

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

2022-2023



LINCOLNSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE



Lincolnshire
COUNTY COUNCIL
Working for a better future

INTRODUCTION

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England¹ sets out the requirements for the fire and rescue authorities to provide an annual Statement of Assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and to show how they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their integrated risk management plan and the requirements included in the Framework. This document is intended to meet that obligation through reference to existing plans, reports and public web pages.

BACKGROUND

General

Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR) is a statutory fire and rescue service for the County of Lincolnshire. It is part of Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) which is also the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA). The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004² is the core legislation for fire and rescue services in England and Wales. It details the statutory responsibilities for all FRAs which includes making provision for the purpose of extinguishing fires, protecting life and property from fires, rescuing people from road traffic collisions, promoting fire safety and responding to other emergencies.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework document outlines the Government's priorities and objectives for FRAs in England. It describes the high-level expectations but does not prescribe operational matters. The priorities in the Framework are for FRAs to:

- Make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents
- Identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face
- Collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide
- Be accountable to communities for the service they provide
- Develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

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

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

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 2021 place the County population at 769,400⁴, an increase of 7.7% since 2011. Current projections suggest the population will increase by 10% by 2043. Notwithstanding this, population density remains low with 130 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 2021 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](#).

Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue

LFR operates 38 fire stations. One of these is staffed by fulltime firefighters around the clock, eight 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 of 31 March 2023, the Service establishment⁵ was 675 staff comprising 597 operational, 18 control and 60 support staff. Key operational equipment includes:

- 48 station-based fire engines
- 2 aerial appliances
- 15 special appliances⁶
- 4 swift water rescue boats
- National Resilience capability⁷
- 26 Co-responder vehicles

The Service received 19,579 calls during 2022/23 and attended 7,655 operational incidents including 1,177 medical response calls.

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

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

⁵ Actual headcount may vary

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

⁷ Marauding terrorist firearms attack specialist response team (MTFA SRT), Urban search and rescue (USAR) and high volume pumping capability

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 practices. 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 2022/23 is due to be published on 31 May 2023 and the Audited Statement of Accounts by 30 September 2023. When published, these and the Accounts for earlier years can be found at [LCC Statement of Accounts](#).

The Authority's financial statements and value for money conclusions are independently audited. At the time of writing, the audit for 2021/22 is not yet complete, 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. The external auditors present regular planning updates and progress reports to the Audit Committee, these reports can be viewed at [Audit Committee Meetings](#). When published the audit opinion can be found within the [Annual Audit Letter](#).

Value for money

LFR ended 2022/23 with a £28k overspend on a £23.6m revenue budget, this is a variance of just 0.1% and is well within LCC acceptable budget tolerances.

Delays in the delivery of some equipment resulted in an underspend on the 2022/23 capital budget of £0.9m. This underspend has been carried-forward into 2023/24 to continue to support improvements in operational capability in line with the Integrated Risk Management Plan.

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 Report. This provides an independent opinion of the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's governance framework, risk and internal control system. The opinion of the Head of Internal Audit in respect of the year ended 31 March 2023 is due to be considered by the [Audit Committee](#) on 19 June 2023. Their opinion for 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 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*. We review the Community Plan annually to ensure it remains current and agile. Minor changes and updates were made to the plan in 2022 to reflect the progress we have made against our priorities and to manage emerging risks. 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, is available on request. 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 has already taken place to ensure our communities can have their say on the risks the community faces. There will be a further opportunity to engage with us on the whole plan towards the end of 2023.

Having robust business continuity (BC) 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. We regularly exercise our business continuity plans, and we debrief every BC incident and exercise to ensure we identify areas which went well and ways we can improve.

Collaboration

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.

Fire and Rescue Chair the Blue Light Collaboration Group and have active members on the Collaboration Delivery Group. These groups continually assess collaborative opportunities to support improved service delivery and realise efficiencies. This also supports the duty to collaborate under the Policing and Crime Act 2017

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 was 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 & Protection

Increase the number of targeted safe and well visits (Home Fire Safety Visits)

Our ability to understand and target risk continued to be a priority. Whilst partnership referrals are a key part of our delivery strategy, we have further developed how we proactively identify vulnerabilities at a household level. Our Risk Scoring Index (RSI) has allowed us to blend a variety of datasets (internal and partners) to categorise risks. Our Integrated Risk team has used mapping software to show where our most vulnerable communities/households are.

Home Fire safety Visits (HFSV) were carried out by our community safety advocates and operational crews. A total of 5207 HFSVs were carried out, focusing on our most vulnerable communities.

To support and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of delivery, our administration processes have been reviewed. We have identified a number of areas relating to how we allocate work and record outcomes to support our targeting process. We will continue to embed these new processes throughout 2023/24.

Develop the capacity within the fire protection team

With clear plans in place, we have continued to develop our Fire Safety Inspectors (FSI). Using local and national investment, we have recruited into vacant posts and placed individuals onto nationally aligned development pathways.

A good understanding of risk in the built environment has allowed us to develop rationale to outline the requirement of resources to manage and mitigate the potential impact. While we still have a small number of FSIs who are completing the required courses and development process, the capacity of the team has increased in-line with identified plans.

A consultation to introduce an on-call element to the FSI roles will allow us to further align to the national competence framework.

Continue to contribute to the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership

A unique partnership has resulted in the national 'Biker Down, Scheme being introduced into the county. The course is aimed at motorcyclists and is designed to raise the awareness of associated hazards and risks. Our partnership with the Lincolnshire Integrated Voluntary Emergency Service (LIVES) and the Air Ambulance team has resulted in the standard course being enhanced. A bespoke element of the course allows emergency life saving techniques to be delivered to road users who may be first on the scene to a road traffic collision where motorcyclists are involved.

The scheme comprises of three modules, all of which were successfully delivered in 2022/23. The second course is planned for delivery in 2023/24. Our road safety advocate is an integral part of our delivery plan, with a link to our operational crews vital to maximising the impact of our activities.

Response

Conduct a full review of the co-responder scheme

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

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 numbers of firefighters to be deployed, and these pumps have a greater pumping capability than our regular fire engines.

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, LFR provides specialist advice and response in support of bariatric patients.
- 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 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 required⁸. LFR is signed up to the National Mutual

⁸ In accordance with sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act

Aid Protocol⁹ 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 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.

Resources

Review support for line of business applications

The completion of this priority was delayed due to the roll out of the Microsoft Office 365 platform in LFR. With this new software now fully embedded across the organisation, we have been able to focus on the development of our in-house applications. Additional staff were recruited into the service support team to assist in the development of our flo-suite application. We have recently signed off a project to identify a new management information system which will integrate across multiple platforms, seeking to avoid duplication and double keying.

Develop the use of technology to improve efficiencies

We have worked with LCC on their process optimisation and automation project, identifying areas within LFR recruitment and organisational development to streamline processes and to identify suitable systems to procure. The specification requirements for these systems have been developed and a tender process will now commence. This new software will service both LFR and LCC.

Develop the 2024-28 Community Risk Management Plan

Work is well underway to produce our next Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). Two rounds of engagement have taken place to identify what risks the community feel are the most important to them, and these will be matched with our assessments to produce the community risk profile. The next step is to put together our plan to manage these risks and keep the people of Lincolnshire safe and well. This plan will be presented to the community in a final round of engagement and consultation before going through scrutiny and sign off by elected councillors.

⁹ Fire Service Circular 42/2006 – National Mutual Aid Protocol for Serious Incidents

People

Increase diversity across the organisation

This year we have produced and delivered face to face foundation EDI training to all staff in LFR. We have established an EDI steering group that is chaired by the Chief Fire Officer, and we have task and finish groups in operation across a variety of strands. We have also developed a three year EDI training and communication plan.

From a recruitment perspective we have carried out a number of positive action days as part of our wholetime and on-call recruitment campaign and this work will continue through 2023/24.

Implement a talent management and succession framework

Following the implementation of a pilot talent management framework throughout 2022/23, a recommendation for an extension to the pilot scheme to be rolled out across the entire organisation was granted. This will remain a focus for the organisation throughout 2023/24 to ensure the scheme is fully embedded.

Review business delivery models (resourcing project)

The resourcing project is underway and phase one of the project is now at consultation stage. The project has involved a full review of the organisation and the structure of each department. Phase two of the project will commence in September 2023 and the proposed implementation will take place over a period of approximately three years.

Performance

LFR uses a number of key performance indicators to assess progress against its Service objectives. During 2022/23 the main differences, compared to the previous year, in its operational priority areas were:

- **Reducing fires and their consequences**

In 2022/23 there were:

950 primary fires which represents a decrease of 2% on the previous year.

1,198 secondary fires, an increase of 58% on the previous year which was directly attributable to the prolonged hot and dry summer of 2022.

8 fire fatalities, an increase of one from the 2021/22 year.

21 primary fire casualties, a decrease of six compared to 2021/22 (which represents a 22% decrease).

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

There were 411 people killed or seriously injured on Lincolnshire's roads during 2022/23. This represents a 19% decrease on the previous year.

The numbers of people killed or seriously injured have fluctuated over recent years; the effects of the COVID-19 lockdown saw a remarkable decrease in numbers involved attributable to the lockdown during that time. The numbers of people involved in 2022/23 is in-line with the broad downward trend over the last six years.

Our priorities for 2023/24 are:

Reduce Fire and their consequences

Priority 1 - Review the sources of risk information that are used to identify and target prevention, protection and response activities.

This year we will continue to refine our data sets, in order that we can target those who are vulnerable within our communities. This will take us from targeting specific areas, to actually targeting specific households where vulnerability is identified. Furthermore, with the refinement of data sets, we can monitor our response activities more closely and ensure we continue to resource to risk.

Priority 2 - Continue to increase the number of targeted Home Fire Safety visits

We will promote the use of our on-line self-assessment tool and build on a strengths based approach for community safety.

We will continue to work towards our target of 10,000 home fire safety visits and enhance our recording and reporting mechanisms. Great progress has been made in our efforts to reach this stretch target and this work will continue throughout 2023/24.

Reduce road traffic collisions and their consequences

Priority 3 - Continue to contribute to the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership

Our wholtime stations will be tasked with completing 10 targeted road safety events per year. We will seek to profile road traffic collision risks in order that we can support targeted and informed prevention activity. We will continue to deliver the 'Biker Down' scheme in partnership with LCCRSP and Linc-Notts Air ambulance and evaluate the impact of this scheme.

Improve health and well-being

Priority 4 - Implement the outcomes of the co-responder review

Progress on the implementation of the outcomes will be monitored through our programme management board.

Protect the community and the environment from the impact of major emergencies

Priority 5 - Undertake a fire control infrastructure project

This project will seek to provide a new mobilisation function into LFR. Progress against the project will be monitored through our programme management board.

Priority 6 - Implement statutory requirements and agreed recommendations and learning from the Grenfell Tower and Manchester Arena incidents

We will develop robust processes that allow identified issues within high rise residential buildings to be reported and dealt with by the Fire Protection team
We will continue to update operational procedures that satisfy the recommendations and required outcomes of the Grenfell Tower and Manchester Arena reports.

Manage our resources effectively

Priority 7 - Consult and implement year 1 recommendations of the resourcing project

Phase 2 of our consultation process will commence in September 2023. Following this period and our continued engagement with staff, we will complete an implementation document, to outline the phases of implementation and associated timelines.

Priority 8 - Review support for line of business applications (Firewatch, Flosuite)

We will review our line of business applications to identify opportunities to improve efficiencies and increase optimisation across the service. We are launching a project to identify a more suitable management information system and more specifically a software that will integrate with existing systems to avoid duplication or double keying.

Manage our people effectively

Priority 9 - Increase diversity across the organisation

100% of our staff will have received the second round of EDI foundation training by December 2023. A training and communications strategy has also been developed to provide staff with a continual feed of information pertaining to EDI and its importance. From a recruitment perspective, work will continue to develop positive action days, targeted at underrepresented groups. The recruitment team will also utilise data sets to identify any noticeable trends throughout the recruitment process where individuals fail to meet the required standard and then offer support to assist in developing those individuals.

Priority 10 - Continue to develop our culture

A full cultural review of LFR is being undertaken. An action plan will be developed, and progress will be monitored through the cultural steering group.

Govern the business effectively

Priority 11 – Develop the 2024-28 CRMP

The CRMP project is underway, with phase two of our public engagement almost complete. This survey provides the public with an opportunity to share their opinions on our county risk and will help us to shape the CRMP from 2024. The feedback we have received so far has been encouraging.

Priority 12 – Develop the use of technologies to provide efficiencies (Optimisation project in-house, Office 365, Microsoft forms)

A three year ICT strategy has been created and this will assist LFR in prioritising those systems where development will lead to greater efficiencies and optimisation. A focus on the use of application programming interfaces (APIs) to link systems and enable interactions from one software application to another will also be a priority to avoid duplication and double keying.

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 2022 to 31 March 2023 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