

Status of Report: Public

Meeting: Corporate Governance Committee

Date: 25 July 2018

Subject: Fire and Rescue National Framework for England Update

Report by: The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

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For: Information

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Corporate Governance Committee (CGC) on the actions taken by Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service to respond to the requirements in the revised Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, and our current position.

2. Recommendations

The CGC is asked to note the content of the report.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1. The Home Office recently undertook a consultation on the updated Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. The Framework provides the overall strategic direction for fire and rescue authorities in England. The previous version from 2012 no longer fully reflected the changing role and landscape of fire and rescue in England, nor the Government's fire reform programme. This report details the main priorities of the Framework and highlights how LFRS are responding to and meeting those priorities.

4. Report Detail

- 4.1. In 2016, the Home Office outlined a programme of reform, which it is delivering with the fire and rescue sector. This revised National Framework seeks to embed this reform, which includes:
- transforming local governance of fire and rescue by enabling Mayors and Police and Crime Commissioners to take on responsibility for their fire and rescue service where a local case is made;
 - establishing Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) as an independent inspection regime for fire and rescue services;
 - developing a comprehensive set of professional standards to drive sector improvement;

- supporting services to transform commercially with more efficient procurement and collaboration;
- increasing the transparency of services with the publication of greater performance data and the creation of a new national fire website; and
- driving forward an ambitious programme for workforce reform including through enhancing: professionalism; management and leadership; training and development; equality and diversity; culture; and options for flexible working.

The Home Office held a consultation on the updated Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, which began on the 27 December 2017 and ended on 14 February 2017. Consultation responses were received from across the 45 fire and rescue authorities in England.

Changes have been incorporated and the new Framework came into effect on 1 June 2018.

The priorities in the National Framework are for fire and rescue authorities 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; and
- develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

Alongside the priorities which feature in the initial introduction section of the document, the Framework also includes seven further sections which outline expectations, these are:

- delivery of functions
- national resilience
- governance
- achieving value for money
- workforce
- inspection, intervention and accountability
- timescale and scope

LFRS Our Plan 2018-2021, which incorporates LFRS Corporate Plan and the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), has been recently refreshed and published. The Plan includes LFRS aims for meeting the needs of communities and accommodates the changes to the revised National Framework.

Our Plan also now contains the five strategies of LFRS:

- safer communities
- response
- finance and resources
- people
- governance

The strategies include LFRS planning priorities and direct how aims and objectives will be achieved in relation to the National Framework, codes of practice and statutory and legislative responsibilities. They outline the challenges faced, how they will be met and the key purpose of: “safer people, safer places” delivered.

The strategies are supported by departmental and district plans, which provide further detail on the specific tasks being undertaken and the expected outcomes.

Our Plan, at Appendix B, and individual district and departmental plans include the success measures against which progress and achievements will be monitored.

4.2. Taking each priority and then the additional sections from the National Framework in turn, this report provides a high-level indication as to the strategy, plan or activities that are in place in LFRS to meet the expectations of the framework. It also outlines where additional work may be required.

(i) **Make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents:**

The LFRS safer communities strategy provides an overview of how established fire safety teams undertake their prevention and protection work in relation to community safety, enforcement, engagement, partnership working and meeting the requirements of the ‘Regulator’s Code’. Details of the specific activities are included in the community safety, fire protection, operational risk and health and safety department plans.

The strategy directly references the priorities of the National Framework. Specific activities meeting these priorities are documented in the 9 individual district plans, which cover Leicestershire’s 20 fire and rescue stations.

(ii) **Identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face:**

LFRS undertake a vast amount of risk identification and management activities, regularly review the Community Risk Model (CRM) and invest considerable time in identifying and dealing with the most vulnerable people in Leicestershire communities. Additionally, Organisational Risk and Community Risk Registers are regularly reviewed and updated.

An IRMP is in place in line with National Framework requirements. The last version was publically consulted on in 2016 and is valid until 2020. All of the activities within the existing 'Towards 2020' IRMP have been successfully implemented. A full review of the IRMP will commence during the latter part of 2018.

(iii) **Collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide:**

LFRS have already implemented a number of collaboration initiatives with other blue light services. For some time, a Tri-Service arrangement has been in place with Nottinghamshire FRS and Derbyshire FRS for the mobilising system (Systel) and the finance system (Agresso). LFRS have increased response activities to assist East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) with first responder and gaining access activities.

LFRS share parts of the estate to realise efficiencies; EMAS occupy a floor of the headquarters building and the Police share facilities at Coalville and Shepshed fire stations. Arrangements are being finalised for EMAS to co-locate at Castle Donington fire station and Lutterworth station. All future building works will explore the ability to collaborate and share facilities to save money.

LFRS continue to liaise with the National Operational Guidance regional implementation team and look to introduce a complete new set of guidance documents for operational crews. We aim to share the same guidance documents with Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire FRS; improving the operational response within both Leicestershire and regionally.

Operationally, LFRS share national resilience assets and have mutual arrangements in place to support neighbouring services. Locally, we share a qualified Health and Safety adviser with Leicestershire Police, collaborate with Derbyshire FRS for fire investigation, and Leicester City and Leicestershire County Councils provide a number of support functions.

Relationships have been established with partner agencies and the volunteer groups within Leicestershire communities, with whom engagement will continue.

An area that will be improved is the purchasing collaboration; the Finance and Resources Strategy commits to looking for best value in procurement activities.

(iv) **Be accountable to communities for the service they provide.**

In meeting the challenge of the Governance Strategy, LFRS have

committed to engaging with communities, better informing them about the role carried out by LFRS and, importantly, seeking their views and opinions on the service that they receive. This process is embedded for the IRMP and the 'After the Incident' surveys undertaken following property fires, but there is a need to extend this to more areas of the community.

(v) **Develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.**

LFRS People Strategy and the supporting Learning and Development and Human Resources departmental plans provide, in significant detail, the challenge faced and the activities undertaken to achieve this priority.

To help define and plan the future, we will focus on six key planning areas that have been taken from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) National People Strategy 2017-2022:

- provide clear inspirational leadership, embed trust, motivate staff and empower them to take real ownership/accountability and make decisions for themselves;
- engage with staff to agree expected behaviours and/or values and increase the diversity of opinion and views to improve relationships and expectations of staff throughout the organisation;
- develop a customer service culture, with a competent and professional workforce who are flexible and proactive in satisfying the changing needs of communities;
- ensure staff contribute to the service and are developed and coached appropriately, with talent being recognised;
- develop a mental health and wellbeing plan that supports the staff and service; and
- engage communities in the promotion of diversity to increase the diversity of staff and create an open, inclusive environment where progression is based on merit and is free from bias.

(vi) **Section 1 – introduction**

This section includes an overview of the Home Office 'powers' under section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the 'priorities' of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England which have been mentioned earlier in this report.

(vii) **Section 2 - Delivery of Core Functions.**

This section focuses on identifying and assessing risk, prevention, protection and response functions and collaboration work.

LFRS are confident that the necessary activities are being undertaken and the requirements of this section are fully met.

(viii) **Section 3 - National Resilience.**

LFRS is actively involved in national resilience and receives Government funding to provide the New Dimensions equipment. The International Search and Rescue capability is also on stand-by, ready to be deployed when required. Local resilience arrangements are also in place across the UK for assisting other Fire and Rescue Services. Any risks or gaps in capacity will be highlighted to the Home Office or the Fire and Rescue Strategic Resilience Board as part of the ongoing engagement and commitment to providing the necessary assurance to Government.

(iv) **Section 4 - Governance.**

LFRS Governance Strategy and departmental plans clearly outline the activities undertaken and the deliverables produced to meet governance commitments. An IRMP is in place and a Corporate Plan is published annually, which includes strategic priorities and aims, an Annual Report, Statement of Assurance and Statement of Accounts.

Transparency commitments are met by publishing the required information on the website.

(x) **Section 5 - Achieving Value for Money.**

Demonstrating value for money is one of the strategic aims in the Corporate Plan.

Finances are managed in line with published guidance in Annex B of the National Framework. There is an Efficiency Plan and a Medium Term Financial Plan, which contains the reserves strategy, published on the LFRS website. Legal and contractual advice is provided by Leicester City and Leicestershire County Councils when undertaking commercial activities.

The commitment to improve commercial practices is included within the Finance and Resources Strategy and its supporting departmental plans. A separate trading company, Forge Health Limited, is operated. This is a separate legal entity, established as a Limited Company by Guarantee and is wholly owned by the CFA. The Company has its own nominated Directors.

Limited local research activities are currently ongoing. We have previously engaged with De Montfort and Nottingham Trent Universities on this.

LFRS are committed to working on the Community Risk Programme, which supports delivery of the NFCC's community risk strategy.

(xi) **Section 6 - Workforce.**

LFRS People Strategy takes into account the principles set out in the NFCC's people strategy.

LFRS are committed to working with all employees to ensure they remain fit and healthy. The Occupational Health Unit (OHU) adhere to the fitness principles and actively monitor the fitness of operational personnel.

The workforce information required by the Home Office for statistical purposes is submitted annually in May.

LFRS are actively involved in the implementation of the National Operational Guidance for fire and rescue services and have committed dedicated resource to the regional project.

LFRS no longer re-engage Senior Officers. The recent recruitment process for the Chief Fire and Rescue Office position was advertised externally and managed by an external independent consultant.

(xii) **Section 7 - Inspection, Intervention and Accountability.**

LFRS are due to be inspected by HMICFRS towards the latter part of 2018. This will allow the Chief Fire and Rescue Inspector for England to submit a report to the Secretary of State providing an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of all fire and rescue services. The outcomes of the report and any recommendations made to drive improvement will be documented and published in an action plan.

LFRS are aware of Section 22 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and understand the powers that the Secretary of State has to intervene should a fire and rescue authority fail to act in accordance with the National Framework.

LFRS are accountable to Leicestershire communities for the service provided and are already transparent with the information provided and the decisions made during the creation and consultation of the IRMP.

LFRS have scrutiny arrangements in place at all levels. The Combined Fire Authority and Corporate Governance Committee review strategic decisions presented by the Senior Management Team (SMT). The Employment Committee and the Pensions Board provide the necessary assurance when required. Below that, the Tactical Managers Team, Project Boards and Steering Groups provide the accountability and scrutiny for day-to-day activities.

(viii) **Section 8 – Timescale and Scope.**

The National Framework has an open-ended duration and only applies to fire and rescue services in England.

5. Report Implications / Impact

5.1. ***Legal (including crime and disorder)***

Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 states that the Secretary of State must prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

LFRS are committed to undertaking the necessary actions to meet the priorities outlined in the National Framework and have developed suitable strategies and plans to facilitate delivery.

5.2. ***Financial (including value for money, benefits and efficiencies)***

Every fire and rescue authority must have regard for the priorities within the National Framework. As such, the tasks required to deliver them should be factored in to business as usual activities and delivered within existing financial plans.

Compliance with the Framework increases the likelihood of providing value for money and efficiencies.

The Framework acknowledges that any additional work undertaken to achieve its priorities should not be at the expense of effective delivery of statutory core fire functions.

5.3. ***Risk (including corporate and operational, health and safety and any impact on the continuity of service delivery)***

- a) Risks to delivering the Framework priorities will be limited as they are incorporated within the Service's strategic and planning lifecycle. There are also well-established and effective management and governance arrangements in place to monitor delivery.

5.4. ***Staff, Service Users and Stakeholders (including the Equality Impact Assessment)***

- a) Impact assessments will be completed when necessary and appropriate.

5.5. ***Environmental***

None identified.

5.6. ***Impact upon Our Plan Objectives***

Successful delivery of strategies and departmental and district plans will ensure that both the priorities of the National Framework and the aims of LFRS Corporate plan will be achieved.

6. **Background Papers**

Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018) <https://bit.ly/2rtXGFW>

Our Plan 2018-2021 <https://bit.ly/2JdcNJX>

7. Appendices

None.