, future training, equipment and the provision of flexible swift water rescue capability. It was noted that AM Hutton would be attending a national, multi-agency event the following week to share accumulated learning from the past 12-months where he would be giving an insight into the types and speed of events.

On behalf of the Authority, the Chairman gave thanks to all staff for their flexibility and commitment during that difficult time.

2. FOUR-YEAR SETTLEMENTS

As part of the Local Government Finance Settlement, the Secretary of State had announced an offer of four-year funding settlements for local authorities in return for publishing an efficiency plan.

The draft four year settlement included in the Local Government Finance Settlement identified a reduction of £1.8m for the current year, with a further reduction of £3.7m over the next three years. As part of the Settlement the Secretary of State announced an offer of

four year funding settlements for Local Authorities, in order to help Authorities plan ahead, subject to the Authority wishing to pursue this and the submission of a suitable efficiency plan. Subsequent to this the Secretary of state had re-affirmed that the offer of four year settlements was unaffected by the budget cuts announced earlier in the year. However, it was possible that other changes might arise in the future, which could impact upon it. Furthermore, whilst it was not clear what the impact would be of not accepting this offer the Secretary of State had re-iterated that he 'could not guarantee future levels of funding' for councils which declined to submit an efficiency plan, thereby rejecting the four-year settlement. Based on this it was hard to see any scenario whereby those Authorities who did not accept the offer subsequently recovered an enhanced settlement.

The Authority approved the recommendation to accept this offer and approved the efficiency plan as presented, thereby giving greater certainty to future funding levels and enhancing financial and service planning.

3. CORPORATE SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Under Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, employers must prepare, and where necessary revise, a written statement of health and safety policy. The existing safety, health and environment policy document, which was last considered by the Authority in September 2013, had been recently reviewed, amended as required, and was now presented to Members for consideration.

As the health and safety and environment functions were managed in a similar way it was considered appropriate for the Authority to declare its intent for both health and safety and the environment in the same document. Members considered the aims and objectives, which were:

- Understand and ensure compliance with safety, health and environmental regulatory and other requirements that apply to our activities;
- Be fully committed to the prevention of injury and ill health to staff and visitors;
- Provide and maintain high facility, workplace and housekeeping standards;
- Continually develop and maintain systems and procedures to ensure that all equipment, plant and premises are safe and do not have an adverse effect on health and wellbeing;
- Consult and communicate with staff and representative bodies promoting Safety, Health, Wellbeing and Environmental expectations and standards;
- Identify hazards, aspects and reduce risks to as low as is reasonably practical whilst being risk aware rather than risk adverse;
- Raise awareness, train staff in safety, health, wellbeing and environmental matters and encourage our staff to play an active role in reducing impacts and risks and contributing to policy and procedural implementation;
- Support staff fitness and wellbeing;
- To plan and set objectives, targets and programmes and monitor and review our systems using proactive and reactive methods to continually improve our safety, health, wellbeing and environmental performance reporting progress each year;
- To implement and adhere to a framework of policies, procedures and processes that comply with the requirements of British and International Standards such as ISO 14001:2004 and OHSAS 18001: 2007;

- Have appropriate plans/arrangements to deal with emergency situations;
- Recycle and reduce waste wherever possible and make efficient and environmentally responsible use of energy, water and other natural resources; and
- Periodically review our systems especially following safety or environmental events.

The Authority approved the policy, which formed an integral part of the Integrated Risk Management Planning and Corporate Planning processes and Business Continuity Arrangements.

REPORT OF THE LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY (CFA) 19 DECEMBER 2016

1. ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE – 2015/16

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.

2. CAPITAL BUDGET 2017/ 2018 – 2021/ 2022 AND REVENUE BUDGET 2017/ 2018 – 2021/ 2022

The Authority noted the draft Capital Programme for 2017/2018 - 2021/ 2022 and Revenue Budget for 2017/ 2018 - 2021/ 2022.

The Authority authorised consultation with representatives of non-domestic ratepayers and Trade Unions on the budget proposals and agreed to consider both at the Budget Fixing Meeting scheduled for 20 February 2017.

3. ADRIAN THOMAS' INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF CONDITIONS OF SERVICE FOR FIRE AND RESCUE STAFF IN ENGLAND

Members considered the Adrian Thomas Review on Conditions of Service, which had been published by the Home Office on 3 November 2016. The report contained 45 key findings that needed to be reflected on by the various elements of the Fire Sector (Government, Local Government Association, Chief Fire Officers Association, Unions as well as individual authorities and services). The Review was confined to Fire and Rescue Authorities in England (46), but had a wider impact. The findings were grouped into five areas:

- i) The working environment;

- ii) Documented Conditions of Service;
- iii) Industrial Relations;
- iv) Retained Duty System; and
- v) Management of the Fire and Rescue Service.

The publication of the report in November 2016 was two years after the Report was commissioned and a number of comments made had now become historical in context, or overtaken. Similarly, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) could demonstrate its position in a favourable light in respect of many of the findings, as was done in respect of the Sir Ken Knight Review. In effect, many of the issues directly in LFRS' control were being progressed within existing activity. A detailed assessment of the Service's position against the findings of the Report would be presented to the CFA meeting to be held on 20 February 2017.

4. RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM PAY REVIEW

Members considered a report that highlighted the outcome of the RDS Pay Review, which had included a comprehensive consultation exercise with staff and representative bodies. The report recommended moving away from the current salary scheme to a hybrid model based on a set reward for commitment and paying separately for actual activity. The proposed changes would result in an additional cost of approximately £300,000, which was included in the draft budget. Approximately 80% of personnel would be better off under the proposal and the 20% worse off would receive three years' pay protection.

The Authority approved the revised scheme for implementation on 1 April 2017, subject to a favourable vote from the Fire Brigade Union membership. If the vote was not in favour of the proposal the current standard re-banding exercise would take place for implementation on 1 April 2017.

5. EARLY DAY MOTION – SCRAPPING OF SCHOOL SPRINKLERS

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that notification had been received of an Early Day Motion currently seeking support in the House of Commons with regards to Building Bulletin 100: design for fire safety in schools and the removal of the expectation that automatic fire suppression systems (sprinklers) would be fitted to all but the lowest risk new schools. It was considered that such a move could compromise the safety of children, staff, local communities and firefighters. The Chairman of the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority and the Chief Fire Officer had therefore written to local MPs on behalf of the Authority.

The Authority noted the Chairman and Chief Fire Officer's letter and agreed to add support where appropriate.

**REPORT OF THE LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY (CFA)
20 FEBRUARY 2017**

1. INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2017 - 2022

Integrated risk management planning provided Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) with the opportunity to detail what the Service aimed to do to identify and consider the full range of fire and rescue related risks across Lancashire. This ensured that both our communities and other interested parties were provided with details of how we intend to fulfil our responsibilities in a clear, cohesive manner. The Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2017/ 2022 had been developed to be an overarching, enabling document. It provided hyperlinks to all of LFRS's strategic documents thereby remaining up-to-date over the lifespan of the plan. The plan did not however detail the Emergency Cover review, this would be undertaken and consulted upon separately during 2017/ 2018.

The Community Safety Strategy had been encapsulated within the IRMP highlighting the importance of the inter-locking components of Start Safe, Live Safe, Age Safe and Road Safe that remained at the core of our approach to reducing risk and improving public safety. Significant progress had been made with Climate Change and Environment responsibilities, which were now thoroughly embedded and entrenched within Service planning, policies and procedures. Therefore the Climate Change and Environment Strategy had also been encompassed within this new IRMP, thus negating any further need for a separate Climate Change and Environment Strategy document.

The approved IRMP 2017/ 2022 would be published in early April 2017 and available to access/ download from the LFRS website.

2. NEXT STEPS FOR FIRE REFORM – MINISTERIAL SPEECH – 7 FEBRUARY 2017

On 7 February 2017, the Rt Hon Brandon Lewis, Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service, gave a speech on the "Next Steps for Fire Reform". A full transcript of the speech was provided for Members. The tone recognised that some progress had been made in improving the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS), but it had to go "further and faster". The speech was linked to those from previous years to emphasise reoccurring themes that had still to be addressed which were Outdated Working Policies, Lack of Diversity, No Independent Scrutiny and Improving Procurement Procedures.

The lack of independent scrutiny would be remedied by the introduction of a new Inspectorate for the Fire Service looking at efficiency and effectiveness, with particular reference to response and prevention, value for money, understanding demand and future risks, together with its leadership, training, diversity, values and culture. These areas would be complemented by thematic inspection, the first area being diversity, flexible employment and collaboration. Inspections would commence this year and be complemented by a transformed peer review process. Greater transparency and accountability would also be facilitated by the introduction of a new website providing incident and performance data.

Regarding the Police and Crime Act, the Minister confirmed the new term of Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners. He did not propose a blanket takeover of FRS by these commissioners, but did emphasise that a local business case could be made and that FRA were obliged to co-

operate in preparing this. The objection of a FRA to any proposed change would not be enough on its own to prevent a change occurring.

He indicated his intention to work productively with the newly constituted National Fire Chiefs Council, which he viewed as the operational voice of the FRS. Also mentioned was the Chief Fire Officers Association's work on peer review, procurement and standards. There was also an increased emphasis on collaboration and he highlighted best practice with some examples provided.

The Minister announced his intention to set up an Independent Standards Body. This would provide guidance and standards on leadership, workforce development, equality and diversity and codify effective practice. Reference was made to culture and the Adrian Thomas Review. The speech also reminded the audience of the disparity in the cost of some goods procured by FRS exposed in a recent Home Office Survey.

The next expected steps for the government were to enshrine its stated direction of travel with a refreshed National Framework, to be published later this year. This would clarify national expectations and responsibilities. Under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, FRA's "must have regard to the Framework in carrying out their functions". If an Authority fails to act in accordance with the Framework, the Secretary then has powers of intervention.

3. ADRIAN THOMAS' INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF CONDITIONS OF SERVICE FOR FRS STAFF IN ENGLAND – FEBRUARY 2015

A report regarding the publication of the Adrian Thomas Review on Conditions of Service was presented at the last CFA meeting in December 2016, where it was agreed that a detailed assessment of the Service's position against the findings of the report would be presented to this Authority meeting. The publication of the report in November 2016 was over two years after the Report was commissioned and a number of comments made had now become historical in context or overtaken by events. Similarly, LFRS could demonstrate its position in a favourable light in respect of many of the findings. In effect, many of the issues directly in LFRS' control were being progressed within existing activity.

The findings were grouped into five areas: i) the Working Environment; ii) Documented Conditions of Service; iii) Industrial Relations; iv) Retained Duty System and v) Management of the Fire and Rescue Service.

The themes emerging for consideration in the sector were:

- How can some authorities make progress whilst others do not;
- Greater cross fertilisation of issues should be developed (institutional learning);
- The Conditions of Service and negotiation arrangements should be "modernised" including Role Maps and Duty Systems and content;
- Issues in respect of employee engagement including culture and trust, including equality and diversity and bullying and harassment issues;
- National Leadership development/ standards;
- Remove the Right to Strike;
- Greater use of Retained Duty System, e.g. more RDS appliances; and
- Future Recruitment.

The key strap line was “where change is common sense, it should become common practice”.

4. REVENUE BUDGET 2017/18 - 2021/22

The Authority considered a report of the Treasurer that presented a gross revenue budget requirement for 2017/ 2018 of £54.3m. This represented a reduction of 2.3% and allowed for the identification of £1.5m of efficiency savings. The Government had confirmed that the multi-year settlement offers had been agreed with all single purpose fire and rescue authorities. Hence, barring exceptional circumstances and subject to the normal statutory consultation process for the local government finance settlement, the Government expected these amounts to be presented to Parliament each year. The Authority noted that the final Local Government Finance Settlement had not yet been received as it would not be debated in Parliament until 20 February at the earliest, hence it had been assumed that the final settlement would be consistent with the draft figures reported in December, i.e. £25.3m.

The Authority considered three council tax options for 2017/ 2018, which met the requirements to deliver a balanced budget and maintain an adequate level of reserves and unanimously determined a council tax freeze, which maintained council tax at £65.50 for a Band D property. To meet the reduced budget requirement of £409,000 associated with this the Authority also unanimously approved the drawdown of £313,000 from the LGPS pension surplus with the remaining £96,000 being met from an additional savings target.