

## Report of the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

9 December 2013

### 1. Emergency Cover Review – Outcomes 2013

At the CFA Planning Committee meeting on 21 November 2013, Members considered the outcomes of the Performance Report and Action Plan 2013 consultation; and more specifically, the response to the proposals arising out of the Emergency Cover Review (ECR).

The Planning Committee considered two aspects in respect of the ECR: the adequacy of the consultation exercise surrounding the proposals and the conclusions post-consultation. Members duly determined that the consultation had been adequate in scale and scope.

Final recommendations were agreed for consideration by the full Authority, specifically to change from a 4 year to a 3 year Emergency Cover Review and to inter-change aspects of the proposals contained within years 3 and 4 and to move South Shore into year 4 and to move Lancaster into year 3. Details of the recommendations are:

#### Year 1 – 2014/15

- Remove one whole time fire engine from Hyndburn.
- Remove one retained duty system fire engine from Padiham.

This would save approximately £1m per annum and mean a reduction of 24 whole time and 8 retained duty system posts.

#### Year 2 – 2015/16

- Maintain the whole time fire engine at Bamber Bridge, change to the Day Crewing Plus (DCP) shift pattern and maintain the retained duty system fire engine.
- Change the whole time fire engine at Chorley to DCP shift pattern and maintain the retained duty system fire engine but relocate it to Euxton.
- Split the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) function and vehicles between Bamber Bridge and Chorley and use staff at those two stations to crew USAR vehicles.

This would save approximately £1.6m per annum and mean a reduction of 42 whole time posts.

#### Year 3 – 2016/17

- Change the whole time fire engine at Skelmersdale to DCP.
- Remove one whole time fire engine from Lancaster (continuing efforts to introduce a retained duty system fire engine).

This would save approximately £1.4m per annum and mean a reduction of 38 whole time posts (although 10 posts would be created subject to the introduction of the retained duty system fire engine in Lancaster).

The Authority considered that the consultation process had been undertaken in an extremely detailed, extensive and fair manner. The proposed outcomes served to demonstrate that the Authority had listened to the representations made by staff, Trade Unions and members of the public. The Authority endorsed the Planning Committee recommendations.

## **2. Capital Budget 2014/15 – 2018/19 and Revenue Budget 2014/15 – 2017/18**

The Authority noted and endorsed the draft Capital Programme for 2014/15 - 2018/19 and Revenue Budget for 2014/15 - 2017/18.

The Authority also authorised consultation with representatives of non-domestic ratepayers and Trade Unions on the budget proposals and agreed to give further consideration to both at their Budget Fixing Meeting scheduled for 10 February 2014.

### **10 February 2014**

#### **1. New Year's Honours List**

The Chairman, County Councillor Frank DeMolfetta and Authority Members congratulated Chief Fire Officer, Chris Kenny who had been awarded The Queen's Fire Service Medal which was awarded to members of the Fire Service for their distinguished service.

The Chairman and Authority Members also congratulated Watch Manager Steve Darby who had been awarded an MBE in recognition of his work with Operation Florian; a UK Humanitarian charity who were committed to provide help in parts of the world in the aftermath of wars or natural disasters.

#### **2. Member Champion Activity**

In December 2007, the Authority introduced the "Champion" role and allocated a £5,000 budget per Member in respect of the subject areas. These positions were currently filled by:

- Equality and Diversity - County Councillor Sylvia Taylor
- Older People - County Councillor Mark Perks
- Environment - County Councillor Malcolm Barron
- Road Safety – Councillor Fred Jackson

The Member Champion for Older People, County Councillor Mark Perks highlighted the success of the SAFER Together Campaign. Over the last three years nearly half of the fire deaths in Lancashire had occurred during the three week period at the end of December and early January. Over 90% of people who lost their lives during this time were older people, living alone with no working smoke alarm. The Service launched the SAFER Together Campaign to raise awareness and to actively involve members of the public.

Firefighters from all stations attended various locations on 21 December 2013 to try to reach older people through their families, friends and neighbours. There were 880 referrals for home fire safety checks and 929 smoke alarms were distributed.

### **3. Service Headquarters Relocation**

At its meeting in September 2013, the Authority agreed to place the procurement process for the new Service Headquarters (SHQ) at Euxton on hold until greater clarity was available on government plans for the future of Fire and Rescue Services. Since then, the anticipated steer of a government White Paper due in autumn had not materialised. It was clear that economic austerity would prevail for the duration of the current five year capital programme. Given the current demands on budgets the Authority agreed to extend the current postponement of considering moving SHQ to Euxton until 2018/19.

This would enable a balanced capital programme to be delivered over the next five years, as well as eliminating any borrowing requirement in this period and providing scope to continue to pay off debt as it matured. In doing so this reduced pressure on the revenue budget, saving up to £0.7m per annum on financing charges, mitigating some of the future pressures on front line services and reductions in staff.

### **4. Revenue Budget 2014/15 - 2017/18**

The Authority considered a report of the Treasurer that presented a gross revenue budget requirement for 2014/15 of £58.383m. After allowing for a council tax freeze grant, the drawdown of reserves and allowing for the increase in council tax base and improved council tax collection rates this resulted in a net budget requirement of £57.838m and a council tax of £63.65 per Band D Property, a freeze.

FRANK DE MOLFETTA  
Chairman

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