

Report of the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority - 24 June 2024

Combined Fire Authority Annual Meeting

The meeting held 24 June 2024 was the Authority's Annual Meeting and Members appointed County Councillors N Hennessy and S Serridge as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority respectively for 2024/25.

Composition Of The Combined Fire Authority

The Composition of the Combined Fire Authority for 2024/25 included returning member Frank De Molfetta and 3 new Members, Usman Arif and Mark Clifford from Lancashire County Council and Mustafa Desai from Blackburn with Darwen Council.

Annual Safety, Health And Environment Report 2023/24

The Authority noted that the Service had again seen a very positive year in terms of overall safety, health and environment performance. In February and March 2023, the auditor from British Assessment Bureau (BAB) carried out an audit against the International Standards for health and safety ISO 45001:2018 and environment ISO 14001:2015. The audit scope for both standards was 'The Provision of Fire, Rescue and Supporting Services across Lancashire'. This broad scope encompasses all LFRS activities with audit visits to the Service Headquarters (SHQ) site, Service Training Centre (STC), four fire stations operating different duty systems together with several supporting departments. Continued certification was granted without any non-conformance and 1 opportunity for improvement was identified. Improvement actions during 2023/24 were identified in the report.

Member Champion Activity Report

- **Community Safety** - The Water Safety Campaign was launched in April with Water Safety education sessions delivered in high schools which fell into high-risk localities and all other schools across Lancashire invited to take part in virtual education sessions. During the week commencing 13 May 2024, the Prevention Support Team delivered virtual sessions to almost 8,200 KS3 and KS4 learners.
- **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion** - The Member Champion and ACFO Jon Charters joined Community Safety Adviser Faz Patel on Awaz Radio to speak to listeners across the UK on Ramadan Safety and introduce the 2024 'Safety During Hajj' package. This was followed up with a launch event led by Lancashire Council of Mosques combining the spiritual and safety messages for persons travelling to Saudi Arabia to conduct their pilgrimage.
- **Health, Wellbeing & Climate Change** - 31 Wellbeing Support Dog requests have been completed over this year, through which we have interacted with 217 staff and 850 members of the public.
- **Road Safety** - Road Sense is a Year 6 Road Safety Education Package offered to primary schools in Lancashire. 13,300 pupils have received the package and we are on track to deliver to all schools by the end of the summer term. The Biker Down team had a very busy month delivering courses and creating content for social media. The team created short videos which shared safety messages about getting your bike prepared for the riding season. Wasted Lives and the use of the

crashed car has been focused on for the celebration of Eid in May in collaboration with local mosques situated within St Matthews Ward on the outskirts of Preston City centre. Approximately 1000 worshippers encountered the crashed car during Eid.

Operational Incidents of Interest

The Authority received a report that provided information relating to operational incidents of note since the last meeting. Full details of the following incidents were provided in the report:

- Eight fire engines attended a commercial building fire in Blackburn (6/4/2024)
- Fatal building fire in Thornton Cleveleys (19/4/2024)
- Six fire engines tackled a commercial building fire in Poulton (23/4/2024)
- Person struck by Train in Parbold (25/4/2024)
- Firefighters responded to wildfire in Bacup (30/4/2024)
- Firefighters responded to fatal RTC on the M58 (17/5/2024)
- Firefighters responded to fatal RTC in Whitewell Bottom, Rossendale (19/5/2024)
- Firefighters responded to reports of a person trapped in a cave in Leck (20/5/2024)

Witton Business Park Fire Presentation

Group Manager Liam Wilson (GM) gave a presentation to members on the commercial building fire at Witton Business Park in Blackburn. The initial call was received at 19:26 hrs on 6 April 2024 with flames visible from the roof of the building. In total over 65 firefighters were involved in dealing with the incident. There were a number of hazards and considerations which included a large thick smoke plume, rapid fire spread, gas cylinders present, signs of structural collapse, the presence of an electric substation and gas supply and signs of asbestos. There were access difficulties with a river running along one side of the building and a wall and fence along another side, additionally there was a loaded HGV blocking access.

There was a multiagency response from Lancashire Constabulary, North West Ambulance Service, Blackburn with Darwen Council emergency planning and building control, Environmental Agency, Cadent Gas, Electricity North West and United Utilities. This was a protracted incident with LFRS working alongside partners for 9 days to determine the involvement of persons, continue to monitor for hot spots to prevent reignition, complete the fire investigation, conduct a controlled demolition and maintain the safety cordon whilst minimising the impact upon the local businesses and communities. This included reducing road closures to one lane to reduce the impact on the local community. The incident was officially closed on 15 April 2024. LFRS maintained consistent warning and informing media messages.

Members praised the excellent work and dedication of the firefighters involved and expressed their gratitude.

Further details of the meeting can be found on our website - <https://cfa.lancsfirerescue.org.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=136&MId=442&Ver=4>

NIKKI HENNESSY
Chair

LFRS
Fulwood