



Open Report on behalf of Mark Baxter – Chief Fire Officer

Report to:	Public Protection & Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date:	19 April 2022
Subject:	Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Report for Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue

Summary:

This report intends to provide a summary of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report on Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR) as part of the national inspection regime for all Fire Authorities in England.

The report also seeks to provide details on current action plan to address the cause of concerns; and to outline areas of improvement that will be addressed in a wider action plan to be developed within the next 2 months and reported against.

Actions Required:

The Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee is invited to:

- (1) Review, comment on and note the contents of this report,
- (2) Note current progress against cause of concerns and accept the action plans (Appendix A),
- (3) Note the additional 17 areas for improvement and the scrutiny and assurance structure to address all areas.

1. Background

This is the 2nd round of inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) that follows the inspection we received in 2018. Due to COVID-19 restrictions this inspection was a virtual inspection as per all 13 Services in tranche 1 of the inspection programme. The inspection lasted for 6 weeks within April and May 2021.

The Inspection report focuses on 3 pillars, which are made up of several diagnostics for each pillar. The main pillars are Effectiveness, Efficiency and People and are summarised as asking 3 main questions of each Service:

1. How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?

2. How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
3. How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?

The judgment grades that can be given are:

- Inadequate
- Requires Improvement
- Good
- Outstanding

The summary of our judgements for this inspection compared with 2018 is as follows:

Question	This Inspection	2018 Inspection
Effectiveness	Requires improvement	Good
Understanding fires and other risks	Requires improvement	Good
Preventing fires and other risks	Requires improvement	Good
Protecting the public through fire regulation	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Responding to fires and other emergencies	Good	Good
Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	Good	Good
Efficiency	Requires improvement	Good
Making best use of resources	Requires improvement	Good
Future affordability	Good	Good
People	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Promoting the right values and culture	Good	Requires improvement
Getting the right people with the right skills	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	Requires improvement	Good
Managing performance and Developing leaders	Requires improvement	Requires Improvement

Out of the 13 Services that have also received their reports, it is worth noting that 7 of them received the same grading as we did, with 1 Service receiving inadequate in 'how they prevent fires and risks'. Only 1 Service gained an 'outstanding' judgement and that was Merseyside Fire and Rescue. This is useful for context and benchmarking to see that we are in similar position to most Services at this point.

In regard to each Pillar, the main areas of interest are as follows:

Effectiveness

- At the time of the inspection the recently launched Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2020-2024 had replaced the old-style Integrated Risk management Plan (IRMP). This was seen as a positive document. However, it was criticised for not allaying resources to this plan and not published the annual plan to set and measure against objectives. Since the inspection the annual plan has been released and is aligned to the structure to reflect our CRMP.
- There were positive comments about the investment in new Mobile data Terminals on appliances but noted that better systems required to keep risk information timely and accurate.
- It recognised good progress against the recommendations of Grenfell Tower Inquiry and the action plan is on track. More to do in communicating this across the Service.
- Prevention activities need to be increased to deliver to the most vulnerable and hardest to reach communities. Although improved understanding on where and who these people are there is more to do with partner agencies to increase this intelligence. There is too much reliance on our dedicated specialist Prevention Team to deliver on this area, when operational crews can do more in their areas.
- A need to improve evaluation of the impact of Prevention work across the County and to have greater understanding on what works best. Currently waiting for the outcome of a study from the University of Lincoln to support this.
- The Protection delivery is where they raised a cause of concern. This was:
The service hasn't taken sufficient action since the last inspection to appropriately resource its protection function. The recommendations are:
 - *Produce a clear plan for how it will ensure all premises it has identified as high-risk are audited in accordance with the timeframe it sets out in its risk-based inspection policy;*
 - *Review its administration of the protection function to make sure it can record and review all activity in a clear and consistent manner; and*
 - *Make sure it has an effective quality assurance process in place so the service can assure itself that staffs carry out audits to an appropriate standard.*
- The cause of concern is being managed through a dedicated action plan. HMI have sent a letter confirming that there is good progress, and it is on target to deliver against all recommendations. HMI completed a re-visit on 28th February-2nd March resulting in a hot de-brief to Chief Fire Officer (CFO) and Executive Councillor on 7th March. Details are summarised in next section.
- The report raises concerns that there are not resources or skills to meet the demand of Protection. Since the report staff have received additional training, which has given capacity to deliver on current demands. There needs to be an assessment on future demands due to changes in legislation.
- Statutory duties have been delivered in this area, which relates to responding to complaints and building consultations.
- This area also reports on responding to fires and other emergencies. This area is rated as 'good' in the report. It showed good response standards and availability. There is an average of 86% availability against the national average of 83%. The response time is on average 10min and 20secs, which is quicker than the average of 10min 27secs for other rural services.

- The stated response targets have not been met, which was 100%. These have since been reviewed to set a more realistic and achievable targets.
- Responding crews and officers are all qualified and trained in their areas, and where there have been occasions when personnel have missed their training, it was demonstrated that they were taken off the run for that element until they are re-trained and in competence.
- The grading of 'good' for responding to major emergencies and multi-agency events. This is recognised through close work and support of the LRF and regular training and exercising programme with partner agencies.
- National Operational Guidance is embedded into the Service, and it was noted good processes through our Operational Learning Board to capture good practice and learning from local and national incidents.

Efficiency

- The report recognises that the new CRMP identifies priorities and foreseeable risks but is concerned that it has not demonstrated alignment of resources against them. This is being addressed through proposed re-structure that is currently being working towards.
- It was positively recognised for the support that Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) offers in terms of alleviating financial pressures to balance budgets.
- There was recognition of improved working with external partners such as Police Control Room, Blue Light Campus, East Coast Consortium and LCC Estates. But it states that more evaluation of the benefits of these arrangements.
- It mentioned the link with the MTFP of LCC, but states that there needs to be longer term savings plans for LFR to support LCC financial planning.
- The report found 'good' at making LFR affordable now and for the future. It found there is a well-balanced budget and well-funded capital programme that has been supported by LCC in terms of holding of reserves and investment in fleet and estates.

People

- It is recognised that the culture and behaviours of the Service has improved and is rated as good. Staff have articulated through the HMI staff survey that had the following outcomes:
 - 90.5% staff were aware of our values and behaviours
 - 83% said they were treated with dignity and respect
 - Over 70 % said that Senior leaders modelled the values and behaviours
 - 97% are confident that they would be offered wellbeing services after incidents
 - 95% said they were able to access services for mental wellbeing
 - 98% stated they understood health and safety policies
 - 90% Were confident the Services took their personal safety and welfare seriously
 - 32% stated they hadn't had enough training to do their job effectively
 - 33% stated they are satisfied with the level of training and development available to them.
- The report states the need to do more to ensure trainers are qualified in assessing against skills in risk critical areas. This is due to a turnover of staff at the point of inspection within Training Department. This is being addressed.
- Although it recognises the 2018 cause of concern has been addressed and closed for having a dedicated training recording system for our operational staff, the report states that this needs to be widened to capture all training for all staff. This is part of our roll out programme which there has been significant development.
- The report stated that although there are identified risks within our CRMP, it needs to identify all current and future skills and workforce to deliver against this plan.

- This section was where they identified the cause of concern for EDI as follows:
The service hasn't done enough since the last inspection to improve its EDI. The recommendations are:
 - *Give greater priority to how it increases awareness of EDI across the organisation;*
 - *Make sure that all staff receive appropriate EDI training;*
 - *Improve how it works with its staff and provides feedback in relation to EDI issues;*
 - *Improve the understanding and use of equality impact assessments in all aspects of its work, and consider if its policies and procedures are inclusive and support those with protected characteristics*
 - *Make sure that there is a programme of positive action to support its recruitment.*
- The cause of concern is being managed through a dedicated action plan. HMI have sent a letter confirming good progress and are on target to deliver against all recommendations. HMI completed a re-visit on 28th Feb-2nd Mar resulting in a hot de-brief to CFO and Executive Councillor on 7th Mar. Details are summarised in next section.
- The report recognises the improvement of Grievance procedures, but more to do to get staff to have understanding. There has been bullying and harassment reported. Although action has been taken there is the view that staff are not confident action will make a difference.
- It was reported that there needs to be more understanding of staff PDR process and ensure they are completed by all staff. This reflected the 2018 report where individual PDRs were not available for all of our On Call Staff. This was addressed prior to inspection, but the report states they have yet to see the impact of this roll out.
- The report states that there is not a process for high performing leaders and high potential staff. This is an area that has not been prioritised due to capacity since the last inspection.
- There needs better succession planning for senior leaders. This is part of the re-structure programme that is being developed to structure the Service for the future. A dedicated Strategic Resourcing Board has been created to look at future workforce planning issues, however the Inspectors have not seen evidence of this impact as it is relatively new in being.

Actions to address recommendations from Inspection report – Cause of Concerns

Since the initial hot de-brief from the Inspectorate in May 2021, LFR were aware of the cause of concerns for both EDI and Protection. LFR produced dedicated action plans that identified areas and actions that needed to focus on to address the recommendations from the report in these areas.

The EDI action plan is led by Mark Baxter CFO and the Protection action plan is led by Ryan Stacey Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO). It is important that there has been, and continues to be, appropriate scrutiny and assurance that these action plans are addressing the recommendations and that progress is being made in a timely manner. This was achieved by implementing the following governance:

EDI Action Plan

- EDI Steering Group created to have monthly oversight and direction of action plan - Chaired by CFO.
- EDI action plan reported into quarterly Performance Management Board through InPhase (performance management platform) for Service Leadership Team and Executive Councillor oversight.
- EDI action plan progress shared with HMI Team on a monthly basis.
- Progress on EDI action plan updated to Executive Councillor and Executive Support Councillor during fortnightly meetings.
- Peer feedback from EDI colleagues in Derbyshire Fire and Rescue on progress of action plan through the EDI Steering Group.
- LFR representation of Corporate Diversity Steering Group to link LFR and LCC closer in delivery of action plan.

Protection Action Plan:

- Protection action plan reported into quarterly Performance Management Board through InPhase (performance management platform) for Service Leadership Team and Executive Councillor oversight.
- Protection action plan progress shared with HMI Team on a monthly basis.
- Progress on Protection action plan updated to Executive Councillor and Executive Support Councillor through a written update on a weekly basis.

As LFR have been updating HMICFRS on a monthly basis following the inspection, the inspectorate produced a letter that accompanied the full report that outlined they were pleased with progress against action plans and also with the governance arrangements to ensure the commitment to this progress continues. The letter is attached as Appendix A.

Copies of the actions plans for Protection and EDI that are within our performance management platform, Inphase, are attached as Appendix B.

As part of the HMI commitment to monitor progress on areas that are deemed as cause of concern, they agreed to a re-inspection that focused solely on the cause of concern elements of the full inspection. This inspection took place between 28th Feb and 2nd March and was a physical inspection by a full inspection team visiting the Service and interviewing key members of staff. The inspection team also requested submission of evidence and key documentation that they used to form a picture on our progress in these areas. The inspection was completed with a full interview with CFO relating to all areas relating to the cause of concerns and future plans.

The outcome of the re-inspection will result in a formal letter that will be made public and is intended to publicly state our progress against the cause of concerns. This letter is expected to be released late March/early April.

CFO, ACFO and Executive Councillor attended a hot-debrief on 7th March to receive feedback from the re-inspection. It was pleasing to hear that HMI had recognised the good progress being made in both of the cause of concern areas.

They particularly noted that there is a far greater emphasis and priority given to embedding awareness and understanding of EDI across the Service. Specific areas that have been addressed is the production and embedding of Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) across all areas, the embedding of the EDI Steering Group as a strategic driver and supporter of EDI, development of

robust training programmes across the Service and delivery of bespoke positive action sessions to support our communities in understanding how LFR can be their employer of choice.

In relation to EDI, the inspection team recognised that EDI embedding takes longer to achieve in any organisation, but the progress that has already been made has given them confidence that is being achieved. They stated they would not wish to come back into Service again to monitor progress as they will review our position of EDI within the next round of full inspection that is likely to be in 2023/24.

The inspection team also recognised the good progress that has been made in the Protection delivery and how this function is supported. It was noted that there had been investment within the team and that the training of personnel to enable them to have the appropriate skills, despite taking approx. 18 months to complete, has been completed and are now delivering against our current Risk Based Inspection Programme. It was recognised that the review of quality assurance and systems processes was successful and that there is a good understanding of risks within the county and robust systems to support the delivery against those risks.

There was a clear focus on future delivery model of Protection activities as LFR were keen to demonstrate that within 2022/23 Protection will be aligned to the newly agreed National Fire Chief Council (NFCC) guidance for identifying premises on a risk basis to identify priority audits of premises. As this will start to be rolled out in the next fiscal year, and will be supported by a revised team structure, the inspection team are keen to see how these progresses and would like to come back into Service in approx. 6 months' time to review progress against the new risk-based inspection programme.

The new risk-based inspection programme and revised Protection team structure will commence in April 2022. This allows capacity to not only have a clear focus on risk-based inspection programme but allows the team to have the capacity to deliver statutory duties of enforcement, responding to complaints and also petroleum licencing that is administered on behalf of LCC and responding to building regulation consultations.

Much like the EDI agenda, the inspection team were positive about the progress that had been made and were assured that the direction of travel is appropriate and achievable.

Actions to address recommendations from Inspection report – Areas for improvement

The inspectorate concluded that there were in total 17 areas for improvement across all 3 pillars, which were:

Effectiveness:

- The service needs to improve how it engages with the local community to build up a comprehensive profile of risk in the service area.
- The service should make sure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information.
- The FRS needs to target its activity toward its most vulnerable and hardest to reach communities.
- The FRS needs to implement a programme of evaluation to assess its prevention activity to understand what works.
- The service should make sure its mobile data terminals are reliable so that firefighters can readily access up-to-date risk information.

- The service needs to assure itself that Control Staff have the appropriate level of training and can respond to complex and challenging incidents.

Efficiency:

- The service needs to show a clear rationale for the resources allocated between prevention, protection, and response activities. This should reflect, and be consistent with, the risks and priorities set out in its integrated risk management plan.
- The service should make sure it effectively monitors, reviews, and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaborative activity.
- The service should make sure that its fleet programme is linked to the IRMP, and it understands the impact future changes to those programmes may have on its service to the public.

People:

- The service should make sure all staff understand and demonstrate its values.
- The service should make sure that wellbeing is sufficiently prioritised.
- The service should make sure that its trainers and assessors are competent to carry out risk critical assessments.
- The service needs to make sure there is a plan in place to develop its training recording system and that formal corporate oversight of the system takes place.
- The service should make sure its workforce plan takes full account of the necessary skills and capabilities to carry out the integrated risk management plan.
- The service should improve all staff understanding and application of the performance development review process and ensure they are completed for all staff.
- The service should put in place a specific process to identify, develop and support high potential staff and aspiring leaders.
- The service should assure itself it has an effective mechanism in place for succession planning including senior leadership roles.

The governance and assurance that the areas for improvement are being addressed, LFR have integrated the recommendations into its formal annual plan which then allocates tasks associated with each recommendation to address improvement. Many of the recommendations have already been addressed and were identified within the inspection due to not having sufficient time or evidence to demonstrate embedding. As it is almost a year from the original inspection, the work that was already underway has had the time to be embedded within Service.

Examples of this include Prevention work, alongside our community risk department, have better data and analysis of vulnerable and hard to reach communities which has resulted in dedicated Prevention advocates and operational crews delivering targeted prevention work in areas that meet our SHERMAN (Smoking, Hoarding, Elderly, Reduced mobility, Mental health issues, Alcohol misuse, Needs care or support), but also focuses on local areas demographics such as our eastern European communities and caravan communities that may need additional support and advice.

LFR have also completed a full evaluation of our Prevention Strategy in partnership with Lincoln University. This evaluation work was still in progress during the inspection, so was not available to evidence the work that has been done to understand the community benefits of the Prevention work. The initial key findings of this work identified:

- Social return on investment indicates that for every £1 spent on the SWCs, £38.67 is accrued.
- The majority of the Safe and Well Checks (SWCs) resulted in some change in service users' understanding of fire risks and their willingness to use this information.
- Information for medium risk service users was sufficient for their need, although some high-risk service users may require additional support irrespective of risk categorisation.
- Overall, 51% of SWCs reported by the SWC delivery team resulted in a reduced risk of fire (per initial and post-contact risk category evaluation), and the other 49% maintained their risk level pre-SWC.
- 86.66% service users reported overall satisfaction with the service and support they received across all 3 types of SWC.
- Service users more often recalled having smoke alarms fitted than receiving other types of fire-related safety advice, including smoking safety or cessation advice.
- The SWC delivery and management team see great value in the SWCs for reducing fire and wellbeing risk within Lincolnshire and discussed the benefits that this has for Partner Agencies based on experience of working within and around the community.

Other examples that are addressed in areas such as efficiency is the need to have a clear link from Fleet programme to Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and future needs. LFR have produced a robust fleet strategy for the next 4 years that is aligned to the resource requirements needed to meet risks and has clear objectives to support the environment sustainability agenda alongside LCC. The fleet strategy is also being ratified by LCC Corporate Environmental Sustainability Board which is chaired by Andy Gutherson to ensure we are aligned to LCC Green agenda.

Within the People Pillar the inspectorate stated an area for improvement was for staff to understand and demonstrate the values of the Service. This was identified as the inspectorate recognise the positive work that had been done to launch THRIVE (Trust, Help, Respect, Include, Value, Empower) across the service, but as it needed time to embed, they required evidence of its success. The inspectorate did recognise and state that LFR had a good culture across the Service. The recent LCC staff survey has given evidence that our values are now embedded and understood as it showed 87% positive feedback of the THRIVE concept across the Service.

The examples above are just some areas to give assurance that much work has already been undertaken to address the recommendations stated in the report that was released in December 2021. LFR's continued focus during 2022/23 as part of our Service Annual Plan has stated that this improvement journey is a stated priority for the Service and will continue to measure progress across all areas and report within our Performance Management Board (PMB) for scrutiny and assurance. LFR's PMB is attended by Executive Councillor representation to ensure oversight by our Portfolio Holder and CFO gives regular feedback on progress during fortnightly meetings with the Executive Councillor and Executive Support Councillor.

2. Conclusion

The Committee is invited to consider and comment on the summary of the HMICFRS Inspection report on Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

See main body of report.

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service Assessment of Progress – Cause of Concern
Appendix B	Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Action Plan
Appendix C	HMICFRS Protection Action Plan

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer- Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue, who can be contacted on 07799110463 or mark.baxter@lincoln.fire-uk.org.