

## **Report of the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority (CFA) 17 June 2013**

### **1. Combined Fire Authority Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

The meeting held 17 June was the Authority's AGM and Members appointed County Councillors F De Molfetta and M Parkinson as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Authority respectively for 2013/14. On taking the Chair, County Councillor De Molfetta thanked past and continuing Members; particularly the outgoing Chairman, County Councillor D O'Toole for their considerable contributions to the work of the Authority. The Chairman also indicated that he looked forward to another excellent year of Members working together for the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service and for the safety and wellbeing of the people of Lancashire.

### **2. 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 period of 2 years until the CFA AGM in June 2015.

### **3. Facing the Future – Sir Ken Knight's Independent Review**

The outgoing Chief Fire & Rescue Advisor to the Department for Communities and Local Government, Sir Ken Knight, had delivered his independent findings from the review of efficiencies and operations in fire and rescue authorities in England. The review entitled 'Facing the Future' looked at five key areas:

- Efficiency of Fire and Rescue Services (FRS)
- Deploying resources
- Collaborating for efficiency
- Driving efficiency
- Future for Fire and Rescue

Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service (LFRS) had already made progress to advance these key areas and had made savings. These were presented to Members including: LFRS' cost per head of population was broadly in line with the national average despite having higher activity levels and higher levels of deprivation; Wholetime firefighter posts had been reduced by approximately a quarter since 2004; LFRS used self-rostering on all Retained Duty System and Day Crewing Plus stations, which amounted to approximately 2/3 of all LFRS fire engines and Lancashire worked closely with partner agencies. For example, the joint North West Fire Control was due to go live in early 2014 which would provide a more technically advanced and sustainable service, whilst delivery £800k savings per annum and LFRS already delivered many back office functions in conjunction with partners.

Members of the Authority highlighted the success of working in collaboration for many years with: other Fire & Rescue Services through the formation and success of the North West Fire & Rescue Partnership Board; a shared procurement service had been working well with Merseyside FRS for some time; the new Community Fire Station at Preesall included shared facilities with the Lancashire Constabulary and SureStart; improved partnership with the Constabulary had also resulted in more arson convictions and bringing about a reduction in deliberate fires. LFRS had identified areas for further consideration which would be included in Directorate Plans.

Sir Ken Knight's 'Facing the Future' report was designed to challenge Fire & Rescue Services who could not or who were unwilling to respond to the economic climate experienced across the public sector. The report was researched and produced over a relatively short six month period and this was reflected in the robustness of some of the data. It provided areas where savings could be realised and acknowledged the inequities that existed within different FRSs and within existing funding mechanisms. It considered the future for FRS and acknowledged that the scale needed to fully transform was unlikely to be achieved through individual action alone and it offered future operating models; which would need to be driven by government.

#### **4. Emergency Cover Review 2013 - Timeline**

An Emergency Cover Review is a three-yearly strategic review of fire and rescue service emergency response provision in Lancashire. The exercise involves an examination of the number of front line fire engines, fire stations and associated staffing arrangements across Lancashire.

Cuts in Government grant meant that by April 2016 LFRS must find at least £10m savings to meet the funding gap over the next 3 years. A programme of reviews had already been carried out which had identified that around half of the required savings (£5m) would come from the Service's specialist functions or departments, administration and non-pay budgets. However, despite the Service focusing its initial reviews on "back office" functions, most of the Service's resources were concentrated in its emergency response provision, specifically fire engines, fire stations and fire fighting staff. Given the scale of the required level of savings the Service is not able to make the £10m savings without presenting to the Authority 'options for change' in respect of future emergency response provision in Lancashire. Members were presented with and considered the timeline for the Emergency Cover Review 2013 and the key milestones for the Authority.

#### **5. Performance Management Information**

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members of the progressive improvements year on year; from a position of 7 targets in the red (greater than 10% off target) in 2009/10 to the current position that showed 4 targets as amber (less than 10% from target) for 2012/13. Members were presented with the overview of the Key Performance Indicators which showed performance to be the best ever, for example: -

- There have been a third less accidental fires in people's homes than there were five years ago and there was a twelve percent reduction in the last twelve months.
- The number of people been hurt or killed within fires has fallen by over half and the severity of injuries and damage has reduced significantly in that time.
- Incidents of arson are at there lowest ever levels with a fall of nearly a third this year.
- Our staff sickness and injuries are also dramatically reduced over the last five years and are currently at there lowest ever levels.

The Service continues to work with partners in reducing the numbers of road traffic collisions and improving outcomes. Through a partnership approach Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service has been working to improve road safety outcomes and to work with our partners to deliver various initiatives.