

**Report of the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority (CFA)
9 September 2013**

1. Welcome to New Members

The Authority welcomed County Councillors: Terry Burns, Ron Shewan and Graham Gooch who had replaced County Councillors: Lorraine Beavers, Sean Serridge and Alycia James. The Chairman thanked the outgoing Members for their contribution to the work of the Authority.

2. Service Headquarters Relocation

In April 2013 the Authority approved moving to the procurement stage of the project to relocate Service Headquarters from its current site in Fulwood to Euxton; subject to final refinement of plans and costs remaining within the overall project affordability.

Subsequently the government had published findings from Sir Ken Knight's review of the efficiencies and operations in Fire and Rescue Authorities in England and a report from the all-party parliamentary group on Homeland Security with a view to improve efficiency, interoperability and resilience of blue-light services. The Authority agreed that it would be more prudent not to embark on a long-term major capital project until the government gave a view on the options contained within those reports, which was expected by way of a White Paper in the autumn 2013.

3. Fitness Standards

There had been growing prominence of fitness standards in the eight point trade dispute between the government and the Fire Brigades Union over pensions. Fitness standards were a matter for individual Fire and Rescue Services and the Service had been approached both by the Minister and the Local Government Association to ensure Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) employees were fully aware of our fitness policies. Members considered and endorsed the current approach to fitness standards in LFRS, which have managed fitness successfully for many years. They also considered work underway to maintain and improve fitness in the future.

4. Community Fire Safety Reports

As part of a report relating to community fire safety initiatives and fires and incidents of particular interest, Members had received a presentation on the work undertaken by the Service in relation to the fire that occurred on Saturday 7 January 2012 on Lytham Road in Freckleton where four brothers and sisters had sadly lost their lives. The presentation showed the complexities of fire investigation within a criminal justice context and how the LFRS team contributed to the outcome achieved in this very high profile case.

Members were also informed that firefighters were called to a vehicle collision at a petrol station where the driver of the vehicle had suffered a heart attack. Using the defibrillator equipment that the Authority had approved for installation on all fire engines, the gentleman was revived by the time the ambulance arrived and his life was saved.

5. Urgent Business - Sprinklers

The Chief Fire Officer updated the Authority on the fire at St Mary's Catholic Technology College in Leyland on Sunday 1 September 2013 and tabled the following position statement:

"Sprinklers are proven to save lives and property; they improve fire fighter safety, minimise environmental damage and reduce economic loss. In March 2007 the Department of Children Schools and Families announced the policy that all new schools should have sprinklers installed, the exception being where schools are assessed as low risk.

The fire at St Mary's School in Leyland has clearly demonstrated the physical loss that can be caused by a fire in a school without sprinklers and the devastating effect there can be on children's education and future career prospects. There is the potential for some students never to recover from the loss of weeks of lessons at critical times.

In this case, a sprinkler system would have likely limited the fire to one compartment and the school would have opened on time, with little disruption. The Combined Fire Authority request that the constituent Authorities in Lancashire lead the way by supporting the installation of sprinklers in all new school buildings and significant renovations or extensions. At around just one percent of build cost, this positive step will safeguard the education of our communities, prevent significant financial loss and reduce the risk of death and injury."

Members agreed to use the position statement to increase the provision of sprinklers.

FRANK DE MOLFETTA
Chairman

LFRS
Fulwood