Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service

Fire Peer Challenge

Report

Contents

Introduction, context and purpose

This report outlines the key findings from the Local Government Association's (LGA) Fire Peer Challenge at Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service (LFR) in September 2017. It expands on the presentation that was delivered on site on Friday 29th September 2017. The content of the presentation is included as an Appendix on p18.

Fire Peer Challenge is part of sector led improvement. In the last four years, all 46 FRSs nationally have undertaken a peer challenge. Following this, the process has been revised to reflect developments within the sector and ensure it continues to meet the needs of FRSs and other key stakeholders. FRSs have been able to commission another peer challenge, to take place at a time of their choosing over the next four years.

Fire Peer Challenges are structured around the core elements in the Operational Assessment toolkit. All fire peer challenges consider these seven key assessment areas (KAAs) and six strategic leadership questions:
KAAs:

- Community Risk Management
- Prevention
- Protection
- Preparedness
- Response
- Health, Safety and Welfare
- Training and Development

Strategic leadership questions:

- Understanding local context and priorities
- Delivering outcomes for local communities
- Financial planning and viability
- Political and managerial leadership
- Governance and decision-making
- Organisational capacity

The Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge toolkit can be viewed and downloaded from: 2016 OpA Toolkit

In addition, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service asked the team to focus on the following key areas of interest:

1. **Sense check on Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) changes**
2. **Collaboration**
   Blue light collaboration, health and medical response
3. **Workforce Reform**
   Particularly around the Retained Duty System (RDS) review and duty systems

The fire peer challenge process and team

Fire peer challenges are managed and delivered by the sector for the sector and peers are at the heart of the process. They help FRSs' and Fire & Rescue Authorities with their improvement and learning by providing a 'practitioner perspective' and 'critical friend' challenge.

The peer challenge team for Lincolnshire FRS was:

- Mark Hardingham, Chief Fire Officer, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service
- Councillor Nick Chard, Chairman, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority
- David (Gabby) Heycock, Business Improvement Manager, Oxfordshire FRS
- Tally Giampa, Head of Community Safety Gloucestershire FRS
- Damien West, GM Service Delivery North, Nottinghamshire FRS
- Becca Singh, Local Government Association

The LFR Fire Peer Challenge took place from 26th – 29th September 2017 and consisted of a range of on-site activities including meetings, focus groups and fire station visits. The peer team met with a broad cross-section of officers, staff, front-line firefighters, partners and elected members. During the challenge the peer team were very well looked after and people the team met were fully engaged with the process and very open and honest.

The peer team undertook background reading provided to them in advance, including LFR's Peer Challenge self-assessment. The evidence and feedback gathered was assimilated into broad themes and was delivered to LFR on the final day of the challenge.

Context

Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR) is a County Fire Service and is therefore a department of Lincolnshire County Council (LCC). It serves a very rural and coastal county, primarily (81%) through retained fire fighters with other primary employers, following a traditional Retained Duty System (RDS). It has been co-responding on medical emergencies for many years, providing a vital service to Lincolnshire's rural communities. Over 50% of its calls are for medical emergencies.

These elements provide the context to how LFR delivers its Risk Management, Prevention, Protection and Response functions.

Key Findings

Specific focus areas:

Sense Check on IRMP changes

This is mostly covered in the 'Workforce Reform' and 'Preparedness and Response' sections of the report.

The Service has demonstrated that it effectively engages with Partners and its workforce in relation to changes and developments within the Service. Changes since the last peer challenge in 2012 have included crewing system changes, investments in equipment, the move to police headquarters and a new joint emergency response station being built on the site of the old headquarters. These changes have been well managed with good staff and partner engagement, ensuring that LFR remains fit for purpose.

Collaboration

This is largely covered in the 'Response and Preparedness', 'Leadership and Corporate Capacity' and 'Community Risk Management, Prevention and Protection' sections.

There is a clear commitment to blue light collaboration locally. It is well-resourced, governed and financially supported. Examples include co-responding, shared headquarters and exploring shared estates more widely. Consideration is also being given to further plans for the Joint Ambulance Conveyancing Project (JACP), although this is funding dependent. Blue-Light Collaboration focuses mostly on the response function and facilities management at the moment. 'Fire as a Health Asset', rather than just as an emergency responder, is beginning. Further engagement with the local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) will help this where opportunities to work together have so far been limited. LFR should consider how to more effectively engage with the NHS' Strategic Transformation Plan (STP) process locally.

Partners have identified that there will soon be a need, at the right time, to have a strategic plan for future collaboration, beyond the shared headquarters and emergency responding in Lincolnshire. There is an opportunity to further consider how LFR works in partnership with neighbouring FRSs in this regard.

Workforce Reform

The Service has undertaken comprehensive reviews of its duty systems in order to align resources to a sustainable service delivery model. This resulted in a number of key changes including:

- Introduction of the Lincolnshire Crewing System (LCS) at eight of its nine Wholetime stations
- Introduction of an organisational development instructor (ODI) duty system
- Establishment of a pool of Watch Commander Support (WCS) posts
- Use of 'reduced crewed' appliances to support the initial attendance at operational incidents.

The changes were negotiated and implemented through effective engagement with Representative Bodies (through joint working groups) and wider staff (through focus groups). This has led to staff largely feeling engaged in the changes and understanding the rationale behind the decisions that have been taken. LFR should build on this positive engagement to ensure RDS personnel are included in periodically reviewing changes. This will help to ensure standardisation in how changes have been delivered at different stations and how they continue to operate when they are embedded in the Service.

There have been some unintended consequences of the changes that LFR will need to consider. For example, some of the roles now include a salary enhancement. Whilst the reason for this is clear, it has a potential to impact on career progression and future management capacity. More senior roles, without the same enhancements, may come with a reduction in salary.

Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) has implemented and embedded a values-based approach to individual performance management through the Performance Development Review (PDR) system. LFR uses different values to the rest of LCC which are felt to be more appropriate to a fire and rescue service. However, non-operational staff at LFR are on LCC terms and conditions and are managed through LCC values and PDRs. The differences in approach and systems is having a detrimental effect, emphasising separation and differences in the LFR workforce. This is most evident where non-operational staff are managed by operational staff who are more accustomed to the language used in the LFR values.

LFR's Response function is performed largely by retained personnel (81%) on a traditional retained duty system model. In 2016 there was a comprehensive RDS review. This resulted in investment in and revision of recruitment, training, engagement, and retention. The review has already delivered, and has the potential to continue to deliver, significant improvements.

LFR could consider some further areas:

- Communication about the RDS Review's outcomes including the rationale for progressing, or not progressing, some areas that were explored. Not all RDS personnel were apparently aware of either the review, or the outcomes of that review. Some personnel are therefore disengaged, and would benefit from greater clarity around the review outcomes.
- Now that progress has been made and support has been established for the RDS, this could form the basis of a continual improvement mechanism.
- Rigidity over the number of supervisory personnel at a RDS station. This can lead to a shortage of appropriate managers at certain times.
- The 120 available hours per week model and how this is financially rewarded, considering the impact on achieving a sustainable workforce with a good work/life balance.

- The stigma associated with identifying Fire Fighters in Development (FFDs) with an ‘orange stripe’ when they have completed all acquisition courses
- The length of time for FFDs to achieve ‘competence’ (currently four years), and how this is evidenced. Could a greater use of technology help this?
- Build on the flexibility demonstrated by the training of the ‘Bardney Four’. Explore other ways to creatively engage with primary employers to increase recruitment and resilience
- Explore the variety of on-call options (such as flexible numbers of hours) which could work in Lincolnshire on a station-by-station basis to meet local needs and challenges. This could also widen the pool of potential on-call firefighters.

Leadership and organisational capacity

This section incorporates all five themes:

- Understanding of local context and priority setting
- Delivering outcomes for local communities
- Financial planning and viability
- Political and managerial leadership
- Governance and decision-making
- Organisational capacity

There is pride and a positive culture across LFR. The team heard complimentary views from people inside and outside about the culture and feel of the Service, particularly about the approach and style of the senior management team. The Service clearly demonstrated effective relationships with partners, especially East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS; bariatric patient assessments), LIVES (the organisation which, along with EMAS, supports medical responding) and neighbouring Services (Section 13 / 16 arrangements). The response to the Grenfell fire was highlighted as a robust partnership approach to emerging risk.

Councillors, senior officers at LCC and managers at LFR have the same view of the future resources in the Fire and Rescue Sector. There is a consistent view of the financial outlook and capacity of the Service, which means that they work constructively to negotiate resources. The Portfolio Holder for LFR has a high level of confidence in the LCC Executive Director of Finance & Public Protection, his knowledge and relationship with the Service. The clear planning structure (IRMP, Service Plan, Risk Registers, and Strategies) will serve LFR well beyond April 2018.

The Service has secured a sustainable partnership funding stream for co-responding through LCC Public Health and the Better Care Fund (BCF). The local community benefits significantly from this activity and it comprises a significant number of LFR 999 calls. The maturity of the model and the learning that LFR have had means that other FRSs could learn from this model.

The Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable are very supportive of closer collaboration with the police and fire, whilst being clear about the respective roles, structures, cultures and approaches. The move into shared headquarters in early 2017 was well co-ordinated and executed. Staff from across LFR and the police report that it was a very smooth operation.

Relationships between LFR management and representative bodies are positive and the impact is widely felt. The whole organisation can see this as a constructive relationship, working for the Service and the people of Lincolnshire. There has clearly been a conscious effort from all parties to reach this position and they have worked through challenges, negotiating for example, to implement LCS and responding with reduced crewing levels.

Political leadership at LCC is well informed about the fire sector and this is acknowledged and valued by LFR. The Portfolio Holder takes part in Chief Officer Group (COG) station visits which staff appreciate and helps to demonstrate leadership. The Council Leader holds LFR in high regard and supports the Service's broadening role. The relationship with the rest of LCC is generally good, although the way roles are designed means this relies on relationships more than structures. The Service should consider how it influences and works with the rest of LCC in future. LFR should build on the relationships at a senior level between strategic managers at LCC.

COG visits have two purposes: an engagement mechanism and part of the assurance procedures. The team suggest that LFR considers the balance between these two functions. The visits stretch COG capacity, but are an extremely valuable engagement tool. They may be less value to the wider Service as an assurance tool. Staff would welcome a better balance between identifying areas for improvement and celebrating success.

The peer team did not find clear evidence of how LFR contributes to setting and delivering wider LCC priorities. Capacity and resilience could be improved through innovative exploration of closer LCC (and partner) working. LFR has been co-responding for many years, before many other FRSs. Expanding the role further is beginning to be considered, for example through Prevention and Protection work, as well as the wider Response function. Politicians are mindful of the need for a good strong emergency response service, but more exploration of the wider benefits of Prevention and Protection work may need to be explored with councillors. For example, Safe and Well (SAW) visits complementing Adult Social Care assessments, and Fire Protection work with catering establishments supports work by Trading Standards and Environmental Health. Emergency response, adult social care, housing, highways, trading standards and environmental health could work together to have a positive impact on each other's services.

There are two layers of strategic management which each meet monthly. The Strategic Management Board (SMB) is the Chief, Deputy Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers along with Area Managers, HR and finance representatives. The Service Delivery Board (SDB) is Group Managers

(GMs) and other key roles. This structure works well, however they could work closer together to share ideas and feedback. Holding occasional, perhaps annual, joint meetings might be useful to set and manage the strategic direction of the Service and ensure there is clarity over internal communications. SDB actively and positively saw part of their role as a filter for feedback from front line staff. Both SMB and SDB should consider if the right views and ideas from the front line are reaching senior managers and what the role of middle managers is in facilitating this.

Some LFR officers would benefit from greater understanding of the role of LCC Members in LFR. This would help with succession planning, as officers gradually build up their political awareness and acumen. Suggestions include:

- LFR making direct links with democratic services team,
- Individuals attending relevant scrutiny, cabinet or council meetings, accompanied by someone to explain how the democratic processes work,
- improving wider political understanding of how prevention, protection and community risk management work complements council service delivery and has an impact on fire responding
- individuals shadowing an LFR or LCC officer throughout the process of working with a report that needs to go for political consideration
- involve the portfolio holder, his deputy, the leader and his deputy in part of an annual SMB / SDB away day helping to set the strategic priorities for LFR.

There are some good communications mechanisms and approaches, blending different channels for different audiences, and supporting staff to use them. Internally, there is a good structure of team meetings although there are some questions on how effectively these include RDS personnel. The Service can demonstrate that it has made reasonable efforts to ensure all personnel are engaged and informed (for example, the COG visits, social media and various publications). It is worth regularly evaluating the different methods used to measure the impact and effectiveness of communication mechanisms. It is good to know that the Communications officers are linked into wider Fire Communications support, such as FirePro and regional communications networks.

As part of the more general financial constraint, there has been a reduction of LFR communications resources. There is no dedicated Fire Communications Team, although there are some identified skilled officers, including one of the LCC Communications Team dedicated to Fire Communications. There is no ‘out of hours’ duty rota for tactical and emergency communications, and no strategic line of reporting from Head of Communications to CFO. When the Knowledge and Information Manager was on maternity leave, the communications part of her role was not covered. This gives the impression that the Service does not value communications expertise, and has left internal communications needing some support to improve it. Some of this has been alleviated with the introduction of a new system of team and

management meetings, but an evaluation of the value of internal communications methods would be useful.

There is an extensive performance monitoring system with many performance indicators. LFR should continue to consider if the balance between the need for good performance reporting and the time taken to collect the data is appropriate and ensure that the extensive range of data that is collected is used to manage good and poor performance, and to identify and analyse trends and patterns.

As with any large and uniformed organisation, there are varied dynamics between staff groups and teams that need to be appreciated and managed. For example: operational / non-operational staff, Prevention / Protection / Response teams, Headquarters / Stations and Wholetime / Retained personnel. People have noted that the relationships between groups have improved recently but some procedural and structural barriers remain. For example, the difference in language used to express LCC and LFR values, the relationship between Response and other functions of the Service, and the convention of operational staff leading projects. LFR should consider how these relationships are perceived, communicated and balanced.

There have been a number of problems with support functions provided through LCC by third parties which have impacted directly upon the Service. For example, the payroll problems, where staff have been either overpaid or underpaid, has caused significant problems over an extended period, which in some cases have affected in-work benefits and student loan repayments. LCC and LFR should continue to work together to manage through these challenges and their impact on staff.

Key Assessment Areas

Community Risk Management, Prevention and Protection Strengths:

Senior Managers have given a strategic commitment to Prevention, Protection, Community Risk Management and the Response functions having equal importance. This is reflected in the LFR strapline: “Preventing, Protecting, Responding”. At the start of the peer challenge, SMB asked the peer team to explore whether this was felt across the Service.

LFR has an impressive number and range of partner organisations who refer clients for Home Safety Checks (HSCs). Community Safety Advocates (CSAs) are passionate, skilled and knowledgeable staff, delivering a range of prevention activities across the County with partners. The risk rating works well and visits are now more targeted and relevant. This could be further developed to monitor how many HSCs are provided to vulnerable people and establish a meaningful target. The range of prevention activity (Youth Engagement, Road Safety) has been reduced recently but it is not clear if the wider impacts on partners, other LCC services or service-users were

specifically considered. For example, where LFR youth engagement has been reduced, how has this decision involved the Youth Offending Team, Highways department or the police, and how has it affected their performance? Consider how to build resilience and achieve strategic outcomes by working more closely with others.

Staff report that the Primary Authority Scheme (PAS) is doing very well and would compare strongly nationally. There are plans for expansion and a desire to generate income through commercial trading and training. It is very satisfying to develop out-of-the-box solutions and see them being adopted by a willing partner. Potentially high-risk organisations such as those in the food manufacturing sector and Anglian water are involved in the scheme. Staff described PAS as buoyant and growing.

There are a number of national prevention campaigns which all FRSs can promote annually. These are sophisticated with toolkits, social media and design work provided. The Prevention Team, supported by Communications professionals, could consider a comprehensive campaign strategy which can be aligned to local priorities. This will provide an opportunity for proactive communications which supports the prevention, protection and community risk management messages that LFR wants to promote.

Data shows that figures for people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on roads are rising. There are many factors to this, and different partners will have an impact on the reasons for this rise. This has led to a conference being arranged to explore options for improvement. A strong strategic partnership response (for example, LCC, LFR, the police, and EMAS) will be needed in order to reduce these numbers. LFR cannot do it alone. There has been investment in a post based in the Road Safety Partnership, but consideration of the impact of KSIs, and what LFR can do, has not been embedded across the Service.

Closer integration with other LCC services will help to identify vulnerable people and work could be targeted accordingly. For example, Adult Social Care presents a significant community risk which will continue to put pressure on local councils and the NHS. There is an aspiration to help people live independently for longer in their homes. If there is appetite to broaden the role, LFR firefighters could make a significant impact in the community for example by embedding HSCs into hospital discharge, slips trips and falls, developing MoU with districts for new tenants to have HSCs, responding to Telecare devices. This builds on the good work already being done with bariatric, oxygen users and bed-ridden smokers.

There is good integration between the Prevention and Protection teams, but the number of HSCs completed by wholetime watches is low. There is a desire to enhance the fire protection skills of wholetime crews, but the hazard spotting and protection advice given by crews has been reported to cause problems for technical inspectors. The team heard that misleading and incorrect advice is sometimes given out which then has to be remedied. Consider what performance and risk data is saying, and evaluate the

effectiveness of work done by stations, identifying where the most long-term impact could be delivered by firefighters and non-operational staff. Use the data to balance the priorities of Prevention, Protection, Risk Management and Response work. This will need to be assessed on a localised basis. LFR could investigate whether there is capacity to increase the activity from fire stations. Closer working with LFR's Learning and Development team could expand the knowledge and expertise across the Service.

LFR appears to prioritise Response as its core function with a focus on the operational activity of its personnel. This is reflected in published documents which are reassuring for the public to know that a high quality response can always be relied upon. Although it is imperative that the response function (including co-responding) is delivering appropriately, staff felt that more could be done in prevention activities; the true value of the benefits to the community (and potentially to firefighter safety) is not being acknowledged, recognised or communicated by politicians and senior managers. This is highlighted through the focus on co-responding as a key example of collaboration and a core operational activity (over 50% of calls are medical). Many crews did not see Prevention activities as their core role, but as a role for the Prevention Team and specialists.

Internally, staff feel that prevention is treated as a lesser priority than response. Processes and practices appeared to be very focused on Response, sometimes at the risk of comprehensive risk management, prevention and protection work. For example, CSAs do not have a guaranteed vehicle or transport arrangements. Visits and transport are booked in advance, but they may then lose the vehicle at short notice to Response. This carries reputational risk by cancelling visits and appointments and is not an efficient use of time. It gives the impression that Prevention work is not valued.

Consider how to prioritise new work and initiatives. Staff feel that they are trying to do everything that is requested of the Service. There is no single point at LFR to filter out or signpost enquiries and requests to the Prevention and Protection teams. Watches reported that the recording of HSCs is onerous and recorded in various formats and the quality is inconsistent. Current processes and IT packages are not enabling demand to be managed, or helping prioritise Prevention activity. LFR has recently reviewed its UWFS policy which is largely based on national guidance. In time this should be reviewed to see if the outcomes are mirroring those of other FRS who might be managing better reductions in UWFS.

Response and Preparedness

In general, the team found that the self-assessment for both Preparedness and Response arrangements reflected the views that were expressed on site.

Local Resilience Forum (LRF) arrangements and relationships are effective. This was confirmed by partners. The Service has demonstrated the application of resilience arrangements through recent incidents. The Service recently successfully dealt with two large incidents (10 pumps) simultaneously.

There is great pride in the level of provision and the high standard of equipment and appliances in the Response function. The Service has invested in these areas significantly and continues to do so through the purchase of 33 new appliances. The significant investment through LCC demonstrates a commitment to maintaining operational readiness. LFR recognises the impact of such investment on support functions such as training and development and has phased the implementation over 3 years, this phased approach should be continually reviewed to take account of capacity.

The Service has effectively reviewed its workforce to deliver an effective response with the resources it has at its disposal. The Control function embraces the flexibility around PDAs and provides a flexible and professional approach to mobilising. The SM for Control is engaged across the Service including at SDB. The Service has clearly invested in the competence and capability of its personnel through the instigation of its Learning Management System (LMS), WCS, training plans and centralised training and refresher courses.

There was evidence that LFR are exploring their options to make use of limited crew numbers. The planned use of crews of three is a positive use of resources but based on the number of RDS stations the Service might want to consider their risk appetite for expanding the use of crews of three to include using them as the initial response to emergency calls.

Medical response is a significant part of LFRs Response activities (over 50%) and is seen as a valuable provision for communities by all personnel. Staff are proud of the JACP and co-responding provision provided by the Service. The team heard questions over whether the Service's primary response for medical incidents is affecting appliance availability. LFR should satisfy themselves that their legislative responsibilities, and commitment to their communities to provide a timely response to fire-related emergencies, is not compromised.

Arrangements for operational assurance and monitoring are established and were thoroughly evidenced, as were the processes for sharing information and 'closing the loop' on areas that were highlighted. The current COG and Portfolio Holder visits form part of this assurance although this may need to be reviewed after feedback from crews as mentioned earlier in this report.

Organisational learning from local and national response activities has been shown to be effective with the recent introduction of “Key Findings” briefings. This could be shared wider as part of National Operational Learning (NOL) to facilitate sector-led improvement. It includes learning from a range of circumstances including operational incidents, national events and outcomes from training. It is effective and valued by all personnel.

RDS personnel highlighted that increasing activity levels is not the sole solution to retention and satisfaction of personnel. Appropriate remuneration for availability was a greater issue for some personnel. It is important to recognise that motivators for personnel will differ greatly and that a suite of solutions may be required to engage and motivate everyone.

Staff indicated that the process to record and maintain levels of competence was not accessible to all, nor suitably robust. Acquisition of competence by firefighters in development (FFDs) was seen as overly arduous, with limited time or access to operational experiences. The focus on operational competence (manged by WCS) had recently changed and some believed that levels of competence have reduced as a result. Exploration is needed to establish a clear understanding of the situation in order to ensure that the WCS role is delivering the outcomes that were intended.

The establishment of eight Lincolnshire Crewing System (LCS) stations (where daytime firefighters provide on-call cover overnight) is largely seen as a positive move to ensuring the provision of response for the Service. LFR should consider the necessity of the current practice of differentiation between their Wholetime staff and RDS through the use of the terms “Operator” and “Technician”. This practice would appear to challenge workforce integration and LFR should consider the necessity for it to continue. There are additional requirements as a result of the practice, such as sending “technicians” to all structural fires, which could provide an opportunity to engage with staff across all duty systems and to seek their views on established practices.

LFR deliver a robust performance framework for Response with a suite of indicators. These were highlighted as adding value for management who use them to improve performance, either directly or indirectly, but not at a local level. LFR should ensure that the resources committed to this process are commensurate to the benefits gained, that all performance indicators add value and that targets are realistic.

Business Continuity Plans are embedded in the organisation, however there were inconsistencies in the programme to test and review them. Risk information is gathered (through liaison with other departments, agencies and crews), assured (including the assurance of use at incidents) and is accessible to crews. The peer team is not assured that there is consistency in the identification of risks and collection of data by RDS, nor that all risks are covered, especially in some of the RDS areas. LFR could do more to ensure that the RDS have a thorough risk knowledge, regularly reviewed and exercised.

Health, safety and welfare

Health and safety is well established and the arrangements are effective. Representative bodies were complimentary about the focus and importance placed on health and safety.

There is a 'Safe Card' mechanism for staff to report concerns. Officers provide feedback to staff who have submitted their concerns. This allows staff to see what has happened as a result of their reporting. Staff commented that this was appreciated and is encouraging completion.

The structure and responsibilities are resulting in good levels of strategic and tactical engagement in health and safety throughout the service. Clear responsibilities are provided and both evidenced throughout the service in meeting minutes and as agenda items. Driven by the Chief Officer Group (COG), there is widespread acceptance that health and safety are everyone's responsibility. There is a clear training strategy to provide staff with the competencies required.

Evaluating and reporting enables LFR to identify trends and make improvements. For example, the Service Plan identifies remedial actions to address manual handling. Pro-active activity such as inspections and audits are contributing to good levels of assurance around legislative compliance.

Increased reporting and the 'Key findings' approach show a service which is a learning organisation. In addition to this the H&S team also attend LCC H&S meetings to ensure that learning and issues can be shared. LFR was able to evidence not only the completion of cultural surveys but the actions that had been taken as a result.

The Service has thorough provision locally on stations for welfare and mental well-being, but there are no obvious external support routes. This might be particularly important in relation to medical response and support staff. Welfare arrangements were viewed positively, but staff were not able to identify who they would call or turn to apart from their direct line manager. As LFR explores potential joint welfare arrangements with the police, consider the need for external support and the provision or communication of support options for support as well as operational staff. When reviewing different crewing models, ensure that staff are involved looking at welfare considerations as well as operational effectiveness.

LFR should consider their arrangements for lone working and ensure that the appropriate processes and systems in place are effective. The Service could involve lone workers in reviewing those arrangements. Learning from other LCC teams with similar arrangements, for example Children's or Adults' Social Care could be particularly useful.

Learning and development

Learning and Development (L&D) is an area of strength in the Service. Engaged staff deliver products directly in line with Service priorities, designed and delivered with a high emphasis on customer needs. The training centre at Waddington is an excellent facility and staff speak highly of the courses run there.

The revision of training as a result of the RDS review is innovative, and valuable to wholetime as well as retained fire fighters. For example, providing high quality materials on an iPad for the whole of the initial training course, e-learning and PowerPoint presentations, alongside quarterly training plans offer flexible learning options. Alongside regular 'key findings' briefings, LFR shows a realistic approach that is supportive and achievable. Regular briefings to supervisory personnel on different ways to use the materials would be valuable as some were unaware of what was available and how it could be used.

L&D worked with a local employer to design and deliver a tailored initial training course to enable four RDS recruits to complete training around their primary employment (the 'Bardney Four'). This demonstrates the ability to be flexible. L&D could explore how other approaches could support other RDS stations by working with specific employers. Consider what improvements could be made, such as timetabling of the sessions in conjunction with primary employment and moving some of the training sessions away from Waddington. There would appear to be an opportunity to consider this approach with other employers around the county after reviewing and making any identified improvements.

Audit and Review arrangements are proportional and effective. The quarterly review of competence against the training plan by Station Managers (SM) examines the competence of operational staff and reviews the standard of training delivery. This audit activity is used by the L&D department to identify trends and training requirements. Staff were positive about SM visits and saw them as supportive.

Further flexibility is demonstrated by L&D by the introduction of the three-hour drill night for RDS personnel. After feedback from staff, this was reduced back down to two hours' operational training, with technical training to be completed using the e-learning provided, either on station as a group, or individually at home. A new ODI role was introduced to improve service provision by L&D and early indications are that this has been a good move.

Training Staff complete centralised assessments of operational personnel but are not the final decision-makers on whether the individual continues to provide operational cover despite not reaching the appropriate standard of assessments centrally. Operational availability can appear to take precedence over competence. In practice LFR have adopted an approach whereby Response managers take decisions locally to alleviate local crewing

limitations by restricting roles personnel can undertake, thereby maximising availability whilst maintaining a competent crew. Better communication of this process would benefit the Service, and in particular those in Response and OD.

L&D has focused revisions following the RDS review. LFR may now want to consider learning and developments for recent and future managers and non-operational staff. Improving political awareness and managerial skills for staff at SDB level would help LFR's succession planning.

Conclusion and contact information

Through the peer challenge process we have sought to highlight the many positive aspects of Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service but we have also outlined some key challenges. It has been our aim to provide some detail on them through this report in order to help the service consider them and understand them. SMB and political leadership will therefore undoubtedly want to reflect further on the findings before determining how they wish to take things forward.

Thanks to LFR for commissioning the challenge and to everyone involved for their participation. The team are particularly grateful for the support provided both in the preparation for the challenge and during the on-site phase and for the way people we met engaged with the process.

As part of the revised Fire Peer Challenge offer, team members are happy to be contacted for suggestions to help develop your plans, and offer to undertake a follow-up to the challenge in due course, at a time which is most useful to you. The Local Government Association's Principal Advisor in the East Midlands is Mark Edgell, and you may wish to stay in touch with him as well as with members of the team in the meantime. Hopefully this provides you with a convenient route of access to the organisation, its resources and packages of support.

All of us connected with the peer challenge would like to wish Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service every success in the future.

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Annex – Feedback Presentation
Contents of the feedback presentation delivered to Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service on Friday 29th September 2017

Leadership and Corporate Capacity

- There is a pride and positive culture across LFR
- The approach and style of the senior leadership is viewed positively
- There is agreement on the medium term financial plan for LFR across both LCC and LFR
- There is a collective understanding across LFR and LCC of the Service's performance, capacity and risk
- The Service has secured a sustainable partnership funding stream for co-responding through LCC Public Health and the BCF
- Relationships between LFR management and representative bodies are positive and the impact is widely felt
- There is a clear planning structure – IRMP, Service Plan, Risk Registers, Strategies etc.
- Internal Communications - there are some very positive aspects to this but also some emerging areas of consideration
- LCC political leadership is strong and well informed which is valued by LFR staff
- The Council Leader holds the Fire and Rescue Service in high regard and supports the service's broadening role within LCC's priorities.
- The executive Member and his Member colleagues take an active part in Chief Officer Group station visits which are welcomed by staff
- There is effective scrutiny of LFR by LCC committees.
- There is a good relationship with the PCC who is very supportive of closer collaboration with the police.

Leadership and Corporate Capacity:
Areas for consideration

- There are opportunities to build further on the LFR links with LCC - bringing the potential impact of LFRS to the benefit of other areas.
- Succession planning at senior level in LFR - future LCC/LFR role of CFO
- Are the right views and ideas from the front line reaching senior managers – what is the role of middle managers to facilitate this?
- SMB and SDB could work closer together to share ideas and feedback
- Wider role of the firefighter in an RDS FRS - ensuring the balance between capacity, resilience and statutory functions
- There are various dynamics that exist between groups of staff, for example uniform and support staff and between different teams
- There are mixed views about the extent to which the resources required to support some processes outweighs the benefits
- The payroll issues are widely felt over an extended period
- Some LFR officers would benefit from greater political awareness and better understanding of the role of LCC Members

Community Risk Management, Prevention and Protection
Strengths

- An established PAS with excellent partnerships with organisations within your risk target group – this would compare strongly nationally
- LFR has a broad range of partner organisations to deliver prevention work supporting vulnerable people
- Broad range of prevention activity – Youth Engagement, Road Safety, Elderly and vulnerable, hoarding etc.
- Use of community safety advocates – passionate staff
- Robust partnership approach to emerging risk – response to Grenfell DBs and HA
- Good integration between Prevention and Protection teams

Community Risk Management, Prevention and Protection
Areas for consideration

- The Service is primarily seen by staff as response-focused
- LFR could investigate whether there is capacity and a willingness to increase the P&P activity from fire stations
- The recording of HSC / SAW visits is time-consuming and burdensome – Flosuite is not viewed as an enabling tool
- To achieve reductions in RTC KSIs, what more can LFR do to influence partnership working
- Consider the benefits that a comprehensive campaign strategy can offer
- How well do you prioritise new work and initiatives into the Service?

Preparedness and Response
Strengths

- Pride in the standard of PPE, equipment and appliances
- Investment in the competence and capability of its personnel through the instigation of LMS, Watch Command Support, training plans and centralised training and refresher courses.
- Establishing Lincolnshire Crewing System stations and maintaining one 24/7 is seen as a positive move
- Medical response is a significant part of LFR's Response activities and is seen as a valuable provision for communities
- LFR plays an active role in an effective LRF
- Organisational Learning effectively applied to a range of circumstances including operational incidents, national events and outcomes from training

Preparedness and Response
Areas for consideration

- LFR have a robust performance framework for Response with a suite of indicators; do the outcomes always justify the input?
- Is risk information gathered and used effectively at RDS stations?

- Is the balance of audit and assurance vs engagement right at the Chief Officer Group visits?
- Some mixed views over the use of 'operator' and 'technician' levels of response – is this about competence or specialist roles?
- Are the current Incident Support Team arrangements the most effective use of reduced crews?

Health, safety and welfare
Strengths

- The structure and responsibilities are resulting in good levels of strategic and tactical engagement in H&S throughout LFR
- Provision of feedback after the submission of a Safe Card is appreciated by staff and is encouraging completion
- H&S evaluation and reporting is enabling LFR to identify trends and make improvements
- LFR has identified the police welfare approach as a collaborative opportunity
- Rep bodies are complimentary about the focus and importance placed on H&S

Health, safety and welfare
Areas for consideration

- Some staff are unclear about referral pathways for welfare and mental well-being
- Ensure involvement of lone workers in reviewing processes for lone working and the upcoming trial
- Ensure the longer term welfare implications of new crewing models are integral to any future review
- Some staff are experiencing logistical issues with occupational health

Training and development
Strengths

- There is a broad consensus that L&D is a notable area of strength
- Waddington is an excellent training facility
- L&D staff feel fully engaged in creating products, designed and delivered with end-user in mind
- LMS and LearnPro are considered to be excellent systems
- L&D demonstrate the ability to be flexible in their approach
- Audit and Review arrangements are proportional and effective
- LFR is demonstrating a continuous improvement approach to learning and developing

Training and development
Areas for consideration:

- There is a view that LFR needs a renewed focus on leadership and development training
- The shift from ADC to CFP has been largely welcomed albeit with some mixed views about the process

- Additional role supplements to pay is having an impact on career progression and future capacity

Additional Focus Areas:
Collaboration:

- There is a clear commitment to blue light collaboration locally.
- What are the plans for the future of JACP, given the uncertainty of funding?
- Does LFR effectively engage with the STP process?
- A need, at the right time, to have a plan for future collaboration

IRMP sense-check:

- Changes since 2012 have been well managed with good engagement, ensuring that LFR remains fit for purpose

Workforce Reform:

- LFR is primarily an RDS Service and this is largely reflected in their approach to activity and initiatives
- Consider what more LFR can do to engage new and existing employers of RDS firefighters
- LFR have taken risk-based, innovative and bold steps in their introduction of new duty systems
- There are some relatively minor limiting factors to workforce reform, such as RDS retaining fee to hours available and the views about time-served approach to flexi appointments
- Build on the good work that has recently started on Inclusion
- There is a very strong approach to values based working – one area to consider is the different values approach between LFR and LCC

Notable Practice:

- The use of technology for Phase 1 training
- The RDS recruitment hub and planning tool
- The partnership approach to bariatric patients involving operational crews
- The bespoke training course for the “Bardney 4”
- The LMS and the overall approach to training and training materials
- Work completed on retained training as a result of the RDS review
- JACP approach is innovative

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