



STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

2017 - 2018



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 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 Framework (covering the period 2017-18) 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](#) website.

Estimates for 2017 place the County population at 751,200⁴, an increase of 8.3% since 2007. Current projections suggest the population will increase by 11% by 2041. Notwithstanding this, population density remains low with 127 people per square kilometre compared with an average for England of 427 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 23% in 2016 to 30% in 2041. The proportion of people over 75 years of age is predicted to increase by 88% 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. Revised document published May 18.

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 2017 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 2018, the Service establishment⁵ was 666 staff comprising 608 operational, 17 Control and 41 support staff⁶. Key operational equipment includes:

- 48 station-based fire engines
- 2 aerial appliances
- 5 special appliances⁷
- 10 swift water rescue boats
- National Resilience capability⁸

The Service received 24,417 calls during 2017/18 and attended 13,126 operational incidents.

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 practices⁹. 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 2017/18 can be found at [Statement of Accounts](#).

The Authority's financial statements and value for money conclusion are audited independently. The audit for 2017/18 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 the Authority had appropriate arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources. The audit opinion can be found within the [Annual Audit Letter 2017-18](#).

Value for Money

LFR overspent by 1.68% on its 2017/18 final revenue budget of £19.0m¹⁰. There was a re-alignment of £2.0m on the original capital budget of £3.0m. This resulted from a number of capital programmes, including fire fleet and the station improvement programme, being deferred to 2018/19. The Service was required to make revenue savings of £1.005m during 2017/18. 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, each of these measures can be misleading. However, used together they can help build a

⁵ Actual headcount may vary.

⁶ Not including Emergency Planning and Business Continuity.

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

⁸ Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and High Volume Pumping capability.

⁹ As set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

¹⁰ Mainly due to increasing costs of employers pension contributions following changing pension legislation and auto enrolment of RDS Firefighters.

picture of how one FRA compares with another. A summary of how Lincolnshire FRA compared against a number of the cost measures is shown below¹¹. 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	35.6	30.9
£ per hectare	150.8	38.7
£ per operational fire station	1,405,859	606,158

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 Report¹². 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 2017/18 was that arrangements for governance were performing well, and that arrangements for risk management, financial control and internal control were performing adequately.

The Portfolio Holder and Executive Director of Finance and Public Protection provide routine oversight of the fire and rescue service. 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
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007

¹¹ Based on 2016/17 Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) statistics (actuals).

¹² As per the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

- 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 2017/18 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 2017-18](#).

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, health and wellbeing, 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](#)¹³ 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, 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

¹³ Partners include the County Council, Police, Fire and Rescue, Highways Agency, NHS Partnership, Probation Service, East Midlands Ambulance Service.

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 capability aims to improve the quality of service and outcomes for patients in Lincolnshire through a 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 required¹⁴. LFR have also signed up to the National Mutual Aid Protocol¹⁵ 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 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 [Safer Lincolnshire 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 2018 to 2021 include; anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, reducing offending and serious and organised crime.

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. The full capability is expected to go live in

¹⁴ In accordance with section 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act.

¹⁵ Fire Service Circular 42/2006 - National Mutual Aid Protocol for Serious Incidents.

early 2019. 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 CFOA National Resilience.

Performance

LFR use a number of key performance indicators to assess progress against its Service objectives. During 2017/18 the main differences, compared to the previous year, in its operational priority areas were:

- *Reducing fires and their consequences.* LFR saw a 5% increase in the overall number of primary fires and a 4% increase in accidental dwelling fires. However, there was a reduction in the total number of fire deaths and injuries recorded.
- *Reducing road traffic collisions and their consequences.* There were 545 people killed or seriously injured on Lincolnshire's roads during 2017/18. This represents a 17% increase on the previous year.
- *Improving health and wellbeing.* LFR attended 7,285 co-responder incidents which represents a marginal increase on the previous year. Of those incidents attended firefighters provided assistance on 91% of occasions.

Details of all the Service's performance indicators for 2017/18 can be found in the [Service Plan 2018-2019 Part 2](#).

Continuous Improvement

LFR identified 3 main improvement priorities for 2017/18. Progress against each is as follows:

- *Implement our Retained Duty System (RDS) action plan.* We have now implemented the majority of recommendations from our review into the RDS and are starting to see some of the benefits. This includes an increase in the number of new recruits undergoing training. We have also established an On-call Resilience Board to maintain the focus on RDS (on-call) issues.
- *Enhance the effectiveness of our collaborative working.* As part of the blue light collaboration programme, LFR moved into a shared Fire and Police headquarters in March 2017 and opened a new joint fire and ambulance station in Louth in November 2017. Other aspects of the programme include the establishment of a shared fire and police Control room, which is due to be operational in early 2019, and the construction of a joint fire, police and ambulance station on the South Park site which is scheduled to open in July 2019.
- *Develop our Information Communications Technology (ICT) capability.* We have seen continued development of our Learning Management System and introduced new software to support our risk and workload modelling. While there has been a delay in implementing the final stage of our Future Control project, the initial capability continues to work effectively. The full capability is now expected to be operational in early 2019.

As part of the commitment to continuous improvement the Service was reviewed under the Local Government Association Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge in November 2017. 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. Key findings from the Peer Challenge included that:

- there is pride and a positive culture across LFR
- IRMP changes have been well managed with good staff and partner engagement, ensuring that LFR remains fit for purpose
- there is a clear commitment to blue light collaboration which is well resourced and governed

A copy of the 2017 Peer Challenge report can be found at [Peer Challenge](#). The Service has also recently been inspected as part of the new Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services process. The results of this inspection are expected by the end of the year.

LFR's Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team were assessed as part of the National Resilience USAR assurance process at the end of 2016. The final report, published in May 2017, concluded that, 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 2017/18 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 2017/18 stations achieved between 88% and 99% on overall performance scores.

Future Plans

Future plans for LFR include:

- Improving the health and wellbeing of our workforce. This will be coordinated through the work of the wellbeing and inclusion Board.
- Continuing to enhance the effectiveness of our collaborative working both with other blue-light services and wider partners.
- Continuing to develop our Information Communications Technology capability. This will include the development of a revised Management Information System strategy and the joint future Control capability.

Further details on the Service's plans for 2018-19 can be found at [Service Plan 2018-19](#).

¹⁶ NFCC National Resilience letter dated May 17.

¹⁷ Service Order 13 and TPP 9.1.1.

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 2017 to 31 March 2018 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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