Lincolnshire
COUNTY COUNCIL
Working for a better future

Open Report on behalf of Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer

Report to:	**Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee**
Date:	**12 December 2023**
Subject:	**Community Risk Management Plan 2024-2028 – Consultation**

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an overview of the public consultation on the Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR) Draft Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-28.

The CRMP consultation meets best practice and statutory requirements laid out by the National Fire Chiefs Council and The Cabinet Office.

Actions Required:

The Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

1. review and comment on the information contained in the Community Risk Management Plan 2024-28 public consultation.
2. note the steps taken during the stage one and two public consultations.

1. Background

The community risk management plan (CRMP) is a requirement of all Fire Services and acts to prioritise the work of the service.

To meet the needs of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018), the CRMP must reflect up to date risk analyses including an assessment of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the area of Lincolnshire. It must demonstrate how prevention, protection and response activities will best be used to prevent fires and other incidents and mitigate the impact of identified risks on our communities.

To ensure we have a detailed understanding of our county, we have completed a comprehensive review of the foreseeable risks within the county which are captured within our Community Risk Profile (CRP).

Community risk profiling is part of a continuous cycle, which ensures that all foreseeable risks are identified, their likelihood and consequences analysed, and effective risk measures are applied to prevent and mitigate their impact on our communities.

2. Community Risk Management Plan Consultation Lifecycle

2.1 Consultation Overview

In developing our engagement approach, we had due regard for the National Fire Chiefs Council's best practice approach to CRMP development and engagement. We have continually worked to involve the public more in the development of our CRMP and the risk mitigation activities we will undertake. Improvement in this area was recommended by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services in their 2021 report. In 2019, following public consultation for our 2020-24 Integrated Risk Management Plan (now called the Community Risk Management Plan) we received 172 total responses. This engagement captured only broad agreement or disagreement with our assessment of risk and plans.

In developing the 2024-28 CRMP, there has been a three-stage process of engagement, promoted through various media and supplemented by a targeted campaign to reach seldom heard groups. We worked with the Council's engagement team to develop an engagement plan. This considered the best ways to engage each audience to ensure good representation.

The key objectives are to:

- ascertain public knowledge and risk levels.
- increase overall response rate versus previous LFR engagement/consultation on Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-24.
- target 'harder to reach communities', representative of the new census data.
- have translatable content (to highly prevalent other languages in Lincolnshire).
- trial remote face to face input using tablets or other technology.
- incorporate 'Let's Talk Lincolnshire' as a platform.
- make responses quick and easy to complete.
- advertise using multiple internal/external platforms.

2.2 Stage one consultation

The first stage commenced in summer 2022 and this pre-engagement was to 'test' knowledge, awareness and risk identification relating to the work of the fire service. We wanted to understand what the public's perception of risk was, and what they felt the greatest risks were to them.

Engagement through the 'Let's Talk Lincolnshire' site alone achieved 658 people who completed a survey. In addition, 961 people viewed more than one page of information, but did not complete a survey.

2.3 Stage two consultation

The purpose of the stage two consultation was to assess opinions of what our priorities should be once risk and data had been presented to the individual.

An online survey was the primary means of engagement during stage two, with the addition of a poll to make it easier for people to respond in one click. All elements were translatable into many languages and worked with read out technology. It was promoted widely on social media and a news release featured on the Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) home page. Previous respondents and those who had registered an interest in community safety received a direct email. It was consciously done in a more low-key manner than stage one or three, to avoid CRMP or survey fatigue.

It was available on request in different formats for those without digital access and those for whom English was not a first language for example. The single equalities council was targeted as part of equality impact assessment action planning, but the organisation was in the process of migration at the time. They will be engaged further for the final stage consultation. More information was sent directly to colleges, universities and local religious organisations in the hope of extending reach and interest.

There were 169 responses to the survey from 164 contributors at the end of April 2023. This is fewer than the first stage (as expected), but almost equal to the number the previous IRMP received at any stage. The quality of the analysis of information gathered from the surveys has increased.

- More than half of all respondents ranked road traffic collisions (RTCs) as their most important risk (86, 51%). Over nine in ten had this risk in their top three (154, 91%).
- Four in ten respondents ranked dwelling fires as their second most important risk (68, 40%). Almost eight in ten had this risk in their top three (130, 77%).
- Three in ten respondents ranked flooding as their third most important risk (51, 30%). More than four in ten had this risk in their top three (72, 43%).
- Flooding remained the most frequently voted fourth most important risk (27) and wildfires were the most frequently voted for fifth most important risk (30).
- A terrorist attack was the most voted for lowest priority risk (46, 27%).
- The overall order is slightly different to the number of votes received in stage one.

There was little difference between the general population's view of risk, and those with protected or SHERMAN characteristics:

- People describing themselves as having reduced mobility or physical/sensory impairment mirrored the general responding population entirely.
- Those with a drug or alcohol dependency ranked domestic fires slightly higher than RTCs.
- Smokers had the same top three perceived risks as the general population, but with very little between domestic fires and RTCs, and a much larger gap between them and flooding.

- Respondents with mental health issues ranked domestic fires and RTCs in the same way as the general population, but water risks were ranked much more highly than other cohorts.
- People from non-White British backgrounds had the same top two risks as the general population, but deliberate fires/arson, which was a slightly different list to that in phase one. This is a limitation of looking at small numbers and a further reason to ensure engagement with minority ethnic groups continues to be a focus.
- There was little geographic difference in risk priority. North Kesteven (31 respondents) was the only district that ranked dwelling fires above RTCs (one point margin).
- The top three issues of the 33 respondents living in Lincoln matched the broader population, but seven people also included high rise fires in their top three. This is likely a result of the concentration of this type of building in the city, compared to other parts of the county.

2.4 Stage three consultation

The final stage is formal statutory public consultation. We have worked with staff, staff representatives and other stakeholders to develop risk mitigation measures, and plan for the next four years. Throughout the life of the plan, we will undertake separate formal consultation should we propose a material change to the way we deliver our service.

The key objectives of *this* formal consultation are to:

- ascertain public views on the content of the proposed plan.
- continue the trend of improved response versus previous IRMP engagement.
- further target 'seldom heard communities', reached and missing from stage one and two.
- have translatable content (to highly prevalent other languages in Lincolnshire).
- incorporate 'Let's Talk Lincolnshire' as a platform.
- make responses quick and easy to complete.
- advertise using multiple internal and external platforms, but primarily target previous respondents and underrepresented groups from stage one and two.

3. Proposed Community Risks

Through a combination of data led assessment of risk (incorporating the national security risk assessment), public perception and professional judgement, we have determined the following as our priority community risk areas:

Dwelling (house) fire

According to the UK Census 2021, there are 298,100 households in Lincolnshire. Of these, 104,400 are rented, which is around 35% of the total number of households. 36% of all dwelling fires occur in premises where there is just one person living there. Over the last five years we have seen a steady reduction in the number of dwelling fires we attend, with 314 incidents attended in 2022/23. An ageing population that may have more complex

health and care needs present a particular risk that we will need to address through our prevention activities.

Road Traffic Collision

There are approximately 5,500 miles of road in Lincolnshire. There were 439 people killed or seriously injured on Lincolnshire's roads in 2022. This is a decrease from the 453 people killed or seriously injured in 2021 but still too high a number. We have seen an increase in the number of RTCs we attend over the last five years, with 702 incidents attended in 2022/23.

Flooding

The number of flooding incidents we attend can vary a lot from year to year with the average being 160 a year. In 2022/23, we attended 192 flooding incidents. We have dealt with a number of large flooding incidents in the last few years, with the breach at Wainfleet in 2019, heavy rain in August 2022 flooding an estimated 100 properties in Spalding, Pinchbeck and Market Rasen, and Storm Babet in October 2023 where more than a month's worth of rain fell in 24 hours causing flooding across the county.

Non-domestic fires

The greatest proportion of non-domestic fires were caused by an electrical fault (37%) followed by deliberate ignition and cooking appliances. We attended an average of 140 fires at non-domestic premises over the last five years.

Wildfires

Although there is a specific definition of a wildfire, it can be taken to include most large fires in woodland, farmland, or other open space. The weather has a significant influence on how many incidents we attend, but there has been an overall increase over the last five years.

Deliberate fires (arson)

The highest number of deliberate fires involve refuse or grassland, with vehicle fires consisting of over a third of the fires that involve damage to property. The overall number of these incidents we attend is rising, but the hot, dry summer of 2022 and the significant increase in grassland and field fires accounts for most of this increase.

Malicious attacks

The Government constantly assesses the threat to the UK from terrorism and communicates this through a threat level. This level has not dropped below substantial in the last five years, which means that an attack is likely. There have been two periods of three months where the level was raised to severe, meaning an attack is highly likely. Fortunately, no attacks have taken place in Lincolnshire, however, there are several

locations and venues that may be considered targets due to their historical importance, or, by the number of people who might gather there. LFR has taken part in operations with other agencies to assist in the investigation of activity suspected of being connected with a malicious attack.

4. Proposed Organisational Risks

We define organisational risks as those which have the potential to affect our service internally, for example, mobilising fire appliances to incidents. These prevent us from conducting our business effectively.

We assess and review these risks on a continuous basis. This is informed by several factors, both national and local, and is linked to our corporate risk register.

Our organisational risks are recorded on our corporate risk register. We have identified the following significant risks for the period 2024 to 2028:

<u>Loss of a considerable proportion of staff through illness, industrial action or severe weather</u>

The availability of our appliances and our ability to supply other services may be affected should a large number of our staff be unavailable for work. This risk was highlighted during the Covid pandemic and has arisen again through the threat of industrial action, both within the fire sector and in other organisations. Severe weather that closes roads or creates excess demand can also affect service delivery. To mitigate this, we keep business continuity plans and conduct tabletop exercises covering various scenarios. We have also reviewed our plans to support delivery through industrial action, working with others in the sector on a peer review basis.

<u>Change in the legislative or financial landscape</u>

Over the last two decades, there have been periods of financial shocks and instability that have had a direct effect on the funding of Fire and Rescue Services. These continue to happen (e.g., Covid and the war in Ukraine), and we must be prepared to manage the impact of such events. There are a number of potential legislative changes coming in the next four years, with further reform of fire safety and building regulations, as well as more responsibilities coming from an updated Civil Contingencies Act and implantation of proposals in the May 2022 Fire and Rescue Service white paper.

<u>Failure to recruit and retain skilled staff</u>

Our staff are at the centre of all we do, and we want to ensure they have the right conditions to flourish and deliver the best service possible to the communities in Lincolnshire. This requires us to refine our recruitment processes to attract the best people, offering opportunities across our communities to work for us in operational and non-operational roles. There are problems we face in keeping staff too, with demand from other services and the private sector for the skills that our staff have. The Service relies on

On-Call firefighters to provide fire cover across the county and this duty system has its own barriers to recruitment and retention. We recognise the dedication of these On-Call firefighters needs to be recognised and we are constantly working to increase the attractiveness of the role through improving our offer to On-Call firefighters, their families and primary employers.

Adverse effects on the Service due to climate change

In recent years, we have seen an increase in demand caused by spate conditions including increased calls for service for incidents involving flooding as well as wildfires and fires in the open. It is predicted that these spells of heavy rains and prolonged elevated temperatures will become more frequent, and we must plan to meet these peaks in demand. We are already seeing Government policies aimed at slowing the rate of change such as demands for energy efficiency, generation of renewable energy and the phasing out of vehicles that use fossil fuels. We are addressing this through our estate and fleet strategies.

5. Proposed Strategic Priority Areas

We have developed the following priority areas for continued development over the lifespan of the community risk management plan. The activity required to deliver against these areas will be captured in annual delivery plans.

Safer Communities

- We will have sustainable and scalable interventions in place to mitigate the impact of changing communities.
- We will make better use of data to prioritise and target people who may be at greater risk of fire and other emergencies.
- We will ensure we have skilled professionals in place to monitor (and enforce non-compliance) relevant fire safety legislation in the built environment.

Service Delivery

- We will provide sustainable mobilising and command and control infrastructure.
- We will take steps to streamline the way in which we manage data and the technology we use to access it.
- We will ensure we have a sustainable response model.
- We will ensure the Health and Safety of staff remains a priority.

Value for Money

- We will provide training and development facilities that are fit for the future.
- We will invest in our ability to deliver service wide improvements.
- We will further develop our performance measurement and management capability.
- We will develop our plans to invest in the future of the service as a force multiplier.

<u>People</u>

- Develop leadership and management capability at all levels in the service.
- Develop and utilise innovative practices to attract, select and retain people from diverse backgrounds.
- Develop the diverse skillsets of our people to build an agile, professional, and competent workforce.
- Continue to develop a happy, healthy and resilient workforce.

6. Conclusion

The Committee is requested to review and comment on the content of this report.

7. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

See body of the report. All members are being consulted as part of the public consultation process.

8. Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Draft CRMP 2024-28	Proposed Community Risk Management Plan 2024-28 – Introduction - Lincolnshire County Council
Draft CRMP 2024-28 Consultation	Let's Talk Lincolnshire
IRMP 2020-2024	Our community plan - integrated risk management plan – Foreword - Lincolnshire County Council
Fire & Rescue National Framework for England (2018)	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/705060/National_Framework_-_final_for_web.pdf

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