

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

2018-19

LINCOLNSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE



Lincolnshire
COUNTY COUNCIL
Working for a better future



INTRODUCTION

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England¹ sets out the requirements for the 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 a 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 FRAs in England. It describes the high level expectations but does not prescribe operational matters. The priorities in the Framework are for FRAs to:

- Make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents
- Identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face
- Collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide
- Be accountable to communities for the service they provide
- Develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

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 seven 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 2018 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.

¹ Fire and Rescue National Framework for England dated 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)

Not only is the population increasing but it is also ageing with the proportion of people aged 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 <http://www.research-lincs.org.uk/>.

Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue – the ‘Service’

LFR operates 38 fire stations. One of these is staffed by fulltime firefighters around the clock, 8 are staffed by fulltime firefighters during the day who then provide on-call cover at night, guaranteeing 24/7 fire cover from these locations. The remainder are staffed by on-call firefighters working the retained duty system. As at 31 March 2019 the Service establishment⁵ was 681 staff comprising 609 operational, 17 control and 55 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 22,745 calls during 2018/19 and attended 10,466 operational incidents including 4,360 medical response calls.

FINANCIAL

General

LFR is included within all County Council financial procedures including budget setting, budget monitoring and the production of final accounts which ensures 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 2018/19 can be found at [Statement of Accounts](#).

The Authority’s financial statements and value for money conclusions are audited independently. The audit for 2018/19 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 2018-19](#).

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

Value for money

LFR ended 2018/19 with just £16K overspend on a £20.1m revenue budget, which is well within LCC 1% budget tolerance target. There was a realignment of £4.0m on the original capital budget of £6.0m. This resulted from a number of capital programmes, including fire fleet and the station improvement programme being deferred to 2019/20. The service was required to make revenue savings of £114K during 2018/19. These were delivered primarily through managing activity levels within the service.

There are various ways of comparing total revenue spending of FRs 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 picture of how one FRA compares with another. A summary of how Lincolnshire FRA compared against a number of the cost measures is shown below¹⁰. Viewed collectively the measures indicate that LFR performed well in comparison to other FRs in England.

Cost measure	Average for all English FRAs	Lincolnshire FRA
£ per head of population	39.4	33.3
£ per hectare	167.8	42.2
£ per operational fire station	1,564,732	659,263

GOVERNANCE

LCC (as the FRA) is responsible for ensuring 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 (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 has 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 of 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 2018/19 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

¹⁰ Based on 2017/18 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

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
- 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 details 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. A copy of the consultation document, along with the results of the consultation, can be requested.

While the IRMP Baseline Document sets out the strategies for the Service, the detail of 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 2018/19 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 2018-19.

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](#)¹² 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 number of businesses aimed at securing greater co-ordination of regulatory and enforcement activities at their premises.

In terms of the Response strategy, LFR delivers 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.
- British Red Cross Emergency Response. Volunteers provide post incident advice, support to members of the community and assist with protracted fire investigations.
- 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 provides alternative methods of transport to definitive care establishments. Building on the existing co-responder scheme, it runs a partnership with EMAS and LIVES from three fire stations.

LFR plays a lead role in the County's 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 provides the deputy chair, is represented on the Forum's Programme Management Board and chairs the Community Risk Register Risk Assessment Working Group. LFR manages 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 has also signed up to the National Mutual Aid Protocol¹⁴ 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 maintains a national resilience capability through its urban search and rescue, flood rescue assets and high volume pumping capabilities.

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

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

¹⁴ Fire Service Circular 42/2006 – National Mutual Aid Protocol for Serious Incidents

LFR continues 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 continues 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 co-ordinating 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 currently maintains 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. 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. As part of the Bluelight Collaboration programme, the control room function will change sites and become a shared control with Lincolnshire Police colleagues from March 2020. The function will remain distinct but supervisors will be in direct contact and the silver command capability will provide further collaborative benefits within the same building.

LFR continues 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 NFCC National Resilience.

Performance

LFR uses a number of key performance indicators to assess progress against its Service objectives. During 2018/19 the main differences, compared to the previous year, in its operational priority areas were:

- *Reducing fires and their consequences.* LFR saw a 1% decrease in the overall number of primary fires and a 11% decrease in accidental dwelling fires. There was a reduction in the total number of fire deaths and injuries recorded of 27%.
- *Reducing road traffic collisions and their consequences.* There were 504 people killed or seriously injured on Lincolnshire's roads during 2018/19. This represents a 9% decrease on the previous year.
- *Improving health and wellbeing.* LFR attended 4,360 co-responder incidents which represents a 40% decrease on the previous year. Of those incidents attended firefighters provided assistance on 91% of occasions. In 2018/19 LFR co-responders helped casualties with the return of spontaneous circulation (ROSC) after a cardiac arrest on 9 separate occasions, saving lives in the process.

Details of the Service's performance indicators for 2018/19 can be found in the [Service Plan 2019-20 part 2](#).

Continuous improvement

LFR identified three main improvement priorities for 2018/19. Progress against each is as follows:

- *Support the health and wellbeing of our workforce.* We have progressed well in establishing our Wellbeing Board, with the next phase being a greater involvement and understanding of the support this group can provide to the Service.
- *Enhance the effectiveness of our collaborative working.* Our co-responder and joint ambulance conveyance schemes have continued to work well. A review is planned in 2019 to ensure they continue to have the most positive effects on the health of our communities. The tri-service station at South Park has embedded our on-going collaborative design work involving operational staff from fire, police and ambulance. The Bluelight programme office has supported progression of workstreams around this area of staff wellbeing, use of drones, shared welfare facilities, light fleet initiatives and command and control functionality.
- *Develop our information management technology capability.* We are linking with the LCC IMT strategy around the best approach for the future. Whilst there have been some delays with our Future Control project, progress is still being made in preparation for the final upgrade and the planned co-location with Lincolnshire Police Control.

In line with LFR's commitment to continuous improvement in 2018 the Service was inspected as part of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection process. A copy of the report and results can be found at [HMICFRS, an Inspection of Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue](#).

The key findings showed LFR is 'Good' for how effective it is at keeping people safe from fire and other risks and 'Good' for how efficiently it delivers its service.

While the service was assessed as 'Requires Improvement' in how well it looks after its people, this mainly related to concerns over the effectiveness of its training recording and monitoring system (getting the right people with the right skills).

The report rightly recognised that LFR displays a positive, friendly culture that is focused on people. However, the Service did receive a 'Requires Improvement' against this sub-question. It is understood HMICFRS came to this conclusion, in part, due to the fact that a number of fire-station-based staff felt disconnected from the service headquarters and LCC and did not maybe fully understand some of the concepts behind the Service's values. Culture and values is being reviewed as part of the HMICFRS Action Plan.

In 2018/19 LFR's Urban Search and Rescue team underwent a year one self-assessment as part of the National Resilience USAR assurance process.

LFR's process for quality assuring its development programmes were re-accredited in 2018/19 by Skills for Justice (SfJ).

Auditing of operational incidents is conducted in accordance with LFR's Integrated Service Assurance Policy¹⁵. Findings from audits are discussed during 'hot debriefs' and recorded at stations as

¹⁵ Service Order 13

appropriate. Summary operational performance key findings reports are circulated quarterly highlighting key issues, good practice and learning points.

LFR conducts 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 2018/19 stations achieved between 85% and 99% on overall performance scores.

Future plans

Future plans for LFR include:


- Improving the health and wellbeing of our workforce. This will be co-ordinated through the work of the wellbeing and inclusion board.
- Develop our information management technology capability. This will include the development of a revised management information system strategy and the joint future control capability.
- Develop our prevention and protection capability. This will be developed in line with LCC's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis and Great Lincolnshire Economic Plan ensuring the health and wellbeing and economic sustainability and growth needs for Lincolnshire are at the centre of development.

Further details on the Service's plans for 2019-20 can be found at [Service Plan 2019-20](#).

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 2018 to 31 March 2019 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

Les Britzman
Chief Fire Officer and Director of Fire
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