

## **COUNCIL APPOINTED COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVE - REPORT TO THE COUNCIL – COUNCILLORS HUGO, JACKSON 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 four occasions, 22 February, 26 April, 28 June and 13 September 2021. 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 22 FEBRUARY 2021**

#### **1. HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES UPDATE**

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) had received a positive inspection from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services. The inspection, which occurred during late September 2020, looked at how LFRS delivered its functions safely and how it worked for the greater good of the community alongside partners. The report noted how prevention and protection work continued, albeit in a modified capacity and how LFRS worked with its partners in the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) providing structure, support and logistics. LFRS successfully engaged with unions and was able to put in place effective plans in line with requests from partners in the LRF, many of which came under the tripartite agreement (including: antigen testing, face fitting, assisting vulnerable people and packing/repacking food). LFRS was also praised for wellbeing support and communication with staff at all levels using a variety of innovative methods. LFRS was graded 'outstanding' in the round one inspections for culture and values. This further positive result would contribute to the grading under the round two inspection.

#### **2. PAY POLICY STATEMENT FOR 2021/2022**

In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, a pay policy statement for 2021/2022 was considered. 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 were not chief officers.

### **3. REVENUE BUDGET 2019/2020 - 2023/2024**

The Authority considered a report of the Treasurer that presented a gross revenue budget requirement for 2021/2022 of £58.2m. The Authority considered council tax options for 2021/2022, which met the requirements to deliver a balanced budget and maintain an adequate level of reserves and determined a 1.99% increase (£1.41 per annum) resulting in a council tax of £72.27 for a Band D property.

### **4. PERSON-CENTRED HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECKS AND HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECK EFFECTIVENESS**

The Authority supported a 'person-centred approach' by LFRS, which placed the recipient at the centre of the offer and ensured they were treated as a person first. LFRS had a number of prevention activities and campaigns, which had been developed around this personalised approach by focussing on the importance of well-informed risk assessments, dignity, choice and close partnership working. The Home Fire Safety Check and Safe and Well visit delivered a bespoke, personalised fire risk assessment, which was tailored towards individual need and, by working with partners for inward and onward referrals, ensured resources were focussed on, and tailored to, high risk and vulnerable individuals.

## **REPORT OF THE LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY 26 APRIL 2021**

### **1. Urgent Decision Arrangements at Election Time**

The Authority authorised the Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk to the Authority to take any urgent decisions upon any matters arising between the date of the County elections and the CFA Annual Meeting, in the event of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman not being re-elected.

### **2. Fire Protection Reports**

Members considered a report that summarised:

- i) An ongoing fire safety prosecution for Plaza Beach Hotel, Blackpool;
- ii) Fire protection and business support information, which confirmed the inspection activity for high rise premises remained a priority and that tailored advice and support was being provided to businesses which may not have been occupied or operating throughout the recent lockdown in order to ensure responsible persons fully considered fire safety within their reopening processes; and
- iii) Cases of arson incidents were reported where evidence had been provided by Fire Investigators into the Criminal Justice System and court proceedings had progressed to trial and custodial sentences given.

The report also included a restorative justice arrangement.

### **3. Community Fire Safety Reports**

Members considered a report that provided an overview of community safety activities and incidents of operational interest across the 14 district authorities during February 2012 –

March 2021. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer highlighted the continued work with young people via:

- i) The Fire Cadet programme which continued to work virtually with over 100 Cadets achieving Skills for Justice qualifications;
- ii) The Road Sense package, which had been adapted for virtual delivery into schools and for pupil's home schooling had now reached over 5,000 pupils;
- iii) The Service had recently celebrated 20 years delivery of the Prince's Trust programme to over 6,000 young people. He also highlighted that the Service continued to support the response to the COVID-19 national pandemic. Staff had assisted in the delivery of over 200,000 vaccinations of which circa 25,000 had now been delivered by our own staff. Operational incidents of note included a terrible incident in Bolton-le-Sands of a roof collapsing where a father and son had sadly lost their lives and serious road traffic collisions where sadly there had been a number of fatalities on Lancashire's roads.

## **REPORT OF THE LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY (CFA) HELD 28 JUNE 2021**

### **1. Combined Fire Authority Annual Meeting**

The meeting held 28 June was the Authority's Annual Meeting and Members appointed County Councillors D O'Toole and J Shedwick as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Authority respectively for 2021/2022. The Chairman took the opportunity to recognise the work of the outgoing Chairman, County Councillor Frank De Molfetta who had been an excellent Chairman to work with over the past eight years and the Authority Members applauded. County Councillor Nikki Hennessy also took the opportunity to thank County Councillor De Molfetta for his support to the Authority particularly his enthusiasm and commitment to the residents of Lancashire.

### **2. Composition of the Combined Fire Authority**

The Composition of the Combined Fire Authority for 2021/2022 included eight new Members from Lancashire County Council: Keith Iddon, Ged Mirfin, Stuart Morris, John Singleton, Ron Woollam, Munsif Dad, Jennifer Mein and Sean Serridge and one new Member from Blackburn with Darwen Council: Councillor Jean Rigby.

### **3. Re-Appointment of Independent Person**

As required by the Localism Act 2011, the Authority had a duty to promote and maintain high standards of Members, which included the appointment of one or more Independent Persons. Following consideration, the Authority re-appointed Mrs Hilary Banks as its Independent Person for a further period until the CFA Annual Meeting in February 2022, which allowed for a period of time to make arrangements for a replacement.

### **4. Unwanted Fire Signal Policy (UWFS) – Proposals for Change**

The Authority received a report and presentation, which provided an overview of the current policy relating to fire engine attendance at False Alarms caused by Automatic Fire

Alarm (AFA) actuations and the high proportion of these, which were subsequently categorised as Unwanted Fire Signals (UWFS). It was noted that the March 2021 Performance Committee meeting considered the implications of the current policy and the resultant performance, endorsing two options for change which were presented for full Fire Authority consideration. The two options were framed around i) non-attendance to non-sleeping risk premises; and ii) the development of a new policy relating specifically to domestic false alarms (which were growing at pace due to increased use of Telecare in Social Care provision for the most vulnerable).

The proposals would bring Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) into greater alignment with other North West services and with the Fire Sector direction of travel. False alarm mobilisations consistently accounted for approximately 50% of all LFRS attendances, compared to 42% nationally. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) noted this disparity in their last inspection. It was reasonable therefore to expect further scrutiny in this area during the next round of HMICFRS inspections later in 2021.

The Authority endorsed both proposals for public consultation.

## **5. Annual Safety, Health and Environment Report 2020/2021**

The Authority noted that the Service had again seen a very positive year in terms of overall safety, health and environment performance. COVID-19 had been a significant challenge to the Service during 2020/2021, which had required significant focus across all areas to ensure that operational response and safety critical community work continued to be carried out safely for both staff and members of the public. While the vaccination programme was providing a route out of the restrictions, the Service would continue to comply with COVID-19 workplace safety requirements, which would be reviewed as restrictions changed.

In April 2021, the auditor from British Assessment Bureau carried out a virtual audit against health and safety standard ISO 45001:2018 and environment ISO 14001: 2015. The scope for both standards was 'The Provision of Fire, Rescue and Supporting Services across Lancashire'. This included all operational activity with virtual visits to five fire stations that operated different duty systems and to a number of supporting departments. Continued certification was granted without any non-conformance. During 2020/2021 there were 57 accidents, 117 near misses and nine RIDDOR events. The report provided a summary of the total accident and ill-health statistics for 2020/2021. A comparison against previous performance showed an overall downward trend from absence following work related injury/illness and demonstrated a positive increase in near miss reporting. The focus for health and wellbeing had been on supporting staff, colleagues, families and friends in response to the COVID-19 pandemic with a range of material developed to support staff through this difficult time. The Carbon Management Plan 2010 included a target of 40% carbon emission reduction by March 2030 from a baseline of 4352 tonnes of CO<sup>2</sup> in 2007/2008. The Service had achieved an overall reduction of 23% by March 2021, which equated to 1020 tonnes of CO<sup>2</sup>.

**REPORT OF THE LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY (CFA) HELD  
13 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**1. 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.

A recently reviewed and updated safety, health and environment policy was considered by the Authority. Throughout the discussion Members were reassured that the Service followed best practice and in many ways exceeded best practice by taking a whole systems approach to ensure firefighters continued to be protected from contaminants.

**2. Member champion activity**

The Authority appointed its Member Champions at its annual meeting in June and current Member Champions are:

- Community Safety – Councillor Jean Rigby
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Councillor Zamir Khan
- Health and Wellbeing – County Councillor Andrea Kay
- Road Safety – County Councillor Ron Woollam

Reports relating to the activity of the Member Champions are provided on a regular basis to the Authority. This report related to activity for the period June – August 2021. During this period all Champions had undertaken their respective role in accordance with defined terms of reference.

**3. Fire Protection reports**

The Authority discussed a report detailing prosecutions in respect of fire safety management failures and arson related incidents within the period 1 July 2021 to 31 August 2021. Fire protection and business support information was provided, and Members noted that there were five arson convictions during the period which amounted to over 20 years custodial sentences.

**4. Re-appointment of clerk to the authority**

The Authority approved the re-appointment of Mr Mark Nolan as Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority for a period of twelve months to the September meeting of the Authority in 2022.