

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2020-21 LINCOLNSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE



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 2020 place the County population at 766,300⁴, an increase of 7.6% since 2010. Current projections suggest the population will increase by 12% by 2043. Notwithstanding this, population density remains low with 129 people per square kilometre compared with an average for England of 434 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 24% in 2020 to 30% in 2043. The proportion of people over 75 years of age is predicted to increase by 82% over the same period. Further information about the County can be found at [Lincolnshire Open Data](#).

¹ [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England May 2018](#)

² [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)

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

⁴ [Office for National Statistics, mid-year population estimates, June 2020](#)

Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue – the ‘Service’

LFR operates 38 fire stations. One of these is staffed by fulltime firefighters around the clock, nine 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 2021 the Service establishment⁵ was 705 staff comprising 629 operational, 21 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 17,836 calls during 2020/21 and attended 8,039 operational incidents including 2,723 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 Resources 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 2020/21 can be found at [Statement of Accounts](#).

The Authority’s financial statements and value for money conclusions are audited independently. At the time of writing, the audit for 2020/21 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](#).

Value for money

LFR ended 2020/21 with just £103k underspend on a £23.07m revenue budget, which is well within LCC 1% budget tolerance target.

⁵ Actual headcount may vary

⁶ Not including emergency planning and business continuity

⁷ 2 rescue support units, 7 Technical response vehicles, water carrier, command support vehicle and welfare unit

⁸ Marauding terrorist firearms attack specialist response team (MTFA SRT), 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

There was a realignment of £874K on the original capital budget of £4.6m. These funds have been re-phased into 2021/22 to support committed Capital programme and ensures we continue to have a balanced Capital programme with agreed Capital commitment over the next 3 years.

LFR continues to have a revenue budget that results in being within the 15% most efficient Fire Services out of the 43 Services in England when comparing Revenue Budget against head of population.

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 Report¹⁰. 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 2021 was that arrangements for risk management were performing well and arrangements for governance, financial control and internal control were performing adequately.

The Portfolio Holder, Chief Executive and Chief Fire Officer 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](#).

COVID-19

During 2020/21 LFR, along with our partners, operated within a state of 'major emergency' to support the collective response to Covid-19. LFR ensured throughout this challenging year that all of our statutory duties were still maintained and also flexed our model and workforce to support new and innovative activities to deliver the emerging needs of our communities.

LFR is embedded within the Lincolnshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) in key areas such as providing the Deputy Chair role of the LRF, Deputy Chair of the Tactical Coordination Group, resources to coordinate bespoke work streams such as mortality planning, PPE coordination and distribution and logistic support. We also provided the Secretarial support for the LRF through our Emergency Planning Team.

¹⁰ As per the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

To support our partners we provided personnel to drive ambulances during this period to relieve the pressure that EMAS were experiencing and to help the increasing demand that arose within our region. Some of our staff assisted in the delivery of food packs to the most vulnerable members of our communities as part of a multi-agency approach.

Throughout this period LFR was conscious of the support needed for our own staff as they were just as affected by Covid-19, whilst carrying out their statutory and new duties amongst our communities. There has been good welfare support mechanisms embedded throughout the Service and robust risk assessments to keep our staff as safe as practically possible whilst delivering essential activities.

LFR took advantage of the accelerated IT upgrades, such as MS Teams and video cameras at all locations. This enabled remote working for staff and allowed business as usual to continue and keep connected across the County. Many of these new ways of working will continue as business as usual and will be embedded after the restrictions of Covid-19 are lifted.

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 LFR 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). The latest version of the IRMP, titled *Our Community Plan 2020-24* was published in 2020 and sets out plans for how risk will be managed in Lincolnshire. Our Community Plan sets out how resources will be allocated to mitigate the risks in our *Community Risk Profile 2020-24*. Our Community Plan is set out in five key frameworks which all complement each other and provide an integrated approach to Service delivery. The five frameworks in Our Community Plan are Response, Prevention and Protection, People, Resourcing and Evaluation. The full suite of documents can be found under [Service Planning](#) on the LCC Website.

LFR conducted an extensive consultation on Our Community Plan 2020-24. This provided relevant stakeholders with the opportunity to comment on the risks identified and proposed frameworks for dealing with them. A copy of the consultation document, along with the results of the consultation, can be requested.

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 collaboration are fundamental elements of delivering LFR's Prevention and Protection strategies in the most effective and efficient way. Our Community Risk Profile continues to evolve and identifies the significant risks across the County, providing a basis for the strategies to be developed.

Partnership working is one of four strands on which delivery is based, with the others being intervention, engagement and education. These four strands allow us to manage and mitigate identified risks. Using the four strands we base our activities around home safety, health and wellbeing, road safety, arson reduction and youth engagement, targeting those most at risk. It is important that we aim our resources at those identified as most vulnerable. Working closely with our Integrated Risk team we are able to profile risk and identify known vulnerabilities (SHERMAN) within our communities. This information is then shared with partners and used to support targeted interventions, ensuring maximum impact of community safety activities.

An integrated delivery model allows for reactive activities (referrals received) and proactive activities (targeted interventions in known risk areas) to be carried out. Our team of Community Safety Advocates, operational crews and key partners provide timely and person centred advice and support. LFR recognises that partnerships are important to ensure support can be offered to hard to reach communities, with examples of collaborative working with Wellbeing Lincs, the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership, Age UK and Western Power. Our community safety engagement advocate focuses on developing partnership working, linking closely with existing partners and identifying new ones with a common aim and objectives; 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, based again on the four delivery elements, partnership working, intervention, engagement and education. To ensure delivery is maximised and risk is reduced in the most efficient way, activities have been developed and are delivered supported by close working relationships with other public enforcement bodies. Partnerships include Local District Housing and Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Police, Licensing Officers, Care Quality Commission and the Health and Safety Executive.

Enforcement is a key component to regulating fire safety, with the provision (education) of fire safety information to those identified as 'responsible persons' is equally important. A commitment to developing our business engagement plan will support and enhance fire safety standards across the County. With a number of changes to fire safety legislation, we have continued to develop and update local policies, ensuring our areas of focus are aligned to nationally identified priorities. A process of professional accreditation ensures our Fire Safety Inspectors work alongside representatives from partner agencies and contribute effectively to reducing risk in the built environment.

In terms of the Response strategy, LFR delivers a number of activities in partnership with other agencies. Key joint capabilities include:

- 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 LFR 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, LFR operates two trailer mounted flood pumps to provide additional capability of pumping high volumes of water in response to a flooding event. The partnership will be enhanced when two further units come into service during 2021/22.

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 required¹¹. LFR is signed up to the National Mutual Aid Protocol¹² 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 flood rescue assets, high volume pumping capabilities, marauding terrorist firearms attacks specialist response and urban search and rescue.

LFR continues to support the work being undertaken as part of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP). This is a nationally recognised multi-agency programme designed to ensure 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 (ASB), 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. As a key stakeholder within the partnership we have supported a review of the work carried out so far and how we can continue to adopt a flexible approach to meet the changing needs of our communities. We have looked at ways that our established working practices can support wider community safety and risk reduction with the Arson Task Force linking in with the ASB core priority group. This has resulted in developing and supporting local projects such as fly tipping awareness and waste reduction.

LFR maintains 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 operate 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

¹¹ In accordance with sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act

¹² Fire Service Circular 42/2006 – National Mutual Aid Protocol for Serious Incidents

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 has remained distinct but supervisors are in direct contact and the silver command capability has provided 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 2020/21 the main differences, compared to the previous year, in its operational priority areas were:

- ***Reducing fires and their consequences***

In 2020/21 there were:

942 primary fires which represents a decrease of 5% on the previous year.

731 secondary fires, an increase of 8% on the previous year.

3 fire fatalities, no change from 2019/20.

28 primary fire casualties, an increase of 8% compared with 2019/20.

- ***Reducing road traffic collisions and their consequences***

There were 403 people killed or seriously injured on Lincolnshire's roads during 2020/21. This represents a 21% increase on the previous year.

Continuous improvement

LFR identified four main improvement priorities for 2020/21. Progress against each is as follows:

- ***Promote an inclusive culture to support the health and wellbeing of our workforce.***

We have embedded our Peer Support Team across the Service which means we have dedicated trained volunteers who are available to talk to staff on issues that have an effect on their mental health. This is also supported by our partner agency *Supporting Minds* who are available to give professional advice for our staff as required.

There has also been a launch of our *THRIVE* culture, developed by staff within LFR to articulate the behaviours expected of our staff. This also supports LCC's Core Values. *THRIVE*, which describes Trust, Help, Include, Value and Empower, has been adopted by all staff and helps drive how our staff support our collective purpose to help the people of Lincolnshire to be safe and well.

An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) working group has been established and developed a dedicated action plan to improve in areas relating to EDI in our workforce.

- **Develop our information management technology capability**

The transition across to Microsoft Office 365 has continued and we have been able to maximise the use of MS Teams to develop our agile way of working. A flexible work plan to migrate the full workforce across to allow the functionality and capability to be utilised has been followed. To ensure we evolve to meet the needs of the workforce and our local communities, we have started a review of our current information systems to ensure we have an integrated approach to service delivery. The review will encompass how we operate internally, streamlining processes and automating tasks, whilst looking at how we engage and support our external stakeholders.

Our Service Support team continues to carry out preparatory work to support the national move towards the Emergency Services Network (ESN) away from the current Airwave system. This work is being carried out alongside the East Coast Consortium Control Room enhancements, as we work alongside colleagues, monitoring current upgrades and preparing for future developments.

- **Develop our Prevention and Protection capability**

With a number of changes to fire safety legislation, and a drive to ensure our community safety activities focus on our most vulnerable communities and individuals, our Prevention and Protection teams continue to develop and evolve. By working closely with our Integrated Risk Team we continue to profile our risks and maximise the impact of our resources to keep people safe and well.

- Having introduced new roles within the Protection team following significant investment, we are developing capabilities to maximise the impact of our protection activities. Targeted work, focusing on our highest risks, has allowed us to integrate delivery of activities across LFR. A focus on developing protection capabilities at a national level has supported the continual reviewing of risks and requirements at a local level. Business engagement and education will form part of our delivery strategy.
- We have continued to develop our delivery strategy working closely with our Integrated Risk Team. A good understanding of risk across the County, profiling exercises to identify where our vulnerable communities are, has allowed us to introduce proactive prevention activities. This proactive approach to engagement and interaction with our communities has supported the continued receipt of referrals from partners and those who request our support. The multi layered approach to interaction will allow us to maximise the impact of prevention activities. Our specialist Community Safety Advocates has improved the way we engage with our communities, allowing us to focus on those communities and individuals who most need our help and are hard to reach.

In addition, in line with LFR's commitment to continuous improvement in 2020 the Service was inspected as part of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) COVID inspection process. In their published report HMICFRS recognised the good work that LFR committed to assist in the collective support to our communities.

As part of LFR's continual preparation, we have provided HMICFRS with full evidence and documents to support our upcoming inspection scheduled for May 2021.

In 2020/21 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 plan to ensure these areas are reviewed and improved.

LFR's process for quality assuring its firefighter development programme was re-accredited in October 2020 by Skills for Justice (SfJ). This annual re-accreditation continues to demonstrate the high standard of operational training and development delivered to our operational staff.

LFR continues to participate in a number of national fire and rescue workstreams including the NFCC People Programme which enables us to continually review our policies, processes and systems of work to further our ambition to be an employer of choice.

Auditing of operational incidents is conducted in accordance with LFR's Integrated Service Assurance Policy¹³. Findings from audits are recorded by crews and audit officers and sent through to the Service Assurance department to assess learning and good practice. The Service now has a well established Operational Learning Board which meets monthly to ensure learning is disseminated both locally and where appropriately nationally. The board brings together National Operational Learning (NOL), Joint Operational Learning (JOL), local incident learning and national guidance updates into one place.

LFR conducts annual station and department audits. Both inspections are scored. This enables the organisation to assess the operational readiness of its stations and identify any areas for development. The station audits have been reviewed in 2020/21 to reflect Fire Standards and HMICFRS themes.

Future plans

Future plans for LFR include:

- **Promote an inclusive culture to support the health and wellbeing of our workforce**
This will be prioritised by having a dedicated EDI Steering Group and Wellbeing Steering Group to drive through improvement in this area for our existing and future workforce.
- **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 development at the heart of this 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 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. We will be reviewing our current Performance Indicators and

¹³ Service Order 13

ensure they are reported more effectively in terms of evaluating the effectiveness of our delivery plans.

- **HMICFRS Inspection**

As we will be inspected early 2021/22 we will ensure we are best placed to respond to the recommendations that come out of the full inspection through a robust and effective action plan.

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 2020 to 31 March 2021 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:



Lindsey Cawrey
Executive Councillor for Fire and Rescue



Mark Baxter
Chief Fire Officer

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