

COUNCIL APPOINTED COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVE - REPORT TO THE COUNCIL – COUNCILLORS BLACKBURN, HUGO 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 one occasion, 24 February 2020. The Combined Fire Authority has produced a summary of that meeting and the appointed representatives will update the Council on any issues.

REPORT OF THE LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY (CFA) 24 FEBRUARY 2020

1. Pay Policy Statement For 2020/2021

The Director of People and Development presented a report informing the Authority that in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 a pay policy statement for 2020/21 had been prepared. The pay policy published data on senior salaries and the structure of the workforce and demonstrated the principles of transparency. The pay policy statement set out the Authority's policies for the financial year relating to: the remuneration of its chief officers; the remuneration of its lowest paid employees; and the relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and that of other employees who are not chief officers.

2. REVENUE BUDGET 2019/2020 - 2023/2024

The Authority considered a report of the Treasurer that presented a gross revenue budget requirement for 2020/2021 of £57.8m.

The Authority considered council tax options for 2020/2021, which met the requirements to deliver a balanced budget and maintain an adequate level of reserves and determined a 1.99% increase (£1.38 per annum) resulting in a council tax of £70.86 for a Band D property.

3. HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES STATE OF FIRE AND RESCUE ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Authority noted that during January Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services released the 'State of Fire Report', which was the annual assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of fire and rescue services in England, based on the 45 inspections carried out between June 2018 and August 2019. The report provided a summary of the performance of the 45 fire and rescue services (FRS) against the three inspection pillars of effectiveness, efficiency and people and provides a comparator for the high levels of performance delivered by Lancashire when considered against peers nationally. The report highlighted that the sector had many strengths, but that ongoing improvement was required. Whilst it was acknowledged that many of the negative statements within the report existed

nationally, it was pleasing that these were not representative of the picture that was reflected within Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's (LFRS) first tranche report.

State of Fire provided strategic recommendations on reforms needed, to ensure that modern fire and rescue services could be provided, which were fit for the future.

The report recommended:

1. By June 2020, 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.
2. By June 2020, 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'.
3. By September 2020, 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.
4. By December 2020, the National Fire Chiefs Council, with the Local Government Association, should produce a code of ethics for fire and rescue services. The code should be adopted by every service in England and considered as part of each employee's progression and annual performance appraisal.

Following the release of the reports from the final tranche of inspections and the State of Fire report, LFRS had identified a number of opportunities to be explored with peers. Accordingly, visits had been made to other FRS, examples being, Merseyside to look at their approach towards Prevention activity, phone conferences with Cambridge and Oxfordshire to look at various areas of strength and a further visit was being planned to West Midlands to consider the work undertaken to achieve their 'outstanding' in response.

Conversely, LFRS had hosted several FRS over the course of the year to share areas of best practice, including Lincolnshire, Durham and Darlington and a number of FRS who attended a recent event to share an overview of LFRS' Risk Based Inspection Programme for fire protection.

It was noted that the dates for the second inspection of LFRS had been confirmed as week commencing 11 May 2020.