Enquiries to: Mrs P Zutic
Telephone: 01768 217734 (op2)

Our reference: PZ

Date 09 July 2025

CUMBRIA POLICE, FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER'S PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY CONFERENCE

The Police and Crime Commissioner's Public Accountability Conference will take place on **Tuesday 22nd July 2025**, at **13:00.**

The purpose of the Conference is to enable the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to hold the Chief Fire Officer to account for operational performance.

If you would like to join the meeting as a member of the public or press, please contact Ellen Cannon on paula.zutic@cumbria.police.uk. Following the meeting papers will be uploaded on to the Commissioner's website.

G Shearer
Chief Executive

Attendees:
Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner - Mr David Allen (Chair)
OPFCC Chief Executive   - Ms Gill Shearer
Chief Finance Officer   - Mr Steven Tickner
Chief Fire Officer   - Mr Paul Hancock

AGENDA

PART 1 – ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. URGENT BUSINESS AND EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC
To consider (i) any urgent items of business and (ii) whether the press and public should be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of any Agenda item where there is likely disclosure of information exempt under s.100A(4) and Part I Schedule A of the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest in not disclosing outweighs any public interest in disclosure.

3. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC
An opportunity (not exceeding 20 minutes) to deal with any questions which have been provided in writing within at least three clear working days before the meeting date to the Chief Executive.

4. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS
Attendees are invited to disclose any personal/prejudicial interest, which they may have in any of the items on the Agenda. If the personal interest is a prejudicial interest, then the individual should not participate in a discussion of the matter and must withdraw from the room unless a dispensation has previously been obtained.

5. MINUTES OF MEETING & ACTION LOG
To receive and approve the minutes and actions of the Public Accountability Conference held on 14th May 2025.

6. PERFORMANCE
To receive a report detailing the latest performance position of Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service.

7. RESILLIENCE
To receive a report which details how CFRS helps build stronger, resilient communities who can better prepare for and recover from emergency events e.g. flooding

8. GRENFELL INQUIRY
To receive an update on the service's response to HMICFRS' Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations.

**CUMBRIA POLICE, FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER
PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY CONFERENCE**

Minutes of the Public Accountability Conference held on
Wednesday 14th May 2025
In the Control Room, FRS HQ

PRESENT
Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner – David Allen (Chair);

Also present:
Chief Finance Officer (Steven Tickner);
Chief Fire Officer (Paul Hancock);
T/Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Ian Seel);
OPFCC Chief Executive (Gill Shearer);
OPFCC Blue Light Collaboration Manager (Steph Stables);
OPFCC Media & Communications Officer (Laura Milligan);
OPFCC Administration Support Officer (Louisa Curran) - taking minutes

Apologies:
CFRS Head of Performance & Assurance (Mark Clement)

PART 1 – ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

001.   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies for absence were received from the CFRS Head of Performance & Assurance (Mark Clement)

002.   URGENT BUSINESS AND EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC
There were no items of urgent business to be considered by the Committee.

003.   QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC
No questions had been received in advance of the meeting from any members of the public

004.   DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS
There were no disclosures of any personal interest relating to any item on the agenda.

005. MINUTES

The Chair presented the minutes of the CFRS Public Accountability Conference held on the 13th February 2025 which had previously been circulated with the agenda. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

The actions from the previous meeting were reviewed and discussed. Following discussion, both were accepted as complete and closed.

RESOLVED, that, the

> (i) Minutes of the CFRS Public Accountability Conference held on the 13th February 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair;

006. END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE

The report was presented by the Chief Fire Officer.

Overall, performance has generally been good and where areas of improvement have been identified, action has been taken. It was noted that from the first quarter of the 2025-26 financial year, new indicators will be implemented to track performance, including an indicator to monitor the effectiveness of the NWFC call handling.

Average response time was within the target of ten minutes (9m 56s) and for On-Call Service, the average was 12m 39s (versus a target time of fifteen minutes), which is positive and puts Cumbria in the top 50% of its comparators. It is proposed that going forward, the FRS will present a breakdown of response times by fire station, which will identify any areas of poorer performance to target.

There has been a 9.6% reduction in the volume of false alarm incidents the FRS has attended, which meets the challenging target of 10% set by the Service. An 18% reduction in commercial fires has been observed. Following extensive building and licencing regulation consultations, the service has achieved an overall compliance rate of 95.7% and 96.4% respectively, exceeding the target of 95%.

Overall there has been a reduction of 11.1% in the amount of fires attended, however there has been an increase of 18.7% in accidental primary dwelling fires. An analysis of the data surrounding this increase did not identify any particular themes or causes, instead the number

is attributed to a small number of additional incidents randomly distributed throughout the county.

The prevention team have exceeded their target of delivering more than 8,000 Home Fire Safety Visits by delivering 8,247 of these visits in the previous twelve months.

Work is being undertaken to bring back more tangible numbers relating to Road Traffic Collisions, Water Rescues and Non-Fire Incidents, including engagement with the Road Safety Partnership.

Staff wellbeing was discussed, with the sickness level target sitting at 6%. There has been a slight increase in sickness absences in recent months, with some of this being attributed to a higher level of longer-term absences rather than acute instances. Work is ongoing to identify trends and causes in this area with a view to decreasing numbers.

Issues for consideration included future-proofing the on-call staffing levels, as national trends are moving downwards and a reduction is expected. It appears that retention issues are more problematic than recruitment capacity. It was agreed that more work is to be done 'bookending' the CFRS employment process, with more engagement with the training and induction process and then with the exit process.

The increase in dwelling fires doesn't seem attributable to a particular cause, however work is ongoing to generally raise awareness and engage with the public with preventative schemes. The implementation of a FRS-specific comms officer has been a positive thing.

It was noted that more governance structures are coming into place, including monthly service improvement and regular full-SLT meetings.

Following a discussion, the report was noted.

RESOLVED, that

       (i)   The report be noted;

007. CODE OF ETHICS / CULTURE

The report was presented by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

The report centres around the Culture of Ethics and how it is being embedded into the Service. This includes discussions around the values and culture, and the handling of misconduct, how those things are enforced and how it all relates to the promotion of CFRS as a value-based organisation. It was noted that the report contains various examples of this, as acknowledgement that the governance is being embedded.

An attitude is being taken of looking to the future of best practice rather than focusing on what has been done historically. The primary values in focus are putting communities first, EDI, integrity, dignity and respect and leadership.

A 'cultural dashboard' is in development, using the NFCC People, Culture and Leadership toolbox. This will be used to identify themes appearing in exit interviews, disciplinaries, grievances and complaints. It is in the early stages of development and a prototype will be brought to the Executive Team when it is ready. A clear framework for this should be in place by summer, and it will be scrutinised with methods such as the Community Scrutiny Panel. To achieve this to a high standard may require a roll-out in 2026.

New exit interview frameworks will be implemented, with a focus on the conversation being had in the right way, with the right person, at the right time to collect the most appropriate data. The policy is currently under development, and will involve consultation with Trade Unions before an implementation ideally in Autumn 2025.

Leadership training has been identified as a significant skill gap, and so steps are being taken to integrate this by placing it into the Learning and Development Centre, possibly engaging with the University of Cumbria and then with the yet-to-be-established Cololege of Fire. This will ensure that the training is holistic and compliant.

The 6-month temporary EDI role is not being renewed as the EDI responsibility is being taken on by all SLT members to ensure that those values are embedded throughout every part of the organisation.

A new HR and Case Management system is being established – currently this is managed through an Excel spreadsheet, which despite receiving good feedback provides room for improvement. New system delivery is expected in Autumn 2025, and an update will be brought back to this panel when available.

Regarding Item 1 of the Action Plan, a query was raised as to how assurance could be provided that confidential reporting was understood and made available to all staff. It was confirmed that this is an area of continual improvement, and while awareness training and resources such as posters are being developed, this progress will be fed back to the Commissioner as it is integrated into the business.

Following a discussion, the report was noted.

RESOLVED, that

      (i)   The report be noted;

008. COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (CRMP)

The report was presented by the Chief Fire Officer.

In terms of its format, this report is very new but will be reviewed quarterly via executive and senior leadership meetings. It details thirty-four deliverables broken down across seven categories.

The 'People' deliverables 3, 4 and 5 are aligned and will be brought back to SLT/EB- Fire to review in July with new developments. This will offer further clarity on what is on track for 2025-26 and what is achievable in this time frame.

The CRMP is a three-year plan, with 10 of the 34 deliverables due for delivery in the first year and the further 24 due in the following two years. This is a live and active document, meaning that new and emerging deliverables will be recorded and tracked in real time. Deliverables will be fed through to PDRs, ensuring that every member of staff knows where their role fits in making this happen.

It was noted that this plan was written prior to the recent HMICFRS inspection and so there will be some crossover, and likely some new deliverables coming out of that report.

Projects under Prevention 1 and 2 and Protection 1 and 2 are ongoing to introduce new software and technology across the FRS – enhancements are required, however there are currently gaps in resource. This is a designated project that will be approached with high levels of rigour. Progress on these projects is being reported to the Service Improvement Board, with a pathway to escalate issues directly to EB – Fire established.

The deliverable under Prevention 3 (development of a new Prevention Strategy) has been closed and approved. A discussion was had around the assurance of closed projects – the audit process is currently being finalised and expanded, but ensuring that the projects are signed off by an appropriate authority and reviewed at suitable intervals is a priority. The CRMP template will be consistent across all deliverables, meaning that progress can be easily tracked.

Under Prevention 5, a bespoke road safety package has been developed and rolled out across the service successfully. A business case for the continuation of the road safety watch manager post is being drafted with a view to expanding the role across various elements of prevention, and this will be brought to the next EB – Fire meeting for approval.

Protection 3 – the new Protection Strategy has been approved and published, this deliverable has been closed.

Within Protection 5, work is ongoing but an out-of-hours Protection Response team has been introduced. Further refinements are being made to the policy, taking into account feedback from the HMICFRS inspection, but there is a view to finish this soon by drafting the extra responsibility into the contracts of relevant staff members. There are relatively few incidents annually that need to be covered by this team, so having it as an extra responsibility with a lump-sum payment per staff member represents good value for money, and means that the service is more resilient.

It was noted that the OOH press policy is being developed.

Work is ongoing under deliverable Response 2, and a meeting will be organised with the PFCC and Chief Executive to brief on the work of the ORH.

Response deliverable 3 has been closed. Response 4 is another designated project, and the contract for the new mobilising system was awarded in January 2025 with a view to go-live in April 2026. It was noted that a significant amount of work will be required to ensure that all resources and plans are in place and approved before go-live.

A positive response was noted from the Inspectorate regarding Fleet and Estate 1. Refurbishments are ongoing to fulfil deliverable Fleet and Estate 2, and 3 and 4 can be closed as they come under the wider Estates strategy.

Learning and Development deliverable 1 is a designated project, but will not be complete for some time. L&D 2 is also ongoing, and will be finalised upon the appointment of the new ACO following recruitment.

Improvement 4 has been introduced and is now business as usual. Improvement 5 is ongoing, and updates are being provided to EB – Fire when relevant. Currently on track for procurements etc.

The new head of legal is currently undergoing recruitment, with interviews upcoming.

A deliverable centred around a savings programme is underway, with initial discussions in progress. Detailed work in scheduled to begin in July 2025.

Following the publication of this plan, quarterly reviews will be put in place to ensure that everything is running to plan and the best use of resources is still in place.

The Commissioner queried whether there is appropriate capacity and capability to undertake this work alongside further actions that may come of the HMICFRS report, and it was agreed that it will be a challenge to cover the volume of work and SLT may have to move resources around to facilitate. SLT and Service Improvement boards will assist with this. It is all positive however, and a move towards having appropriate resources in place.

A major concern is the IT provision – a grant is in place however it will be quickly eaten up by IT equipment and software. The vision is good, it will be important to ensure that it all comes off. Full implementation is still in the distance.

It was noted that anything else that drops out of the HMICFRS report will likely be closely watched by FBU. The representative in CFRS is good, and the PFCC and Chief Executive will be kept sighted on any further developments with a view to a meeting between them, the FBU representative and the CFO/ACFOs to maintain this relationship.

RESOLVED, that

      (i)   The report be noted;

Meeting concluded at 14:00

Signed: _____   **Date: _____**

Fire Public Accountability Conference
OPEN ACTION LOG

Date of meeting	Action Number	Minute Number / Topic	Action to be taken	Lead Person/s	Report back to Board	Update
14/05/2025	007	Code of Ethics / Culture	The Cultural Dashboard to be presented at Executive Board Fire prior to its launch in Autumn 2025.	Chief Fire Officer	Yes	This has been added to the Exec Board Fire Forwrad Plan for September's agenda.
14/05/2025	008	Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)	A meeting to be arranged with ORH to provide the PFCC and OPFCC Chief Executive with an overview of the Operational Fire Cover Review	Chief Fire Officer	Yes	The Commissioner received a briefing on the review after Executive Board – Fire on 18 June 2025. ORH is currently modelling bespoke scenarios, which will be shared with SLT and Commissioner in due course.

Public Accountability Conference

Meeting Date: Tuesday 22 July 2025

Agenda Item: 6

Report of: Area Manager Ian Seel

CFRS Q1 Performance 2025/26 Update

Purpose of the Report

1.   To provide the end of Q1 performance position for the service against a set of agreed indicators.

2.   A detailed performance report is also provided on page 11 regarding Assisting Other Agencies.

Recommendation

3.   That the Commissioner:

   a.   notes the content of the two reports.

Background

4.   In April 2023, the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) took up his role as the Cumbria Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority, replacing the County Council as the Fire Authority.   This year also saw the start of the process to create the Services new Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

5.   These events created an opportunity for the Service to review our Performance Management Framework and performance measures. The main aim of which was to align the new measures against the priorities of the Fire and National Framework

for England and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reporting requirements.

6.   Following this review a core suite of indicators was created and subsequently agreed by the PFCC.   This suite of indicators provides HMICFRS with the information they need, and also provides reassurance to the PFCC, the Strategic Leadership team (SLT) and the public that the Service is delivering against the objectives set out in the CRMP.

7.   A breakdown of each performance indicator is provided throughout the document. Where possible valid comparisons have been made to the latest regional or national data. Commentary against each indicator is summarised below.

Operational Response

8.   Average response times

9.   Following feedback from HMICFRS in 2024/25 the Service changed its approach to setting response targets to be more realistic. The target for the Service to respond to all fire incidents was set at 10 minutes, with a corresponding target of 15 minutes for our On-call staff. Whilst we saw a slight increase in response time over the previous financial year, in both instances we hit our target with figures of 9:54 and 12:39 respectively.

10.   When compared to the other 13 predominately rural services, the grouping Cumbria fits into according to MHCLG, this places us mid table.

11.   The charts below highlight monthly performance for Service average response times (all fires).
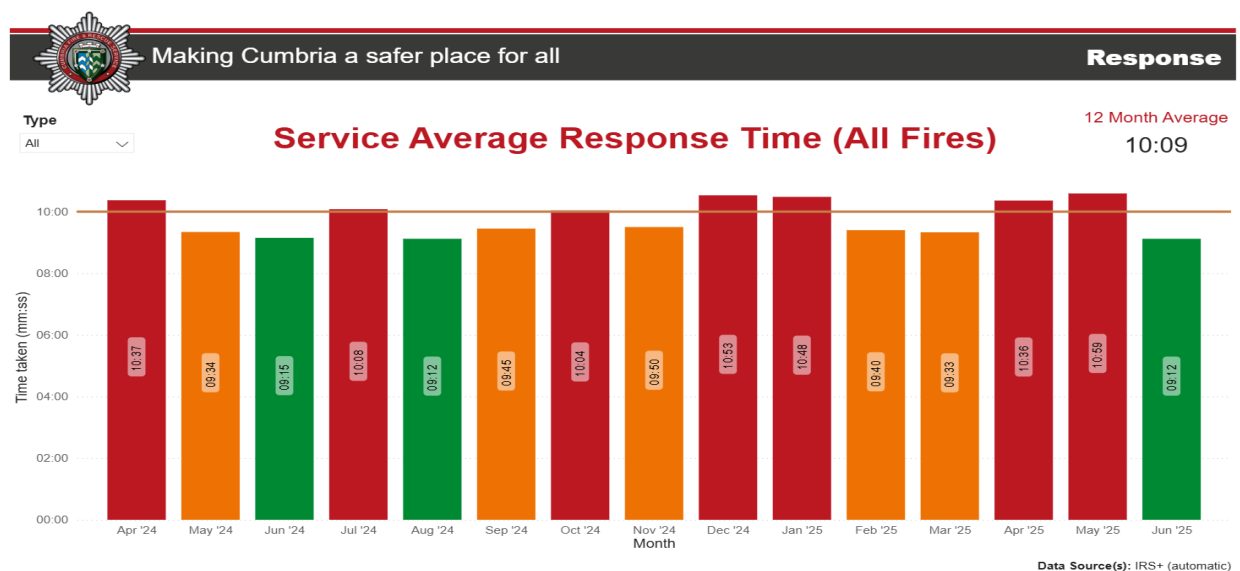
12.   The chart below highlights monthly performance for On-call average response times (all fires)
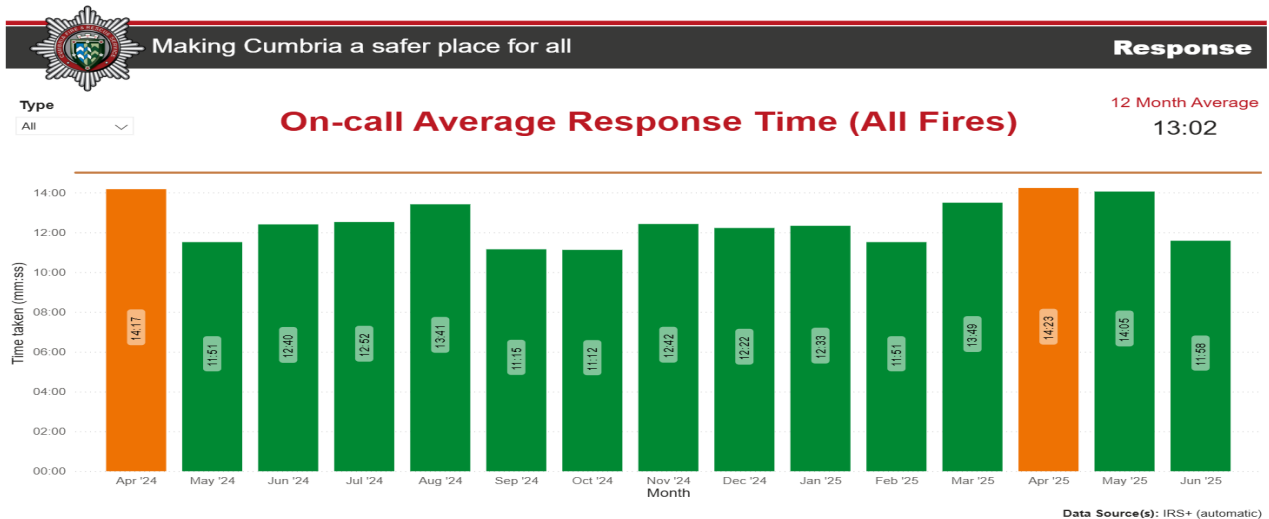
13.   Service Availability

14.   In terms of Service Availability, the Service has always had a target of 90%. In the current climate, this is particularly challenging as all Services with an On-call cohort are seeing a steady decline in availability. Nevertheless, Cumbria's figures rank the Service in the top 50% of its comparators with a Service availability of 78.5% and an On-call availability of 73.1%.

**15.**   The chart below highlights the Service availability by Wholetime, On-call and Service average.
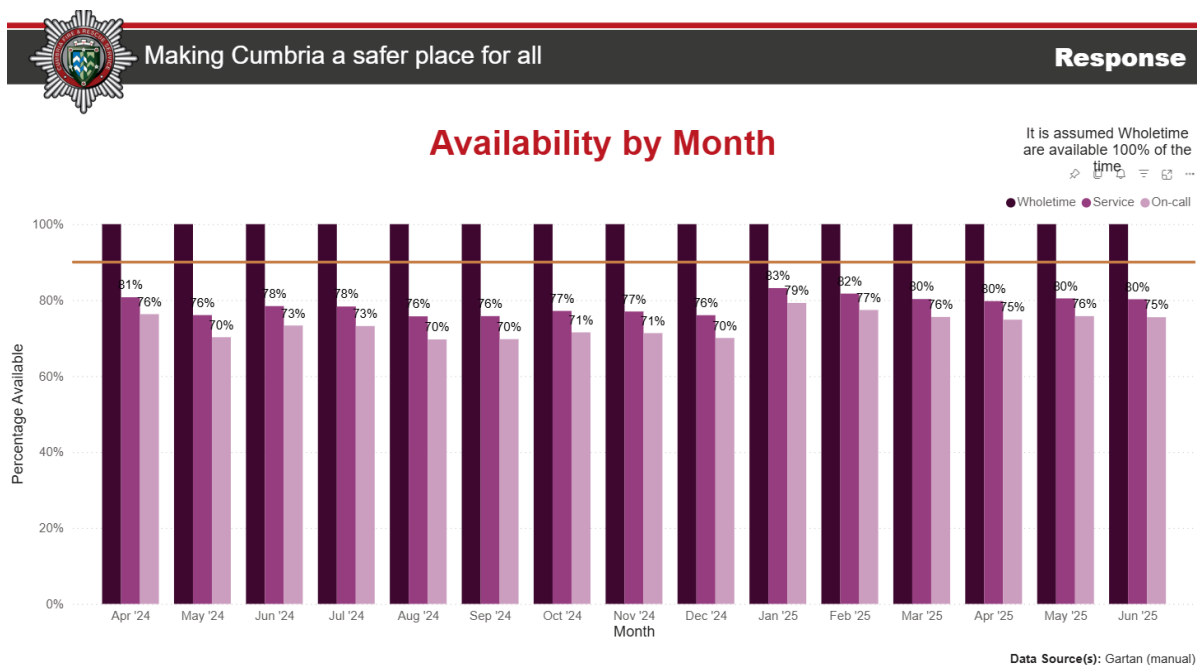
Protection

**16.**   Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP)

17.   One of the key drivers of performance of the protection team is the delivery of the Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP). This is a list of all the high-risk premises in Cumbria. The previous RBIP ran up until Dec 2024, and the Service completed 86.5%. From January onwards a new RBIP was created using the latest available data and intelligence to ensure that the Services resources are utilised in the most effective way. This RBIP will be delivered against over a similar three-year period.

18.   In numerical terms only, the Service delivered 532 high risk audits in the last financial year, up from 377 in the previous year.

19.   Two of the drivers of activity within the Protection team are the number of false alarms that occur and the total number of commercial fires.

20.   Commercial False Alarms

21.   With regard to false alarms, the Service set itself a challenging target of 10% and achieved this with a figure of 9.6%. This has been achieved by identifying repeat offenders and working with them to raise awareness and identifying improvements in process.

22.   The chart below highlights the number of commercial false alarms (attended)
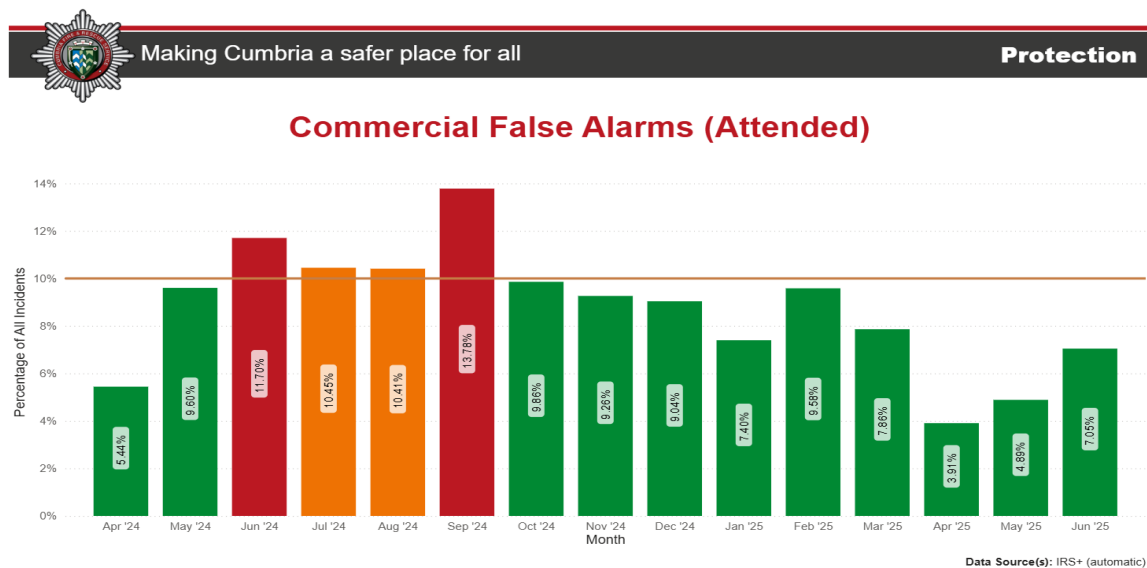
23.   Commercial Fires

24.   Over the last twelve months we have seen a significant reduction (18%) in the number of commercial fires in Cumbria, as illustrated by the chart below.

Commercial Fires

Data Source(s): IRS+ (automatic)
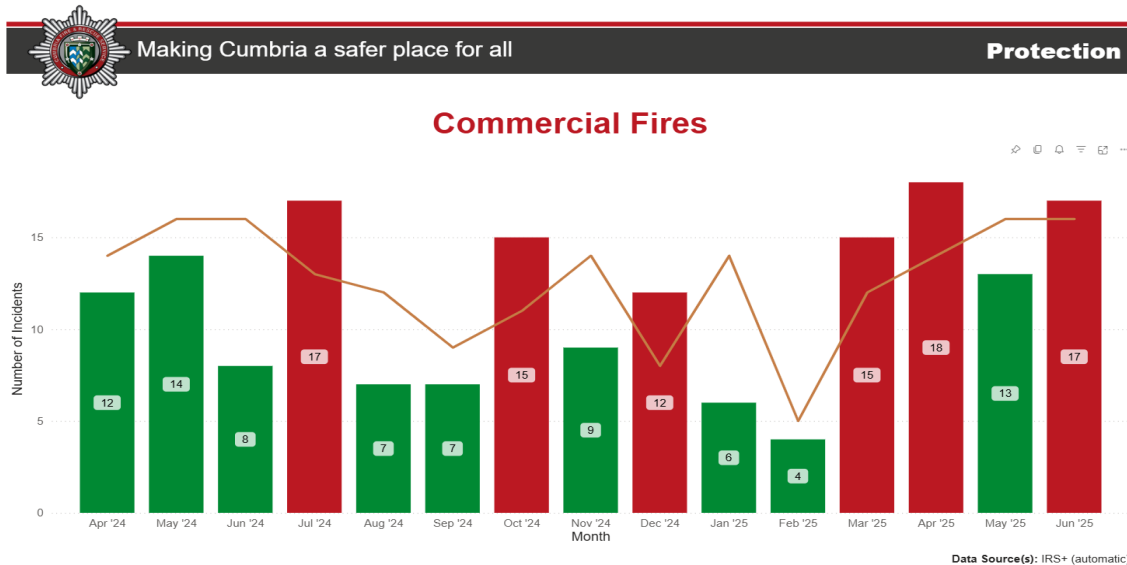
25.   Two of the statutory functions the Protection team deliver against are building and licencing regulations. Due to the statutory nature of this work, the Service has set itself the target of 95% compliance, and in the last financial year has achieved figures of 96.5% and 96.4% respectively.

26.   The chart below highlights the number building regulations completed on time.


Building Regulations

Percentage Complete on Time
96.5%

Data Source(s): CFRMIS (automatic)
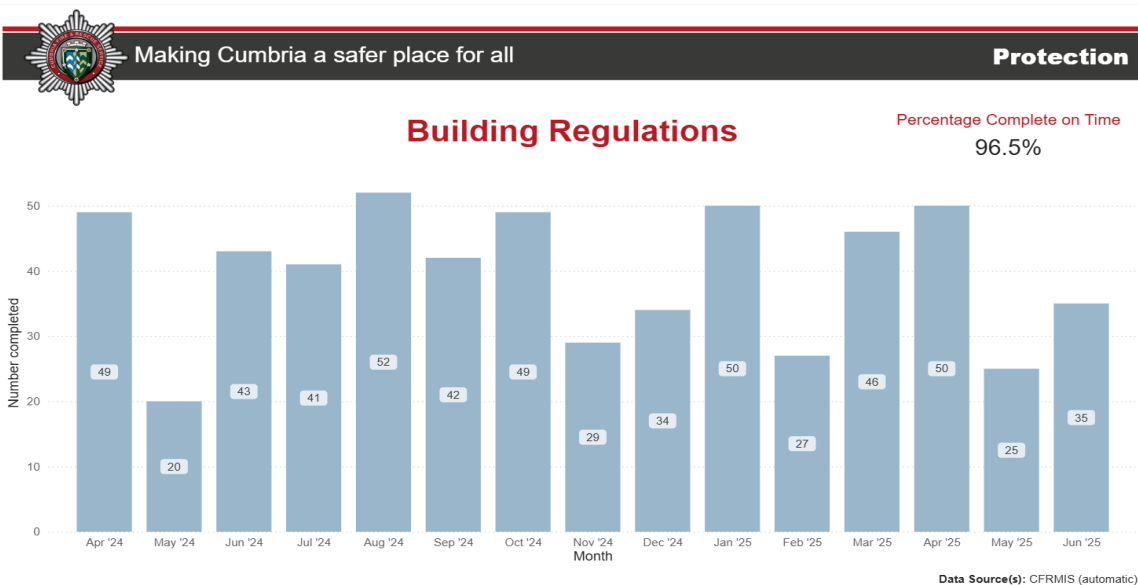
Prevention

27.   Fires

28.   Overall, in Cumbria over the last twelve months, we have seen a 11.1% reduction in the level of fires.
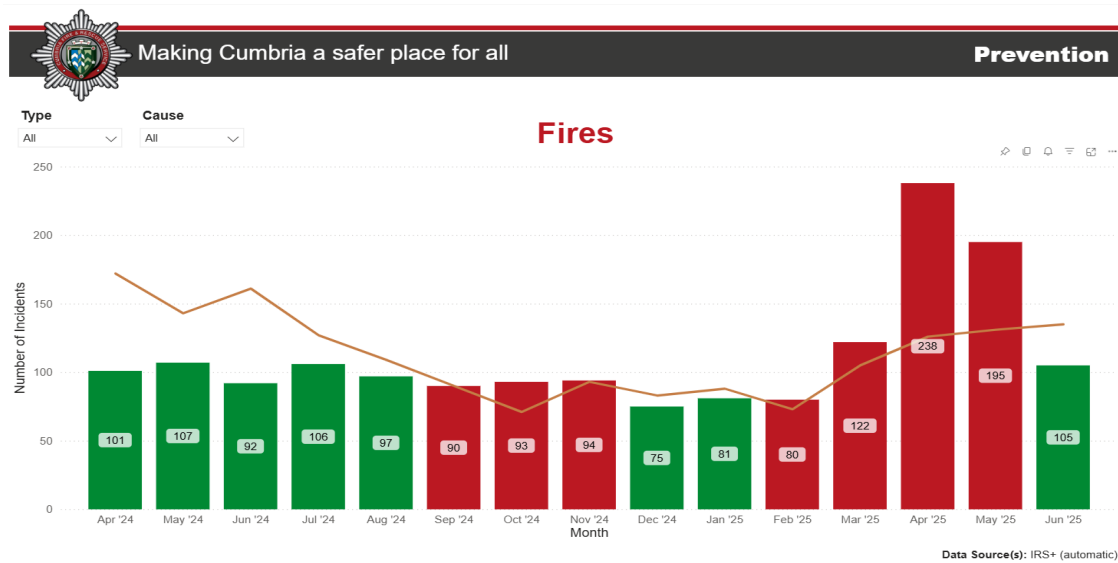
Fires

29.   Accidental dwelling fires

30.   Despite the overall reduction, unfortunately we have seen an increase of 18.7% in accidental primary dwelling fires.

31.   Performance is monitored on monthly basis, and these figures were comprehensively interrogated by the PFCC through the Fire Executive Board. An analysis of the data did not highlight any prevalent theme that could be addressed by the Service, rather the increase in incidents was due to a small number of additional incidents randomly distributed throughout the county.

32.   To address the concerns the Service increased its public safety endeavours, and worked to increase public reassurance, exemplified by the post fire activities carried out after the unfortunate fatal fire in Kirkby Lonsdale.

33.   The chart below highlights the number of accidental primary dwelling fires.

Accidental Primary Dwelling Fires
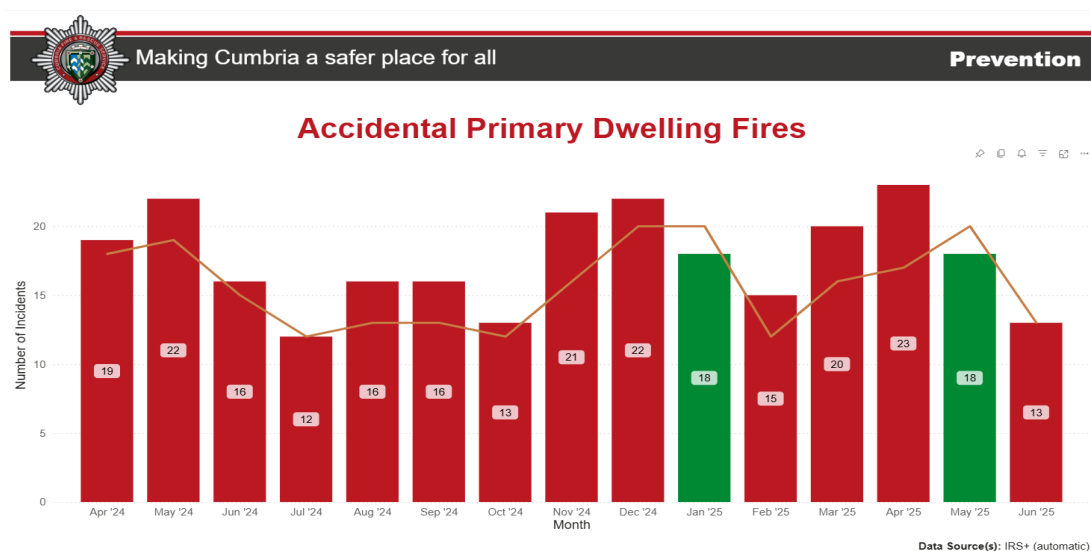
34.   Home Fire Safety Visits

35.   The primary activity of the prevention team is to deliver Home Fire Safety Visits targeted at the most vulnerable households in Cumbria. We have set a target of 8000 visits annually which if achieved would place us in the top 10 best performing services nationally. In the last year we exceeded this target and delivered 8247.

36.   As previously mentioned, it is vital that our visits are delivered to vulnerable individuals. Using the Home Office definition, we know that 73% of our visits meet these criteria, of being either elderly or disabled. The remainder of our visits are referrals from partner agencies where despite not meeting the home office definition we would still consider the individuals to be high risk. For example, they may have drug or alcohol dependency issues or other factors which increase their fire risk.

37.   The following chart highlights the number of HFSV conducted.

38.   Domestic false alarms

39.   Whilst we do not have a target, we do monitor how many false alarms we have attended in domestic properties. Currently this running at 21.8%, a slight reduction on the previous year's 22.1%.

40.   Other incident types

41.   At the beginning of the year, the Service did monitor several other incident types, those being Road Traffic Collisions, Water Rescues and Non-Fire incidents. With regard to Water Rescues and Non-Fire incidents no targets were set. Over the last twelve months we have seen a 20.5% reduction in the number of water rescues and a 2.4% increase in non-fire incidents.

42.   Road Traffic Collisions (RTC)

43.   Partway through the year a decision was taken to look at RTC data in a different way. Essentially the fire service only looks at a snapshot of data, those that they attend, rather than the complete data set. To enable more informed decisions to be taken a quarterly report is now developed using the more robust constabulary data and shared throughout the Service.

People

44.   <u>Service Absence</u>

45.   Throughout the Service, the wellbeing of staff is paramount to the delivery of a first-class service to the people of Cumbria. To that end, we constantly monitor absence levels across the organisation against a target of 6%. Over the last twelve months, sickness levels for the Wholetime, On-Call and Corporate staff have run at 6.7%, 4.6% and 3.5% respectively. The chart below illustrates the combined monthly sickness levels.
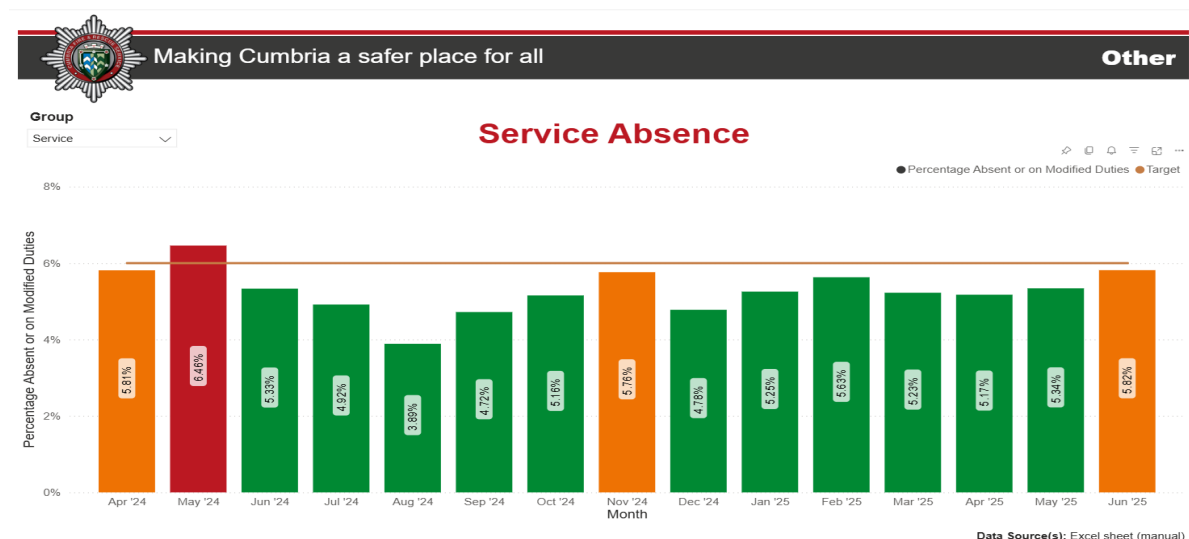
Issues for Consideration

46.   Within the Service, Performance is not considered in isolation. Every month the SLT review the latest data, and the Head of Safety and Assurance reviews the underlying data. If there are any emerging trends or anomalies that need to be addressed, then action can be taken.

47.   Whilst we know that our response time figures and availability are good, we are aware that if our availability figures follow the national trend then we will see a reduction in On-call availability over the coming years. The Service is aware of this and has developed a number of initiatives including

- Virtual engagement sessions for On-call recruitment that can be tailored to specific audiences
- A more streamlined / customer focussed recruitment process
- The introduction of the Prime initiative to aid in the retention of staff

48.   During the last twelve months it was flagged up that we may struggle achieve our RBIP target. To address this issue, the Area Manager responsible for the Protection team developed a specific action plan to consider areas of concern. This was agreed by the PFCC, and the implementation of the plan saw a significant upturn in performance.

49.   Throughout the previous year, it became apparent that we were seeing an increase in the number of adverse safety events involving drivers engaging in low-speed manoeuvres. One of the consequences of the recent change in governance from a council model to a PFCC model was that fire took ownership of the driver training team. This enabled a specific training programme to be developed that resulted in achieving a reduction in the number of incidents and the target being achieved.

50.   Whilst data is used to monitor performance against an arbitrary target, it is also used to shape the services we deliver.

51.   In the last financial year, the Service was instrumental in setting up a water safety partnership. An analysis of those water related incidents that we attend highlighted several hot spot areas that might not immediately spring to mind as a cause for concern. This has allowed the partnership to target its activity in those areas where it will have the most impact and we have actually seen a year-on-year reduction in the number of incidents attended.

The next twelve months

52.   The consideration of performance within Service aims to drive forward the objectives within the CRMP and within the Commissioners Police and Fire and Crime Plan. The Service has created a Strategic Improvement Board where Performance will be considered on a regular basis and managers held directly to account for performance delivery within their sphere of influence.

53.   The creation of this board and a refocusing of other boards within Service will allow performance data to be used to inform decisions and consider the benefits realisation of different initiatives.

54.   On the 16 July 25, the Service will receive its final HMICFRS report, and during the summer 25 a comprehensive analysis of incident data will inform the emergency cover review. These two products will help define how performance data and KPIs are used within the Service going forward.

Conclusion

55.   Performance data is a valuable tool in helping to shape service delivery within Cumbria. Service performance when considered holistically is in a good place, and in those areas where an intervention has been required, the subsequent delivery has seen an upturn in the Service position, which in turn ensures an improved service to the people of Cumbria.

Financial Implications

56.   There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Legal Implications

57.   There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Risk Implications

58.   There are no risk implications associated with this report.

HR and Equality Implications

59.   There are no human resources or equality implications arising from this report.

Procurement Implications

60.   There are no procurement implications associated with this report.

DDaT Implications

61.   There are no DDaT implications associated with this report.

Public Accountability Conference

Meeting Date: Tuesday 22 July 2025

Agenda Item: 8

Report of: Area Manager Dave Love

Grenfell Inquiry (Phase 1 and Phase 2) Progress Report

Purpose of Report

1.   To provide an overview of the service's progress in addressing the recommendations from the Grenfell Inquiry Phase 1 and Phase 2 reports.

Recommendation

2.   That the Commissioner:

   a. notes the content of the report and progress made against the Phase 1 and Phase 2 recommendations.

Background

3.   Following the fire in Grenfell Tower on 14 June 2017, the government commissioned a public inquiry, which was conducted in two phases i.e. Phase 1 and Phase 2.

4.   Subsequent reports were published; the Phase 1 report was published on 30 October 2019, and the Phase 2 report was published on 4 September 2024. The reports detail recommendations for public bodies and organisations, including fire and rescue services.

5.   In response, the service established a multi-departmental approach to address the reports' recommendations. A principal officer was nominated as the strategic lead and a group manager was assigned responsibility for coordinating the service's action plan.

6.   Progress and actions against the recommendations were — and continue — to be reported to the service's Operational Improvement Group (OIG).

Phase 1 Recommendations

7.   There are 46 recommendations from Phase 1 that all fire and rescue services should be aware of. The service categorised these into specific areas: competence, evacuation, command and control, premises information, Fire Survival Guidance (FSG), compartmentation, consistency, collaboration, debriefing and learning, equipment, and JESIP (Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles).

8.   The service has made good progress in addressing the Phase 1 recommendations; while all recommendations have recorded progress, there are some that have not been signed off as completed. Therefore, the overall completion is 89%.

9.   Areas that still need to be addressed are:

- Copies of plans for high-rise residential buildings are to be provided to the fire and rescue service by the manager/owner. Paper copies are to be provided in an information box on the premises.

- The interoperability of sharing information between North West Fire (NWFC) and other blue light responder organisations such as Cumbria Constabulary and North West Ambulance Service (NWAS).

- Work to establish a datalink system between National Police Air Service (NPAS) helicopter and other responding emergency services.

- London Ambulance Service (LAS) and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to review their protocols to identify FSG calls to LFB, and how this can be achieved by NWFC.

10.   The service is confident that with continued progress against the recommendations under the governance and support of OIG that these areas will be completed by December 2025.

Phase 2 Recommendations

11.   There are 12 recommendations from Phase 2:

- Five recommendations are for all fire and rescue services (FRS).

- Three recommendations are aimed at His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

- Two recommendations are for His Majesty's Government (HMG).

- One recommendation is for the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

- One recommendation is for the British Standards Institution (BSI).

12.   Details of the service's response to the five recommendations for fire and rescue services are detailed below.   Three recommendations relate to Communications and two recommendations relate to Water:

Communications (3):

(1) Recommendation 113.59 – Status Complete

Recommend that fire and rescue services that continue to use low power intrinsically safe radios as part of breathing apparatus consider reserving them only for situations in which there is a real risk of igniting flammable gases and generally using radios of higher power, particularly in high-rise buildings.

CFRS Action:

CFRS currently utilise the Motorola DP4601 as a general fire ground radio communication system including being incorporated into the breathing apparatus sets. These units are placed in all service vehicles, including flex-officers, thereby enabling effective communications on the incident ground. The DP4601 can operate in both high and low power modes (5W/1W), with the high-power setting being the preferred standard mode of operation within the service. The DP4601 is not intrinsically safe and where intrinsic safety is a requirement, the service has several strategically placed intrinsically safe models (Motorola DB4801Ex) within service.

(2) <u>Recommendation 113.60 – Status Complete</u>

There is strong evidence that in general digital radios are more effective than analogue radios. Therefore, it is recommended that all fire and rescue services consider providing all firefighters with digital radios.

<u>CFRS Action:</u>

Both the DP4601 and the DP4801Ex are digital models, thereby satisfying the requirements of this recommendation.

(3) <u>Recommendation 113.61 – Status Complete</u>

Since radio communications are inherently unreliable in certain environments, it is recommended that firefighters be trained to respond appropriately to the loss of communications and to understand how to restore them.

<u>CFRS Action:</u>

Communications on the incident ground, especially with regards to the use of breathing apparatus is multi-faceted. In addition to the use of fireground radios, the Dräger BA sets have telemetry systems built-in that offer a heightened element of communication and command.

The Dräger PSS Merlin Telemetry System package enhances and supports control procedures by providing a means of remote two-way digital data and alert status communication between the wearer of the breathing apparatus and an external support control module (BA Board). To achieve communication, the Dräger PSS® Merlin® Telemetry System modules interface with the electronic system of the breathing apparatus.

It should be noted that communications and transfer of data can become compromised depending on elements such as distance, building design or below ground.

The Learning and Development team has confirmed that crews are trained to relocate their position within a structure to restore communications or the nearest team will attempt to make contact. Failing that, a prolonged period of communication loss would result in a BA emergency and the committal of an emergency team to establish communications. BA crews would withdraw and replace their radio if

they realise that it is no longer working. This training is also covered by the new management of Breathing Apparatus Course, which gives all supervisory managers input on how to efficiently manage this element of an operational response.

Moving forward, the element of breathing apparatus communication is continually reviewed and improved in line with technological changes. Our current breathing apparatus stock is due for renewal in 2031, and communication will be vital when considering the replacement.

From a general fireground communication perspective, the Motorola DP4601 and DP4801Ex are the latest models incorporating the most up to date technology, having been updated in 2022, so any update will be reviewed in line with the equipment replacement strategy.

Water (2):

(1) <u>Recommendation 113.62 – Status Complete</u>

On the night of the Grenfell Tower fire firefighters were unable to distinguish between different types of hydrants. That is a clear indication of a need for better training and so it is therefore recommended that basic training on the structure and operation of the water supply system, including the different types of hydrants in use and their functions, be given to all firefighters. Training should also be given on effective measures to increase water flow and pressure when necessary.

<u>CFRS Action:</u>

All staff are given input into the different types of hydrants and their operation during their initial recruits' course and periodically through their career as part of their training plan.

(2) <u>Recommendation 113.63 – Status Complete</u>

The Grenfell Tower fire made unusual demands on the supply of water, but other major fires may make similar demands in future. If it becomes necessary to seek the assistance of the statutory water undertaker to increase the volume or pressure of the supply, the fire and rescue service should be able to communicate with it quickly and clearly. It is therefore recommended that all fire and rescue services establish and periodically review an agreed protocol with the statutory water undertakers in their areas to enable effective communication between them in relation to the supply of water for firefighting purposes.

CFRS Action:

The service and other regional FRS work closely with United Utilities (UU) regarding obtaining effective water supplies across the region. Cumbria's water infrastructure is dated and prone to damage especially when a request for an increase in flow is requested. To counter the issues around this request, UU have introduced a fleet of Alternative Supply Vehicles (ASV) located across the region. These units consist of tankers containing between 27,000 and 30,000 litres capable of pumping water supplies up to 7 bar. This pumping capability means that they can connect directly into fire engines or specialist units such as Turntable Ladders.

The service also has access to High Volume Pumping Units at Kendal, while they are primarily used during flooding operations they can be used to utilise water from rivers, lakes or hydrants to deliver large volumes of water to an incident ground.

It should be noted that both the above have been used numerous times at larger incidents within Cumbria such as the waste fire at Rockcliffe in 2021 and Kirkby Lonsdale Fire in 2024.

The service's established Site-Specific Risk Information process for premises or locations that meet risk levels 3, 4 and 5 have tactical water plans built into the planning stage.

Conclusion

13. The service is making good progress in addressing the 46 recommendations from the Phase 1 report. It believes it meets the relevant recommendations from Phase 2 and is dedicated to maintaining and providing evidence of compliance through its operational assurance process. Governance and oversight will continue to be provided by OIG.

14. It is proposed that MIAA will conduct an audit of the actions the service has taken to address the recommendations in the first quarter of 2026-27.

Financial Implications

15.   There are no financial implications associated with this report. However, there are a number of financial considerations that will need to be considered during the training needs analysis annual and quarterly reviews and future equipment replacement programmes e.g. breathing apparatus.

Legal Implications

16.   There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Risk Implications

17.   There are no risk implications associated with this report.

HR and Equality Implications

18.   There are no human resources or equality implications arising from this report.

Procurement Implications

19.   There are no procurement implications associated with this report.

DDaT Implications

20.   There are no DDaT implications associated with this report.

Public Accountability Conference

Meeting Date: Tuesday 22 July 2025

Agenda Item: 7

Report of: Area Manager Dave Love

Resilience Update

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an overview of how the service contributes to building resilient communities by preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies.

Recommendation

2. That the Commissioner:

    (a) notes the content of the report and supports the maintenance and development of the service's resilience arrangements in accordance with relevant fire standards, the authority's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-28, and the Police, Fire and Crime Plan 2025-29.

Background

3. The service's approach to preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies is underpinned by HM Government's statutory and non-statutory guidance accompanying the Civil Contingencies Act 2024.

4.	Resilience is also a strategic priority for the service, acknowledging the increasing complexity and frequency of disruptive events, such as climate-driven emergencies, major incidents, and unique risks associated with Cumbria's geography and seasonal activities.

5.	The service has responded effectively to various large-scale incidents, including the incident at BAE Systems in Barrow, which posed significant threats to critical infrastructure and required a complex, multi-agency response. Another example is the major fire in Kirkby Lonsdale, which was officially declared a major incident due to its scale, risk to life and significant impact on the community. These high-profile events have tested the service's operational response, resilience, incident command structure, and its ability to coordinate effectively with emergency partners.

6.	Additionally, the service faces an increasing number of emergencies driven by climate change. Notable examples include Storm Desmond in 2015, which caused record-breaking rainfall and extensive flooding across the county, and Storm Arwen in 2021, which brought widespread damage and prolonged power outages. These climate events reinforce the need for adaptive and robust community-focused resilience planning.

7.	These challenges are further complicated by Cumbria's unique risk profile, which includes rural isolation, a dispersed population, and a seasonal influx of tourists, all of which create dynamic and evolving demands on the service's operational planning arrangements and the deployment of resources.

Information

8.	The service continues to enhance its approach to emergency preparedness and community resilience through robust planning, targeted training, effective partnerships, and continuous learning, while also adopting the relevant fire standards and national operational guidance (NOG).

Operational Measures

9.	The service employs a range of operational measures to ensure it is prepared to respond effectively to emergencies and support communities in recovering from disruptive events. These measures are designed to be flexible and risk-informed, reflecting the diverse challenges across Cumbria.

<u>Risk Profiling and Operational Readiness</u>

10. The service uses risk profiles — aligned to the CRMP — historical data, and seasonal trends to identify and prepare for the most significant risks in the county. This includes communities vulnerable to flooding, areas at risk of wildfires, and locations affected by increased seasonal tourism. These insights help inform decisions regarding resource allocation, station locations, response models, and mobilisation arrangements.

11. To further enhance readiness and ensure that resources are effective and efficient, the service is currently conducting an Operational Fire Cover Review. This is the first review undertaken in seven years and is key to determining current and future response options. The review is utilising up-to-date data and operational intelligence to assess whether the service's response capabilities and resources are appropriate for identified risks. The aim of the review is to ensure the service has the right response resources in the right place to improve community outcomes, enhance public and firefighter safety, and maintain operational resilience across the county.

<u>Dynamic and Scalable Response Models</u>

12. The service has an established Critical Incident Team that stands up internally to match resources to risk during periods of high demand, with underpinning policies that support its work such as the Service Degradation Policy.

13. In line with its commitment to improving operational flexibility, in 2024 the service conducted a comprehensive review of its water rescue capabilities. This review resulted in a strengthened and more geographically distributed water rescue capability across the county.

14. Simultaneously, the service has significantly improved its wildfire response capability in light of the increasing frequency and severity of wildfires across Cumbria's rural and moorland areas. Recent investments include the introduction of all-terrain vehicles, the provision of dedicated wildfire personal protective equipment (PPE), and the training of specialist wildfire officers and tactical advisors to lead and coordinate complex incidents. Furthermore, the service has established an additional wildfire response station at Ulverston, enhancing its ability to respond quickly and effectively to incidents in the southern part of the county.

<u>Seasonal Demands</u>

15. The service does not adjust staffing levels based explicitly on seasonal demand; instead, it maintains strategically located specialist resources at stations to ensure resilience across the county in response to foreseeable risks. Carlisle, Penrith, and Kendal fire stations, positioned along key transport corridors (such as M6 and A66),

are equipped for enhanced heavy vehicle rescues. This provides critical coverage for major road traffic collisions and incidents involving significant or complex vehicles.

16.   The service also anticipates high levels of demand over defined periods or events where there is a foreseeable risk, for example, Appleby Horse Fair and Dave's Day.

17.   Additionally, the service has specialist capabilities at designated stations to ensure coverage for rescues from heights, wildfire response, and water rescue operations. These resources and skill sets are distributed based on Cumbria's unique risk profile, allowing the service to respond effectively to both localised incidents and large-scale emergencies. This supports a flexible, risk-informed approach to maintaining operational resilience and public safety.

Preparedness for Critical Infrastructure Risks

18.   The service actively collaborates with Category 1 and 2 responders and voluntary groups to assess and plan for risks to critical infrastructure, which includes utilities, transport networks, and major industrial and energy sites. The service has established predetermined attendance plans and operational procedures for several high-risk locations, including BAE Systems, Sellafield, Spirit Energy, and Innovia. These locations present significant industrial or hazardous risk profiles within Cumbria.

19.   To enhance preparedness, the service develops and maintains a structured exercise programme designed to test operational plans, strengthen command competence, and improve coordination with partner agencies. This includes regular multi-agency exercises at Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) and Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information Regulations – REPPIR) sites. These exercises ensure compliance with statutory requirements and enhance collective readiness for high-impact scenarios.

20.   Through these exercises, the service evaluates its interoperability, intraoperability, communication, and response effectiveness under realistic and high-pressure conditions. They also help inform continuous improvement across the prevention, protection and response functions.

Learning from Major Incidents

21.   The service is dedicated to continuous improvement supported by a strong Operational Assurance Framework. After every major incident, including severe weather events, widespread flooding, large-scale fires, and significant industrial or infrastructure-related emergencies, structured debriefs and reviews are conducted. These reviews capture lessons learned, assess performance against operational standards, and identify areas for development. The outcomes inform changes to procedures, training, equipment, and multi-agency coordination.

22. Importantly, the service's learning extends beyond incidents within Cumbria. The service actively engages in regional and national learning through structured mechanisms such as the National Operational Learning (NOL) and Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) platforms. These systems allow the service to benefit from shared experiences across UK fire and rescue services, as well as the wider emergency services sector, integrating insights into service delivery to enhance safety, efficiency and resilience.

23. All learning identified through local, regional, and national channels is systematically tracked and reviewed by the Operational Improvement Group (OIG). This internal governance forum is responsible for overseeing operational learning, assurance and improvement. The OIG ensures that recommendations are acted upon, incorporated into policy and training, and monitored for effectiveness, supporting the service's commitment to providing a safe and high-quality service.

Information Sharing Arrangements

24. Effective information sharing is crucial for the service's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies. As a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004), the service has a legal obligation to share information with other responders to support civil protection efforts. This duty aids coordinated planning, joint risk assessment, and unified response activities across all emergency scenarios.

25. The service actively participates in the Cumbria Local Resilience Forum (LRF). This multi-agency partnership comprises emergency services, local authorities, health agencies, utility providers and other key organisations. This collaboration enables the service to engage in coordination mechanisms, such as the Multi-Agency Assessment Teleconference (MAAT) and the Multi-Agency Information Cell (MAIC). These platforms are essential for real-time information and intelligence sharing during evolving or large-scale incidents, ensuring all partners operate from a consistent and informed position, especially in complex or high-risk situations.

26. At an operational level, the service is supported by North West Fire Control (NWFC), which provides a shared control function and plays a crucial role in managing and disseminating critical risk information during incidents. NWFC enhances situational awareness and facilitates coordinated deployments across the region's fire and rescue services.

27. The service is committed to investing in technological advancements that improve information sharing and operational intelligence. One notable tool is 999Eye, which allows for the live streaming of video from emergency callers directly to control room operators. This significantly enhances the early understanding of incidents and supports better response decisions.

28. The service places a strong emphasis on preparing its staff to respond effectively to a wide range of emergencies through a structured and continually evolving training programme. All operational and risk-critical training is planned and delivered in accordance with the Learning and Development Plan for 2024–27, which outlines a strategic framework for maintaining competence, enhancing capability, and aligning training with emerging risks and service priorities.

29. Operational staff receive ongoing core skills training in key areas, including incident command, breathing apparatus, road traffic collisions (RTC) and fire behaviour. In addition to these foundational skills, the service provides specialist training focused on the service's key risk areas, including water rescue, wildfire response, rescues from heights, and hazardous materials.

30. To ensure preparedness for major incidents, the service regularly conducts multi-agency training and exercises, often in collaboration with partners from the Local Resilience Forum (LRF). These exercises include both tabletop and live-play scenarios, such as widespread flooding, industrial incidents at COMAH sites, transport collisions and extreme weather events. These exercises are designed to test joint operational procedures, decision-making under pressure and interoperability of incident command structures.

31. A notable example was a cross-border wildfire exercise hosted by the service near Sedbergh, which simulated a large-scale moorland fire involving partner agencies from neighbouring fire and rescue services, as well as other Category 1 responders. The exercise provided a valuable opportunity to practice joint tactics, coordinate resources, and enhance cross-border communication in challenging terrain, which is crucial given Cumbria's remote and rural geography.

32. Furthermore, the service maintains a team of trained tactical and strategic commanders who receive continual training.

Implementation of Fire Standards

33. The service is committed to implementing the requirements of national Fire Standards. For example, the Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Response standards outline the expectations for fire and rescue services to anticipate, plan for, and respond effectively to a wide range of emergencies while ensuring business continuity and collaborating with other responders.

34. The Emergency Preparedness standard specifies requirements related to risk identification, governance, learning, multi-agency planning, and business continuity. The service meets these requirements through the structured approaches outlined in paragraphs 35 to 38 below.

35. **Risk Identification and Planning:** the CRMP reflects the specific risk landscape of the county, which includes flooding, wildfires, infrastructure failure, and high-risk industrial sites. This plan informs decision-making and capability development, such as the water rescue review and the expansion of wildfire resources.

36. **Governance and Organisational Learning:** the service oversees its operational learning and assurance through the Operational Improvement Group (OIG). This group reviews insights gained from incidents and exercises, ensuring that lessons learned are incorporated into operational policies and practices in compliance with the standard's requirement for structured learning processes.

37. **Multi-Agency Planning and Coordination:** the service actively participates in the Cumbria Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and frequently engages in Strategic Coordinating Groups (SCGs) where collaborative decisions are made in response to major incidents. Following the Kirkby Lonsdale fire, the service also took part in a Recovery Coordination Group, working with local partners to support impacted communities and infrastructure, aligning with the standard's emphasis on recovery planning.

38. **National Coordination:** the service is also engaged with national resilience arrangements, which includes compliance with the National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) to ensure comprehensive preparedness and response strategies. Through these efforts, the service aims to bolster its emergency preparedness and resilience capabilities effectively.

Conclusion

39. The service is well-prepared and well-versed in the technical and practical requirements and arrangements for planning for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies. It is an area that is assessed by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). It is anticipated — based on initial feedback from the recent inspection — that the service will be graded as 'Good' in the responding to fire and other emergencies, and the responding to major and multi-agency incidents assessment areas.

Financial Implications

40. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Legal Implications

41. There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Risk Implications

42. There are no risk implications associated with this report.

HR and Equality Implications

43. There are no human resources or equality implications associated with this report.

Procurement Implications

44. There are no procurement implications associated with this report.

DDaT Implications

45. There are no DDaT implications associated with this report.