



ITEM 6 APPENDIX 1

INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

YEAR FOUR 2007-2008

CONSULTATION PAPER ON A **VOLUNTEERING STRATEGY** FOR LANCASHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This consultation paper on a Volunteering Strategy has been compiled as one strand of work within our Integrated Risk Management Plan for 2007-2008, the aim of which is to reduce risk and deliver continuous improvement. Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service readily acknowledges the important community contribution made by volunteers, and this paper outlines how we intend to develop a consistent and structured programme around which they can support a wide range of fire service activities directed towards enhanced community safety.

Section 2 outlines some of the background to the report on a local and national level, and explains some of the terminology used in the voluntary sector. Section 3 details our proposed strategy for consideration, with section 4 describing a performance framework for monitoring and evaluating the activities of volunteers. Finally, section 5 outlines some of the key development steps involved in delivering the strategy and associated resource implications.

For the purposes of this paper and the subsequent strategy, the **definition** of a **volunteer** is:

A person who is unpaid and of their own free will, contributes time, energy and skills, and undertakes a range of directed activities on behalf of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service to assist in making Lancashire safer.

As such, the paper focuses on formal, organised volunteering to support the enhancement of the fire and rescue service, rather than informal activities such as mutual help and co-operation between individuals within communities e.g., checking on an older neighbour.

People volunteer for many reasons. They may want to acquire new skills, contribute to community life, or they may have a particular interest or cause they wish to pursue. Volunteering can help provide a route into employment, education or training, and is particularly beneficial in developing softer skills such as teamwork and communication. For older volunteers, it can improve physical health and mental well being, providing a means to keep active and make a contribution. People retire earlier and volunteering offers an opportunity to maintain skills and share them with others.

We anticipate that in some cases volunteers will work alongside other volunteers towards a stated aim; on other occasions, they will work alongside paid staff, complementing and adding value through their efforts. Our strategy will promote volunteering as an activity distinct from paid work and we intend to maintain this distinction to avoid volunteering being seen as a substitute for remunerated employment.

1.2 Links to Strategic Objectives

This paper and the proposed strategy supports the following Combined Fire Authority (CFA) objectives:

- Reduce life loss and injury arising out of fires and other emergency incidents
- Reduce the number of fires and other emergency incidents
- Reduce the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergency incidents
- Protect the environment and Lancashire heritage
- Provide a safe, healthy, competent and representative workforce
- Support the wider agenda of community cohesion
- Provide a better value service

The strategy also supports the CFA priority of providing for '*more prevention and better protection*'.

1.3 Consultation

As part of the strategy development, project officers have held preliminary discussions with several organisations, most notably:

- Lancashire Constabulary
- Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
- Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Volunteering England
- Lancashire Council of Voluntary Youth Services
- Lancashire County Council
- Volunteering Lancashire

Having prepared this paper and draft strategy, we will now consult widely with stakeholders across the County. How appropriate and effective this strategy will be, needs to be considered by everyone who has an interest in volunteering - placing him or her at the centre of the process. We hope they will respond positively and afford us their advice on how it might be improved. Our consultation methods will be fully inclusive and use a range of methods. To help during the consultation, a number of specific questions will be utilised as an aid in framing a response.

2. BACKGROUND AND TERMINOLOGY

2.1 Common terms

What is the Third Sector?

The Government defines the third sector as non-governmental organisations which are value-driven and which principally reinvest their surpluses to further social, environmental or cultural objectives. It includes voluntary and community organisations, charities, social enterprises, co-operatives and mutuals.¹ The term 'local third sector' is also used apparently to denote third sector organisations working in a locality.

What is the Community Sector?

The *Compact Code of Good Practice on Community Groups* describes the community sector as the web of 'personal relationships, groups, networks, traditions and patterns of behaviour among people who share physical neighbourhoods, living conditions or common understandings and interests. It is the community itself taking action to get things done, although much of its activity is informal and often invisible.... Its activities can range from nurseries and play groups to community centres and village halls, from tenants' associations and environmental groups, from arts and sports groups to credit unions, and from self-help groups to scout groups.'²

What is the Voluntary Sector?

There are many definitions and refinements of this term, with often a wide and a tight/core version. One approach is by reference to what the other sectors cover e.g. private/commercial, state/public and informal (family, friends) - what is left being described as voluntary. Another issue in defining the sector is that although many feel voluntary organisations are distinctly different from private and public ones, the boundaries actually are unclear. It is more of a continuum than a set of discrete boxes³.

A definition used by Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations states that a voluntary organisation is: non-profit distributing, non-statutory, autonomous, may be charitable. Also see Community Sector re Voluntary and community organisation.

As can be seen, the terms community sector and voluntary sector are not entirely discreet, share commonalities and are often combined in the term voluntary community sector (VCS). Also, the faith sector is often subsumed within the community voluntary sector (VCFS).

¹ *The Future Role of the Third Sector in Social and Economic Regeneration*, HM Treasury, HMSO, Dec. 2006, pg. 5, http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/53E/94/pbr06_3rd_sector_428.pdf

² *Compact Code of Good Practice on Community Groups*, Home Office/Compact Working Group, 2001,

³ Taken from the *VolResource* website: <http://www.volresource.org.uk/moreres/glossary.htm>

2.2 National Perspective

Recent years have seen a time of unprecedented interest in the role of volunteers by all sectors of society, including government, business and the voluntary and community sector.

The third sector has historically played an important role providing public services, identifying needs, campaigning for change and developing dynamic innovative solutions. The Government wants to ensure that the third sector is at the heart of reforms to improve public services as contractors delivering public services, as campaigners for change, as advisers influencing the design of services and as innovators from which the public sector can learn.

The involvement of the third sector has “never been about abdicating the Government’s responsibility to properly fund services but ensuring that, in the right circumstances, the sector can flourish and provide services where it is best placed to do so.”⁴

Volunteers form a major part of the third sector workforce. Without volunteers, many third sector organisations (particularly community groups) would struggle to survive. The National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) estimated that in 2006, formal volunteers equated to double the paid full-time equivalent third sector workforce⁵.

Government policy and the aspirations of volunteer-promoting organisations both treat as self-evident the value and importance of increasing the proportion of the population engaged in volunteering. Government policy relating to volunteer involvement relates to two broad areas:

- *Civil renewal* which “is about people and government, working together to make life better. It involves more people being able to influence decisions about their communities, and more people taking responsibility for tackling local problems, rather than expecting others to”⁶.
- *Social inclusion* or reversing social exclusion, which can be defined as: “a short-hand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low income, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown”⁷

⁴ *The Future Role of the Third Sector in Social and Economic Regeneration: Interim Report*, HM Treasury, December 2006, http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/53E/94/pbr06_3rd_sector_428.pdf

⁵ *The UK Voluntary Sector Almanac*, NCVO, 2006

⁶ <http://www.civilrenewal.communities.gov.uk>

⁷ Definition coined by the Social Exclusion Unit, 1997

<http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/seu/pageac0b.html?id=96&pld=27&url=page.asp?id=213>

Government Compact with the Third Sector

The 'Compact'⁸ was launched in 1998 to promote better relationships between government (central and local). The Compact was developed from recommendations made by the Deakin Commission Report on the *Future of the Voluntary Sector* and from the policy document *Building the Future Together*.

The Deakin Commission concluded that Government should recognise the legitimacy of the voluntary and community sector's diverse roles and its own responsibility to promote a healthy sector. It proposed a 'concordat' drawn up between representatives of government and the sector, laying down basic principles for future relations. *Building the Future Together* concluded that a Compact, underpinned by a set of principles, was necessary as the basis for a partnership between government and the voluntary and community sector.

The first Local Compact was published in 1999 by Dorset County and 99% of England is now covered by a Local Compact.

The voluntary and community sector is represented by Compact Voice, an independent body that represents the voluntary and community sector on Compact issues⁹.

2.3 Lancashire Perspective

Lancashire Compacts

The County Council has had a long and fruitful relationship with the VCFS in Lancashire spanning a wide range of activities over many years. This relationship has recently moved into a new phase with the joint development of a Compact that sets out principles and commitments on both sides to underpin the relationship in the future. Both the Cabinet Working Group and County Management Board have previously agreed that the next step in the review of the County Council's relationship with the VCFS should be the development of a policy framework which would capture the whole range of relationships with the VCFS, not just grant-making activity¹⁰.

In 1998 Blackburn with Darwen Council created a compact with the voluntary and community sector which recognised the important contribution this sector makes to Blackburn with Darwen and set out a code of practice between them. In creating the compact the Council consulted the voluntary and community sector about service level agreement and grant aid criteria and procedures affecting them. The compact is reflected in the work of services such as Arts Services and External Funding and Programmes; both of which

⁸ *Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England*, CM400, Home Office, November 2

http://www.thecompact.org.uk/shared_asp_files/GFSR.asp?NodeID=100318

⁹ <http://www.thecompact.org.uk/>

¹⁰ See County Council web site for more details on the compact and the emerging policy framework:

http://lccintranet/office_of_the_chief_executive/policy_unit/corporate_policy/social_inclusion/vcfs/index.asp

have a role in grant giving. It also impacts directly on Groundwork Blackburn, which has a service level agreement with the Council that is managed through an annual review and annual business plan.

The Compact for Blackpool was formally signed by representatives from the Voluntary & Community Sector, Blackpool Council, Blackpool Primary Care Trust, Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service and Lancashire Constabulary. The membership for the Compact was launched in December 2004.

Blackpool's Compact guides the relationship between voluntary and community groups and statutory organisations and aims to regulate and improve the way they relate to each other and work together.

The Compact is seen not as another strategy but as an ongoing process that will encourage communication between voluntary and community groups and statutory organisations. This should lead to greater understanding, openness and accountability.

The Compact includes Codes of Good Practice - on black and minority ethnic groups, community groups, consultation and policy appraisal, funding and procurement and volunteering. These cover rights and responsibilities which government, local public bodies and the voluntary and community sector should reflect in their relationship to make them work.

More information can be found on the Compact Website¹¹.

The Lancashire VCFS Consortium¹²

Initiated by the Home Office, *ChangeUp* represents a ten-year programme to strengthen the support available to the voluntary sector. *ChangeUp* acknowledged the important role played by voluntary and community organisations in delivering public services and strengthening communities, but argued that many small and medium-sized frontline organisations were not able to get the support they needed in a range of areas. Such organisations were reliant on voluntary and community sector "infrastructure" support, which:

"in some parts of the country is patchy in coverage and quality and lacks sustainable funding, particularly at the local level where what people need most is affordable face-to-face support".

The Lancashire VCFS Consortium commenced in June 2004 in response to the *ChangeUp* programme. The Consortium is a non-incorporated body representing the voluntary, community and faith sector across Lancashire.

¹¹ <http://www.thecompact.org.uk/>

¹² See their website for further details:

http://vcfs.org.uk/bulletin/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1

Community Futures¹³ acts as the accountable body for Lancashire VCFS Consortium.

Local Area Agreements

In Lancashire there are three local area agreements (LAA) covering Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire CC. LAA's set out the priorities for a local area agreed between central government and a local area represented by a Local Strategic Partnership that incorporates key partners at the local level from the public, private and VCFS sector.

LAA's simplify some central funding, help join up public services more effectively and allow greater flexibility for local solutions to local circumstances. Through these means, LAA's are helping to devolve decision making, move away from a 'Whitehall knows best' philosophy and reduce bureaucracy

LFRS is a delivery partner in all three LAA's. All three make reference to the role of volunteers. By way of example, the Lancashire Local Area Agreement¹⁴ contains a statement of Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Involvement at page 14:

"This Agreement has been developed with active involvement of the voluntary, community and faith sectors (VCFS). Their involvement has been achieved through two ongoing streams of activity, namely consultation and representation...

As we progress through to the action planning and delivery stages of the LAA, the VCFS will become involved in the delivery of targets, both across the county and at neighbourhood level where, in particular they will be able to assist in identifying and delivering local solutions to local problems."

The LAA Safer and Stronger Communities Block holds a sub outcome for: Improved capacity of the voluntary, community and faith sector, and targets:

- S27: % of people who have given any unpaid help in their free time in the last 12 months
- S28: Growth of the local VCFS in the past year
- S29: Proportion of key public services delivered by the VCFS

All of which can be contributed to by the proposals in this strategy.

¹³ Community Futures is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. The organisation, previously known as the Community Council of Lancashire but now operating under a working name of Community Futures, was founded in 1934. The role of the organisation has changed several times during its history, gradually acquiring a more rural focus, and ultimately becoming the Rural Community Council for Lancashire.

¹⁴ Lancashire Local Area Agreement 2006 – 2009

<http://www.lancashirepartnership.co.uk/content/laa/index.asp>

3. LANCASHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE VOLUNTEERING STRATEGY:

OUR PROPOSED APPROACH - WHY AND HOW?

This section is our draft strategy. Following consultation and necessary amendment, it will be widely published and promoted.

3.1 Why do Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service want to involve volunteers in their work?

In a public survey¹⁵ commissioned by the Service in 2006, 30% of those who responded stated they would consider being involved in non-emergency projects with Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service on a voluntary basis. We are greatly encouraged by these findings as we believe that volunteers can put a great deal into their community in partnership with Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service. These are just a few of the reasons why we want to involve volunteers in our work:

- ***Reaching into the community.*** The Voluntary, Community Faith Sector is recognised by national government as often being able to access hard to reach/influence communities far more effectively than their statutory partners are. We want to harness that by involving a wide range of volunteers from many backgrounds. In so doing we will gain a better understanding of the needs of all our citizens. This will help ensure that we do not overlook those people who, for many reasons, may never normally interact with public services.
- ***Community empowerment.*** We can involve people in work to benefit *their own neighbourhood* and connect them with their local fire station. By being inclusive in our approach to recruiting volunteers we will support *integration and community cohesion*. An active, involved *empowered* community has ownership and interest in what happens there, and that is in everyone's interest.
- ***Adding value to our current services.*** It is important that we continue looking for ways to improve our services to the people of Lancashire. It is important that we remember that services are paid for by taxpayers and that their money could be spent elsewhere on other services. Volunteers can help us to offer services that we could not fund ourselves but which the public may need, or could benefit from.

Volunteers are a rich source of knowledge, skills and abilities and we should give as many people as possible an opportunity to contribute to our work. The means and support that we provide to volunteers can be repaid in much greater measure through added value and a better range of services to all.

- ***Giving a better personal service to our citizens.*** By recruiting volunteers from all sectors, it will be possible to plan for peer support,

¹⁵ Best Value Performance Indicator No.3, Public Opinion Survey 2006

which has been proven to have a great effect. As already demonstrated by our Community Fire Safety Practitioners, support and advice provided by someone you identify with is often better received. This is most often true for older people and those from black and minority ethnic groups.

- ***Providing an outlet for specific skills.*** Where possible, we intend to recruit volunteers to support a specific function. The process will include specific personal volunteer agreements with identified competencies or skills required for delivery or achievement of the task. However, we will always seek out opinions and views of the volunteer on how their individual skills and expertise may support the aims of this strategy. We will keep an open mind and truly value all support, and will seek to be inclusive at every opportunity.

Many people want to make a contribution. Many people do not know what they can contribute to improving their own life and improving the quality of life for others. We will ensure that opportunities for contributing to this work will be widely known, taking each and every opportunity to publicise this strategy and its ongoing delivery.

3.2 Why should volunteers wish to be involved in the work of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service?

It is easy to assume that the only reason people want to volunteer is to make the world a better place. This may well be one of the factors, but most people have other more personal reasons and will be looking for opportunities to satisfy these. There are many reasons for volunteering, here are just a few:

- To gain skills and experience and to develop as a person
- To put existing skills to good use
- To make new friends
- To get out of the house
- To work in the community
- To improve the community
- To be part of the community
- To be part of a group
- To join in
- To meet a challenge
- To work with a particular group of people
- To change status from service user to contributor
- To get away from problems
- To have fun
- To meet new people
- To fill time
- To provide a service
- To be of use

These reasons are very wide and diverse and, there are other less altruistic reasons to volunteer, but we will not exclude anyone who possesses the skills and experience to make a contribution to a specific role based on any

individual reasons for wanting to volunteer. In developing opportunities for volunteers, we feel it is important to have an understanding of personal motivation so that the work can be satisfying and meet personal expectations. We will have support mechanisms in place across the whole Service to ensure that volunteers can feel valued and accepted and make a significant contribution towards our aim of making Lancashire safer.

3.3 How could volunteers add value, specifically, to the work of the Service?

Our approach will be to develop tasks for volunteers in response to needs identified from within the Service. Each task proposed will be assessed for its suitability as a volunteer activity and its contribution to our aim, objectives and priorities. If accepted, we will complete a health and safety risk assessment, prepare suitable training, and provide any necessary equipment. The following are just a few examples of the types of tasks that we will consider for development.

Home Fire Safety Check Lead Generation

Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) are a totally free service during which fire safety advice specific to someone's home is given and smoke alarms are fitted as required. This service, largely delivered by firefighters whilst they remain ready to attend emergencies, is available to all households in Lancashire.

Some of the people at particular risk from fire are extremely difficult to reach and the reasons for this are many. We believe that a local volunteer may have the time and the opportunity to approach a vulnerable individual or household, not as a public service employee, but as a well known neighbour, gaining their trust on our behalf and facilitating our visit to carry out a home fire safety check.

Extended Home Fire Safety Support

For many different reasons, people are not always able to follow the recommendations made during the HFSC. It may be that they don't have the skills, the memory or the practical on-going support needed.

After a HFSC or other support from our dedicated Community Fire Safety Staff, we believe that trained volunteers can further ensure that vulnerable people *stay* safe from fire. We want to add to our HFSC service by working with volunteers, who will be trained to recognise fire risks, have a knowledge of agencies who can give additional support and be able, if appropriate, to complete the simple jobs required to make people safer.

Extended Support after a Fire

A house fire can be devastating for anyone. People with no immediate assistance available to them from relatives or trusted neighbours may find a house fire so devastating that it costs them their independence. We could

maintain a network of volunteers who can help kick start processes and procedures immediately after a fire and help return the victims of a fire back to their normal lives.

Supporting Safety Campaigns

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service deliver programmed safety campaigns each year. We are also asked to support local events in the community where we can promote safety messages. Trained volunteers, teamed with paid members of staff, can add their support to our campaigns and attend local events in their community, helping to raise awareness of safety issues.

Fire Investigation Support

The fact that many people feel able to light fires and remain undetected or unpunished is of grave concern to the Fire and Rescue Service. Obviously we wish to see people discouraged from this kind of behaviour and offenders punished appropriately.

We support Lancashire Constabulary through investigating fires and providing them with evidence that contributes to deterring further fire setting and the prosecution of some offenders. Trained volunteers could help by calling back people who have rung the Fire and Rescue Service to report fires and gathering further information. The telephone call would follow a clearly scripted set of objective questions designed to help identify information that the caller may not realise is important to the FRS or the Constabulary.

Market Research Support

It is important that we know what people expect from the Fire and Rescue Service and that we check we are meeting the high standards we set ourselves. Trained volunteers can contribute to our ongoing research by undertaking surveys that ask people who have come into contact with us how did we do? Did we meet your needs? Could we do better?

Co-Production

Co-production refers to the process through which people and public services work together to create the outcomes valued by both, for example, learning, good health and safe neighbourhoods. Through co-production, volunteers can influence the design of our services ensuring that they are flexible, responsive to local needs and fit for purpose.

Prince's Trust Team Programme Support

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, as a delivery partner for the 'Team' Programme, aims to develop young people by modifying behaviour and changing attitudes. This is achieved through working directly with young people, developing them for further education, progression into the workplace or creating opportunities for those already in employment.

'Team' is a full time 12-week programme of personal development for 16-25 year olds. Teams of 12-15 people take part in a challenging and action packed programme which begins with team building activities, including a week at a residential activity centre, and includes team work in the local community as well as work placements. It culminates in each Team presenting its achievements to an invited audience as they receive their certificates.

Trained volunteers can help to support these young people during their programme in clearly defined mentoring and support roles.

Young Firefighter Unit Support

Young Firefighter Units aim to give young people from all areas of the community the opportunity to develop key skills and to help prepare them for the challenges that face them in adulthood. The scheme aims to encourage personal development and strengthen community links, providing young people with a sense of belonging. There are currently three Young Firefighter Units in the county, based at Lancaster, Bacup and Rawtenstall.

The Young firefighters take part in a combination of fire related skills training (hose drills, ladder drills etc), outward bound trips or residential visits, other practical skills including first aid and food hygiene, and other personal development issues. There also opportunities to gain Youth Achievement Awards and AQA Unit Awards.

Young Firefighter units are internally funded and wholly dependent on the involvement of volunteers. Any expansion in the number of Units is contingent on the development of an effective volunteering strategy and external funding.

Public displays

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service owns a number of vintage fire engines that could be maintained and displayed by volunteers at community safety events.

3.4 Aiming for a range of opportunities

People wish to volunteer in many different ways and in many different circumstances. We see this as a positive aspect, providing flexibility within an extended service delivery. Some young people may wish to volunteer during summer holidays or during gap years before attending university. Others in full employment may only wish to volunteer in the evenings or weekends.

Many people have a wealth of skills, experience, wisdom and understanding that they can bring to the volunteering opportunities that we will create, for example:

- Stay at home parents
- Older people

- People with disabilities
- Recently arrived migrants and other members of our BME communities

Some people may wish to volunteer but believe that they can't because they are currently receiving a range of support such as Incapacity Benefit. We can, however, advise that there are opportunities to volunteer whilst continuing to claim benefits. The Government recognises that the voluntary sector can play a role in helping people to return to paid employment by offering opportunities to re-experience a structured work environment through volunteering.

3.5 Our commitment to volunteers

- Every individual has the right to volunteer, and volunteers have rights which should be met in the course of their volunteering. Volunteering is a legitimate activity in its own right and not a substitute for paid work.
- Volunteers will have a clear idea of the tasks they are being asked to perform and the responsibility which goes with those tasks.
- Volunteers will be told who is responsible for their support and supervision. They will have regular access to this person who will ensure that each volunteer is given adequate support.
- To ensure the fair representation of the needs and interests of volunteers, volunteers will have access to, and play a part in, the decision making process of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Volunteers will be protected against exploitation of their interests, both as volunteers and as individuals and will not be put under moral pressure to undertake work that is against their principles.
- Volunteers will be adequately protected against any risks involved in volunteering.
- Volunteers will not suffer financially through participation in our work and will receive all reasonable out-of-pocket expenses and equipment/tools/materials to enable them to carry out their tasks.
- The relationship between paid workers and volunteers will be complementary and mutually beneficial. Paid workers will be fully aware of the areas of work undertaken by volunteers and of the distinction between paid work and volunteering.
- Volunteering will be a fulfilling experience. Through adequate support and supervision, we will assist volunteers to develop, expand and undertake a range of varied activities.
- Volunteers will be recognised and respected for their efforts to make Lancashire a safer community.

3.6 What do we want to achieve?

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service is well placed to support people in fulfilling their volunteering aspirations. We aim to offer an interesting and rewarding range of activities which will enable people to contribute towards delivery excellence in our service and in so doing make a real contribution to their communities.

Within the lifetime of the strategy we will endeavour to:

- forge links with members of the Lancashire VCFS Consortium; and,
- steadily develop a network of volunteers that reaches across the County to meet the needs we identify.

Maintaining volunteers and volunteering activity costs money. So that we can show that volunteers provide an effective, efficient and value for money service we will:

- evaluate their work by talking to the people who they provide a service to, making sure that the service they received met reasonable expectations;
- place a notional monetary value against each hour of volunteering provided and show, by comparison with the costs of provision, that they provide a value for money service; and,
- then seek external funding to supplement the core funding of volunteers.

4. PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

4.1 Measuring Success

Maintaining volunteers and volunteering activity costs money. We will need to show that while involving volunteers we are continuing to provide an effective, efficient and value for money service.

In terms of measuring outputs/outcomes, there is no single measure that will identify success or otherwise. Each task that is undertaken needs to be evaluated to assess its benefits. That is to say that any particular task will not be successful because volunteers carry out the task per se. We will evaluate the work of volunteers by:

- considering volunteer inputs, outputs and their contribution to the outcomes needed to support the Combined Fire Authority's aim, objectives and key priorities. This will be done using existing evaluation systems which may be complemented by new processes where necessary;
- talking to the people who receive the service, making sure that it met their reasonable expectations.

It is appropriate that we place a notional monetary value against each hour of volunteering provided and show, by comparison with the costs of maintaining volunteers, that they provide a value for money service.

We have considered three costing models:

National minimum wage rates

There are three levels of minimum wage, and the rates from 1st October 2006 are:

- £5.35 per hour for workers aged 22 years and older
- A development rate of £4.45 per hour for workers aged 18-21 inclusive
- £3.30 per hour for all workers under the age of 18, who are no longer of compulsory school age.

European Social Fund Match Funding rates

For European Funding (e.g. European Social Fund - ESF) unpaid volunteer time can be used as match funding in-kind¹⁶. This is classed as private match funding in-kind. To evaluate volunteer time for match funding purposes organisations determine what project tasks will be undertaken by volunteers

¹⁶ See European Social Fund web site for more details:
[http://www.esf.gov.uk/03_Applying/07_APPLICATIONS_GUIDE_\(Last_Updated_February_2_007\)_-Rules_and_Regulations/08_Match_funding_\(Last_updated_July_2006\).asp](http://www.esf.gov.uk/03_Applying/07_APPLICATIONS_GUIDE_(Last_Updated_February_2_007)_-Rules_and_Regulations/08_Match_funding_(Last_updated_July_2006).asp)

then categorise them into the following roles as far as possible: Project Manager; Project Co-ordinator; Project Researcher; Project Administrator.

The ESF Unit has determined the following annual and hourly rates.

- Project Manager: £29,000 – £16.76/hour
- Project Co-ordinator: £23,000 – £13.13/hour
- Project Researcher: £23,000 – £13.13/hour
- Project Administrator: £16,300 – £9.38/hour

These hourly rates include all (notional) on-costs such as Employers' National Insurance Contributions and pensions.

Local Government Pay Scales

Using the national agreement on Pay and Conditions of a Service for Local Government Services, we could choose the mid point of Scale 1. The total with on costs per hour is £7.77.

4.2 Suggested Approach

It is proposed that the notional value is, by default, set at the mid point of scale 1 according to the National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service for Local Government Services. However, there should be latitude to allow some forms of volunteering to be considered as providing greater monetary value and some as lower.

We will seek external funding to supplement core funding provided for the work of volunteers. Dependent on the nature of the funding (e.g. government grant, private sector sponsorship) it may or may not be considered appropriate to include this additional funding in the 'value for money' calculation.

Volunteers will be asked to record the nature of the activities they support and the number of hours that they volunteer per month. After the first year of operation the Service should consider the merit of setting a target for the number of hours of volunteering delivered as a performance measure for the paid staff supporting the strategy. This may help to ensure that we stay on track to surpass the 'value for money' test within the lifetime of the strategy; however, the accumulation of volunteering hours should not be seen as an end in itself. Each hour should be meaningful and contribute to the aims and objectives of the Combined Fire Authority.

5. KEY STEPS FOR DEVELOPMENT

In preparing this strategy, a number of key steps or processes have been identified for development that will help ensure that it delivers the desired outcomes. Some of these processes will need to be considered further by a project implementation team and included within an implementation plan.

5.1 Volunteering Delivery Options

Through our research, different models for volunteer involvement emerged. Their outline descriptions are listed briefly below:

Model 1: *working in partnership with a separate 'volunteer involving' organisation*

In this model we would work in partnership with a 'volunteer involving' organisation or several such organisations through memoranda of understanding (agreements of mutual understanding that are not legally binding, i.e. not contractual by nature). Rather than making direct payments, LFRS would provide support, such as provision, storage, garaging or maintenance of equipment used in the course of volunteering, and training related to the new tasks proposed. We *may* also make a donation to the organisation.

This model is currently in use through our relationship with the British Red Cross, which provides volunteers for the Fire Victim Support Unit (garaged by LFRS). This unit provides a response to incidents where people need immediate support and comfort. The British Red Cross have previously stated they would consider the provision of a task module for extended support after a fire (see brief description of concept for module on page 12).

Similarly, the Salvation Army provides a response to large incidents, providing volunteers and refreshments for fire fighters and personnel from other agencies involved in the incident. The vehicle is provided by LFRS.

Model 2: *commissioning a separate volunteer involving organisation*

In this model we would make payments to a volunteer involving organisation through a service level agreement (a contract). In return, the organisation would provide a range of services delivered by volunteers. In addition, they would be responsible for the recruitment and support of volunteers. Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service *could* provide other benefits in kind such as accommodation, computer equipment and training etc. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service and some Lancashire County Council directorates use this model

Model 3: *direct recruitment of volunteers: becoming a 'volunteer involving' organisation*

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service would recruit volunteers directly to the Service to deliver the new tasks. The recruitment, training equipping and

support of volunteers would be provided for by paid members of Service staff. LFRS has utilised volunteers in its work in the past but generally only by drawing volunteers from within its own staff.

This model is currently used by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, Lancashire Constabulary and some Lancashire County Council directorates.

Recommendations regarding structure

Model 1 has been utilised successfully and may be appropriate in the future for certain tasks; however, some of the volunteering tasks that we wish to pursue may not be considered important or relevant to the objectives of many third sector organisations without significant direct financial payments.

Model 2 leaves the responsibility for the delivery of volunteering tasks with another organisation contracted to the Service. This model limits the control that LFRS would have over the activities of volunteers. It also means that the volunteers would not necessarily identify themselves as volunteering for LFRS.

Model 3: the project team recommends the final model of direct recruitment of volunteers and employment of staff to support the volunteers. This model allows the Service to exercise more control and direction over the activities of volunteers and will allow volunteers to feel a greater involvement with and allegiance to the Service and their local fire station.

5.2 Priorities

The Project Team recommends that the CFA should provide priorities to steer LFRS when developing volunteer tasks. The following are proposed:

Priority one: provide an effective, value for money volunteer delivered service to the public of Lancashire

Priority two: increase capacity to assist the Combined Fire Authority to achieve its aim and objectives through broadening its services

Priority three: make sure that each task is appropriate for volunteers to complete and provides a rewarding experience for volunteers so that volunteer recruitment and retention is high

In broadening its services, the CFA can utilise the Fire and Rescue Service's appeal and attributes, along with external funding, to assist its partners in the broader agendas of civil renewal, social inclusion, integration and community cohesion. Increasing the provision of Young Firefighter Units is a good example of how the Service's appeal (or brand) can be harnessed with support from external funding to deliver these broader agendas.

5.3 Planning

It is essential that top-down commitment exists for involving volunteers. Senior and middle management personnel must be able to reason and

explain volunteer involvement to address any concerns from LFRS staff over job security and the use of volunteers in an increasing capacity.

We must ensure that there are worthwhile and rewarding roles for volunteers before we start recruiting.

We will need to allocate time and resources for policy development, volunteer training and support, and associated costs.

We will need to write a volunteer policy, to set out agreements for working with volunteers and in order to define the rights and responsibilities of both volunteers and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, including sections on equal opportunities, recruitment, training and support.

We will need to write a volunteer agreement to identify expectations of both the volunteer and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service including rights and responsibilities of the Service and volunteer, time commitment, behaviour and support.

5.4 Recruitment

Many volunteers get involved through word of mouth, so it is important that as many people as possible know about our need for volunteers, what volunteers do, and the benefits from volunteering with Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.

Using wide promotion and publicity methods will help to increase diversity, demonstrate our commitment to equal opportunities and substantially increase the number of people coming forward to volunteer.

5.5 Selection

Some people will be put off volunteering with LFRS if we have too many 'obstacles' to overcome before they can volunteer; so it is important that we make the process as simple as possible.

We will need to put together a simple information pack and application form (available in alternative formats to encourage diversity amongst our volunteers) and to support volunteers to fill this in if needed. We should then meet with the potential volunteer for an interview, chat or induction.

Organisations that work with vulnerable adults or children need to carry out a criminal record check on their volunteers. As a matter of policy we believe we need to check each volunteer we recruit.

5.6 Training

All new volunteers will need to be provided with induction and training. The training will be bespoke to the tasks that the volunteer has chosen to take on and will be provided in a variety of ways depending on the task and the individual volunteer concerned. All tasks will need to be risk assessed

comprehensively, ensuring that the health, safety and welfare of volunteers is assured, and that training and equipment provided is appropriate.

5.7 Support

We will need to identify who is going to spend time with a new volunteer and provide on-going support as a failure to do so will result in volunteers not feeling included and valued, and leaving as a consequence.

The practical support that our volunteers will require includes:

- Reimbursement of expenses incurred through volunteering e.g. travel expenses, lunch expenses;
- Suitable insurance to cover the organisation if the volunteer is injured, and to cover claims from third parties arising from the actions of volunteers; Will our existing insurance arrangements cover volunteers as a non-employed worker, or are they classed as employees? Similarly, what financial provision will/could we make should a volunteer become incapacitated as a consequence of working on our behalf?
- Improving accessibility i.e. facilities to cater for specific needs to enable people to volunteer, the possibility of working flexible hours or changing the way the work is organised to suit their availability.

The volunteers will also require personal support. Setting aside the time to provide support to volunteers is vital if they are to feel valued and stay motivated. This should include time and space to talk about how they are finding the work, opportunities for feedback, opportunities for personal development through increasing their knowledge and understanding about their work, and taking on increasing responsibilities. Personal support can be provided through:

- Regular one to one supervision sessions;
- Informal volunteer get-togethers;
- An open door policy to deal with questions from volunteers;
- Someone who says 'thank you' for their efforts;
- Involving volunteers in the decision making and planning processes of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.

5.8 Management and Co-ordination

It will be necessary to establish a new role of Volunteer Co-ordinator for the Service. The post holder will recruit, assist in training, place and arrange support for volunteers. The Co-ordinator will work as a link between other staff and volunteers. Over time, other staff or experienced volunteers will

become involved in support and training for new volunteers, whilst the Co-ordinator retains overall responsibility for the arrangements.

Volunteers will be readily identifiable on and off fire stations by distinctive corporate clothing (e.g. polo shirt and sweatshirt with a logo but not duty rig) and by carrying personal identification.

On a daily basis, the line management of volunteers will be carried out by those line managers who volunteers are assigned to support, e.g., Station Managers, Watch Managers etc. As volunteers attached to a station increase, we would:

- introduce volunteer team leaders (who are also volunteers), reporting to the above officers and who would arrange the tasks that the team would carry out;
- consider introducing Firefighters as watch liaisons with the volunteers—their first point of contact when entering a station.

The Volunteer Co-ordinator will develop/create volunteering roles in response to needs identified by the organisation. As the number of volunteers and the size of the volunteering structure grows it may well become necessary to employ further Area based volunteer co-ordinators.

5.9 Pilot Roll Out

Before recruiting volunteers, our research has shown that it is necessary to put effective support systems in place and to have developed tasks for them to complete. We recommend that the volunteer network is developed initially around one fire station. With this in mind, we recommend that as first steps:

1. a project implementation team is established from within existing staff resources;
2. a volunteer co-ordinator is recruited with experience in the development of an effective volunteer network to complement that project team;
3. a small number of tasks are developed;
4. a station is chosen at which to pilot the delivery of those tasks;
5. the pilot is fully evaluated and appropriate lessons learned;
6. A plan is drawn up for wider implementation.

5.10 Resource Requirements

Resources that will be needed include:

- Time: for recruitment and selection, training new volunteers, and ongoing support;

- Accommodation/Access to facilities: office space, access to computers;
- Finance: salaries, advertising and supporting literature, possibly additional IT equipment, other equipment and tools, volunteer corporate clothing, reimbursement of expenses, costs of criminal records checks and any extra insurance cover that might be required, external training or accreditation for volunteers.

The Project Team believes that the early appointment of a volunteer co-ordinator is fundamental to the development of a successful strategy. Whilst there has been some bench marking carried out to establish the market rate for a post of volunteer co-ordinator, it will be necessary to subject the post to the job evaluation process recently introduced to the Service.

	INDICATIVE COSTS – YEAR ONE	COST
Staffing	Volunteer Co-ordinator post Appointed at PO 35-40 (mid point of scale) as is commensurate with the sector average (April 2008). Recruitment costs for co-ordinator	£ 36,738 £1,000
Travel	Based on casual user allowance for mileage	£1,000
Equipment	IT and desk	£1,000
General Implementation Funding	This is a speculative figure in advance of the development of an implementation plan covering expenses such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advertising and supporting literature • additional ICT equipment for the use of volunteers • equipment and tools, • volunteer corporate clothing, • reimbursement of expenses, • costs of criminal records checks • any extra insurance cover that might be required, • external training or accreditation for volunteers • events to recognise the value, successes and commitment of volunteers 	£50,000
Total	First year of strategy only	£89,738

Whilst more detailed costs can be established by a project implementation team, the progression of this strategy should be viewed as contingent on an adequate level of financial support to the extent outlined above.

5.11 Charitable Trust

As the volunteering strategy is implemented, it is recommended that consideration be given to the setting up of a charitable trust with suitable objectives that can encompass the delivery of the tasks identified for completion by volunteers. The charity would be eligible to apply for a range of funding opportunities available to the third sector that could support the volunteers.

5.12 Quality Assurance

Once an initial network of volunteers has been established, consideration should be given to seeking the Investing in Volunteers Award (IiV). This is the UK-quality standard for all organisations that work with volunteers. The standard enables organisations to comprehensively review their volunteer management and to also publicly demonstrate their commitment to investing in volunteering¹⁷.

¹⁷ See <http://www.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/> for more details