



Fire Service NEWS

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Welcome to Fire Service News

It's been another busy three months for us, finalising plans for this next financial year and dealing with a number of significant incidents.

Tragically one of those incidents was a house fire which resulted in the deaths of two residents in Peterborough. It's a call that I never like to receive, to inform me of a fatality following a fire. It is why the prevention side of our work is so important, but is not always the side that people think of when they hear 'fire service'. The image that springs to mind is big red trucks with blue lights flashing. But responding to fires is the last resort for us. We put a lot of effort into trying to prevent fires from happening in the first place, both in the home and in non-dwelling properties.

This edition of FSN features an article on the work of our fire protection team who concentrate on the non-dwelling properties such as businesses, factories, town halls, hotels and nightclubs. Their vital work ensures that people are safe when visiting these premises and can escape should a fire break out. As we begin this new financial year we have four main priority projects and you'll find updates on these inside this edition. The first is around budget cuts and our plans on how we will decide where to make the cuts. This is a huge project as we want to make informed decisions with as little impact as possible on our ability to respond to fires.

The new fire station for Cambridge is happening this year and staff at Parkside are currently packing boxes ready to move to their temporary fire station elsewhere in the city. A lot of work is ongoing to ensure the transition goes smoothly and has no impact on the crews being mobilised in an emergency. Our third priority is to ensure we are able to receive and deal with 999 calls for Suffolk following the new partnership we have formed to run a joint control room. This will happen in October.

And our fourth and final priority is to continue to improve the Service we provide. We have recently received two reports from separate external assessments. One looking at our operational abilities and the other about our progress generally against our plans. Both have acknowledged we are a very good fire and rescue service that is performing well. Despite this, we know we can improve further in a number of areas and do not want to lose sight of this amidst the challenges of the financial situation.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of FSN. Please get in touch with us if you want to comment on any articles or provide general feedback. Email feedback@cambsfire.gov.uk.



Chief Fire Officer
Graham Stagg



CAMBRIDGESHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Potential areas for savings identified

In the last edition of FSN we informed you that we needed to find £4.3m over the next four years. We now have a list of areas where significant savings could be made and the Fire Authority agreed to us investigating these areas further by carrying out feasibility studies.



Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Chris Strickland

It has to be stressed that these are just feasibility studies. We know that savings could be made but we need to look at the risks, issues, benefits and impact on our ability to deliver our service working to the response times we currently aim to achieve. Some of these studies also impact on each other so we will be considering this as well.

In addition to the feasibility studies, one of the first pieces of work we are doing is an options appraisal looking at how we utilise our wholtime crews as we believe that we can achieve significant savings by operating a different system. The options we look at will still ensure all fire engines are crewed with the same number of firefighters they are now. Initial results from the first four studies and the crewing options appraisal will be presented back to the Fire Authority in May, and if the Fire Authority agrees to further development, we will commence implementation projects which will go into much more detail. These will again go back to Fire Authority before any final decision is reached. The other feasibility studies will be presented to the Fire Authority in October.

In addition to these high level feasibility studies, we are starting a number of reviews, such as reviewing our fleet, our maintenance arrangements and in-house catering.

We will endeavour to take as much as we can out of the back office before we make changes to the number of fire engines or the status of fire stations. However, we have already taken over £1million from the back office to find the cuts for 2011/12 and we know that there is only so much we can cut before lack of support in the back office starts to affect the frontline, therefore some impact on the frontline is very likely. Where we do make changes to the frontline, we will ensure that the changes have as minimal an impact as possible on our overall response to emergencies.

Further information can be found on our website www.cambsfire.gov.uk or you can contact us at feedback@cambsfire.gov.uk.

The 10 areas we are looking at are:

- Changing Huntingdon Fire Station to Day Crewed or Day Crew Plus (this is where firefighters work a day shift and then sleep in purpose built accommodation on or next to the fire station so they can attend calls within a similar turn out time to now).
- Review of fire engines attending less than 120 calls per annum
- Review of non-operational staff (target to reduce this budget by 15 per cent)
- Review of special appliances (including turntable ladders, water carriers and rescue vehicles)
- Review of day-crewed stations (St Neots, Ely and Wisbech)
- Merger of Peterborough stations (Dogsthorpe and Stanground)
- Feasibility study looking at whether Stanground could move from 24/7 crewed to Day Crewed Plus
- Review of the second fire engine at Cambridge
- Review to establish if the Service needs to upgrade March from Retained to Day Crewed or Nucleus
- Review of Service administration.

Audit Commission praises our achievements

A REPORT from the Audit Commission has recognised we are making Cambridgeshire and Peterborough a safer place for residents and acknowledged achievements in a number of priority areas.

Following the abolition of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) in May 2010, we asked the Audit Commission to produce a report to summarise what they had found when they came to assess us under CAA just prior to the announcement the CAA process was to stop.

The report looked at our priorities and objectives and measured how well we were achieving against them.

Director of Resources Matthew Warren said: "The results of the Audit Commission's report were very positive and demonstrated that all of the hard work we've been doing over the last three years is really paying off.

"The report confirmed that we are performing well against our own objectives and performance indicators, and recognised the work of both frontline and support staff."

Some of the main conclusions of the report were:

- The Service is making good progress in implementing and delivering priorities
- Outcomes for the public have improved. The number of fires and accidental house fires has

- decreased
 - An investment in communication and engagement allows the Service to focus resources where they are most needed
 - Productivity has improved through new approaches to sickness, project and performance management
 - The leadership team is well regarded and is taking action to help ensure it is able to deliver priorities in a more constrained financial environment
 - The Service has taken the lead with many partnership projects in Cambridgeshire, ensuring best use of limited resources
 - The Service is working hard to build capacity and use staff effectively.
- Matthew continued: "This report provides valuable feedback and is the second positive report we have received by external parties in a short space of time – the other was an assessment of our operational ability. Both reports are testament to the hard work carried out by all staff.
- "Of course, this doesn't mean that we will become complacent. We strive for continuous improvement and we know there are a number of areas where we can do better or further enhance what we do and many of these areas are already built into our plans for the coming year."
- The report can be found on the website www.cambsfire.gov.uk under **Publications**.

Crews prepare to move out of Cambridge Fire Station

An historic moment is just around the corner as crews at Parkside in Cambridge get set to move out of the current fire station and into a temporary fire station (**right**) sited at Coldhams Lane on the Territorial Army base.

The temporary fire station is taking shape and will be ready for crews to move in at the end of May. The old station will then be demolished to pave the way for a new station to be built as part of a new development on the site.

District support teams including community safety and fire protection will move to our new fire station in Cambourne, which is set to be completed at the end of May.



Business Continuity

CFRS is leading the way nationally

BUSINESS Continuity is vital for any organisation which is relied upon during major emergencies, and CFRS is leading the way nationally.

Earlier this year the Service became the first fire and rescue service in the UK to achieve the national business continuity standard BS 25999 after passing the Stage Two Assessment.

Achieving the BS 25999 standard demonstrates our commitment to the highest level of standards and shows CFRS leading the way in the field of business continuity within the national fire and rescue service.

Business continuity is about ensuring that core activities and other roles can still be carried out in situations that cause disruption to one or more services, such as power failure, flooding,

fires in our own buildings or extreme weather conditions. All category one responders are required to have business continuity plans in place under the Civil Contingencies Act and it is also a requirement of fire services under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. Project Quality Assurance Manager Graham Edridge said: "Over the last few months managers across the Service have been writing and testing group and district business continuity plans and ensuring that their staff are aware of their responsibilities in a contingency situation. "Every member of staff has played a part in securing the BS 25999 certification and this is reflected in the fact that the embedding of business continuity in CFRS has been cited by the assessors as an example of best practice."

More than just a **big red truck**

As well as responding to fires and preventing them from happening in the first place, we want to make sure that when a fire does occur, people have the right level of protection to get out of a building safely.

Our specialist fire protection officers give advice to business and other non-domestic premises owners to help them comply with their duties under the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005. This legislation requires the responsible person(s) of any non-domestic premises to ensure they are compliant with the Fire Safety Order to protect their staff and visitors from fire.

We also have a statutory duty to enforce the legislation, which means we have the authority to issue prohibition, alteration and enforcement notices to building owners. And it is not just businesses that need to be compliant with the legislation, it relates to any premises that is not used

as a place to live including places of worship, schools, charity organisations and town halls.

You can learn more about the support we offer and the legislation at

www.cambsfire.gov.uk

Did you know?

Last year we issued 13 prohibition notices, 1 alteration notice and 29 enforcement notices



Cambridgeshire and Suffolk work towards combining Control rooms

WORK to transfer Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service's command and Control function to our Control room in Huntingdon is running to schedule, and a go-live date of the end of October has been identified.

Following this date, the combined Control room will be able to mobilise and take calls for both Cambridgeshire and Suffolk.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Neil Newberry said:

"The transfer was agreed in principle by the Fire Authority in January and since then both services have been working together to ensure that the same level of professional service to the people of Cambridgeshire and Suffolk can be delivered from one combined team.

"A lot of hard work is going into this project by both services to ensure that after the transfer the people of Cambridgeshire and Suffolk won't notice any difference when they ring the fire service."

We will keep you updated with progress in future editions of *Fire Service News*.



Firefighters tackle arson at partnership event

Firefighters in Peterborough have been helping to tackle arson in the city at a multi agency workshop at Thomas Deacon School.

The workshop was organised by Neighbourhood Schools Officer Tony French who is based at the school and works closely with the PSHE curriculum to discourage antisocial behaviour.

The event ran for two days so all year nine students could be

involved, and consisted of a number of different workshops which were run by different agencies. Martin Boome, Station Manager for CFRS said: "The focus of our workshop was arson and hoax calls, and Firefighters Jamie Johnson from Dogsthorpe and Jon Crowley from Stanground did an excellent job at driving home this message to over 200 pupils over the two days. "Sometimes there is a risk that

a few children see events such as this as a challenge and there is a small increase in hoax calls in the days after, but there were no calls whatsoever following this event which shows the firefighters really delivered an effective message. "This sort of partnership work is vital to delivering community safety and we will be looking to carry out similar partnership work in other areas in the city where there is a lot of this type of antisocial behaviour."