

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 2021/22. 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 8 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 2021/22 included 8 new Members from Lancashire County Council: Keith Iddon, Ged Mirfin, Stuart Morris, John Singleton, Ron Woollam, Munsif Dad, Jennifer Mein and Sean Serridge and 1 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 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. This disparity was noted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) 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 2020/21

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 2020/21 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 2020/21 there were 57 accidents, 117 near misses and 9 RIDDOR events. The report provided a summary of the total accident and ill-health statistics for 2020/21. 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 CO² in 2007/08. The Service had achieved an overall reduction of 23% by March 2021 which equated to 1020 tonnes of CO².

DAVID O'TOOLE
Chairman

LFRS
Fulwood