

Annual Report and Statement of Assurance for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority 2021-2022

Welcome to the Statement of Assurance and Annual Report for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority.

The report covers the financial year 2021/2022 and summarises our performance over the 12 months, including how we spent your money in delivering priority services. It features highlights of the year, case studies and information about how we are working in collaboration with partners to improve our service to you.

It incorporates the Fire Authority's Statement of Assurance. Under the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, fire and rescue authorities must provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters.

This document is designed to be read electronically and as such has been checked to ensure it is accessible for as many readers as possible. The links to other documents and websites should be clearly identifiable. Any links to other documents or websites will be lost if the report is printed.

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1. The year at a glance

Here are some highlights from the year 2021/2022.

April

Crews faced a challenging fire involving a car transporter carrying nine cars near Cambourne in South Cambridgeshire. Firefighters worked hard to bring the fire under control and extinguished it within a few hours.

Norman the cat was saved by an on-call crew from Whittlesey after he got himself into a pickle and became trapped in a 15 foot deep drain. The crew showed great innovation during a two-hour operation to rescue poor Norman. Using chimney rodding equipment, they eventually managed to entice him back to safety and return him to a very thankful family.

Group Commander Simon Thompson completed an incredible fitness challenge, to raise money for The Fire Fighters Charity, performing 44,597 press-ups, marking one for each member of staff who works for a fire service in England. Over four months Simon averaged around 340 press-ups each day and finished the challenge on Firefighters' Memorial Day, having raised more than £1,500.

May

A dozen iPads were donated to Addenbrookes Critical Care Unit thanks to a fundraising effort by the family of on-call firefighter Danny Granger, who sadly passed away in February 2021. Danny had been treated at Addenbrookes Hospital for a number of weeks after he became ill and his family were unable to visit because of Covid restrictions. They had to rely on the ward ipad to speak to Danny so decided to fundraise in Danny's memory to buy more ipads for the wards. More than £6,000 was raised to fund 10 iPads and cases, with two being donated by the Service, as well as providing money for several charities.

June

Volunteers' Week saw the Service celebrate the amazing efforts of around 150 staff that offered support for the national Covid vaccination rollout. Senior officers, firefighters, call handlers and support staff gave more than 4,400 hours of their time at vaccination sites around the county. This included helping to set up mass vaccination centres, assisting with patients and marshalling. Some colleagues were also trained to administer vaccines by The British Red Cross and St John's Ambulance.

July

The Service's High Volume Pump (HVP), which is based at Cambourne, travelled to Tilbury Docks, next to the River Thames, for an exercise organised by the Petrochemical team at Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. Crews worked together to demonstrate the effectiveness of the pumps at dealing with a large-scale petrochemical fire.

August

More than 30 firefighters tackled a challenging fire on a busy morning on the A14. Crews arrived to find a fire involving a lorry containing furniture and household items. The road was closed to allow crews to tackle the fire safely, before moving it to a local recycling centre to ensure it was safe and the fire was fully extinguished. Footage was posted on the Service's social media channels throughout the incident to inform the public and keep them updated as the crews worked to get the fire under control and the traffic moving again. Following the fire, a resident got in touch as the lorry contained their household items following their move from Canada. After liaison between the officer

in charge of the incident, the media and communication team and the recovery firm, the resident was reunited with the possessions that weren't severely damaged.

A group of Dogsthorpe based firefighters took on the National Three Peaks challenge, involving climbing the three highest peaks of Scotland, England and Wales. The team from red watch completed the challenge and raised more than £1,400 for The Fire Fighters Charity. If that wasn't impressive enough, whilst climbing Snowdon, they put their rescue skills to the test when they came across a walker who was injured. They contacted the local Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team before they began assisting the lady down the mountain, taking it in turns to carry her. After her condition rapidly deteriorated, they performed immediate first aid, before handing the casualty over to the mountain rescue team who had come to meet them. Despite getting behind schedule, they continued on their route to compete the final two climbs.

September

The Service celebrated the outstanding accomplishments of staff during the coronavirus pandemic, along with recognising long service achievements, at a belated Excellence Awards event. Around 100 staff and family members attended the event at the Marriott Hotel in Huntingdon.

Cambridge Fire Station hosted one of the first open days after restrictions on gatherings were lifted. As part of Open Cambridge, the duty watch were on-hand to welcome visitors, show them around the fire engines and explain the equipment used to save lives. The Community Safety and Recruitment teams were also there to discuss fire, water and road safety as well as answer any questions about careers within the Service. A highlight of the event was a regular story time throughout the day with Community Safety Coordinator, Odette Tattersall, who read her own creative work featuring Cambridgeshire's firefighting dragon, Jet.

Staff attended a partnership event focusing on safe driving as part of Project Edward, a national campaign highlighting best practice in road safety. The crew from Ely, along with the Community Safety team, joined emergency service and other partners to deliver sessions about vehicle safety and safe driving.

October

The Service's Combined Fire Control celebrated its tenth birthday since the merging of Cambridgeshire and Suffolk control rooms. The first collaboration of its kind in the country, which has since been replicated by other fire services, has saved more than £4 million across both counties. Since coming together, call handlers have taken more than 177,000 emergency calls and sent around 178,000 fire engines to incidents.

The ground was broken on the much anticipated, multi-million pound project to build a new purpose-built training centre and community fire station in Huntingdon. Chief Fire Officer Chris Strickland was joined by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority Chair, Councillor Edna Murphy, along with contractors Artisan.

November

Extrication skills were put to the test at a number of road traffic collision based training scenarios during the Autumn. Organised by wholetime watches and the Operational Support Group, on-call crews were tasked with removing casualties, testing their skills and practicing safe systems of work.

Crews from across the county raised more than £13,500 from car wash events as part of The Fire Fighters Charity National Car Wash campaign. Firefighters dug out their sponges and buckets and

welcomed people with all manner of vehicles, from cars and vans, to children's bikes and mobility scooters, to raise money for the charity.

A popular road safety initiative aimed at motorcyclists returned following the lifting of Covid restrictions. Biker Down allows motorcyclists the opportunity to learn practical skills to help avoid being involved in a crash, as well as essential first-aid training and advice on what to do should they find themselves first on the scene of a crash where someone is injured. Hosted at St Ives Fire Station, more than 100 people have attended these sessions since they restarted.

Employee fitness was high on the agenda as Battle Boxes began to arrive at fire stations across the county. Organised by the Occupational Health team, the boxes contained equipment to help colleagues train and maintain their fitness levels.

December

Working smoke alarms alerted a family to a fire and gave them time to escape before it became too severe. By the time crews arrived, the fire had spread from the kitchen to the rest of the house. The alarms sounding meant that the family was able to evacuate safely.

Around 50 firefighters tackled a well-developed fire in a flat above a pub in Pampisford. Crews arrived to find flames and smoke issuing through the roof. They tackled the fire from the outside as the fire had spread through the roof causing it to collapse, but they prevented it from spreading to neighbouring thatch properties.

A long serving employee was recognised for his outstanding contribution to supporting the vaccination rollout by being invited to attend a Christmas Carol Concert at Westminster Abbey. Receiving the invite from the Duchess of Cambridge, Project Manager John Barlow was nominated by the Service, through the National Fire Chief's Council, as a thank you for giving significant support to the vaccination rollout, including administering around 3,000 vaccinations and booster jabs in his own time.

January

Chatteris Fire Station was crowned The Fire Fighters Charity Bag It And Bank It recycling champions for having more than 4,500kg of recycled clothing donated at their charity collection bin. Beating stations from across the UK, the station managed to raise more than £1,000 through clothing donations in January alone.

February

The Service's TikTok account reached a milestone, thanks to Burwell Fire Station and the Service's Training Centre. Videos showing helmet markings and new recruits in action went viral, clocking up more than a million views.

March

March Fire Station became the first in the county to roster an all women crew thanks to their hard work in promoting the role of an on-call firefighter in the town and attracting diverse applicants. They've also shown excellent teamwork to make sure new recruits have the support they need to gain the skills required for the job, and then develop further to acquire additional skills like driving and incident command, which are all needed to make up a crew.

2. Forward

Welcome to our annual report and statement of assurance for 2021/2022.

This report looks back over the last financial year, captures our achievements and looks at how we've performed. It's always good to look back to see the great work that our colleagues, from across all areas of the Service, have done and to highlight that success. Each year it gets harder to choose what to include from the sheer volume of excellent work we see day in day out. Having such a passionate and committed workforce is what we are most proud of and without them we would not be the organisation that we are.

We started the financial year having been visited by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services to assess where we were compared with the previous visit in 2018. With the country just coming out of a second lockdown, much of the visit was done by virtual meetings, representing quite a change from the previous visit. Colleagues from across the organisation were interviewed about their work and the Service in general. We had to wait several months to find out how we had done.

In June we welcomed our new Fire Authority Chair and Vice Chair following local elections. Councillor Edna Murphy has become the first woman to chair the Authority, with Councillor Mohammed Jamil appointed Vice Chair, bringing his experience to the role having served on the authority for many years.

We've experienced significant challenges over the last year in the post pandemic world. Many of our employees are working in a hybrid way after our offices were reopened, with interactions via video conferencing now the norm. This has meant many people have had to adapt to a different way of working, but employee wellbeing and work/life balance for many has improved. Our managers have been engaging with their teams, and with each other, to ensure we remain a high performing service, while adapting to new ways of working.

After a few months delay because of Covid, we were able to celebrate colleague achievements and host our Excellence Awards again. This is a really important fixture in the calendar and one we look forward to. We made some adjustments to make sure the event was safe for staff and their families to attend and we enjoyed a wonderful evening celebrating the excellent work and long service of colleagues.

As the calendar year drew to a close, we received the outcome of our inspection. We were again rated as Good in all three areas of effectiveness, efficiency and how well we look after our people, putting us among the best performing fire and rescue services in the first tranche of those inspected. The team was impressed with how our employees engaged in a positive and constructive way, as well as how we prioritise the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our staff. This was very pleasing to hear, as colleagues told the inspection team that CFRS is a great place to work. We have some areas to continue to improve on, but the team recognised our investment in continuous improvement. The inspection team found marked improvements since its last inspection, notably in how we respond to and learn from operational incidents, share risk information with other fire and rescue services and partners, and evaluate our prevention and protection activities. More information about the report can be found on page 37.

As we moved into 2022 we saw significant progression in one of our key projects for that year. The multi-million pound fire station and training centre in Huntingdon is nearing completion and will be ready for colleagues to move across to later in 2022, which is very exciting. The project team have been working hard on fitting out the building and planning for the move. This represents a significant

investment in ensuring our operational colleagues have a purpose built, state-of-the-art facility to train and refresh their skills in.

This summer we experienced record breaking temperatures and the period of heat induced fires put a great strain on the Service, but our staff responded brilliantly. It has made it very clear to us that climate change is happening and will very likely be worse – both in terms of fire and also flooding – and we need to bear these risks in mind in planning our services.

As we look ahead to the next financial year, we continue to experience significant uncertainty. As much as the pandemic disruption seems to be behind us, we are seeing high rates of inflation and government borrowing and the situation is as problematic for us as it is for all public bodies and individuals too as the conflict in Ukraine destabilising the globe. We have started to plan for how we will deal with these additional budget challenges and this work will continue into 2022/23. We understand that uncertainty causes anxiety for many people and we are doing our best to keep colleagues informed of our financial planning and the issues we face. However difficult it may be, we are legally obliged to deliver a balanced budget.

Keeping people in our communities informed of what we do is important to us and our social media channels are updated regularly with interesting stories, safety advice and general information about what we do. We're across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, as well as growing our presence on TikTok and Nextdoor. Find and follow us to keep up to date with our news.

Thank you to everyone that has supported us over the last year. Whether you've engaged with or shared a post on Facebook, passed us on information about a vulnerable neighbour, sent us a thank you message or made a cup of tea for a hard working crew at the scene of an incident, we are extremely grateful and hugely value that support.

Councillor Edna Murphy - Chair of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

Chris Strickland - Chief Fire Officer

3. Statement of assurance

Context

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England sets out a requirement for fire and rescue authorities to publish a statement of assurance. It says the statement should:

“...outline the way in which the authority and its fire and rescue service has had regard – in the period covered by the document – to this National framework, the Integrated Risk Management Plan and to any strategic plan...prepared by the Authority for that period. The authority must also provide assurance to their community and to government on financial, governance and operational matters.”

One of the principal aims of the statement of assurance is to provide an accessible way in which communities, government, local authorities and other partners may make a valid assessment of their local fire and rescue authority’s performance.

Purpose

The purpose of this statement of assurance is for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority to formally confirm the adequacy of arrangements for the effective management of financial, governance and operational matters in Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service. The statement has been prepared and published in accordance with the guidance published by the Home Office.

Statement of Assurance

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority is satisfied that its business during the financial year 2021/22 was conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money was properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Authority is further satisfied that the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England have been met.

Evidence to support this judgement can be found within this report, specifically:

- Integrated Risk Management Plan - page 38
- Financial and governance matters - page 31

4. Governance arrangements

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

The Fire Authority is the governing body responsible for delivering a fire and rescue service to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The main responsibilities of the Authority are set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The Authority makes decisions about how the local fire and rescue service operates and how it reviews performance and policies. It also sets the budget each year and agrees the strategic direction set out in the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and the corporate priorities within the IRMP action plan.

In some counties, delivery of the fire and rescue service is the responsibility of the county council, however in counties such as Cambridgeshire, where unitary authorities exist, a separate Authority is set up to run the Service and this is made up of councillors from both the county and unitary council.

As well as the Fire Authority there are a number of committees made up of smaller groups of Authority members, which look at certain aspects of the Service.

The political make-up of the Fire Authority reflects the number of members from the political parties on each of the appointing county and unitary authorities.

Transfer of Governance to the Police and Crime Commissioner

In March 2018, following a business case submitted by the former Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Cambridgeshire, the Home Office announced that the governance of the fire service would transfer to the PCC in June 2018. The date was delayed as the Fire Authority sought a judicial review against the decision.

In 2020, the Home Office announced it would not hear any cases for a transfer of power until after the May 2021 PCC elections, and as so much time has passed, a new business case would be required. The Fire Authority withdrew all active legal proceedings at this point.

Earlier in 2021, the Government then announced it would consult on a White Paper in the summer of 2021 which would mandate the transfer of fire and rescue service governance to local PCCs or the mayor.

We await the White Paper and will respond accordingly. Until then it is business as usual and we continue to plan for the future.

More information about the Fire Authority, including details of Authority and committee meetings, together with the dates, agendas and minutes for these meetings, [can be found on our website](#).

Current members of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

Councillor	Council	Party	District
Edna Murphy (Chair)	Cambridgeshire County Council	Liberal Democrat	South Cambs
Michael Atkins	Cambridgeshire County Council	Liberal Democrat	South Cambs
Andrew Bond	Peterborough City Council	Liberal Democrat	Peterborough
Simon Bywater	Cambridgeshire County Council	Conservative	Huntingdonshire
Ian Gardener	Cambridgeshire County Council	Conservative	Huntingdonshire
Bryony Goodliffe	Cambridgeshire County Council	Labour	Cambridge
John Gowing	Cambridgeshire County Council	Conservative	Fenland
Mohammed Jamil (Vice Chair)	Peterborough City Council	Labour	Peterborough
Sebastian Kindersley	Cambridgeshire County Council	Liberal Democrat	South Cambs
Mac McGuire	Cambridgeshire County Council	Conservative	Huntingdonshire
David Over	Peterborough City Council	Conservative	Peterborough
Catherine Rae	Cambridgeshire County Council	Labour	Cambridge
Kevin Reynolds	Cambridgeshire County Council	Conservative	Huntingdonshire
Philippa Slatter	Cambridgeshire County Council	Liberal Democrat	Cambridge
Mandy Smith	Cambridgeshire County Council	Conservative	South Cambs
Simone Taylor	Cambridgeshire County Council	Independent	Huntingdonshire
Scott Warren	Peterborough City Council	Conservative	Peterborough

The Fire Authority records its appreciation for the contribution of councillors Hilary Cox Condron and Peter McDonald during the past year.

Our structure

Our chief officer team:

Name	Role	Responsibilities
Chris Strickland	Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive	Ensuring the Service performs all of its statutory duties. Direct line manager for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transparency, Media and Communication - Democratic and Legal Services.
Jon Anderson	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operational Response (wholetime and on-call) including Combined Fire Control - Community Fire Safety (prevention and protection) and Resilience - Resource Management - Occupational Health - Operational Support, Equipment, Policies and Procedures, Training and Fleet - Safeguarding.
Matthew Warren	Deputy Chief Executive	Treasurer to the Fire Authority and responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HR, Learning and Development, Recruitment and Equality and Inclusion - Programme Management and Planning, Business Intelligence and Performance and STEP transformation - Finance, Property and Estate Management and Payroll - Procurement and contract management and Business Support - ICT.

Our legal responsibilities

Our responsibilities as an emergency service are set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and also the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. As a public service provider we also have responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

The Act replaced the Fire Services Act 1948 with a new legislative framework to ensure fire and rescue services were better able to meet the particular challenges of the 21st century.

The Act clarifies the duties and powers of fire authorities to:

- Promote fire safety
- Fight fires
- Protect people and property from fires
- Rescue people from road traffic incidents
- Deal with other specific emergencies, such as flooding and terrorist attacks
- Do other things to respond to the particular needs of their communities and the risks they face.

Civil Contingencies Act 2004

Under Part One of the Act, emergency services and local authorities (defined as Category One responders) have a legal obligation to assess risk, plan and exercise for emergencies and undertake business continuity management.

We are involved in ongoing partnerships to plan multi-agency responses to major incidents. This work involves carrying out risk assessments for all eventualities and producing emergency plans that are tested and continually updated.

More information about our emergency planning [can be found on our website](#).

We have a quarterly Business Continuity meeting to provide direction and to oversee all aspects of business continuity management within the organisation to ensure that the Service continues to deliver its core services to communities and partners at all times and is resilient in adverse conditions.

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 replaces most fire safety legislation with one simple order. It means that any person who has some level of control within a premises must take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from fire and make sure people can safely escape if there is a fire. The Order applies to virtually all buildings, places and structures other than individual private dwellings, such as a family home or individual flats in a block.

Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007

The Emergencies (England) Order 2007 outlines the additional statutory duties of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 for fire authorities. The duty requires authorities, where provision of resources has been made by central government, to respond to incidents both within and outside the authority area involving Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear hazards (CBRN) and Urban Search and Rescue (USAR).

Localism Act 2011

The aim of the Act was to devolve more decision-making powers from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils. The Act covers a wide range of issues related to

local public services, with a particular focus on the general power of competence, community rights, neighbourhood planning and housing. The key measures of the Act are grouped under four main headings:

- New freedoms and flexibilities for local government
- New rights and powers for communities and individuals
- Reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective
- Reform to ensure decisions about housing are taken locally.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has published a plain English guide to the Localism Act, which [is available on the government's website](#).

Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in England. It was updated in May 2018.

The priorities within the 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 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 services they provide
- Develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

Full details of the Fire and Rescue National Framework can be found on [the Department for Communities and Local Government website](#).

Equality Act 2010

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Service must have due regard to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people of different protected characteristic groups.

Our progression in this area during 2020/21 will be published in our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion compliance report due out in December 2022.

Our IRMP and IRMP action plan set out objectives to ensure we continually improve in this area.

Policing and Crime Act 2017

This act has placed a statutory duty on all three emergency services to consider collaboration when entering into new agreements, in the interest of efficiency and effectiveness.

Within CFRS, these opportunities are monitored and assessed by the Blue Light Strategic Interoperability Board.

5. The communities we serve

Our community

The population estimate of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is approximately 894,300 according to 'Population and household estimates for England and Wales: Census 2021', the first release of results from the new Census data. This represents an increase of 11 per cent from the previous census in 2011. The population is 49 per cent male and 51 per cent female. The report also shows there are 362,100 households.

The social demography of Cambridgeshire varies considerably, with the cities of Peterborough and Cambridge being particularly multi-cultural and multi-racial with more than 16 per cent of the population from a non-white ethnic group (Census 2011 data). In comparison, the other four districts have a non-white population of between 2.9 per cent and 6.8 per cent. The number of migrant workers in both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has grown very quickly since 2004, with the Polish community now being one of the largest European groups in the county.

The population of Cambridgeshire is ageing with the number of people aged 65 and over accounting for 18 per cent of the population (157,815 people), based on Office for National Statistics Population Estimates. Those most at risk from a fatal fire in the home are vulnerable people aged 65 and over.

Further information on our communities can be found in our IRMP 2020-2024, [which is on our website](#).

We await with interest the next release of 2021 census data for more up to date information about our communities.

Our built environment

Cambridgeshire has a diverse and resilient economy. Situated in the heart of the East of England, Cambridge is less than one hour from London, just 20 minutes from London Stansted airport, which has excellent links to most major European cities and Cambridge also hosts its own private airport.

Cambridgeshire has good access to the national motorway network with the A1, A14 and M11 roads which provide superb connections to the Midlands, the North, London and the east coast ports of Felixstowe, Lowestoft, Ipswich, Great Yarmouth and Harwich.

In order to accommodate the expected increase in population, a number of new sustainable developments are under construction, including the country's first eco-town Northstowe, being built just five kilometres from the city of Cambridge.

Peterborough grew and developed rapidly in the seventies and eighties, following its designation as a 'new town' in 1968. Three new residential townships were developed with a full range of social and economic facilities and the fourth, Hampton, will continue this growth with over 5,000 homes and supporting infrastructure.

Our heritage

Cambridgeshire is a county of contrasts in the East of England. The county's towns and cities are steeped in history and have evolved over centuries. Cambridge is a university city of old streets, ancient colleges and bridges spanning the River Cam. Ely has a magnificent Norman cathedral and Huntingdon was the birthplace of Oliver Cromwell. Wisbech in the Fens has fine examples of Georgian street architecture whilst the Fens themselves are renowned for their impressive agricultural landscapes. The city of Peterborough is a mixture of the ancient and modern. The

renowned 11th century cathedral dominates the city centre landscape, with new townships sited around the existing urban centre.

Our natural environment

Cambridgeshire has a diverse natural environment, from gently undulating hills in the south of the county to the man-made landscape of the Fens in the northeast.

Covering an area of some 3,200 square kilometres, extending almost to the Wash in the north, Cambridgeshire is the most westerly county of East Anglia. It is a largely low lying area and the landscape is notably flat, with clay islands to the west and south east over soft chalk. Reclaimed fenland with rich peat beds, criss-crossed with man-made dykes, makes up the northern part of the county.

There are three principal rivers, the Nene in the north, the Cam to the south and the Great Ouse in the northwest.

6. How we serve our community

Our Service

The Service is run by a management team headed by the Chief Fire Officer (see page 11 for structure) and is currently governed by a Fire Authority, made up of 17 councillors from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Members of the Fire Authority can be found on page 10. Further details of the Fire Authority including committee structures and meeting dates [can be found on our website](#).

We currently operate from 27 fire stations across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Management, professional support departments and our Combined Fire Control are all based at our Service Headquarters in Huntingdon.

A map showing our fire stations [can be found on our website](#).

We employ 235 wholetime firefighters, including up to principal officers (establishment is 240) and 262 on-call firefighters. A total of 44 staff (establishment/full time equivalent is 36) operate our Combined Fire Control, mobilising appliances across Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Suffolk. 209 staff (110 full time equivalent) work in support roles across the Service in essential operational and business support functions, including Learning and organisational Development, Health and Safety, Recruitment, Property, Fleet and Equipment, Finance, Media and Communication and Human Resources.

We have a fleet of 36 fire engines, two rescue vehicles, two turntable ladder aerial appliances and a number of other specialist vehicles. More information about our vehicles and the equipment we use [can be found on our website](#).

Our values

We work to a set of key values that everyone is expected to incorporate into every aspect of their work.

These key values are:

- **Dignity** - our treatment of people should conform to a standard of behaviour that is socially acceptable to all members of the community we serve.
- **Respect** – we respect the differences in groups of personnel and the public and take into account the right for people to be different, valuing diversity rather than demeaning it.
- **Welcome** – we welcome people into the workplace and create a working environment that is open and inclusive, which offers help and support.

7. Achievements towards our strategic aims

Our vision and strategic aims

Our ultimate vision for the future is to create a safe community where there are no preventable deaths or injuries from fire or other emergencies.

Put simply, this means we want to reduce risk and save lives.

We will work towards our vision by putting the community and our staff at the heart of everything we do, striving for excellence both operationally and in how we approach community safety, and seeking to provide value for money in all areas.

These are therefore our strategic aims, which [can also be found on our website](#).

Integrated risk management plan (IRMP)

Our IRMP is our corporate plan and it focuses on how we plan to achieve our strategic aims. It is a public facing document covering a set period. This annual report looks at our achievements against the second year action plan of our current 2020-2024 IRMP.

Our IRMP identifies the key risks that may get in the way of us achieving our strategic aims, and it looks at the opportunities that may help us get there quicker. It then explains what action we will take to mitigate the risks and what we need to do to explore the opportunities that will help to further improve our Service.

From this, our corporate priorities emerge, which we list under the strategic aim they most relate to (many also impact on one or more other areas). We deliver these through a detailed action plan which sits alongside the IRMP and updates are discussed every three months by chief officers and the strategic leadership team. Progress against the plan is presented to the Fire Authority on a regular basis.

Risk modelling is used to assess the likelihood of fire and rescue related incidents using performance data from the last six years. The information enables us to compare performance year on year and assess the impact of change and events such as weather, legislation changes and situations such as Covid-19. The more we can understand about these impacts on our demand, the more we can improve our Service.

The current 2020-2024 IRMP, [can be found on our website](#).

Achievements against our IRMP 2020-2024

The next few pages outline what we delivered in 2021/2022 against the priorities in the IRMP, set out under each of the four strategic aims:

- People
- Operational excellence
- Community safety excellence
- Value for money

Each section starts by explaining what we are aiming to achieve for that strategic aim heading and then explains what we have done during the past year, how we have performed in key areas and includes a case study to evidence this.

People

What we're aiming for:

Working with our managers and staff to ensure our people are safe and the Service is accessible to everyone, meeting their needs and expectations, we:

- Continually strive to improve the service we deliver
- Listen and engage with staff, communities and our partners to improve what we do
- Develop our staff and encourage them to reach their potential.

To achieve this in 2021/22 we have:

- Focused on coaching and developing managers to understand their accountabilities, which has been particularly important as we have a number of managers new in role at all levels. This has also involved working to understand more about what factors that impact on employee engagement have changed as a result of the pandemic.
- Been working to procure a new partner to work with us on future engagement surveys, as our previous partner no longer operates in the UK market.
- We have been able to re-introduce opportunities for staff from across different areas of the Service to interact face-to-face once again, for example a series of leadership days for Heads of Group and opportunities for professional support staff to visit fire stations once again.
- Completed the roll out of mental health and wellbeing training to all staff and evaluated its impact. The training was well received, and we know there is ongoing work needed to end the stigma surrounding mental health. Several staff have shared their personal stories, which has been very impactful. We also received substantial assurance as to our wellbeing strategy and approach through an internal audit.
- Refreshed our Inclusion plan, including our approach to, and focus on, community inclusion to support the building of long-term relationships with our diverse communities. We have focused on maintaining and developing contacts with community leaders and groups and worked to be ready to engage in community events in a co-ordinated way as they begin to be rescheduled.
- Increased capacity in our Learning and Organisational Development team to enable us to focus on developing a framework to embed a coaching culture, and on refreshing our programme of short professional skills development. There has also been a focus on collaborating closely with colleagues in our operational training team to ensure full alignment and coordination across activities that support operational leader development. We have also run a further cohort of our development programmes for future leaders and middle leaders. We've evaluated how effective our collaboration with regional partners has been, with the results of this influencing our future plans.
- Continuing to embed an understanding of the value of quality conversations to enhance personal performance and development. We are working to ensure that everyone understands the value of quality conversations in multiple spheres, including for wellbeing and career potential and aspirations, as well as current performance and development. We have refreshed our strategic thinking and approach to embedding quality conversations, ready to launch and reframe in the organisation next year.
- Launched a new succession planning tool and have been collating data for the whole-time operational workforce initially, which will extend to the wider service next year. We have also been working to be ready to launch a new portfolio-based route to

promotion in 2022/23. We have also undertaken a review of the effectiveness of our various apprenticeship schemes, building recommendations into the new IRMP action plan as appropriate.

- Prepared to launch a new approach to wholetime recruitment, focusing on a 'rolling programme' rather than individual campaigns on an annual/bi-annual basis, which are very resource intensive. This is now ready to launch when our workforce planning indicates it is appropriate and necessary to. We have continued to assess candidate and assessor feedback following all recruitment activity and have made changes where appropriate. At the end of the year this has led to a fundamental re-design of our approach to professional support staff recruitment, in order to be able to compete for talent and skills in a very busy and candidate-driven post-Covid employment market, and we are already starting to see success with the new approach driving down time to hire and maximising our chances of not losing candidates in a fast-paced recruitment market.

Case study – Staff wellbeing during pandemic

The pandemic was a challenging time for our employees for a whole host of different reasons. People had anxieties about coming into work, concerns about loved ones and the added stresses of balancing work and childcare with schools closing, among others.

We knew that change had been forced on everyone, be that suddenly working from home or having to adapt to new PPE and procedures to ensure Covid safe working. We could also see the impact on our managers in ensuring the wellbeing of their teams and often being the people their team members would share their worries with.

So in January 2021, nine months on from the first lockdown, we ran an employee survey to see what impact, if any, the pandemic had had on colleagues mental health and wellbeing and how they felt about working for us during the pandemic.

Shortly after the survey closed, we used a specialist training company to run mandatory mental health and wellbeing training for managers to help them support their teams and give them the confidence to have the right conversations and recognise the signs that someone may need additional support. The results of the survey were used to inform the training sessions and further online training sessions were made available for additional learning.

Following the employee survey an action plan was put in place to address some of the areas where we felt we could make improvements. This included starting a review of the way we supported colleagues following traumatic incidents, including training for managers in leading effective conversations with their teams post critical events. We have also promoted the different ways people can seek support as it was evident not everyone knew where to find this information.

For some employees who had been working from home, there had been positive changes to their work/life balance and this was considered in our decisions around how we continue to work once all Covid restrictions had been lifted.

John Fagg, Head of Occupational Health, commented: "The wellbeing of our employees is hugely important to us and the pandemic has had a significant impact on the mental health of everyone, adding more stress, anxiety, pressure and uncertainty for people. The survey allowed us to understand what had changed for people and actually there were some benefits in how we were working that were having a positive impact on people's wellbeing and it was just as important for us to acknowledge this too.

“There were some significant pieces of work added to the action plan following the survey, which also included delivering personal resilience sessions for our professional support teams, and we’ll continue to implement these next year as well as continue to monitor how employees are feeling as we come out of the pandemic.”

Operational Excellence

What we’re aiming for:

Working with our managers and staff to ensure the highest standards of operational response we:

- Have competent, confident and skilled staff
- Have the right skills, equipment and resources in the right places
- Have a learning culture looking to continually improve the way we deliver our services.

To achieve this in 2021/22 we have:

- Continued to align operational resources to our risk and demand through the Operational Response Review project. This began in 2021 and takes a broader view of how we utilise our operational resources. The outcomes of the project are likely to highlight opportunities to use our resources in a smarter way to meet our changing and growing risk and demand profiles.
- Extended co-responding to two more on-call fire stations, with plans in place to further increase this to more stations where appropriate, in consultation with the East of England Ambulance Service Trust. Co-responding crews attend cardiac arrest 999 calls to administer immediate life-saving intervention until ambulance crews arrive.
- Introduced different training courses for new recruits that offer on-call colleagues greater flexibility.
- Revised the recruitment process to reduce the time it takes for someone expressing an interest in joining the on-call service to getting them onto a course.
- Purchased four new fire appliances that will be cascaded through the fleet in the coming year. We have also reviewed the number of vehicles we have and reduced it by a third. Building on our commitment to modern technology and move towards sustainability, we have started to introduce electric vehicles into our pool fleet, with charging points installed at key locations.
- Continued to embed changes within National Operational Guidance into our training and guidance documentation by working alongside regional partners to align procedures where possible. We have also commissioned an external audit to review and provide feedback.
- Continued to progress the project to build the new training facility and fire station in Huntingdon. This is progressing well and to schedule, with staff actively engaged in the design and build of the new facilities. Plans are in place for these to open later this year.
- Successfully completed our enhanced training buildings at St Neots and Wisbech, with work well underway with the training facility at Ely.
- Reviewed the provision of our firefighter recruit training and from 2023 we will undertake all new wholetime recruit training in house at our new training facility in Huntingdon.
- Developed our assurance across all operational areas to ensure a high level of performance and support the continued development of staff. The processes have been

reviewed and contracts been put in place to provide external verification and learning. This supports the ongoing assurance of our operational training and development of our staff. Supporting this we work within a newly established regional operational assurance group to share and review learning.

Case study – Enhanced first aid training rolled out to provide better casualty care

The Service has enhanced its first aid capabilities by rolling out enhanced casualty care training to all wholetime crews and some on-call firefighters.

Pre-Hospital Emergency Medicine (PHEM) level D was initially introduced for operational colleagues at Cambridge, Dogsthorpe and Stanground in the last financial year. This gave crews an additional immediate emergency care qualification, being trained to administer advanced life supporting first aid, to help provide support for casualties at incidents. Some additional places were also offered to firefighters at on-call stations.

After reviewing the data for the incidents we've attended where first aid was provided, the PHEM D training provision was extended to crews at Ely, Huntingdon, St Neots and Wisbech. It was also open to on-call firefighters at Chatteris and March, who carry out co-responding to cardiac arrest incidents with the ambulance service. The PHEM D course consists of pre-course study and two days of training, followed by an assessment day.

Crews at other stations have received PHEM training to level A, which is basic life supporting first aid.

Providing the additional training means more firefighters are fully qualified, accredited to a high standard, to assist patients in an emergency situation.

With the upgraded training, fire engines were kitted out with enhanced equipment. In addition to standard first aid kits, the new PHEM D bags include eye gels and a pelvic binding splint.

The kits that were previously on the fire engines have been put to good use. Staff have arranged for them to be donated to assist medics helping the conflict in Ukraine, as well as to youth football clubs.

Community safety excellence

What we're aiming for:

Working in partnership with agencies such as local authorities, district councils, police and health authorities, we:

- Understand the risk in our communities
- Are inclusive in our approach and tailor our services to meet the needs of our diverse communities
- Work with partner agencies in a targeted, proactive and effective manner and are perceived as a key contributor to community safety
- Have a high level of customer satisfaction in our activities.

To achieve this in 2021/22 we have:

- Further collaborated with the Care Quality Commission to identify care homes that may need prioritising for fire safety auditing.
- Introduced and promoted a new online home safety check tool in partnership with the National Fire Chiefs Council.

- Partnered with Anglian Water to gather data referrals for vulnerable residents for Safe and Well visits, with a similar agreement being explored with Cadent Gas and UK Power Networks. This partnership approach is being looked at by other services who are interested in embedding similar agreements (see case study below).
- Used data provided by health partners to target Safe and Well visits for residents who have been given a hospital bed and are therefore more likely to be vulnerable in a house fire situation due to their immobility issues.
- Continued with our Firebreak youth intervention programme, while also trialling a condensed one-day version. We are working on identifying where we can work to support those most in need of this programme.
- Collaborated with East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) lead on water safety, in a joint educational presentation featuring our Jet the Dragon stories, bringing to life important safety messages for children.
- Continued to work with local authority building control and housing to ensure that buildings are safe from fire and responded to requests from other agencies where fire safety issues are identified, and enforcement may be required.
- Worked with water companies and planning officers to ensure that hydrants are installed on new developments.
- Worked with Vision Zero to help drive down road deaths. We delivered a number of Biker Down sessions to motorcycle riders and continue to host these at our fire stations.

Case study – New partnership to help reach vulnerable people

The Service entered into a new partnership with Anglian Water to reach out to those most vulnerable in the community and help keep them safe and continue to enjoy independence.

The agreement involves sharing data securely to support residents with fire safety advice, as well as general safety and wellbeing.

Using the data provided, the Service can offer those vulnerable residents a free Safe and Well visit, which are carried out by community safety officers and firefighters across the county. The data provided includes better contact information, meaning residents can be informed in advance that they can have a visit, saving time for operational crews who would otherwise be attending without an appointment.

Anglian Water provide the details of vulnerable residents that are signed up for their Priority Services Register, which offers a wide range of practical support from help in the event of an incident to extra protection against bogus callers and scams.

Station Commander James Ball said: “The joint working and notable example of interoperability has been the product of months of work. We understand this to be one of the first two-way data share agreements in the country involving a fire and rescue service and utilities provider. This partnership is highlighting how we can safely and responsibly share data to better reach the most vulnerable residents of Cambridgeshire to offer them the support they want and need.

“It’s an excellent step forwards and we hope this will lay the foundation and set the precedent for setting up similar agreements with other partners and will go a long way to helping us ensure we are doing all we can to prevent fires happening, particularly in the most at-risk groups.”

Before this agreement was in place, operational crews would attend visits in their local area without making contact with the resident in advance. This is due to the data not including any contact details. The details provided by the partnership include this so residents can now be contacted prior to the visit to make sure the crews visit at a convenient time.

Anglian Water's Customer Services Partnership Manager, Bethanie Kennedy said "We're incredibly proud to be working in partnership with Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service. We want to make sure our customers are supported, and this is a great example of how effective partnerships can benefit those most in need, with minimal effort on the customer's part.

"Making sure all customers have access to our services is essential and it is vital that we know who may need extra help should there be any interruptions to water supplies. We want to ensure that our customers who need some additional support are signed up to our Priority Services Register."

Value for money

What we're aiming for:

Working with our managers and staff to ensure we deliver high quality, value for money services, including:

- Actively seeking collaborations
- Having effective and efficient working practices
- Continuously monitoring how we are performing, sharing what we do with others and taking best practice from others.

To achieve this in 2021/22 we have:

- Continued to support the Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme, run by the Home Office, and responded to all requests for information or actions within the required timescales. We have been mostly conducting coverage testing in this financial year. This programme has seen several delays.
- Installed new equipment and completed Site Acceptance Testing for our new mobilising system. We have reviewed all the functionality of the system and completed key system connections. The project is making positive progress; however, it has been impacted by the Covid pandemic and the inability to meet face to face with our suppliers until recently.
- Progressed work to migrate the existing STEP (automating) technology to a new cloud provider. This has allowed the Service greater flexibility to manage the required upgrade processes. The team also delivers key systems integrations to enable accurate data to flow across the organisation and reduce data administration activities. Significant activity has been focused on our on-call payment processes.
- Continued to rollout the full suite of Microsoft Office 365 to improve access to resources from any location, while also improving virtual meetings and collaboration with partners and external agencies. Significant support has been provided to wider Service projects, including the new mobilising system.
- Regularly reviewed spending across departments by the Commercial Team through many ways, including analysing off contract spend in existing contracts, third party spend through the finance system to identify where contractual arrangements should be put in place, opportunities for rationalising the supply base by aggregation of spend and ensuring contractual arrangements are delivering against requirements.

- Collaborated with Essex Fire and Rescue Service to improve safeguarding (see case study below).

Case study – Safeguarding collaboration with neighbouring service brings savings and expertise

The Service signed a new agreement that sees the provision of safeguarding oversight delivered by Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS).

Having lost many years of experience through staff retirement, there was an opportunity to review our structures and the way we deliver safeguarding across the organisation.

Signing a memorandum of understanding with ECFRS made an efficiency saving for the Service, while also providing professional leadership around safeguarding from the experienced Essex team.

The agreement means the Essex team would ensure the Service is and remains compliant with all relevant legislation and regulations, including the new Safeguarding Fire Standard. They would also ensure that all safeguarding issues are dealt with in line with the CFRS policy.

We are currently recruiting a safeguarding coordinator that will work to the Essex safeguarding team to deal with all safeguarding issues.

“We meet regularly with the team and are in regular contact to ensure any issues relating to safeguarding are dealt with.”

“The aim of this initial trial is to establish a new structure and look for other services to come on board with a more regional approach in the near future, using the same model. The trial has been successful so far and we already have other services looking to join this collaboration.”

Quote from Jon Anderson - Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Our performance data

We collect lots of data to help us understand how we are performing compared to previous years. Factors such as the weather or events like the prolonged lockdowns we’ve experienced over the last year can greatly impact the number of fires and other emergencies we attend, and year on year numbers of incidents in each of the categories can fluctuate. We monitor our data carefully and report on it quarterly to seek to understand any underlying causes or factors that we are able to influence to reduce numbers or improve our service. Appreciating there will always be different factors that cause fluctuations year on year, we look at trends over a number of years as a better way of assessing our performance, aiming to achieve a downward trend in the number of incidents.

In our IRMP we set out the main performance areas we monitor that help us understand the progress we are making against the IRMP. Behind the scenes, we analyse much more data than this, but these are the headline data sets.

How we performed in 2021/22

We have three performance measures relating to how long it takes our fire crews to get to an emergency. These are:

- We will respond to the most serious incidents within an average of nine minutes in urban areas and 12 minutes in rural areas, for the first fire engine in attendance
- We will respond to all incidents in our authority area within 18 minutes for the first fire engine in attendance, 95 per cent of the time.

Over this year we have responded to the most critical incidents in urban areas in 7.36 minutes, which is 84 seconds quicker than our measure of 9 minutes.

Rural attendance times have exceeded our measure of 12 minutes by 14 seconds. Rural attendance analysis continues to show that non-addressable locations, driven by vehicle and fire incidents, are a barrier to meeting our rural attendance measure as no precise location is given, so crews have to try and find the incident from the limited information given by the caller. We continue to exceed our measure of having a fire engine arrive within 18 minutes on 95 per cent of occasions.

There has been an increase in total fires this year compared to last year, however last year was impacted by the pandemic. If we compare to 2018, 2019 and 2020 the total is less than these years.

There has been a 4 per cent increase in primary fires compared with last year, however the rolling 5 year figure is down by 11 per cent. There has been a 12 per cent increase of secondary fires on the previous call year and again, looking at the rolling 5 year data, this year is down by 5 per cent.

We have seen 5 fire deaths this call year which is the same as last year. Of these, 3 fatalities occurred in dwellings and 2 occurred in vehicles.

Fire casualties are similar across the rolling 5 years, with the exception of the peak 4 years ago. Of the 43 casualties this year, 34 occurred in the home, 3 in a work place, 2 in vehicles, 3 outdoors and 1 in a boat.

We have attended 382 road traffic collisions in this call year, this is higher than the previous year but lower than the rolling 5 years. There have been 392 people killed or seriously injured in this call year. This is up by 3 per cent against the rolling 5 years. This is from a police dataset and the last 12 months is provisional data.

We have attended 1,433 Special Services incidents this year. This is a 37 per cent increase on the rolling 5 years. Of these 537 incidents were assisting other agencies. The largest contributors to this are an increase in co-responding and assisting other agencies (66 per cent increase across 5 years), making safe and advising on non-environmental flooding (100 per cent increase), rescue of trapped wild animals (64 per cent increase), and attempted suicides (34 per cent increase).

We have seen 109 accidental non-domestic fires this year. This is comparable with the numbers over the previous 5 years. There was a pause in the completion of business engagements undertaken by watches during the pandemic, with 16 business engagements reported in the previous year's figures. However, the fire protection team have actively supported businesses within the community and have carried out both face to face and desktop audits. This year we have conducted 408 business engagements.

Our workforce diversity

Of those applying for a role with Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, 11.3 per cent of applicants were from black and minority ethnic communities (8.3 per cent of on-call applicants and 15.7 per cent of support applicants). This unfortunately does not translate through to the percentage of new recruits into the Service who are from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. We are working to identify where specifically within our recruitment processes we need to target our ongoing positive action activities.

From the total, 29.1 per cent of all applicants were female, with 15 per cent of on-call applicants being female. This led to 15 per cent of new on-call recruits being female. Overall, 32.7 per cent of

all new recruits were female – this is higher than the current proportion of female staff in our workforce, having a positive impact on our workforce profile.

More than 5 per cent of applicants declared having a religion or belief other than Christianity recruiting in 1.9 per cent of all new recruits, an increase from 0 per cent last year.

Almost 10 per cent of new recruits recorded themselves as LGBTQIA+ compared to 2.7 per cent last year. Applicants declaring identifying as LGBTQIA+ was 40 per cent.

Our full-time equivalent workforce is 531.4, compared to 575.5 last year. The number of operational staff has decreased by 30 over the past 12 months, to bring the workforce back in line with the agreed establishment and eliminating the over-establishment that we have had in place over the past couple of years. This has been a managed process to retain experiences and provide opportunity for skills transfer. Headcount is 619 compared to 639 last year.

The proportion of staff from black and minority ethnic communities is now 2.7 per cent, which equates to 20 compared with 26 last year. Around a quarter (24 per cent) of the workforce overall is female, with 8.7 per cent of the operational workforce. Women make up 22.9 per cent of managers across the Service, including 4.8 per cent of operational managers. Control managers are 81 per cent female, and 57 per cent of support staff are female.

8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We are committed to continuous improvement of equality and inclusion in both our service delivery and within the workplace.

To do this, and in compliance with our public service equality duty, we set ourselves objectives in our Equality Strategy 2018-20 that detail what we are going to do to achieve improved equality outcomes for our communities and staff. Since then, we have incorporated these objectives into our Integrated Risk Management Plan.

Below are the objectives listed within the strategic aims:

People Excellence

- Continue work to develop our organisational culture and to enhance employee engagement
- Develop and improve the ways in which we support the mental health and wellbeing of our staff
- Improve the diversity of our workforce
- Expand our programme of development activities to prepare employees for future roles and opportunities
- Embed an understanding of the value of quality conversations to enhance personal performance and development
- Strengthen our understanding of succession planning needs
- Continual review of our recruitment and promotion processes to provide equality of opportunity and remove any unnecessary barriers to people joining or progressing their careers within the Service.

Community Safety Excellence

- Reduce community risk by identifying and reaching those most at risk of fire
- Develop our Firebreak programme to support the safety, health and personal development of identified young people (CYP)
- Offer early intervention and positively influence children and younger people
- Support businesses to comply with regulation, and ultimately create safer places to live, work and visit
- Effectively keep the community safe and well.

Highlights of our achievements last year:

People Excellence

- We revised our methods of providing leaders with the resources to improve their team's level of engagement
- We resourced our People Partner Team to support and coach line managers and station-based employees
- We embedded the Personal and Leadership Development Framework for employees to adopt behaviours, which will support their development
- We reviewed the feedback from the Affinity at Work mental wellbeing and engagement survey and embedded the results in our strategy going forward
- We regularly promoted our visions for our culture, which included considerations around the impact of COVID-19
- We are ensuring that employee feedback from engagement events and visits are captured effectively, and that employees are kept informed of the outcomes
- We embedded content of all pillars of engagement into the Learning and Organisational Development Team's programme of activities and interventions
- We ensured that our data is visible and easy to access for all employees

- We appointed and embedded a new Mental Health and Wellbeing Advisor to launch the mental health and wellbeing plan and support our efforts in ending the stigma surrounding mental health
- We designed and evaluated Affinity at Work sessions to support managers in understanding mental health and wellbeing
- We supported employees in the transition to normality post-COVID-19
- We have created and embedded an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan
- We have reviewed professional support recruitment
- We confirmed the funding for a fixed-term employment contract to help deliver the Inclusion Plan
- We continued to embed a coaching culture into the Service, with both formal and informal coaching
- We have explored opportunities for further collaboration between Learning and Organisational Development Team and the Service's Training Centre
- We revised our approach to include a blend of e-Learning and in-person learning interventions for personal leadership and management development
- We have scoped a development pathway for new managers to provide them with resources and support
- We have designed and delivered sessions to support management develop around the core people processes, especially with regards to decision-making
- We reviewed Performance Development Reviews to explore if they are meeting the identified needs of the organisation and employees
- We have developed a new succession matrix and we are now collecting succession data to analyse
- We have developed portfolios to support operational employees with development and promotions
- We have reviewed our assessment and verification model
- We have reviewed the co-ordination of apprenticeship activity in the Service
- We have scoped a new mentoring programme to support talent management and succession planning
- We developed an internal shadowing programme to provide insight into senior roles
- We plan for our operational promotion processes to be updated to become a development-based route
- We developed our approach to enable structured feedback to be given to candidates
- We continued to contact unsuccessful candidates to provide support and understand where barriers can be removed to encourage successful re-application
- We embedded feedback from candidates to consider how best to implement our recruitment and assessment processes after COVID-19 restrictions
- We kept engaged with external organisations to re-embed work experience once lockdown restrictions were lifted.

Community Safety Excellence

- We have successfully resumed Firebreak and we have experienced positive results
- We have ensured that Firebreak is safe and efficiently resourced during and after the COVID-19 pandemic
- We have engaged with the Firebreak brand to reduce risk and promote
- We continued to work towards national Children and Young People objectives
- We continued to use our Safety Zone product digitally
- We regularly conducted business webinars, including additional sessions, to reach a wider audience

- We have resumed safe and well visits and proposed developments to engage with customer conversation and online tools
- We have expanded our community safety visits to target those most at risk of flooding
- We have established a regional Resilience group to share best practices.

Equality Impact Assessments

We continued to complete Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA). Here are some examples of the more detailed EQIAs that were completed in this reporting period:

- Lone working – we identified the need for a new policy, guidance, devices, recording and applications. A working group completed the EQIA which led to a successful procurement of new devices and applications that have now been implemented. The EQIA included involving the inclusion network.
- Bikes – we listened to feedback from fire protection employees at one site who recommended using bikes to get to premises to undertake inspections as it would be quicker and more environmentally friendly than driving in a city. The EQIA explored potential impacts on sex, age, pregnancy and disability and included the Female Operational working group.
- Operational Assurance – the Operational Support Group reviewed the approach to operational assurance and, as part of this work, completed an EQIA that included the neurodiversity working group.
- Re-launch of coaching mindset modules – the Learning and Organisational team reviewed the materials prior to sending them to all employees and completed an EQIA on the format and content.

9. Partnerships and collaborations

We recognise that we are better able to achieve our aims and objectives across all areas of the Service by collaborating and working in partnership with other agencies with similar aims and goals – these include other emergency services and public sector organisations, charities, voluntary groups and other fire and rescue services.

Not only does this improve the service we each deliver, but in tough economic times it makes financial sense to remove duplication and share resources.

Partnership working is embedded across the Service in all departments, from how we investigate fires and drive down arson and road traffic collisions, to planning for big events and dealing with disasters and day to day incidents.

We have many active collaborations ongoing across the Service. Some of them save us money, others help provide resilience or bring additional benefits we wouldn't otherwise have been able to achieve. Other collaborations may cost us more but may have additional benefits to us or to the wider community which makes it a worthwhile investment.

Examples of some of our collaborations are:

Combined Fire Control with Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service

This year saw the tenth anniversary of our Combined Fire Control. Working in partnership with Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, we became the first fire and rescue service to prove that the concept of combined control room works. All 999 calls for both Suffolk and Cambridgeshire are answered by control operators based at our headquarters in Huntingdon and operators mobilise fire engines and resources for both fire and rescue services. Through this agreement, each service saves approximately £400,000 each year.

Mutual Aid Agreements

The Fire Authority has mutual aid agreements with each of the seven neighbouring fire and rescue services whereby:

- In the event of a significant emergency, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority can request additional resources from a neighbouring fire authority.
- Should the location of an emergency be closer to a fire engine from a neighbouring authority, a request will be made for that fire engine to attend the incident.
- Specialist equipment and trained personnel can also be requested from other fire and rescue services to attend significant emergencies in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

In the event of a national emergency elsewhere in the country, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority has a high volume pump, to support a large scale flooding incident, that can be deployed to assist those in need. We also jointly manage a third vehicle, which is the Eastern Region's Detection, Identification and Monitoring (DIM) vehicle which provides a 24/7 response capability for deployment in the early stages of a major incident involving chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials. This vehicle is operated by Essex Fire and Rescue Service but the specialist officers who run the equipment come from both Cambridgeshire and Essex fire services.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Resilience Forum (LRF)

Local Resilience Forums aim to plan and prepare for localised incidents and catastrophic emergencies. They work to identify potential risks and produce emergency plans to either prevent or mitigate the impact of any incident on their local communities. Our senior managers are actively

engaged in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Resilience Forum, which is chaired by our chief fire officer. The Service has fully supported and participated in the development of an agreed risk profile for the local area through the community risk register, in partnership with police and ambulance services, local authorities, NHS England, Public Health England, the Environment Agency and the military.

The LRF has worked tirelessly over the last two years to coordinate the strategic and tactical response to the pandemic to ensure a coordinated effort by all partners.

Shared ICT Service with Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Our ICT Shared Service provides ICT support to both Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire fire and rescue services. The shared service brought together staff from both services' ICT teams, who started working as one team from July 2013, to bring resilience and improved ways of working to both services.

Cambridge Water Safety Partnership

Cambridgeshire Water Safety Partnership was established in December 2018, initially funded by CFRS and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). The partnership has been set up with the vision of reducing all preventable water related deaths and injuries through education, training and engagement. Other partners include Peterborough City Council, Cambridge City Council, Conservators of the River Cam, Great Ouse Boating Association, Beds, Cambs and Herts Joint Protective Services, East of England Ambulance Service, MAGPAS Air Ambulance, Environment Agency, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), the Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS), and the Samaritans.

Safeguarding provision with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

The Service entered into an agreement to share safeguarding expertise with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. The staff infrastructure in place at Essex is now open to Cambridgeshire managers for support and access to resources. This has provided both resilience and a cost saving. More information about this new collaboration can be found on page 22.

Sharing facilities with ambulance service

Staff can now utilise facilities in Melbourn, South Cambridgeshire thanks to a collaboration with the East of England Ambulance Service Trust. Crews in the area will be able to use the Hazardous Area Response Team base to stop off or be based if needed.

NHS Blood and Transplant

We offer our fire stations for free to NHS Blood and Transplant to run blood donation sessions. This saves them money not having to hire other venues in some areas of the county and we promote our home safety services and fire prevention advice to waiting donors.

10. Financial performance and governance

Ensuring we have an efficient service that offers value for money, underpins everything we do. Although the pressures on our budget through a continued real term reduction in government grant since 2010 have been felt across the Service, with innovative thinking and more collaborative working, as well as the support from our communities and staff, we have managed to find the necessary savings each year to ensure a balanced budget.

It gets tougher each time we need to find savings as we are now a lean organisation and have been recognised as an effective and efficient Service by HMICFRS. Any future budget cuts are likely to be felt hard, especially with the country experiencing high inflation and a cost of living crisis, exacerbated by the war in Ukraine.

Where our money comes from and how much we spent

The Fire Authority's total net expenditure was £28,713,000. This is made up of £33,782,000 (expenditure) less £5,069,000 (other income). £21,683,000 was collected from council tax payers, which amounted to £73.53 a year for a Band D council tax household. This equates to £1.41 a week – less than the price of a four pint carton of milk.

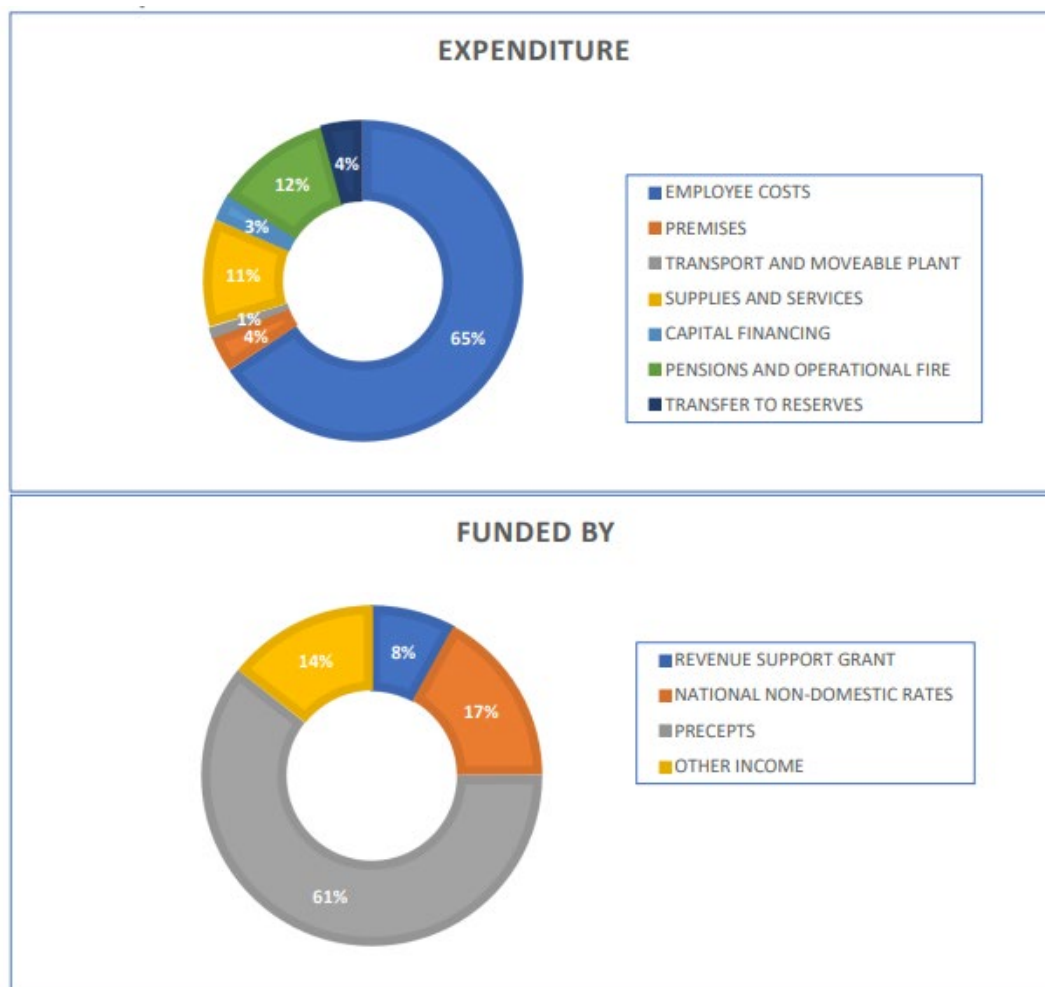
The table below shows the breakdown of where our funding comes from and how we spent it.

Please note these are draft accounts as our independent audit has not taken place yet.

Description	Revised budget £000's	Actual to date £000's	Variance £000's	Variance %
Full time firefighters	13,169	13,218	49	0%
Control room staff	1,677	1,749	72	4%
Local government employees	3,441	3,304	-137	-4%
Senior management	3,696	3,624	-72	-2%
Recruitment and training	777	541	-236	-30%
Fire allowances	681	697	18	2%
EMPLOYEE COSTS	23,441	23,133	-308	-1%
Property maintenance	351	399	48	14%
Insurance	74	46	-28	-38%
Energy costs	320	255	-65	-20%
Cleaning	61	46	-15	-25%
Rents and rates	614	559	-55	-9%
PREMISES	1,420	1,305	-115	-8%
Car and cycle allowances	69	46	-23	-33%
Vehicle running expenses	177	186	9	5%
Vehicle insurance	179	140	-39	-22%
TRANSPORT AND MOVEABLE PLANT	425	372	-53	-12%
Office expenses	315	178	-137	-43%
IT and communications equipment	2,235	1,625	-610	-27%
Fire equipment	361	335	-26	-7%
Uniforms and clothing	394	285	-109	-28%
Other supplies and services	2,034	1,434	-600	-29%
SUPPLIES AND SERVICES	5,339	3,857	-1,482	-28%

Debt charges	1,266	976	-290	-23%
External interest	-90	-20	70	-78%
CAPITAL FINANCING	1,176	956	-220	-19%
CONTROLLABLE EXPENDITURE	31,801	29,623	-2,178	-7%
Other income	-1,938	-1,856	82	-4%
Other Government grants	-1,802	-3,193	-1,391	77%
CONTROLLABLE INCOME	-3,740	-5,049	-1,309	35%
NET CONTROLLABLE EXPENDITURE	28,061	24,574	-3,487	-12%
Pensions – lump sums	660	981	321	49%
Operational fire budget	3,329	3,158	-171	-5%
SAFETY-NETTED EXPENDITURE	3,989	4,139	150	4%
NET EXPENDITURE	32,050	28,713	-3,337	-10%
Grant/precept income	-30,683	-30,201	482	
Transfers to/from earmarked reserves	-1,367	1,453	2,820	
CONTRIBUTIONS	-32,050	-28,748	3,302	
CONTRIBUTION TO GENERAL RESERVE	-0	-35	-35	

This information is also shown below in two pie graphs:



Key Budget points

Uncommitted money that was underspent has been used to help finance capital spending and reduce our borrowing requirement. The Service has also implemented a Finance Business Continuity Reserve of £1 million to provide support with anticipated financial pressures due to increased inflation and higher than expected global energy and goods prices expected over the coming months and the longer-term.

What we own

Our assets include (as of March 2022):

Buildings

• Fire headquarters and operational buildings	29
• Staff houses	5
○ Total	34

Vehicles and Plant

• Fire engines (including rescue pumps)	36
• Aerial appliances	2
• Rescue vehicles	2
• Other special appliances	5
• Reserve and training appliances	6
• Other vehicles	101
○ Total	152

*Operational staff from Papworth Fire station have been relocated to Cambourne Fire Station from May 2022 and the land and buildings in Papworth will be put up for Sale during 2022/23. The Service is also currently building a new fire station and training centre in Huntingdon and will relocate to this new Station in 2022/23 with the old Huntingdon Fire Station being put up for sale once the build has been completed.

Capital Spending

The Authority has purchase 11 provided and non-operational vehicles in 2021/22 totalling £300,000. The Fire Authority has committed to purchase seven fire appliances over the next 18 months totalling £1,746,000.

The Authority has carried out property works to existing properties and has invested in new a fire station and training centre, which will be completed in 2022/23.

The Authority has carried out a technical refresh of breathing apparatus equipment and purchased new personal issue dry suits for operational crews totalling £200,000.

The Authority has purchased ICT systems and hardware and is currently upgrading the communications equipment used within the control room.

Financial governance

Each year we publish sets of accounts for public consumption. These documents explain our financial performance over a given financial year which always runs from April 1 to March 31. Recent versions of these documents are [available on our website](#).

External audit

The Fire Authority has external auditors appointed by central government to assess its financial standing. The Authority's appointed auditor, BDO LLP, undertakes an annual audit of the financial

standing of the Fire Authority. The auditors are required, under the Code of Audit Practice, to highlight all issues of significance arising from an audit, in the form of an annual audit letter.

Due to significant backlogs, the external audit won't be taking place until later in the year, with the results not being available until the first quarter of 2023.

Governance matters

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority has arrangements with an external auditor to audit the governance arrangements of the Authority. The Authority undertakes an annual assessment of the governance arrangements using the principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)/Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. The external auditor also undertakes their assessment of compliance against these standards.

We have not received the outcome of our annual governance statement of the Authority for 21/22 yet, however, the 2020/21 assessment can be accessed on our website. The external auditor's opinion confirmed assurance in the governance arrangements.

Internal audit

The Fire Authority appoints internal auditors to ensure its internal systems of control are appropriate. Reports and recommendations arising from these audits are taken to the Fire Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee before being presented to full Fire Authority for consideration and approval.

Financial transparency

The Local Government Transparency Code 2015 is a tool to embed transparency in local authorities, which includes fire and rescue authorities and sets out the minimum data that local authorities should be publishing, the frequency it should be published and how it should be published. To streamline and simplify access to this information, our website includes a specific Transparency section - a link for which can be found in the footer of each webpage.

11. How we compare nationally

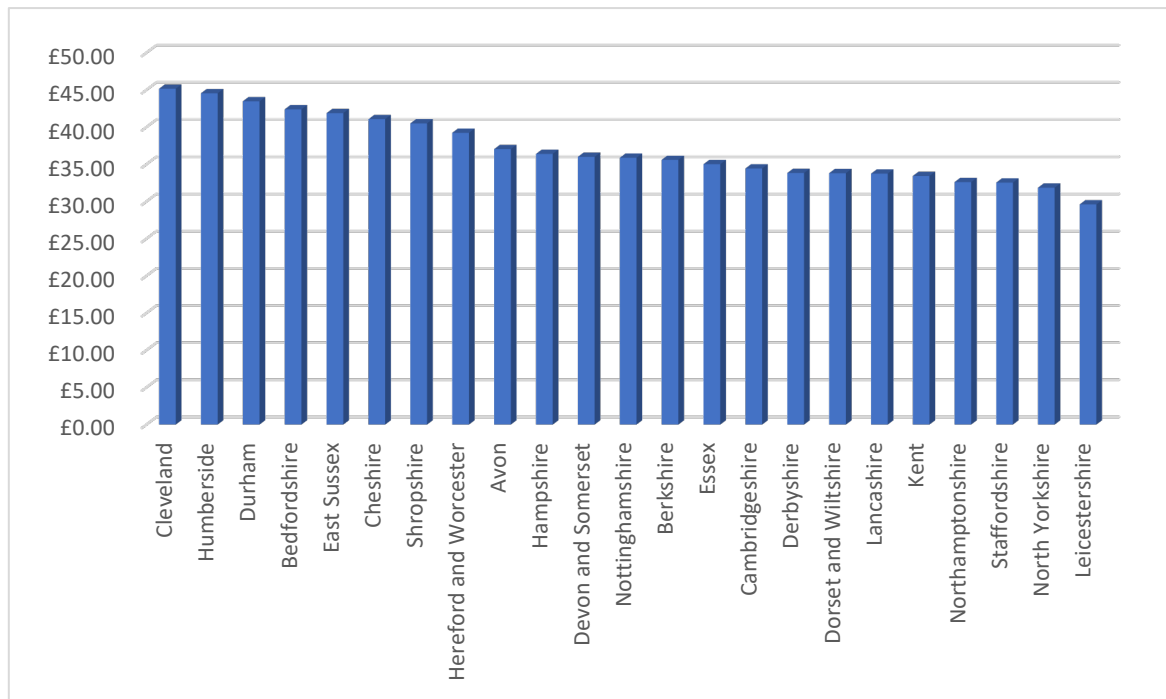
All public bodies must now make difficult decisions about priorities and find more efficient and innovative ways of delivering their responsibilities.

In our 2021 HMICFRS inspection, we were awarded 'Good' in the Value for Money assessment. The report did highlight that we could improve our medium-term financial planning and we're currently making sure our documentation for this is more robust.

The table below details how much each fire and rescue service costs to operate per head of population over the last financial year. Note not all services are included in the table.

Fire and rescue service	Cost per head of population 2020/21
Cleveland	£45.16
Humberside	£44.55
Durham	£43.47
Bedfordshire	£42.39
East Sussex	£41.88
Cheshire	£41.06
Shropshire	£40.50
Hereford and Worcester	£39.23
Avon	£37.04
Hampshire	£36.39
Devon and Somerset	£36.00
Nottinghamshire	£35.87
Berkshire	£35.60
Essex	£35.01
Cambridgeshire	£34.44
Derbyshire	£33.83
Dorset and Wiltshire	£33.80
Lancashire	£33.74
Kent	£33.43
Northamptonshire	£32.60
Staffordshire	£32.54
North Yorkshire	£31.85
Leicestershire	£29.60

The information in the table is also displayed in the graph below:



12. Our HMICFRS inspection results

In the Spring of 2021, we underwent another full inspection by HMICFRS – the organisation appointed by the government to inspect all fire and rescue services .

We were rated as Good in all three areas, and we were up there with the best performers in the first tranche of inspections. What made this outcome more pleasing is that our inspection came after a challenging year dealing with the pandemic, just as we were coming out of the second lockdown.

The inspection team commented on the positive and constructive way that we engaged with the inspection. It found that overall we are doing a good job, that we are effective and efficient at keeping people safe and secure from fire, and we look after our people well.

It recognised that we prioritise the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our staff and it was pleasing to read that colleagues from all levels of the organisation told the inspection team that it is a great place to work.

The report also recognises our investment in continuous improvement. The inspection team found marked improvements since its last inspection, notably in how we learn from operational incidents, share risk information with other fire and rescue services and partners, and evaluate our prevention and protection activities.

The report also highlights areas in which we can continue to improve and we welcome this feedback. Many of these are around assuring what we do or more clearly linking activities to our risk management plan. We will review these and build them into our action plan for the next 12 months.

The three main areas they looked at were:

- How effective are we at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
- How efficient are we at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
- How well do we look after our people?

There are four possible outcomes in the judgement criteria:

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires Improvement
- Inadequate (serious or critical failings in policy, practice or performance).

Our full report [can be found on the HMICFRS website, together with our 2018 inspection report in which we also achieved Good in all three areas.](#)

13. Planning and future priorities

Our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) provides full details of how we plan for the future, how we set our priorities and what those priorities are until 2024.

The draft IRMP went out for public consultation at the end of 2019 and was presented to the Fire Authority in March 2020 for final agreement. We began the action plan to deliver the first year of the IRMP in April 2020 and continue to work through the priorities.

This annual report looks back on our progress against the action plan for the second year of the current IRMP.

The full 2020-2024 IRMP is [available to view on our website.](#)

14. Letters of appreciation

Each week we get letters, cards and posts on our social media sites thanking our staff for the many great things they do including attending incidents and events, visiting homes to provide safety advice and delivering awareness sessions.

Our staff appreciate every letter, card and comment they receive and it is always heart-warming to see the difference our staff and the service we provide makes to people.

Here is a small selection of some we have received this year:

A huge thanks to all of those at Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service who helped to put out a fire at one of our managed HMO properties this weekend. Thankfully all fire safety provisions and tests on the property were complete and up to date so the fire service were alerted quickly and no one was injured. Property compliance and safety is so important and should be a priority for landlords and managing agents.

A letting agent in Cambridge

Stanground Fire Station did a virtual station visit for my Rainbows and Brownies from Hampton. I want to sing their praises please to everyone possible as it was a brilliant session and the girls were all very excited about what they have learnt.

We have had many messages from parents about what a brilliant session it was, and us leaders can't believe it was only their second virtual session!

I think my favourite question from the girls was 'Have you ever rescued a bear...?' and 'What do you have for pudding' but all questions were answered brilliantly!

Thanks to all involved!

A community group leader in Peterborough

I want to thank the crew that came out to my car on fire before it caused any other problem, great work guys.

A resident in Cambridge

Thank you so much for giving us a brilliant session, covering so many key areas of learning in an amazingly fun and engaging way. What a Friday afternoon!

The children got into the classroom and said "I want to be a firefighter". They also volunteered history about the fire of London as well.

We hope you can maybe come and work with us again in the future. It is so important and motivating for the children to have real life experiences and role models.

Thank you again.

A school in Huntingdonshire

One of your lovely crews came out to us today in Waterbeach to rescue a swift that got stuck in our neighbour's roof! Would like to say a big thank you for their time and expertise - great job.

A resident in South Cambs

Big shout out to firefighters in Ramsey this morning who assisted East England Ambulance Crews. We didn't get to thank you properly but we're really impressed and grateful. Great job guys!

An ambulance crew

Thank you for spending your time helping our school on many things like knowing when to stop when crossing a road and other things, like not to use your phone when crossing a road, to look left and right when on a road and thank you for helping our school community.

We learned that if you fall into water you should float on your back because it will prevent you from drowning in the water.

A school pupil in Cambridge

A well-deserved thank you to the crew at March Fire Station who kindly stopped and moved our car on Friday night from a dangerous position. In a torrential rainstorm they pushed our car around to a lay-by for safety.

A resident from Peterborough

Can't thank enough the crew that came out today. My key and eight-week old baby were in the car and my car decided it would lock itself! I really didn't know what to do, but was advised to call the fire service, they came out really quickly. They got my car unlocked with no damage at all! Thank you so much for your quick service and getting to my baby.

A resident in Huntingdonshire

We just wanted to say thank you so, so much to the firefighters that came to our rescue today. The professionalism, kindness, skillset and support was outstanding along with their speed and response and it meant everything. Thank you so much.

A resident in Cambridge

What a lovely bunch of people you are! Thanks for attending today to get the cat off my house roof. You did a great job! Well done! Huntingdon Blue watch... heroes all of you and very much appreciated, keep being superstars.

A resident in Huntingdonshire

15. Your feedback

We would very much welcome any comments you may have about this document to help us improve the way we report back to you on what we have done and what we plan to do. We would be very grateful if you could take the time to provide us with any comments and send them to us at the address below:

Fire HQ
Hinchingsbrooke Cottage
Brampton Road
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE29 2NA

Alternatively, you can share your thoughts via email at feedback@cambsfire.gov.uk, via our website [through the 'contact us' section](#), or post a message on our social media channels.

If you require a response, please don't forget to include details of how we can contact you.

Thank you for your time.