

REPORT OF THE LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY - 22 April 2024

Chairman's Welcome and Introduction

Members were reminded that that the Authority was in the pre-election period (purdah).

Supa Skips Presentation

Group Manager, Kirsty McCreesh attended the meeting to provide a presentation to the Authority on the incident at the Former Supa Skips Site in Lancaster. The Environment Agency had brought the building to the attention of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service in February 2022 due to the amount of waste being stored at the site (even after their prohibition notice). Partner agencies were involved in pre-planning meetings for a potential incident where a tactical plan and actions were agreed. An Impact Statement was also created which included environmental impacts, impacts to the community, impacts on businesses, difficulties to fight a fire, and the cost to the Service.

On Sunday 3 December 2023, a fire started at the site with the first call to report the incident received at 5.30am. A 'Make Up' of Resources comprised of 10 fire engines, 2 Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALPs), a High-Volume Pump (HVP), the Hazardous Materials and Environmental Protection Unit (HMU), the Command Unit, and a Stinger. The drone unit also attended as part of the initial response to assist with situational awareness and was used on numerous occasions throughout the incident. Partner agencies were also in attendance at the incident. North West Fire Control (NWFC) ensured cover across the county by strategically moving fire engines and replacing resources.

Solutions were created for the challenges that included the significant quantity of compacted waste and the small footprint of the site which involved Lancaster City Council and the Environment Agency funding the removal of waste (approx. 10,000 tonnes) and demolition of obstructions around the site. Drone footage at the site was useful for firefighting tactics as hotspots could be detected and the ALP was directed to where water was needed.

The Service had a 24/7 attendance at the site until 22 December 2023 (20 days). The incident remained in the response phase including regular inspections until 5 April 2024 (125 days). All Wholetime fire engines in Lancashire attended the incident at some point with 52 out of Lancashire's 58 fire engines having attended.

The Corporate Communications Team led on the communication throughout the incident and were praised for the regular updates. The structures for partnership working had already been in place and were positive, and the incident pre-planning had proved to be very beneficial.

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

Annual Statement of Assurance

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018) set out the Government's high-level expectations, priorities and objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in England. Included within the framework was the requirement on all FRAs must provide assurance on financial, governance and operational matters.

The Statement of Assurance was considered and approved by the Authority. It provided the required accountability and transparency to our communities and the Government that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service continued to deliver efficient and effective value for money services.

This statement sat alongside the Community Risk Management Plan, Statement of Accounts, the Annual Governance Statement, the Annual Service Plan and Annual Progress Report. It detailed the measures that were in place to assure that the Combined Fire Authority's performance was efficient, economic, and effective and provided further evidence that the Service continued to deliver under the expectations detailed within both the National Framework and its own Risk Management Plan.

Operational Incidents of Interest

The Authority received a report that provided information relating to operational incidents of note since the last meeting. As this had been a very busy operational period, the report detailed only the larger deployments or more complex incidents. Full details of the following incidents were provided in the report:

- Firefighters attended a Road Traffic Collision (RTC) in Tarleton, in which 2 people lost their lives.
- 6 fire engines attended a commercial building fire in Lytham St Annes.
- Fire crews attended a suspected chemical leak with multiple casualties in Clitheroe.
- 8 fire engines attended a commercial building fire in Blackburn.
- 8 fire engines attended a large fire in Clayton Le Dale, Ribble Valley.
- 8 fire engines attended a commercial building fire in Blackpool.
- 8 fire engines attended a derelict building fire in Chorley.
- 6 fire engines attended a church in fire in Padiham.

DAVID O'TOOLE
Chair

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