



# ***STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE***

**2015 - 2016**

## INTRODUCTION

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England<sup>1</sup> sets out the requirement for fire and rescue authorities to provide an annual Statement of Assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and to show how they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their integrated risk management plan and the requirements included in the Framework. This document is intended to meet that obligation through reference to existing plans, reports and public web pages.

## BACKGROUND

### General

Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR) is the statutory fire and rescue service for the county of Lincolnshire. It is part of Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) which is also the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA). The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004<sup>2</sup> is the core legislation for fire and rescue services in England and Wales. It details the statutory responsibilities for all FRAs which includes making provision for the purpose of extinguishing fires, protecting life and property from fires, rescuing people from road traffic collisions, promoting fire safety and responding to other emergencies.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework document, published in July 2012, outlines the Government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in England. It describes the high level expectations but does not prescribe operational matters. The priorities in the current Framework are for fire and rescue authorities to:

- identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face, make provision for prevention and protection activities and respond to incidents appropriately
- work in partnership with their communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally to deliver their service
- be accountable to communities for the service they provide

### The County

Lincolnshire is the fourth largest county in England covering 5,921 square kilometres. The County is classified as one of the most rural in England by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Five of the 7 Local Authority Districts in Lincolnshire<sup>3</sup> are classified as either 'mainly' or 'largely' rural, with Boston being classified as 'urban with significant rural' and Lincoln as 'urban with city and town'. Further information on rural-urban classifications can be found on the [DEFRA](#) website.

Estimates for 2015 place the County population at 736,700<sup>4</sup>, an increase of 8.8% since 2005. Current projections suggest the population will increase by 10% by 2029. Notwithstanding this, population density remains low with 124 people per square kilometre compared with an average for England of 421 people per square kilometre.

Not only is the population increasing but it is also ageing with the proportion of people age 65 and over projected to increase from 22% in 2014 to 30% in 2039. The proportion of people over 75 years of age is predicted to increase by 95% over the same period. Further information about the County can be found at [www.research-lincs.org.uk](http://www.research-lincs.org.uk).

<sup>1</sup> Fire and Rescue National Framework for England dated Jul 12.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/21/contents>

<sup>3</sup> East Lindsey, North Kesteven, South Kesteven, South Holland and West Lindsey

<sup>4</sup> Office for National Statistics 2015 mid-year population estimates/GP Registrations April 2015 (NHS-HSCIC).

## Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR) - the 'Service'

LFR operates 38 fire stations. One of these is staffed by wholetime firefighters around the clock, 8 are staffed by wholetime firefighters during the day who provide on-call cover at night from these locations and the remainder are staffed by firefighters on the Retained Duty System. As at 31 March 2016, the Service employed 713 staff comprising 641 operational, 19 Control and 53 support staff. Key operational equipment includes:

- 48 station-based pumping appliances
- 2 aerial appliances
- 5 special appliances<sup>5</sup>
- 10 swift water rescue boats
- National Resilience capability<sup>6</sup>

The Service received 18,469 calls during 2015/16 and attended 10,391 operational incidents. The latter represents a 15% increase over the previous year.

## FINANCIAL

### General

LFR conducts its duties, as part of the County Council, under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 in respect of ensuring that public money is properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. LFR are included within all County financial procedures including budget setting, budget monitoring and the production of final accounts.

The Executive Director of Finance and Public Protection is responsible for the preparation of the Authority's Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices<sup>7</sup>. The purpose of the accounts is to give electors, local tax payers and service users, elected members, employees and other interested parties clear information about the Council's finances. The published Statement of Accounts for 2015/16 can be found at [Statement of Accounts](#).

The Authority's financial statements and value for money conclusion are audited independently. The audit for 2015/16 has not been finally concluded at the point of publishing this statement. The external auditor indicated to the Audit Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016 that he was minded to issue an unqualified report on the 2015/16 financial statements and an unqualified value for money opinion except for the aspect relating to informed decision making, where deficiencies with the Agresso system meant this was compromised during the year in terms of the availability of timely and accurate budget management information. The audit report, when published, will be available at [External Audit Report 2015-16](#).

LCC's internal audit department publishes an Annual Internal Audit Report<sup>8</sup>. This provides an independent opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's governance framework and internal control system. The opinion of the Head of Internal Audit in respect of 2015/16 was that arrangements for governance and risk management were performing well and internal and financial control were performing inadequately. The latter stems predominantly from the difficulties around the implementation of the Council's new financial system.

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<sup>5</sup> 2 Rescue Support Units, Water Carrier, Command Support Vehicle and Welfare Unit.

<sup>6</sup> Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), Mass Decontamination and High Volume Pumping.

<sup>7</sup> As set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

<sup>8</sup> Prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government in the UK 2006.

## Value for Money

LFR underspent by 0.8% on its 2015/16 revenue budget of £19.9m<sup>9</sup>. There was a 35% underspend on the capital budget of £4.2m. This resulted from a number of capital programmes, including the Sleaford fire station new build, being deferred to 2016/17.

There are various ways of comparing total revenue spending of FRAs from expenditure per head of population to expenditure per hectare, fire engine or firefighter. Used selectively, each of these measures can be misleading. However, used together they can help build a picture of how one FRA compares with another. A summary of how Lincolnshire FRA compared against a number of the key cost measures for 2015 is shown below<sup>10</sup>. Viewed collectively the measures indicate that LFR performed well in comparison to other fire and rescue services in England.

Cost Measure	Average for all English FRAs	Lincolnshire FRA
£ per head of population	36.94	34.03
£ per operational fire station	1,424,169	655,105
£ per hectare	153.99	41.93

## GOVERNANCE

LCC (as the fire and rescue authority) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. One of the Executive Councillors (the portfolio holder) has specific responsibility for the exercise of executive functions in relation to the Council's role as Fire Authority.

LCC has adopted a governance and assurance structure which is consistent with the principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy/Society of Local Authority Chief Executives Framework '*Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*'. The Council's Annual Governance Statement sets out its commitment to good governance describing the governance framework and processes. It provides details as to the measures taken by LCC to ensure appropriate business practice, high standards of conduct and sound governance and sets out the actions LCC have undertaken to review the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the system of internal control. LCC's Annual Governance Statement is included in its [Statement of Accounts](#) publication.

The Portfolio Holder and Executive Director of Finance and Public Protection provide routine oversight of fire and rescue activity. Key decisions are processed through the County's Informal Executive and Executive as necessary. LFR reports to the Communities and Public Safety Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis in accordance with the scrutiny work programme. Copies of committee reports can be found on the [LCC website](#).

## OPERATIONAL

### Planning

Lincolnshire FRA has carried out its functions in accordance with the defined statutory and policy framework in which it is required to operate. The key documents setting this out are:

- The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

<sup>9</sup> Excludes grants and other income.

<sup>10</sup> Based on 2014/15 Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) statistics.

- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007
- The Localism Act 2011
- The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England
- The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

To ensure the Service is well positioned to meet the duties and responsibilities placed on it by the Government, LFR undertakes a process of Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP). This is a holistic and flexible process that enables fire and rescue services to identify, measure and mitigate the social and economic impact of fires and other emergencies. As part of the process LFR identifies those risks to the community that, as a fire and rescue service, it can help to mitigate. It develops the key strategies it will use to deal with those risks, the core strategies being Prevention, Protection and Response. Further detail on the planning process, key risks and core strategies can be found in the [IRMP Baseline Document 2016-2020](#).

LFR conducted an extensive consultation on its draft 4-year IRMP Baseline Document. This provided relevant stakeholders with the opportunity to comment on the risks identified and proposed strategies for dealing with them. The consultation document, along with the results of the consultation, can be found at [IRMP Consultation](#).

While the IRMP Baseline Document sets out the strategies for the Service, the detail on how these are delivered is included in the supporting annual Service Plans. These outline key Service objectives and outcomes and are the mechanism by which performance is managed. Key Service objectives for 2015/16 were:

- Reduce fires and their consequences
- Reduce road traffic collisions and their consequences
- Improve health and wellbeing
- Protect the community and environment from the impact of major emergencies
- Manage our people effectively
- Manage our resources effectively
- Govern the business effectively

Further detail can be found in the [Service Plan 2015-2016](#).

Having robust Business Continuity Plans is essential if the Service is to minimise the impact of a disruption on its ability to deliver an effective service to the community. LFR continues to maintain, develop and test plans to deal with major disruptions of service resulting from staff shortage, loss of premises, technology failure, loss of information or loss of a key supplier or partner.

### **Collaborative Working and Interoperability**

LFR works with a wide variety of local partners to deliver its key strategies. Its Prevention strategy is based around home safety, road safety, arson reduction and youth engagement. Programmes and activities within these themes are targeted at those most vulnerable and delivered in conjunction with key partners. Examples include Telecare, the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership<sup>11</sup> and the Arson Task Force.

LFR's Protection strategy aims to educate and regulate the built environment to protect people, property and the environment from harm. To deliver this the Service has developed close working relationships with other public enforcement bodies. These include Local

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<sup>11</sup> Partners include the County Council, Police, Fire and Rescue, Highways Agency, NHS Partnership, Probation Service, East Midlands Ambulance Service.

District Housing and Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Police, Licensing officers, Gang-masters Licensing Authority and the Health and Safety Executive. The Service has also continued to develop its work on a fire safety based Primary Authority Scheme with a number of businesses aimed at securing greater co-ordination of regulatory and enforcement activities at their premises.

In terms of the Response strategy, LFR deliver a number of activities in partnership with other agencies. Key joint capabilities include:

- The Co-responder scheme. This is a collaboration with East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) and Lincolnshire Integrated Voluntary Emergency Service (LIVES) to provide emergency response to cardiac and respiratory arrest and similar life threatening emergencies.
- Fire Emergency Support Service (FESS). Working with British Red Cross volunteers FESS provides post incident advice and support to members of the community.
- Bariatric Response. In partnership with Adult Social Care and EMAS, the Service provides specialist advice and response in support of bariatric patients.
- Joint Ambulance Conveyance. The Joint Ambulance Conveyance Project commenced in September 2014 with the aim of improving the quality of service and outcomes for patients in Lincolnshire through the development of an innovative and complementary approach to ambulance provision in the County. Building on the existing co-responder scheme, it has been running in partnership with EMAS and LIVES from 3 retained fire stations.

LFR plays a lead role in the County's Local Resilience Forum. This multi-agency partnership, established under the authority of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, brings together the emergency services and other key organisations and agencies in order to plan for and respond to emergencies which may have a significant impact on the community. LFR provide the deputy chair, are represented on the Forum's Programme Management Board and chair the Community Risk Register Risk Assessment Working Group. LFR manage the emergency planning function on behalf of the Council.

Agreements are in place with fire and rescue services bordering Lincolnshire to augment the Service's operational resources where required<sup>12</sup>. LFR have also signed up to the National Mutual Aid Protocol which outlines the terms under which an authority may expect to request assistance from, or provide assistance to, another authority in the event of a major national emergency. Working with the Government and other partners, LFR maintain a national resilience capability through its Urban Search and Rescue, Mass Decontamination and High Volume Pumping capabilities.

LFR have and continue to support the work being undertaken as part of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme. This is a nationally recognised tri-service programme designed to ensure the blue light services are trained and exercised to work together as effectively as possible. Further details are available at [www.JESIP.org.uk](http://www.JESIP.org.uk).

LFR have continued to work alongside other agencies as part of the Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership. Established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the partnership has a duty to identify countywide community safety priorities and ways of coordinating activities in relation to those priorities. Priorities for 2015 to 2018 include; anti-social behaviour (including hate crime), domestic abuse, reducing offending, serious and organised crime, sexual violence and substance misuse<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> In accordance with section 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act.

<sup>13</sup> LCSP Community Safety Agreement 2015 – 2018.

LFR entered into a collaborative partnership with Norfolk, Humberside and Hertfordshire fire and rescue services as part of a project to develop an integrated and resilient joint mobilising system. Each Service will maintain their own Control Room but there will be one shared mobilising system capable of mobilising the resources of each of the other FRS therefore providing significant improvements in resilience. An initial enhanced capability was introduced in February 2014. By working collaboratively savings are anticipated through joint procurement and common operating procedures. There are also likely to be opportunities to extend this to other operational practices in the future.

LFR continue to provide support for the UK International Search and Rescue (ISAR) team. The mechanism for provision of this capability is outlined in a memorandum of understanding between the Department for International Development, the Department for Communities and Local Government and CFA National Resilience. The Service also represents the UK's interest on the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group.

A general trend in the reduction of operational incidents attended has led to a corresponding decline in the operational experience of the Service's firefighters. To address this LFR continue to invest in the development of a realistic training environment at the Waddington training site. The site also provides extensive national resilience training facilities which are recognised as world class. These are being promoted widely to support income generation.

## Performance

LFR use a number of key performance indicators to assess progress against its Service objectives. During 2015/16 the main differences, compared to the previous year, in its operational priority areas were:

- *Reducing fires and their consequences.* LFR saw a 12% increase in the overall number of primary fires. There was also an increase in the total number of deaths caused by fire, although there was a reduction in the number of fire injuries recorded. The total number of deliberate primary fires fell by 4%.
- *Reducing road traffic collisions and their consequences.* There were 324 people killed or seriously injured on Lincolnshire's roads during 2015/16. This was an 8% reduction on the previous year.
- *Improving health and wellbeing.* LFR attended 4,920 co-responder incidents which is a 36% increase on the previous year. This reflects the fact that an additional 5 fire stations started co-responding during 2015. Of those incidents attended firefighters provided assistance on 86% of occasions.

Details of all the Service's performance indicators for 2015/16 can be found in the [Service Plan 2016-2017 Part 2](#).

## Continuous Improvement

LFR identified 3 main improvement priorities for 2015/16. Progress against each is as follows:

- *Ensure our Retained Duty System remains fit for purpose.* This project remains ongoing, although a number of early recommendations have already been implemented. The remaining recommendations will be taken forward over the next 6 months in accordance with the agreed implementation plan.
- *Continue to enhance the effectiveness of our collaborative working.* The Service's co-responder scheme was successfully extended to a further 5 RDS stations following the previous year's IRMP consultation. The Joint Ambulance Conveyance Project

pilot has also completed and, subject to appropriate funding, will continue with a view to expansion. There has also been considerable planning undertaken in conjunction with Lincolnshire police and EMAS in support of the Blue Light Collaboration project. This will see the introduction of a shared police and fire headquarters, shared control room and the development of an operational Blue Light campus.

- *Continue to develop our Information Communications Technology capability.* An Information Management Portal (IMP) has been successfully implemented and its use is now well embedded. We have continued to see increased functionality and usage of our Firewatch management information system. While there have been some delays with our Future Control project the initial capability continues to work well. The full capability is now due to be operational by April 2017.

As part of the commitment to continuous improvement the Service was reviewed under the Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Peer Challenge process in October 2012. Fire Peer Challenge supports sector led improvement and is a key component of the LGA's 'Taking the Lead' offer. The process is used to provide independent assurance to FRAs and local communities that operational service delivery is efficient, effective and provides value for money. Overall the Peer Challenge concluded that *'LFR continues to move forward positively and that the Service has worked hard to improve across a broad range of areas'*. It also recognised that *'from frontline staff to senior management there is a passion and commitment to protect the people of Lincolnshire'*. A copy of the 2012 LGA Peer Challenge report can be found at [Peer Challenge](#). The next peer review is planned for June 2017.

The Service received re-accreditation of its training and development Quality Assurance Framework by Skills for Justice Awards in March 2016. This followed an audit of the development programmes set against the criteria in the Skills for Fire and Rescue quality assurance framework. In addition, 2 key training courses covering recruit training and operations command training received the SkillsMark® endorsement in October 2014.

Auditing of operational incidents is conducted in accordance with LFR's integrated Quality Assurance policy<sup>14</sup>. Findings from audits are discussed during 'hot debriefs' and recorded at stations as appropriate. Summary operational performance key findings reports are circulated quarterly highlighting key issues, good practice and learning points.

LFR conduct annual Organisational and Operational Preparedness inspections of all stations. Both inspections are scored. This enables the organisation to assess the operational readiness of its stations and identify any areas for development. During 2015/16 stations achieved between 86% and 100% on overall performance scores.

## **Future Plans**

Future plans for LFR include:

- Implementing the recommendations from its Retained Duty System review to ensure the system remains fit for purpose.
- Continuing to enhance the effectiveness of its collaborative working both with other blue-light services and wider partners.
- Continuing to develop its Information Communications Technology capability. This will focus on further development of the Service's core management information system and the joint future Control capability.

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<sup>14</sup> Service Order 13 and TPP 9.1.1.



- Implementing the changes agreed as part of the 2016/17 [IRMP consultation](#) process to meet ongoing savings targets.

Further details on the Service's plans for 2016/17 can be found at [Service Plan 2016-17](#).

## Summary

Lincolnshire FRA is satisfied that the systems and measures it had in place with respect to financial, governance and operational matters for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 were fit for purpose and effective. It is satisfied that its business was conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money was properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. It is also satisfied that, where appropriate, the National Framework requirements have been met.

Signed:

Nick Worth  
Executive Councillor for Fire and Rescue

Nick Borrill  
Acting Chief Fire Officer

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