

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2019-20

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 755,800⁴, an increase of 7.8% since 2008. Current projections suggest the population will increase by 12% by 2043. Notwithstanding this, population density remains low with 127 people per square kilometre compared with an average for England of 432 people per square kilometre.

Not only is the population increasing, it is also ageing with the proportion of people aged 65 and over projected to increase from 23% in 2018 to 30% in 2043. The proportion of people over 75 years of age is predicted to increase by 83% over the same period. Further information about the County can be found at <http://www.research-lincs.org.uk/>.

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 2018 mid-year population estimates/GP Registrations April 2019 (NHS-HSCIC)

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 2020 the Service establishment⁵ was 691 staff comprising 610 operational, 21 control and 60 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 22,038 calls during 2019/20 and attended 10,004 operational incidents including 3,818 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 2019/20 can be found at [Statement of Accounts](#).

The Authority’s financial statements and value for money conclusions are audited independently. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the statutory deadline for the publication of audited financial statements for 2019/20 was pushed back to 30 November 2020. Consequently, the audit for 2019/20 is still on-going, however no matters have been identified which would prevent the Auditors from giving an unqualified opinion on the financial statements or an unqualified Value for Money conclusion. When published the audit opinion can be found within the Annual Audit Letter 2019-20 (*available end Nov 20*).

Value for money

LFR ended 2019/20 with just £30.1K overspend on a £20.7m revenue budget, which is well within LCC 1% budget tolerance target.

The 2019/20 capital budget consisted of £9.8m plus £4.1m brought forward from 2018/19. There was a realignment of £6.3m on the capital budget into 2020/21 due to a number of capital programmes,

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

including station improvement programme and extending life span of some equipment and vehicles, being moved forward.

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	40.4	36.4
£ per hectare	142.1	46.6
£ per operational fire station	1,460,557	732,349

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 the year ended 31 March 2020 was that arrangements for governance, 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](#).

¹⁰ Based on 2019/20 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

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 2019/20 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 2019-20 ([Part 1 & Part 2](#))

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

Partnerships and collaborative working are key elements to delivering LFR's Prevention and Protection strategies in the most effective and efficient way. The comprehensive 'Community Risk Profile' identifies the significant risks across the County, providing a basis for the Prevention strategy to be developed with a view to managing and mitigating the identified risks. The strategy is developed around home safety, health and wellbeing, road safety, arson reduction and youth engagement; targeting those most at risk. With a comprehensive risk stratification process, resources are targeted at those identified as most vulnerable. A Service wide integrated delivery model results in activities carried out by a team of Community Safety advocates and Operational Crews, providing timely and person centred advice and support. LFR recognise that partnerships are important to ensure that support can be offered too hard to reach communities, with examples of collaborative working with, Wellbeing Lincs, the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership and the Arson Task Force. A common aim and objectives are shared by all partners, working towards reducing harm and keeping communities across Lincolnshire safe.

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, recognising that combined efforts and resources are far more effective and productive. Partnerships include Local District Housing and Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Police, Licensing officers, Care Quality Commission and the Health and Safety Executive. Whilst enforcement is a key element to regulating fire safety, provision of required fire safety information to those identified as 'responsible persons' is equally important. Supporting the provision of information with partner agencies has resulted in the Better Business for All concept being introduced within the County, providing relevant and accurate information to businesses, allowing them to operate and develop safely.

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.
- Flood response pumps. In collaboration with the lead Local Flood Authority, the Service operates two trailer mounted flood pumps to provide additional capability of pumping high volumes of water in response to a flooding event.

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 required¹². LFR has also signed up to the National Mutual Aid Protocol¹³ 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.

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. Provision and sharing of information to the wider community safety groups allows risk to be profiled and proactive strategies for support and prevention to be developed.

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 changed sites and became 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 2019/20 the main differences, compared to the previous year, in its operational priority areas were:

- *Reducing fires and their consequences.* LFR saw a 8% decrease in the overall number of primary fires but a 3% increase in accidental dwelling fires. There was a reduction in the total number of fire deaths and injuries recorded of 3%.
- *Reducing road traffic collisions and their consequences.* There were 511 people killed or seriously injured on Lincolnshire's roads during 2019/20. This represents a 2% increase on the previous year.

¹² In accordance with section 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act

¹³ Fire Service Circular 42/2006 – National Mutual Aid Protocol for Serious Incidents

- *Improving health and wellbeing.* LFR attended 3,818 co-responder incidents which represents a 12% decrease on the previous year. Of those incidents attended firefighters provided assistance on 92% of occasions. In 2019/20 LFR co-responders helped casualties with the return of spontaneous circulation (ROSC) after a cardiac arrest on 6 separate occasions, saving lives in the process.

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

Continuous improvement

LFR identified three main improvement priorities for 2019/20. Progress against each is as follows:

- *Support the health and wellbeing of our workforce.*
The Wellbeing and Inclusion Board continues to support six pillars of work to help improve the wellbeing of staff. The pillars include Culture/ Equality, Diversity and Inclusion/ Family and Social/ Mental Health/ Fitness, Health and Nutrition/ Occupational Health and Rehabilitation. Champions and Sponsors (at strategic level) are in place for all work streams.
- *Develop our information management technology capability.*
We have transferred our control function into the East Coast consortium and the software continues to be challenging. This is a new multi service architecture built from the ground up and we are hopeful that longer-term this provides the benefits we expect. We are due to upgrade our standard office packages to Microsoft Office 365 in 2020 and have used 'Teams' throughout the COVID pandemic which has reduced the need to bring remote staff to central locations.
- *Develop our Prevention and Protection capability.*
We have identified a number of new posts within the Prevention and Protection team to ensure we are in the best possible position to adapt and manage the identified, evolving risks across the County.
 - Our Protection team has benefited from a number of national funding grants, allowing us to enhance our capabilities and capacity to regulate fire safety in the built environment. Whilst national drivers for change have been the catalyst for improvement, continual reviewing of risks and requirements at a local level remain the priority for the Protection Team.
 - Our Prevention team continue to focus resources on those identified as most vulnerable across the County. Working with the Community Risk Team, analysis of local information in addition to national statistics has allowed the 'SHERMAN' risk profile concept to be developed. Identified vulnerabilities allow prevention activities to be focused on those most at risk from fires. A commissioned review of prevention activities will provide detailed information and confirmation that we are working to reduce risk across the County. This process will also allow us to amend/update activities and areas of focus if required.

LFR continues to respond to the HMICFRS inspection recommendations from 2018 through a working group and a robust action plan. The Cause for Concern that related to insufficient recording of training has been resolved through the introduction of PDRPro.

Throughout 2019/20 we have also been preparing the Service for round 2 of HMICFRS which is predicted to be programmed in during 2020/21.

The previous inspections 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.

Following the inspection, we have worked to an action plan which aims to target those areas which showed LFR as 'Requires improvement' and 'Cause for concern' where we have put in significant resources to improve our tracking of competence for all roles.

Culture and values is being reviewed as part of the HMICFRS Action Plan (linked to the Wellbeing and Inclusion work referred to above)

In 2019/20 LFR's Urban Search and Rescue team underwent a year two Zone exercise at Tyne and Wear Fire Training centre as part of the National Resilience USAR assurance process. Generally the team performed well with some areas of improvement being identified. The team Manager has implemented an action to ensure that these areas are reviewed and improved.

LFR's process for quality assuring its development programmes were re-accredited in May 2019 by Skills for Justice (SfJ).

Auditing of operational incidents is conducted in accordance with LFR's Integrated Service Assurance Policy¹⁴. Findings from audits are discussed during 'hot debriefs' and recorded at stations as appropriate. Additionally we have set up an Operational Learning Board which meets monthly to ensure learning is disseminated both locally and where appropriately nationally. The board brings together NOL, JOL, local incident learning and national guidance updates into one place. The process has been peer reviewed by colleagues from Nottinghamshire Fire service.

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 2019/20 stations achieved between 82% – 100% on overall performance scores.

Future plans

Future plans for LFR include:

- **Promote an inclusive culture to support the health and wellbeing of our workforce.** This continues to be co-ordinated through the work of the Wellbeing and Inclusion Board.
- **Develop our information management technology capability.** Data analysis to drive efficient and effective ways of working are at the heart of the drivers of development. A new IT strategy will be developed following an internal review of requirements. Internal stakeholders will support the development of IT systems, allowing timely sharing of information, resulting in enhanced performance. The development and delivery of key projects, such as the Emergency Services Network will contribute to this area of improvement.
- **Develop our prevention and protection capability.** Development will be driven by continually reviewing the risk profile across the County to enhance the understanding and ensuring resources are targeted at those identified as most at risk. A collaborative approach to prevention and protection work will be key to success, with partnership develop at the heart of the strategic aim. Contributing to LCC's Transformation programme, will ensure activities are aligned to wider strategic intentions and cognisant of competing demands. External drivers will support

¹⁴ Service Order 13

development of an agreed direction, with the ultimate aim of keeping our communities safe and well.

- **Evaluate to drive improvement.** It is important that we understand the impact of our activities. A blend of internal evaluation and commissioned work will allow LFR to fully understand the impact of work being carried out. Evaluation of performance in all aspects of service delivery, integrated with the continued evaluation of emerging risks, locally and nationally, will ensure LFR contribute to keeping our communities healthy and safe.
- Towards the end of 2019-20 LFR entered into a state of Emergency due to the national COVID crisis. As this is still a developing situation, it is clear that LFR has sufficient planning and Business Continuity Plans in place to ensure we still have the ability to respond to the needs of our communities in the most relevant and appropriate manner. We will evolve, through partnership working to ensure we remain fit for purpose during this period.

Further details on the Service's plans for 2020-21 can be found at [Service Plan 2020-21](#).

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 2019 to 31 March 2020 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

Mark Baxter
Chief Fire Officer