



STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

2016 - 2017



INTRODUCTION

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England¹ 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 2004² 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 Lincolnshire³ 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](http://www.defra.gov.uk) website.

Estimates for 2016 place the County population at 743,400⁴, an increase of 8.5% since 2006. Current projections suggest the population will increase by 14% by 2039. Notwithstanding this, population density remains low with 125 people per square kilometre compared with an average for England of 424 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.

¹ Fire and Rescue National Framework for England dated Jul 12.

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

³ East Lindsey, North Kesteven, South Kesteven, South Holland and West Lindsey

⁴ Office for National Statistics 2016 mid-year population estimates/GP Registrations April 2016 (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 2017, the Service establishment was 669 staff comprising 608 operational, 17 Control and 44 support staff. Key operational equipment includes:

- 48 station-based pumping appliances
- 2 aerial appliances
- 5 special appliances⁵
- 10 swift water rescue boats
- National Resilience capability⁶

The Service received 22,316 calls during 2016/17 and attended 12,938 operational incidents. The latter represents a 24% increase over the previous year and reflects the increase in the number of medical co-responder calls attended following an expansion of the scheme⁷.

FINANCIAL

General

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

The Executive Director of Finance and Public Protection is responsible for the preparation of the Authority's Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices⁸. 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 2016/17 can be found at [Statement of Accounts](#).

The Authority's financial statements and value for money conclusion are audited independently. The audit for 2016/17 concluded that the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority and of the Authority's expenditure and income for the year. The auditors were also satisfied that, in all significant respects, the Authority put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The audit opinion can be found within the [Statement of Accounts 2016-17](#).

Value for Money

LFR delivered an underspend of 1.0% on its 2016/17 revenue budget of £19.4m⁹. There was a re-alignment of £1.8m on the original capital budget of £3.1m. This resulted from a number of capital programmes, including fire fleet and the station improvement programme, being deferred to 2017/18. The Service was required to make savings of £0.85m during 2016/17. These were delivered primarily through internal restructuring and changes to duty systems.

There are various ways of comparing total revenue spending of FRAs from expenditure per head of population to expenditure per hectare, fire engine or fire station. Used selectively,

⁵ 2 Rescue Support Units, Water Carrier, Command Support Vehicle and Welfare Unit.

⁶ Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), Mass Decontamination and High Volume Pumping.

⁷ Expanded to 5 additional fire stations during 2015.

⁸ As set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

⁹ Excludes grants and other income.

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 cost measures for 2016 is shown below¹⁰. 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	35.4	32.8
£ per hectare	148.9	40.7
£ per operational fire station	1,387,597	635,579

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.

LCC's internal audit department publishes an Annual Internal Audit Report¹¹. 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 2016/17 was that arrangements for governance and risk management were performing well, arrangements for financial control were performing adequately and arrangements for internal control were performing inadequately. The latter stems predominantly from difficulties with implementation of the Council's financial system.

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 Public Protection and Communities 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
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004

¹⁰ Based on 2015/16 Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) statistics (actuals).

¹¹ As per the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

- 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 2016/17 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 2016-2017](#).

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 Partnership¹² 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 District Housing and Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Police, Licensing officers,

¹² Partners include the County Council, Police, Fire and Rescue, Highways Agency, NHS Partnership, Probation Service, East Midlands Ambulance Service.

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 runs 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 required¹³. 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 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.

LFR continue 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 misuse¹⁴.

¹³ In accordance with section 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act.

¹⁴ 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 Home Office and CFA National Resilience.

A general trend in the reduction of operational incidents attended (other than co-responder calls) 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 continue to be promoted to support income generation.

Performance

LFR use a number of key performance indicators to assess progress against its Service objectives. During 2016/17 the main differences, compared to the previous year, in its operational priority areas were:

- *Reducing fires and their consequences.* LFR saw an 8% reduction in the overall number of primary fires and a similar reduction in accidental dwelling fires. However, there was an increase in the total number of fire deaths and injuries recorded. The total number of deliberate fires fell by 5%.
- *Reducing road traffic collisions and their consequences.* There were 465 people killed or seriously injured on Lincolnshire's roads during 2016/17. This represents a 29% increase on the previous year.
- *Improving health and wellbeing.* LFR attended 7,249 co-responder incidents which is a 47% 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 89% of occasions.

Details of all the Service's performance indicators for 2016/17 can be found in the [Service Plan 2017-2018 Part 2](#).

Continuous Improvement

LFR identified 3 main improvement priorities for 2016/17. Progress against each is as follows:

- *Ensure our Retained Duty System remains fit for purpose.* The Service project to review the Retained Duty System has now concluded and good progress has been made in implementing many of the recommendations. These will continue to be developed and embedded over the next 12 months.
- *Enhance the effectiveness of our collaborative working.* The Service has now extended its co-responder scheme to 26 stations. The Joint Ambulance Conveyance Project has been completed and, subject to funding, will continue running from the

existing 3 stations. As part of the blue light collaboration project LFR moved into a new shared Fire and Police headquarters in March 2017. The other key aspects of the project, including the establishment of a shared control room and development of an operational Blue Light campus, are moving forward as planned.

- *Develop our Information Communications Technology (ICT) capability.* We have seen continued development of our FireWatch and Flosuite management information systems. Our training delivery has been enhanced through the introduction of command and control training software and the use of Learn-Pro as part of our learning management system. While there has been a delay in implementing the final stage of our Future Control project, the initial capability continues to work well. The full capability is now expected to be operational in early 2018.

As part of the commitment to continuous improvement the Service was reviewed under the Local Government Association Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge in October 2012. 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 Peer Challenge report can be found at [Peer Challenge](#). The results of the most recent Peer Challenge, conducted in September 2017, will be available by the end of the year.

In May 2016, the UK ISAR team, to which LFR contribute, successfully passed the United Nations ISAR Advisory Group heavy rescue team re-classification¹⁵. The team were judged as outstanding with a number of areas of best practice identified.

LFR's Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team were assessed as part of the National Resilience USAR assurance process in October 2016. Overall, the Lincolnshire USAR Team performed to a high standard providing a fit for purpose capability¹⁶.

LFR's process for quality assuring its development programmes was re-accredited in 2016/17 by Skills for Justice (SfJ). The Service's recruitment and incident command training courses were also re-awarded the SfJ Skills Mark accreditation.

Auditing of operational incidents is conducted in accordance with LFR's integrated Quality Assurance policy¹⁷. 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 2016/17 stations achieved between 82% and 100% on overall performance scores.

Future Plans

Future plans for LFR include:

- Implementing and embedding the remaining recommendations from its Retained Duty System review to ensure the system remains fit for purpose.

¹⁵ CFA National Resilience letter dated 7 Jun 16.

¹⁶ NFCC National Resilience letter dated May 17.

¹⁷ Service Order 13 and TPP 9.1.1.

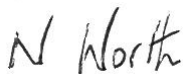
- Continuing to enhance the effectiveness of its collaborative working both with other blue-light services and wider partners.
- Continuing to develop its Information Communications Technology capability. This will include further development of the Service's core management information system and the joint future Control capability.

Further details on the Service's plans for 2017/18 can be found at [Service Plan 2017-18](#).

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 2016 to 31 March 2017 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
Chief Fire Officer

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