



Open Report on behalf of Mark Baxter Chief Fire Officer, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue

Report to:	Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date:	19 July 2022
Subject:	Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service- Lincolnshire Crewing Arrangements

Summary:

Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR) provide a range of duty systems to deliver its operational response. In 2013 the Service introduced a staffing model that increased the number of stations across the county by wholetime firefighters from 2 to 9 (2 existing wholetime stations Lincoln North and Lincoln South, 4 wholetime day crewed stations Boston, Gainsborough, Grantham, and Skegness, and 3 On Call stations were uplifted Louth, Sleaford and Spalding). The reasons to introduce this increase was so that wholetime staff were available 24/7 throughout the county and support our On Call staff, ensure that specialist capabilities could be provided and meet our attendance times to life critical incidents. To support this change, the service used historical incident and building type data (from 2007 – 2010) to plot and measure where incidents had occurred.

From 2013 to present day Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue has operated the nine stations through 2 different wholetime duty system models, Lincoln South operates as a 24-hour shift station in accordance with the National scheme of conditions of service and the 8 other stations (Boston, Grantham, Gainsborough, Lincoln North, Louth, Skegness, Sleaford, and Spalding) operates as “the Lincolnshire crewing duty system” which is a locally agreed duty system.

In our Community Risk profile 2020-2024 document we identified that we now analyse the level of community risk using a Fire Risk Assessment Methodology (FRAM). FRAM blends five years incident data and Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMDs) to generate an independent risk score; this is then combined with population density data and incident demand to give an overall risk score. Using FRAM, we have now identified that in order to ensure LFR can continue to provide a sustainable operational response in the future our response model needs updating to meet the change in demand.

This report describes and informs the committee that we propose to enter consultation to seek to change the Lincolnshire crewing duty system.

Actions Required:

Members of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee are invited to:

- (1) Consider this report and make comments on the proposals. These will be considered by the Executive Councillor for Fire and Rescue and Cultural Services prior to consultation with the workforce.
- (2) Share their views with the Executive Councillor for Fire and Rescue and Cultural Services.

1. Background

1.1 As part of the ongoing programme to ensure that Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue's Operational response as identified in the IRMP is delivered in the most appropriate way, our risk and demand is routinely assessed. Our comprehensive methodology provides Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue with predictive risk analysis.

Currently we organise our Operational response from 38 different fire stations, from which we utilise three different duty systems. At all of our stations we have On Call staff who respond via an alerter system to their station when an incident has occurred, in addition at 9 of the 38 stations we have wholetime staff that provide an immediate response.

1.2 The current wholetime staff and their duty systems, the changes and the reasons why are dealt with in this section:

LFR currently provide wholetime operational fire crews from stations that are located in our highest risk where the demand is greater. The model we currently operate was introduced in 2013 and was consulted on in 2012 to deliver our integrated risk management plan for 2013-2016. The key benefits of the change were to

- Ensure all wholetime staff were trained to support on-call staff
- Underpin the longer-term sustainability of our response capability
- Enable the provision of specialist capabilities
- Improve attendance times to life critical incidents

Through the assessment of historical incident and building type data (from 2007 – 2010) it was determined that 9 stations (Boston, Grantham, Gainsborough, Lincoln North, Lincoln South, Louth, Skegness, Sleaford and Spalding) would require 24/7 wholetime cover. However, the most efficient way to resource our response was through 2 different duty systems

- Lincoln South operates as a 24-hour shift station compliant with the National scheme of conditions of Service. 20 personnel are to work as 4 watches of 5 personnel on a rota pattern of 2 x 11-hour day shifts, 2 x 13-hour night shifts followed by 4 rota days.

- The 8 other stations (Boston, Grantham, Gainsborough, Lincoln North, Louth, Skegness, Sleaford and Spalding) operate as “the Lincolnshire crewing duty system” which is a locally agreed duty system. 10 personnel are to work a progressive rota pattern of 4 x 11-hour day shifts followed by 4 rota days; every third cycle staff provide 5 x 11-hour day shifts followed by 3 rota days. When staff provide their daytime shifts, they are required to undertake on call duties in line with the rota pattern. Personnel receive an additional 20% of their basic annual salary to provide the on-call duties.

Locally this wholetime provision is known as the “wholetime spine”.

1.3 Why we need to change

Since the introduction of the wholetime spine Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue has developed a number of initiatives which has improved and focused where and how our response can be proportional to the risk and demand. These improvements have included:

- Increased training time for all On Call staff so that they can perform more skills.
- Developed and introduced a three-year training programme where all operational staff complete training in line with recognised standards. (National operational guidance)
- Introduced improved methodology to assess community risk relating to fires and road traffic incidents which provides data to ensure our response modelling is effective.
- Reviewed our fire cover using data over a four-year period from 2017-2021, to ensure we have a comprehensive picture of our risk and demand to inform our proposals. This is summarised below, with full details provided at Appendix A.
- Reviewed and currently implementing a new response model and equipment for incidents requiring specialist capabilities. (Technical response refresh)
- Undertook a survey of operational staff to gather their views about current duty systems.

The cumulative effect of all these initiatives have identified that the Service is in a position to change the way it delivers its operational response to maintain efficiencies and manage suitable business continuity.

There was also a challenge from the Fire Brigades Union in relation to the Lincolnshire crewing duty system. Lincolnshire was one of the first services to introduce a close proximity system and achieved this through a local agreement with the Fire Brigades Union. Other fire services in England have tried to mandate this duty system on their staff but have had to withdraw it as it has been identified by the health and safety executive as non-compliant with the working time directive. There is a risk that if Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue does not address this

then the Fire Brigades Union could give 6 months' notice to terminate the agreement, and therefore the service would have to potential gaps in its guaranteed operational cover during night-time periods.

1.4 What change do we propose to make

We propose that based on our understanding of operational fire risk, the improved training and assessment of on call firefighters and redistribution of specialist skills the service is in a position to change the crewing model at Sleaford fire station to a day crewing duty system as detailed in the national scheme of conditions of service. This would provide a wholetime service with daytime cover 7 days a week and night-time cover provided by on call personnel. The operational fire risk in Sleaford has been identified through FRAM as medium risk, which is the only medium risk compared with all other wholetime stations. Historical incident data for Sleaford has identified that over the 4-year period the number of incidents that they have attended is 23% less than the next highest wholetime station and is 54% less than the busiest station working the Lincolnshire crewing duty system. As part of the review for the technical rescue unit refresh it was also identified that Sleaford was no longer a viable location to host any of the specialist skills, however, would still be the base location for the urban search and rescue team. This team comprises of both wholetime and on call personnel and therefore is not reliant on a specific duty system.

For the seven other stations (Boston, Gainsborough, Grantham, Lincoln North, Louth, Skegness, and Spalding) we propose that based on our understanding of operational fire risk, the improved training and assessment of on call firefighters and redistribution of specialist skills the service still requires 24/7 wholetime cover. It is therefore suggested that the service implements the day crewing duty system as detailed in the national scheme of conditions of service and seeks a new local agreement that would define the new arrangements for day crewing with requirement to provide night-time cover. Operational fire risk for these locations has been identified through FRAM as high risk. Historical incident data does still identify a level of demand that requires wholetime resources. As part of the review for the technical rescue unit refresh it was also identified that all these locations still had strategic importance for hosting and mobilising specialist capabilities.

Station	FRAM Risk Rating	Future growth (Data from LRO)	Deprivation factor	Total incidents (excluding Coresponding) 2017 - 2021	Current arrangement	Proposed Change
Boston	High	6%	High	1648	Lincs Crewing	W/T day crewing + night time arrangement
Gainsborough	High	10%	High	1590	Lincs Crewing	W/T day crewing + night time arrangement
Grantham	High	10%	High	1912	Lincs Crewing	W/T day crewing + night time arrangement

Station	FRAM Risk Rating	Future growth (Data from LRO)	Deprivation factor	Total incidents (excluding Coresponding) 2017 - 2021	Current arrangement	Proposed Change
Lincoln North	High	5%	High	1784	Lincs Crewing	W/T day crewing + night time arrangement
Louth	High	4%	High	1115	Lincs Crewing	W/T day crewing + night time arrangement
Skegness	High	4%	High	1769	Lincs Crewing	W/T day crewing + night time arrangement
Sleaford	Medium	8%	Medium	856	Lincs Crewing	W/T day crewing
Spalding	High	9%	High	1341	Lincs Crewing	W/T day crewing + night time arrangement

Table 1

1.5 Finance

This change in the way the operational response is delivered has the potential to deliver annual savings of £40,000.00 based on current activity levels, the savings are achieved through the difference in providing the night-time response at Sleaford. For wholtime personnel to provide this response, wholtime staff are paid a 20% allowance which costs the service £70,000.00 per year, if the on-call personnel provided the response to the same level of activity it would cost no more than £30,000.00 per year. The service will look to reinvest this saving into supporting the delivery of the on-call service, through recruitment and retention of on call staff.

1.6 Timetable

Date	Action
29/07/2022	Start 30-day consultation
29/07/2022, 15/08/2022	Consultation briefings
28/08/22	Consultation closes
N/A	Issue notices for voluntary redundancy and early retirement
26/09/22	Issue implementation document
N/A	Undertake selection training and competitive selection process. Date of completion will be subject to outcomes of consultation.
01/01/2023	Go-Live date for the new structure

2. Conclusion

The service has been engaged in a joint working group to review the operational response model and efficiencies of the duty systems that are provided. Personnel have been engaged through a staff survey and face to face meetings to provide them with the relevant operational risk and demand performance information. Feedback is sought prior to the consultation being released to the workforce.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Based on the risk and demand work that was highlighted in the fire cover review, options appraisals were worked up outlining the potential duty systems available to the service that could be implemented at any of the 8 locations. Equality Impact analysis has also been completed based on the 2 duty systems that have been identified as the preferred solutions and the impact on the community. Finally, risks have been identified outlining the potential effect the changes may have for the organisation.

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Fire cover review
Appendix B	Equality Impact Assessments
Appendix C	Risk Log for Sleaford fire station

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 Spencer Creek, (T) Area Manager Response, Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue, who can be contacted on 0778 551 6664 or spencer.creek@lincolnfire-uk.org.