

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2021/22



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

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](#)

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is predicted to increase by 82% over the same period. Further information about the County can be found at [Lincolnshire Open Data](#).

Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue

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. All stations (including those that have whole time staff) are staffed by on-call firefighters working the retained duty system. As at 31 March 2022 the Service establishment⁵ was 709 staff comprising 624 operational, 21 control and 64 support staff⁶. Key operational equipment includes:

- 48 station-based fire engines
- 2 aerial appliances
- 15 special appliances⁷
- 4 swift water rescue boats
- National Resilience capability⁸
- 25 Co-responder vehicles

The Service received 19,167 calls during 2021/22 and attended 8,004 operational incidents including 2,253 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 taxpayers and service users, elected members, employees and other interested parties clear information about the Council's finances. The draft Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 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 2021/22 is still on-going, however no matters have been identified

⁵ Actual headcount may vary

⁶ Not including emergency planning and business continuity

⁷ 2 rescue support units, 7 Technical response vehicles, water carrier, 4 Flood pumps 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/LASAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom

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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 2021/22 with just £10k overspend on a £22.4m revenue budget, which is well within LCC 1% budget tolerance target.

There was a realignment of £3.8m on the original capital budget of £4.2m. These funds have been re-phased into 2022/23 to support committed Capital programme and ensures we continue to have a balanced Capital programme with agreed Capital commitment over the next 2 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.

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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 2022 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

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

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](#).

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 reviewed annually to ensure it remains current and agile. Minor changes and updates were made to the plan in 2022 to reflect current practice. Our Community Plan is set out in five key frameworks which all complement each other and provide an integrated approach to Service delivery.

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. Work has already begun on developing LFR's next Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) which is due to go live in April 2024. Significant stakeholder and public engagement have been planned to ensure our communities can have their say on the services we deliver in the future. There will be three opportunities to engage with us on [Let's Talk Lincolnshire](#) over the next 24 months.

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. 2021/22 saw LFR evaluate our response to the covid pandemic and build on our strong business continuity planning processes.

Collaboration

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A partnership approach has been an important part of our service delivery. Information sharing supported decisions and influenced the delivery of services to ensure we maximise the impact and reach of our activities. The introduction of an evaluation process for our key partnerships have allowed us to review the effectiveness of agreements and enhance where opportunities have been identified. Opportunities have been identified following the ways of working enforced on us as a result of covid restrictions.

The National Fire Chiefs Council, (NFCC), continued to offer direction working in partnership to develop supporting tools, such as the on-line home safety assessment and business engagement tool kit.

A full review of partnerships will be carried out in 2022/23 as we identify priorities for the year. We will be working with partners in LCC to further profile our risk and understand how we can work better to identify those most at risk and how we can support them.

Prevention

Delivery of prevention activities remained with the backdrop of covid restrictions in place. Amended ways of working allowed us to focus on and support those who most needed physical safety interventions, e.g., Safe & Well Visits. A robust risk assessment process and understanding of risk allowed for a blended approach, resulting in the delivery of virtual support and generic safety advice, where the risk was deemed low.

Whilst we continued to complete partnership referrals, we were also able to introduce a proactive element to identifying and supporting those most at risk. Our Fire Risk Assessment Modelling (FRAM) allowed us to profile risk, identifying areas of high risk and target resources to carry out Safe and Well visits.

We were able to carry out 7009 recorded interventions. These was a mix of virtual and face to face activities which resulted in LFR helping members of the community that needed support.

Protection

We committed to carry out inspections in 417 high risk business premises. Despite having an under resourced team due experienced staff leaving the organisation, we completed 400 by the end of March, the remaining 17 were completed in the first two weeks of 2022/23.

In addition, we completed 552 building consultations, 336 licencing applications, followed up on 103 complaints received from members of the public and supported our operational crews to complete 473 'hazard spots' of low-risk commercial premises.

With several significant updates to national fire safety legislation on the horizon, we remain committed to ensuring we have the right skills, capabilities and capacity to meet future demands placed on the Service. We are developing our fire safety inspectors and continue to recruit into vacant posts within the team.

Response

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In our integrated risk management plan we highlighted the enhanced risk of localised flooding in Lincolnshire. To reduce the impact of this risk we introduced two additional flood pumps. This reduces the need for large amounts of firefighters to be deployed, and they have a greater pumping capability than our regular fire engines.

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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 two fire stations.
- Flood response pumps. In collaboration with the lead Local Flood Authority, LFR operates four 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 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.

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

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 Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Home Office and NFCC National Resilience.

Performance

LFR uses a number of key performance indicators to assess progress against its Service objectives. During 2021/22 the main differences, compared to the previous year, in its operational priority areas were:

- **Reducing fires and their consequences**

In 2021/22 there were:

967 primary fires which represents an increase of 3% on the previous year.

758 secondary fires, an increase of 4% on the previous year.

7 fire fatalities, an increase of 4 from the 2020/21 year.

28 primary fire casualties, an increase of 1 compared to 2020/21 (which represents a 4% increase).

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

There were 507 people killed or seriously injured on Lincolnshire's roads during 2021/22. This represents a 26% increase on the previous year.

While we have seen an increase across the board, this contrasts with a non-typical year of lockdowns caused by COVID-19. There is still a broad downward trend over a five-year period.

Our priorities for 2022/23 are:

- 1. Increase the number of targeted safe and well visits**

We have a priority to maximise the use of our resources to keep people safe from fire. We understand the characteristics of those most likely to suffer harm in a dwelling fire and are targeting our activity towards those individuals. We will use more of our operational crew's capacity to achieve this objective.

- 2. Develop the capacity within the fire protection team**

We continue to focus our attention on maintaining appropriately skilled fire protection inspecting officers. During 2022/23 we will mentor, and quality assure the work of newly trained inspectors and further upskill our more experienced inspectors.

- 3. Continue to contribute to the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership**

Our commitment to the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership remains strong. We intend to develop and embed road safety education that will bring benefit to the road users in Lincolnshire. During 2022/23

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we will launch the national 'Biker Down' initiative which provides lifesaving care to motor cyclists involved in an accident, delivered by their fellow riders.

4. Conduct a full review of the Co-responder scheme

During 2022/23 we will conduct a review into our medical response strategy. This will involve a review of the level of service we provide and the funding model that pays for it.

5. Ensure Fire Control staff have systems in place to deal with complex emergencies

Following the tragic incident at Grenfell Tower, national learning showed a need for control rooms to have a better understanding of incidents ongoing in services where they act in a backup capacity. We have introduced a process to do this. During 2022/23 we will carry out simulations to test the skills of our staff in this area.

6. Review support for line of business applications

We will put in place the right support mechanisms to ensure the software applications we use remain up to date and continue to meet the needs of the service.

7. Develop the use of technology to improve efficiencies

We will begin to review our business processes to see if changes in technology can automate and optimise them to make them more efficient.

8. Increase diversity across the organisation

We understand that having a diverse workforce ensures diversity of thought and helps us to challenge the way we deliver services to the public. This in turn ensures everyone in our community has the best chance of accessing the service they need. Work will continue to increase the diversity of our workforce at all levels.

9. Implement a talent management and succession framework

We have many talented people in the organisation working in roles that support our operational response and those that attend emergencies. We want to implement a process to support all our staff to reach their full potential.

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10. Review business delivery models (resourcing project)

We will review the skills and capabilities we need to deliver our community risk management plan. This will ensure the resources we have are properly aligned to the current and future needs of our community.

11. Develop the 2024-28 community risk management plan (CRMP)

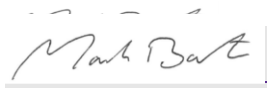
During 2022/23 we will begin the work to refresh our understanding of the risks the community of Lincolnshire face in the future. We will also engage with the public to hear what matters to them.

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 2021 to 31 March 2022 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