

# Annual Report and Statement of Assurance for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority 2022-2023

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

The report covers the financial year 2022/2023 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.

The report also 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 website 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 2022/2023.

### April

Two significant fires tested crews north of the county. More than 30 firefighters were needed to tackle a fire on a building site involving part-built houses in Gunthorpe, Peterborough. A few days later, crews from Fenland were joined by firefighters from Norfolk and Lincolnshire at a fire involving a casino business in Wisbech. This was a three-storey terraced building, making access very challenging for crews to extinguish the fire.

Her Majesty's High Sheriff for Cambridgeshire, Mrs Caroline Bewes visited the Service's headquarters to present a special award to the Service for keeping communities safe during the pandemic.

The crew at Papworth said an emotional farewell to the local station as it closed and firefighters relocated to nearby Cambourne. The move, which was a long-planned transition, took place following the relocation of Papworth Hospital and the increased population in Cambourne. Residents were invited to a farewell tour of the station before it finally closed.

### May

A group of young people from a local secondary school were welcomed to the Service's youth intervention programme, Firebreak, and were taught a variety of firefighting skills to build confidence and teamworking. Courses are delivered over a week at one of the Service's fire stations, culminating in a pass-out parade where participants show off their new skills in front of their family and teachers.

A Huntingdon based firefighter took on an ultra-marathon to raise money for The Fire Fighters Charity. Starting at Cambridge Fire Station, Jordan Cadogan completed the 50-mile run on Firefighters Memorial Day, ending at Dogsthorpe Fire Station. He raised more than £1,500 for the charity.

### June

Colleagues from our Community Fire Safety team and on-call firefighters from Ramsey paired up to give fire safety advice to the farming community at an event hosted by the National Farmers Union. As well as advice aimed at reducing the risk of arson, crews discussed the various ways they could access water if needed when responding to an emergency.

Crews around the county hosted charity car washes to raise much needed funds for The Fire Fighters Charity. Around £5,000 was raised as residents came out to support the events and gave generously.

The Service joined Nextdoor, a new online neighbourhood hub for sharing helpful information, built around an individual's address. Information is targeted to specific locations and has been used to share recruitment information, safety advice, promote local events and seek feedback from local communities.

### July

Colleagues from Cambridge White Watch and different support groups joined the Cambridge Pride celebrations, promoting careers within the Service and important fire safety advice.

Littleport and Soham firefighters joined March and Ramsey crews to become corresponding stations, attending medical incidents of cardiac arrest to begin life-saving treatment until an ambulance arrives.

## August

Dogsthorpe Fire Station hosted its first open day in three years and welcomed thousands of people through the doors. Fun activities at the station included dunk-a-firefighter, a hose reel challenge and tours of the smoke house. There was also a drill yard exercise where firefighters demonstrated how they rescue casualties from a road traffic collision. The event raised more than £4,000 for The Fire Fighters Charity and the Peterborough Foodbank.

A local journalist was invited to spend time at Sawston Fire Station to profile the role of an on-call firefighter and promote it to residents. The crew demonstrated their skills by simulating a road traffic collision, with the journalist as a live casualty.

## September

Officers from the Fire Protection team visited Burghley House ahead of the horse trials event. The team, part of the Safety Advisory Group, provided fire safety advice, guidance and instruction to the event organisers to ensure those visiting were kept safe.

Sawston Fire Station hosted the Service's first FireFit bootcamp, seeing people interested in joining the station as an on-call firefighter take part in an eight-week fitness programme. The weekly sessions involved general fitness activities along with fire related drill work outs to help the participants get ready to join an induction course.

## October

To mark World Menopause Day, an awareness session was hosted for colleagues, highlighting the Service's journey to becoming a menopause friendly employer.

## November

The Service launched a new online forum for local residents and business owners to get involved, provide feedback and share their views and opinions about various different subjects. More than 200 people joined the Community Engagement Forum and have been providing valuable feedback on various areas of the Service's work.

Firefighters at Stanground unearthed a historic link to the Battle of Dunkirk after a collection of fire service items was given to the station. A National Fire Service flag, flown during the Dunkirk rescue operation by the Massey Shaw Fireboat, was found amongst a host of memorabilia from decades of firefighting. One of only two ever made, the original flag was used to assist wounded soldiers from the battle. Representatives from the Massey Shaw Education Trust and the Fire Heritage Fund were invited to the station to be reunited with the flag.

## December

Firefighters from around the county were kept busy while residents enjoyed Christmas Day. Wholetime firefighters and on-call firefighters, who were called away from spending time with their families, attended emergencies including a house fire, a rescue from water, a man in cardiac arrest, a flooded house and assisting ambulance colleagues.

## January

Excellence and long service were celebrated at the Service's annual Awards Evening, which took place at the Delta Hotel, Marriott in Huntingdon. Around 120 people attended and celebrated the achievements of employees from across different areas of the Service, highlighting outstanding accomplishments throughout the year.

A BBC radio presenter was put through her paces by taking on the firefighter fitness test. Hosted at one of the Service's on-call stations, Radio Cambridgeshire breakfast show presenter Dotty McLeod took on the Chester Treadmill test, one of the first stages of the recruitment process, to demonstrate what it takes to become an on-call firefighter.

### February

New fire engines were delivered to wholetime stations around the county. The new Scania 280 engines feature increased water capacity and new battery powered cutting equipment. In total, the Service invested in seven new vehicles, with the older fire engines being cascaded to other stations.

### March

Chatteris Fire Station scooped first prize in the national Bag It and Bank It competition, run by The Fire Fighters Charity. Local residents donated more than four tonnes of clothing into the yellow bins outside the station, generating more than £1,000. Representatives from the charity visited the crew to present them with their award.

Working smoke alarms alerted occupants of a Peterborough house to a fire in their kitchen, allowing them to safely evacuate. Crews from Stanground and Dogsthorpe attended the incident in the Orton Goldhay area, where on arrival they were faced with thick smoke coming through the front door. The smoke alarms alerted the occupants, who were upstairs at the time the fire started, so they could safely evacuate the house without being injured.

## 2. Forward

Welcome to our annual report and statement of assurance for 2022/2023.

This report looks back over the last financial year, highlighting how we have performed and some of our achievements over those 12 months. Reflecting on and highlighting the great work of our employees, from across all areas of the Service, is always something we look forward to. We have a high-performing and committed workforce, who work hard day in, day out, to deliver the best service we can to everyone. It is the people we have working at CFRS that we are most proud of and without them we would not be the Service that we are for the residents of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

There is only one place to start when looking back at last year, and that is the summer heatwave in July and August, which saw record numbers of calls coming into our Combined Fire Control, to the point we had to declare a major incident. With temperatures reaching 40 degrees on some days, the hot and dry ground combined to see multiple fires across the county daily. Many required several crews to attend in very challenging physical conditions, due to poor water supplies in their rural locations and the fires spreading quickly across large areas. Some days, crews were responding to double the number of incidents they would usually during this part of the year. At some points, nearly every fire engine was committed to an incident, and there was no help available from bordering services as they were also facing similar pressures. At its peak, we were also taking 999 calls from other fire service areas across the country as their own control rooms were flooded with calls. It was a real team effort and again our colleagues rose to the challenge. You can read more about our response during these spate conditions on page 23.

Following the unprecedented summer, work began to learn from the experience to identify what went well and where we could improve for a similar situation in future years. This included looking at equipment and vehicles, as well as working with the local farming community and looking at how we use our crews.

As the year progressed, we faced more challenges as the cost of living crisis meant many people were struggling with the price of necessities like food, gas and electric. People faced uncertain times as they saw costs going up, and the price rises hit us too in terms of energy costs, fuel and supplies. Preparing a future budget taking this into account meant we had to plan for potential cuts to our service to fund the increasing costs. Managers faced the difficult prospect of reducing their budgets significantly in order to find savings. With around £8 million having been taken from our budget over the last decade, we were already a lean service and finding any further efficiencies was hard. A significant factor in this was not knowing what our funding settlement from government would be, nor what the national pay negotiations would result in.

In tandem with the financial planning, we also had to face the real possibility of industrial action as the national pay negotiations continued. This presented some significant challenges to ensure we could meet our response demand while also maintaining good working relationships between staff groups. Fortunately, we did not need to put our plans in place as an agreement was reached but the planning had been vital to ensure we could still be there for people when they needed us.

We made the tough decision to ask our residents for an increase in their council tax to help ensure we could maintain our current levels of service. Asking for more is not something we wanted to do, especially when we knew everyone was feeling the financial pressures, but asking for an additional amount of around £5 a year, together with the savings we found internally, helped ensure we could continue to provide our current level of service.

Despite it being a challenging year, we also had some moments of celebration. We completed a very significant development as our new multi-million pound fire station and training centre in Huntingdon opened. Crews began responding from the new station in February, with the Training Centre having already opened for courses and the Occupational Health team moving in at the turn of the year. This was a very exciting milestone, which you can read more about on page 25.

As the financial year drew to a close, we welcomed our next inspection from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). This involved gathering documents, an employee survey and then a visit by the inspectorate team who spoke to colleagues across different areas of the Service to gather their views on what it's like to work here and different aspects of their role.

At the time of publishing this annual report in December 2023, we had received our inspection outcome and we're pleased to see so much of the good work going on in the Service recognised. We were awarded one Outstanding, six Goods, three Adequates and one Requires Improvement. A plan to focus attention on the areas that were identified as needing further improvement has already been started with some already implemented. We look forward to reporting more on this report in the annual report for 2023/24.

We are always looking to celebrate what we do and keep people informed of the great work going on around our Service. Our social media channels are updated regularly with stories, as well as important safety advice and information. We're across Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram, as well as growing our presence on TikTok and Nextdoor.

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 information about a vulnerable resident for us to visit, sent us a thank you message or made a cup of tea for a hard-working crew at an incident, we are extremely grateful and we really value that support.

After the last few years of a global pandemic, financial crisis and heatwave, who knows what 2023/24 will throw our way, but we are confident that with the support of our incredible workforce we will be able to navigate our way through whatever challenges we face and continue to be there for our communities when they need us.

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 2022/23 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 17

Financial and governance matters - page 33



#### 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.

The Fire Authority records its appreciation for the contribution of councillors Michael Atkins, John Gowing and Andrew Bond during the past year.

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

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Council</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>District</b>
Edna Murphy (Chair)	Cambridgeshire County Council	Liberal Democrat	South Cambs
Simon Bywater	Cambridgeshire County Council	Conservative	Huntingdonshire
Douglas Dew	Cambridgeshire County Council	Liberal Democrat	Huntingdonshire
Ian Gardener	Cambridgeshire County Council	Conservative	Huntingdonshire
Bryony Goodliffe	Cambridgeshire County Council	Labour	Cambridge
Ros Hathorn	Cambridgeshire County Council	Liberal Democrat	South Cambs
John Howard	Peterborough City Council	Peterborough First	Peterborough
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

Our structure

Our chief officer team:

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

## Our legal responsibilities

Our responsibilities as an emergency service are set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and 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 Business Continuity and Information Security Forum (BCIS) 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, for example 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 were 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.

A plain English guide to the Localism Act, can be found [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 government's 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 2022/23 will be published in our equalities compliance report, which [can be found on our website](#).

Our IRMP and IRMP action plan sets 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 894,500 according to the Office for National Statistics Census 2021 figures. This represents an increase of around 11 per cent from the previous census in 2011. The population is 49 per cent male and 51 per cent female, living in around 362,100 households.

The population of Cambridgeshire is ageing with the number of people aged 65 and over accounting for 18 per cent of the population (around 160,000 people), based on Office for National Statistics Census 2021 data. Those most at risk from a fatal fire in the home are vulnerable people aged 65 and over.

The social demography of Cambridgeshire varies considerably, with the cities of Peterborough and Cambridge being particularly multi-cultural and multi-racial compared with other areas of the county. For example around 20 per cent of those living in the cities identify as non-white (Census 2021 data), with most of that population identifying as Asian. In the rest of the districts, the population is around 90 per cent white. Across the county, 16 per cent of residents are disabled under the Equality Act. More than 35 per cent of the population work predominantly from home.

Further information on our communities can be found in our IRMP 2020-2024, [which is on our website](#) (although this is based on the 2001 census data – our IRMP for 2024-2029 will be based on 2021 data).

### 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.

To accommodate the expected increase in population, a number of new sustainable developments have emerged in recent years and continue to grow. These include the country's first eco-town Northstowe, being built just five kilometres from the city of Cambridge and Alconbury Weald just north of Huntingdon.

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.

There is predicted to be over 21,000 new homes built across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in the next five years in major developments alone.

### 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 structure 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. Our training centre is part of the new Huntingdon Fire Station site, which relocated to Percy Road from Hartford Road earlier this year.

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

We employ 240 wholtime firefighters, including up to principal officers (establishment is 240) and 247 on-call firefighters. A total of 36 staff (establishment/full time equivalent is 36) operate our Combined Fire Control, taking emergency calls from Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Suffolk residents. We have 213 staff (including more than 100 part-time) working 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 and Human Resources.

We have a fleet of 41 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

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service works to a set of key values that everyone is expected to incorporate into every aspect of their work.

These key values are:

- **Welcome** – we welcome people into the workplace and create a working environment that is open and inclusive, which offers help and support.
- **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.
- **Dignity** - our treatment of people should conform to a standard of behaviour that is socially acceptable to all members of the community we serve.



## 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 third year 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](#).

One of our key areas for the next year is to plan, consult on and publish our next plan, which will go live from April 1, 2024, under a slight change to the name to mirror a national change – Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

### Achievements against our IRMP 2020-2024

The next few pages outline what we delivered in 2022/23 against the priorities in the IRMP, set out under each of the four strategic aims:

- People
- Community safety excellence
- Operational 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

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:

- Continued work to develop our organisational culture and to enhance staff engagement, including ensuring mechanisms are in place to properly feedback to staff and facilitating opportunities for colleagues from across different areas of the Service to engage and work with each other more
- Developed and improve ways we support the mental health and wellbeing of staff
- Continued our ongoing work to improve the diversity of our workforce
- Expanded our programme of development activities to prepare staff for future roles and opportunities
- Strengthened how we understand our succession planning needs, including identifying and matching an individual's potential to those needs
- Continued to embed an understanding of the value of quality conversations to enhance personal performance and development
- Continued to 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.

To achieve this in 2022/23 we have:

- Carried out an employee engagement survey in October 2022, presenting the outcomes to all colleagues in January 2023. The results showed an improvement in overall employee engagement of 9 per cent compared to 2019 and an overall engagement score of 79 per cent. In many areas we scored above the fire service sector benchmark used by the external provider and this was a significant difference in some areas. Since January we have been working to further analyse the results and identify the areas where different employee groups feel less satisfied.
- Completed a gap analysis of the London Fire Brigade culture review report and the actions have been built into our IRMP action plan for 2023/24 (this was done as part of an annual review of our actions to continue to develop our culture).
- Reviewed our mental health provision.
- Re-started community engagement following the pandemic and attended many events including Pride in Cambridge and Peterborough as well as a Black History Month event in Peterborough. We attended the Asian Fire Services Association inclusion conferences to learn from other services and external speakers. We started an Employer of Choice project to ensure our inclusive culture is represented in our recruitment branding.
- Revised the content of and re-launched our mandatory equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) e-learning module and reached 100 per cent completion, as well as training over 100 managers in equality impact assessments (EQIA) and all watches had 'Introduction to Inclusion' sessions delivered by the ED&I team. We updated our internal inclusion page with webinars, videos and local events throughout the year that colleagues could watch or attend.
- Reviewed the content and scheduling of our Inclusion Network meetings to reach more colleagues and put terms of reference in place for our working groups. We appointed new Women in the Fire Service (WFS) representatives and have supported our female operational working group to take forward initiatives and listen to feedback.

- Launched Coaching Culture’s development and mindset learning modules and promoted the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) new coaching and mentoring platform. We expanded our range of professional skills workshops that are open to all colleagues, based on feedback. We collaborated with Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire services to review the content and deliver a leadership development programme for crew and watch commanders who are looking to progress their careers.
- Gathered and listened to feedback from colleagues around any barriers to having quality conversations about performance and development. From this we re-clarified the purpose of personal development reviews/one to ones and created a supporting toolkit including videos, guides and workshops.
- Created and launched development portfolios for wholetime and Combined Fire Control progression from firefighter through to crew commander, watch commander and station commander, based on national operational guidance, our values and leadership attributes. We will evaluate the portfolios this year and then create development portfolios for support and on-call staff.
- Evaluated and completed an equality impact assessment on our previous wholetime recruitment process and the insights and actions have been built into this years’ recruitment process. For example, we have re-introduced community assessors to our wholetime firefighter interview panels. This year we will do the same evaluation and EQIAs for our other recruitment processes.
- We have put a process in place during recruitment, where we positively encourage candidates to declare any neurodiversity with the recruitment team to explore reasonable adjustments. For employees, we improved our neurodiversity passport process and put enhanced external support in place. An Inclusion Ambassador for Neurodiversity and a working group is in place for peer support.
- We have continued our work to improve support and awareness for colleagues going through the menopause, by surveying all women in the Service about periods and menopause and their impact at work, resulting in a number of recommendations to take forward next year, including trialling portable toilets with pop up tents on two fire engines.

#### *Case study - A welcoming place to work*

In October we ran our third full employee engagement survey. The previous full survey had been completed in 2019, just before the pandemic. We ran a pulse check survey in 2021, together with questions more focused on mental health and wellbeing. We were keen to see if the pandemic and subsequent new ways of working – i.e. more working from home for those in office based roles – had changed how people felt about work.

The results were really pleasing. From a 61 per cent response rate, we achieved an engagement score of 79 per cent. What’s more, 86 per cent of respondents said they were proud to say they worked for CFRS, 77 per cent were motivated to give their best and 74 per cent said they still wanted to be working for the Service in two years’ time.

For this year’s survey, we worked with a new company to manage responses to ensure full confidentiality and trust in the anonymity of responses. The benefit to us was that the new company worked with a dozen other fire and rescue services and we would be able to understand how our results compared to others. We were above average in the majority of questions.

More than 80 per cent agreed that everyone is welcome in the Service, regardless of individual difference and this was 20 per cent more than the sector average. Colleagues also felt that everyone worked well together across employee groups, 25 per cent more than the sector average.

When asked what was the best thing about working at CFRS, colleagues, collaboration and team work were the best scoring responses, followed by working patterns and culture.

Head of People, Christine Doody said: "The results were really positive, especially considering the survey was done at a time when we were experiencing the impacts of the cost of living crisis and people were still adapting to life after the pandemic.

"It was interesting to be able to compare our results with other fire and rescue service and we were pleased we were above average in most of the categories.

"The analysis of responses by different employee groups and the comments people left have all been helpful in us identifying where we can concentrate our efforts to continue to improve work life for employees. This is important feedback that helps us understand how we can do things better and shape our plans moving forward."

### Community safety

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

- Collaborate further with health, social care and other partners to refine ways to identify and reach those most at risk of fire
- Develop our Firebreak programme to support the safety, health and personal development of identified young people
- Explore opportunities to offer early intervention and positively influence children and younger people
- Work with partners and local authorities to support businesses to comply with regulation and ultimately create safer places to live, work and visit
- Continue to lobby and work with developers and local authorities to increase public safety through the fitting of sprinklers where relevant
- Continue to work with partners from the road and water safety partnerships to reduce the number of people killed or injured on our roads and waterways
- Develop and embed systems to effectively evaluate our activity to keep the community safe
- Bring together expertise from protection, prevention, and community resilience to reduce risk to people, places and events.

To achieve this in 2022/23 we have:

- Continued to define and develop our use of partner data to ensure we are focusing our efforts on those we define as most vulnerable. Successes in our Anglia Water data sharing agreement, hospital bed data and increased referral rate from partners has allowed us to reach high or very high risk people on 84 per cent of occasions. More intelligent use of data has also increased the times our crews are getting across the doorstep to 70 per cent of occasions. This improved efficiency is not only helping to keep our communities safe but also allowing us to do more. Last year we delivered Safe and Well visits to more than 6,300 vulnerable households, more than we have ever delivered in a year before.

- Continued delivering our youth engagement programme Firebreak, which goes from strength to strength. Last academic year we delivered 10 courses, involving around 120 young people. Firebreak is unfunded and we continue to work across partners to ensure funding is available to deliver these interventions. In the last year we have included an evaluation tool which will allow us to clearly evidence the positive impact of the Firebreak intervention on the young people who attend the course and add further weight to its efficacy when seeking funding.
- Reviewed our children and young people offering and are focusing our efforts on Firebreak and fire setter intervention. We are also promoting the NFCC Stay Wise Programme, which offers nationally agreed learning materials for Key Stage 1 and 2 and can be included in the national curriculum, covering areas such as staying safe in the home, water and road safety. To reach Reception and Key Stage 1 children, we have also developed a character called Jet the Dragon. Jet has been designed specifically to deliver water and fire safety messages to early learners. To date, there have been four stories from Jet, all available [on the Stay Wise virtual resource](#), available nationally.
- Engaged with businesses through seminars and webinars.
- Worked as part of a multi-agency team in the area of Lincoln Road, Peterborough running days of action, ensuring people are safe in their homes as well as offering safety advice to businesses in the area.
- Continued to engage with developers and the local authority to recommend the fitting of sprinklers where legislation does not require it.
- Recruited a dedicated Community Road Safety Officer. This role is hosted by the Service and funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). This partnership approach ensures the police and fire service are aligned with the community casualty reduction focus set out by the OPCC, through the Vision Zero Road Safety Partnership.
- Delivered several initiatives, including 20 Biker Down sessions to 200 members of the public and Be Water Aware sessions to around 4,500 students in schools throughout Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- Embedded evaluation in all prevention activity. This has led us to ceasing some activities we have done previously and ensure that we focus our resources on best outcomes.
- Launched a post incident review project, 'Customer Conversation,' in partnership with an academic professor at Salford University to further investigate behaviours that lead to a fire occurring in the home, to help shape our approach and messaging to reduce the occurrence of these in the future.
- Continued to visit risk sites across the county.

#### *Case study – Online fire safety tool launches*

The Service launched a new home safety check tool allowing people to carry out their own home fire risk assessment for free. The online tool takes the answers given by the resident and creates an action plan that can be saved and printed, giving basic, simple tips to help keep their home fire safe.

The tool can be used on any internet-enabled device and has a user-friendly interface. Those using the tool are prompted for information about each part of their property, with the answers then generating easy to follow advice that can be kept and referred to at any time.

Station Commander James Ball, one of the Service's community risk managers, said: "This new resource really is a game changer for us and for residents. It allows anyone to get free access to fire safety advice in their own time. They can also use the tool on behalf of a vulnerable member of their

family or friend, particularly if they struggle with using technology. Families can also sit and do it together to help educate their younger family members.”

The online home safety check tool does not replace the in person visits the Service carries out to vulnerable residents around the county.

Station Commander Ball explained: “We currently prioritise visiting those most vulnerable people in our communities, for example those with mobility issues, disabilities and the elderly. Not only will this tool help us give vital fire safety advice to those we can’t give a visit to, but the information provided will highlight any vulnerable people that we might have struggled to reach or not been aware of from our data. It will also give them the initial advice that will help until we can arrange a visit for them.”

Since launching, more than 300 people have completed their own home fire safety check using the online tool. Of those, more than half were referred for an in person safe and well visit.

James concluded: “The online home safety check is such an easy way for people to risk assess their homes at the touch of a button, which will help keep them and their families safe. I would really encourage people to log onto our website and give it a go. Hopefully everyone will find it straightforward and encourage their friends and family to use it too.”

### Operational Excellence

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

- Align operational resources to our risk and demand
- Develop the use of our on-call crews to improve our operational service to the public
- Explore and implement improvements to support the working experience for our on-call staff
- Review the structure and resourcing in our Combined Fire Control to ensure the continual provision of a high quality, sustainable control function
- Ensure our emergency vehicles and equipment meet our identified risks
- Align service procedures with national operational guidance to improve firefighter safety and our ability to work with other fire and rescue services
- Develop our central training facility to support the delivery of risk critical operational training
- Review current arrangement for operational training to ensure they meet the needs of operational staff
- Develop further our assurance across all operational areas to ensure a high level of performance and support the continued development of our staff.

To achieve this in 2022/23 we have:

- Launched our Operational Risk Review project, that will help us to better understand our efficiency and effectiveness of resources and the demands placed upon them.
- Worked to allow on-call staff to better utilise their capacity. For instance we have removed the infrequently used 13.5 metre ladders from on-call appliances, which was not only a barrier for some joining the Service, but also removes a significant training burden.
- Introduced responding to incidents with a crew of three firefighters, when five or four cannot be achieved. This has provided approximately 1,000 additional hours of cover per

month and seen an increase in call outs for most on-call stations. We will continue to strive to ensure we have appliances that are mobilised with crews of four or more, but where we can't crews of three will be utilised. This will take time to embed and evaluate, but initial findings would suggest that morale has increased on on-call stations as crews are being used more and hopefully in the long-term retention will increase too.

- Introduced battle boxes containing high-end gym equipment at all on-call stations to help crews to maintain fitness.
- Improved processes to help crews limit the impact of administration on their drill nights.
- Introduced seven new fire appliances into our fleet with the latest technology and specialist rescue equipment on board. We have also, following the summer spate conditions in 2022, procured two vehicles to trial with specific off-road capabilities to support our response to wildland and field fires.
- Continued to fully adopt and align to the National Operational Guidance (NOG). This sees us working collaboratively with all services within the Eastern Region to share both resources and peer review the information being provided to ensure, where appropriate, standardisation in response and share learning.
- Concluded the project to review the current arrangements for operational training and implemented the key identified areas. This has seen a new shift system for our training instructor team, which ensures a seven day and evening provision to meet the needs of our wholetime and on-call firefighters.
- Developed and successfully created a flexible bridging course programme to best recognise the skills and attributes of our on-call firefighters who have been successful in the wholetime recruitment process.
- Put in place a programme to provide external verification and learning of our operational skills. This supports the ongoing assurance of our operational training and development of our staff.

#### *Case study – Heat wave brings busiest summer ever!*

The summer of 2022 was a significant challenge for us and services across the UK. Prolonged periods of hot weather including very high temperatures and no rainfall resulted in lots of fires requiring several crews to attend. These fires would spread very quickly and will often be in areas where water supply would be difficult, so several fire engines would be needed.

As many people enjoyed the sunshine, firefighters were called on to assist with a large increase in fires. Over one weekend in mid-July, more than 100 firefighters were required at three separate incidents involving large field fires, lasting around seven hours. Usually, the Service could request support from neighbouring services to assist, however many counties were experiencing similar issues, so this was not possible.

Our Combined Fire Control was under immense pressure throughout the heatwave, dealing with increased amounts of calls for both Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. Over the two hottest days in July, our emergency call handlers dealt with almost 800 calls, sending fire engines to 92 incidents in Cambridgeshire, the highest amount ever for a single day. At one stage they were also providing support for other fire services across the country due to unprecedented demand elsewhere. In addition to Cambridgeshire and Suffolk, they were also dealing with emergencies from London, Greater Manchester and Yorkshire, among others.

In August, as temperatures climbed again, call handlers and crews were tested to their limits. Control received more than 1,400 calls, which included many significant incidents in Suffolk. This

time of year they would usually expect to deal with around 850 calls. Crews continued to respond to fires in hot, gruelling conditions, often for several hours going from incident to incident.

At some stages, every fire engine was committed to an incident, which led to the chief fire officer declaring this a major incident.

Chief Fire Officer Chris Strickland said: "In times like these I am so proud of the people we have. Everyone demonstrated their passion for serving the community and giving their best, but also being there to help and support each other. We had our officers set up our Major Incident Command Room to coordinate our crews and ensure we could relieve and rotate them around to ensure their wellbeing. They were also checking on the welfare of our control colleagues and providing refreshments, as they literally could not leave their desks at some points of the day. Our communication team was also on hand to ensure we were not only informing the public of the key incidents, but also sending key safety messages to try and reduce the amount of incidents happening. Everyone pitched in together to make sure we were providing the best level of service we could.

"Everyone who worked for our Service at the time could hold their heads high as they all stepped up to the challenges of the extreme heatwave. When things cooled down, we evaluated our response and implemented some improvements to enable us to respond even better next time."

#### Value for money

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

- Deliver new emergency mobilising technologies into operational service as well as review existing technologies to deliver enhancements to these
- Deliver efficiencies, through the Service Transformation and Efficiency Programme (STEP), by the automation and improvement of business processes
- Ensure technology delivers opportunities for more efficient and effective ways of working, with a particular emphasis on ensuring our software provides value for money
- Review spend across departments and contractual arrangements to inform enhancements and improvements to our procurement processes
- Ensure that financial awareness and greater accountability for budgets are in place to ensure that spend is efficient and effective
- Ensure that the digital drivers across the Service are understood, scoped and prioritised
- Review digital capacity to ensure that they are sufficient to meet need
- Ensure that the Service has sustainability strategies in place and the mechanisms by which to measure and evaluate these.

To achieve this in 2022/23 we have:

- Made positive progress on the project to introduce a new mobilising system. Work will continue throughout this financial year to complete testing and training ready to go live in the new year.
- Improved connectivity of our systems from remote locations.
- Renegotiated contracts resulting in some significant savings.
- Identified some considerable opportunities for savings and amended some processes in readiness of requirements within the New Procurement Act.



- Developed a sustainable procurement strategy and this is now an integral part of our procurement and tendering process, along with modern slavery checks, social value requirements and ethical procurement.
- Delivered a Financial Awareness and Understanding Your Budget training session to the management group during 2022/23 and this is now incorporated in the financial training for new starters who have budget responsibilities.
- Used a zero-based budgeting approach to build the 2023/24 budget, meaning that the budget holders were forced to start from zero and build their budgets from there.
- Created a business case to introduce a two-year secondment opportunity to specifically look at how we utilise Microsoft 365 and to ensure that the organisation moves forward to embrace available toolsets.
- Continued to develop and work towards our sustainability goals with key strands in place to support the strategy.
- Commissioned and received an independent review of the key areas by the Carbon Trust with an action plan in review on areas of good practice and improvements identified. This will support our drive to net zero by 2030.

#### *Case study – New station and training centre opens its doors*

Building work for the Service’s new multi-million pound fire station and training centre in Huntingdon finished allowing crews to move in and begin responding from the new location.

The new state-of-the-art fire station is now in Percy Road, just off the A141. It houses two fire engines, one crewed 24/7 by wholetime firefighters and the one crewed by on-call firefighters who are not based at the station, but carry alerters and drop everything to rush to the station if they are needed.

Adjoining the station is the Service’s new Training Centre. The new site provides far more opportunity for the Service to provide the necessary training to ensure all firefighters are competent in the variety of skills needed for the role and the many different incidents they could be called to. It includes multi-level buildings and live fire burns to give firefighters a wholly realistic training experience. Previously, crews would need to attend off-site locations, costing more money and travel time. There is also a large road traffic collision compound and facilities to replicate water filled ditches.

The Occupational Health team, Operational Support Group and Health and Safety team are also based at the station.

Deputy Chief Executive, Matthew Warren said: “It was a momentous occasion for the project as firefighters moved into and began responding to 999 calls from the new fire station.

“A huge thanks must go to all those involved in getting the development to where it is today - we now have a first-class fire station and training centre that will provide an excellent facility for our colleagues.”

#### *Our performance data*

We collect lots of data to help us understand how we are performing compared to previous years. Factors such as the long spells of hot weather we’ve experienced over the last year and the impact of covid restrictions for example can greatly impact the number of fires and other emergencies we attend each year, 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 2022/23*

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 7.39 minutes, which is 81 seconds quicker than our measure of 9 minutes.

Rural attendance times have exceeded our measure of 12 minutes by 18 seconds.

We have had a fire engine arrive within 18 minutes on 94.6 per cent of occasions, not quite meeting our measure of 95 per cent. This is down to a number of factors, mainly the summer spate conditions but also incidents in non-addressable locations, such as vehicle and outdoor fire incidents as people do not always know exactly where they are when they call an incident in.

There was a significant increase of 21 per cent in total fires this year, again due to the summer spate conditions, with the highest number of fires seen in the last five years.

There has been a 16 per cent increase of primary fires (most serious) compared with last year, which also represents a 5 per cent increase on the rolling fire year figure.

There was a 25 per cent increase of secondary fires on the previous call year, but this shows a 2 per cent decrease for the rolling 5 year figure.

We have seen 1 fire death this call year. This was as a result of a fire caused by smoking materials.

We have attended 419 road traffic collisions this year, an 8 per cent increase on last year's figure but 15 per cent lower than the rolling 5 year figure. There have been 388 people killed or seriously injured this year. This is down by 5 per cent against the rolling 5 years. (Source: Police dataset, the last 12 months is provisional data).

We have attended 1,528 Special Service incidents this year. This is a 52 per cent increase on the rolling 5 years. Of these 547 incidents were assisting other agencies, including 58 co-responding incidents. We attended 150 flooding incidents, around 30 more than the previous year, along with 162 animal rescues, 10 more than last year.

We have seen 131 accidental non-domestic fires this year. This is a 20 per cent increase on last year and 10 per cent more than the previous 5 years.

There were 719 business engagements carried out through a combination of online and face to face, compared with 406 last year. This shows our function is fully back following the challenges of the pandemic.

#### *Our workforce diversity*

Of those applying for role with Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, 15.1 per cent of applicants were from black and minority ethnic communities, an increase of 8.3 per cent over five years. However, across our workforce 3 per cent are from these communities, a drop of 0.4 per cent.

From the total, 29.9 per cent of all applicants were female, with 12.9 per cent of operational applicants being female.

Our full-time equivalent workforce is 536.9, compared to 531.4 last year. Headcount is 633 compared to 619 last year, which is mainly on-call staff.

Those identifying as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic have a total increase from the previous year to 3 per cent, in wholetime and on-call. The NFCC Family Group 2 benchmark is 3 per cent, with all English fire and service's benchmark being 5.3 per cent. Census 2021 is 10.1 per cent for Cambridgeshire.

The number of women is down from 24 per cent to 22.8 per cent in on-call, Control and support, but up by 3 in wholetime. Female managers have increased to 24.2 per cent overall. The NFCC Family Group 2 benchmark and all English fire and rescue service's benchmark being 18 per cent. Census 2021 is 51 per cent for Cambridgeshire.

The percentage of staff declaring they have a disability has largely remained the same, from 6.8 per cent to 6.9 per cent. We have seen an increase to 3 per cent of employees who have declared other religion or belief and those identifying as LGBT+ has increased to 3.4 per cent.

## 8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We are committed to continuous improvement of equality, diversity 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 and have incorporated them into our Integrated Risk Management Plan.

Below are the objectives listed within the strategic aims:

### People

- 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

- 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

- We scoped the work to review our One Team Behaviours in the following year, in line with our review timescales.
- We put a plan in place to best utilise Microsoft Office 365 to support great internal communications.
- We ensured the impacts of the pandemic on ways of working and our culture and employee wellbeing were factored into plans and activities.
- We revised the post responsible for mental health support and are recruiting a psychological wellbeing practitioner.
- We began a project to review the current Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) provision.
- We have created and embedded an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan.
- Continued to embed a defined coaching culture, incorporating both formal and informal coaching.
- We reviewed the benefits versus the cost of FACET for all staff, including the education and promotion to gain maximum benefit.
- We reviewed the use of technology to offer a range of blended learning, e-learning and in-person learning interventions for personal, leadership and management development.

- We ensured all colleagues are clear on what is mandatory training, and that mandatory training content/length is regularly reviewed.
- We identified and defined the barriers to our people engaging in appropriate development activities to support our plans to remove barriers.
- We worked with appropriate stakeholders to identify areas for improvement within our recording system for performance conversations.
- We explored options for a quality assurance process, to provide insight and assurance that good quality conversations are happening and being captured.
- We relaunched performance and development conversations, outlining their purpose and meaning to ensure everyone understands what we mean when we talk about them.
- We refreshed and relaunched the tools need to support managers and employees in quality conversations.
- We completed the first review of talent grids for wholetime, control and on-call colleagues, enabling identification of emerging talent and single points of failure at all levels.
- We began to review talent identification process for professional support staff, key dependency roles and the leadership team.
- We launched and embedded refreshed development portfolios for wholetime and control staff.

#### Community Safety Excellence

- We have successfully continued to deliver Firebreak with positive results
- Supported businesses to comply with regulation
- We regularly conducted business webinars, including additional sessions, to reach a wider audience
- We are delivering training with external partners to improve the understanding of fire regulation and identifying risks.
- We have worked to ensure our services are accessible.
- We have scoped a new sprinkler campaign and assessed our strategy to reach a wide audience.
- We deliver safe and well visits, 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.

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

- Proposal for roll-out of electric vehicle chargers
- Review of training centre shift system
- Review of safe and well visits
- Review of Mobile Data Terminal accessibility
- Review of on-call crewing policy
- Financial business continuity planning
- Review of sickness attendance policy
- Review of expenses and allowances policy
- Remote working for on-call firefighters
- Review of annual leave policy
- Review of Firebreak
- Proposal for development portfolios
- Proposal for replacement finance system
- Proposal for refurbishment of a station

- Upcoming legislative change for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks
- Proposed wholetime recruitment process
- Review of HSE documentation
- Risk resource methodology
- Review of turntable ladders
- Proposed estates strategy.

## 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 11th 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.

#### 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 has an agreement with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service to utilise its provision for safeguarding. This gives extra support to the in-house safeguarding officer, providing the staff infrastructure and experience in place at Essex, meaning the Service has a resilient and robust safeguarding structure.

#### 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.

#### Data sharing with Anglian Water

A partnership agreement with Anglian Water allows the Service to access vulnerable residents in the community that are signed up to a Priority Services Register, offering a wide range of practical support from help in the event of an incident to extra protection against bogus callers and scams. The agreement involves sharing data to support residents with fire safety advice, as well as general safety and wellbeing to help reach out to those most vulnerable in the community. Since beginning the partnership last year, the Service has managed to reach more than 250 vulnerable residents through referrals.



## 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 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 £31,743,000. This is made up of £36,337,000 (expenditure) less £4,594,000 (other income). £22,214,100 was collected from council tax payers, which amounted to £74.97 a year for a Band D council tax household. This equates to £1.44 a week – less than the price of a four-pint carton of milk.

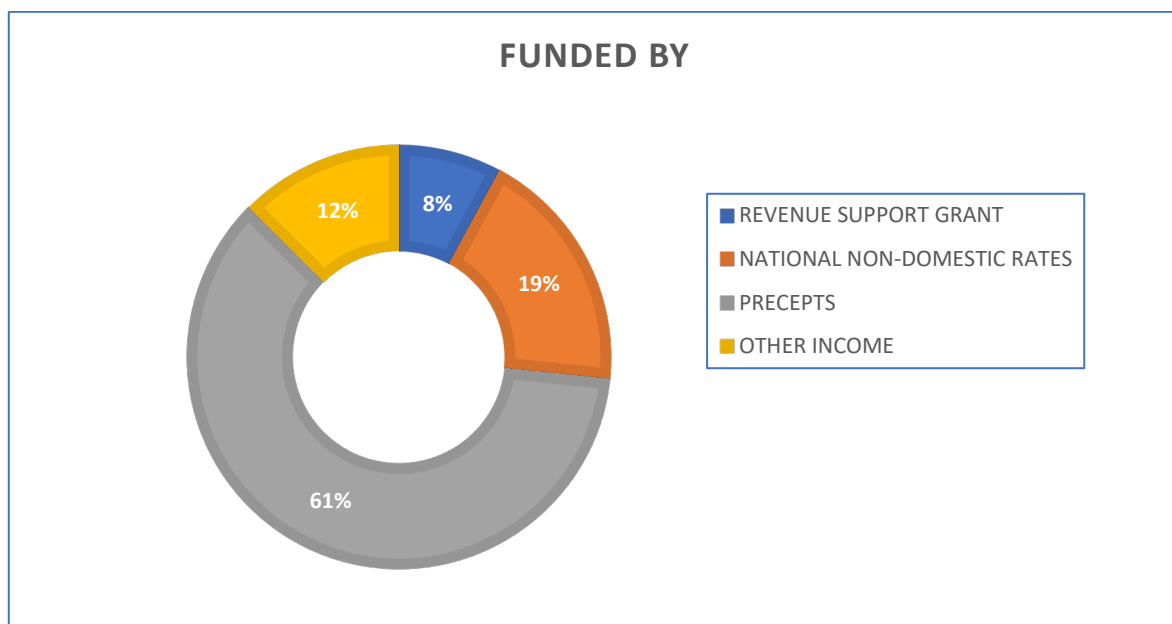
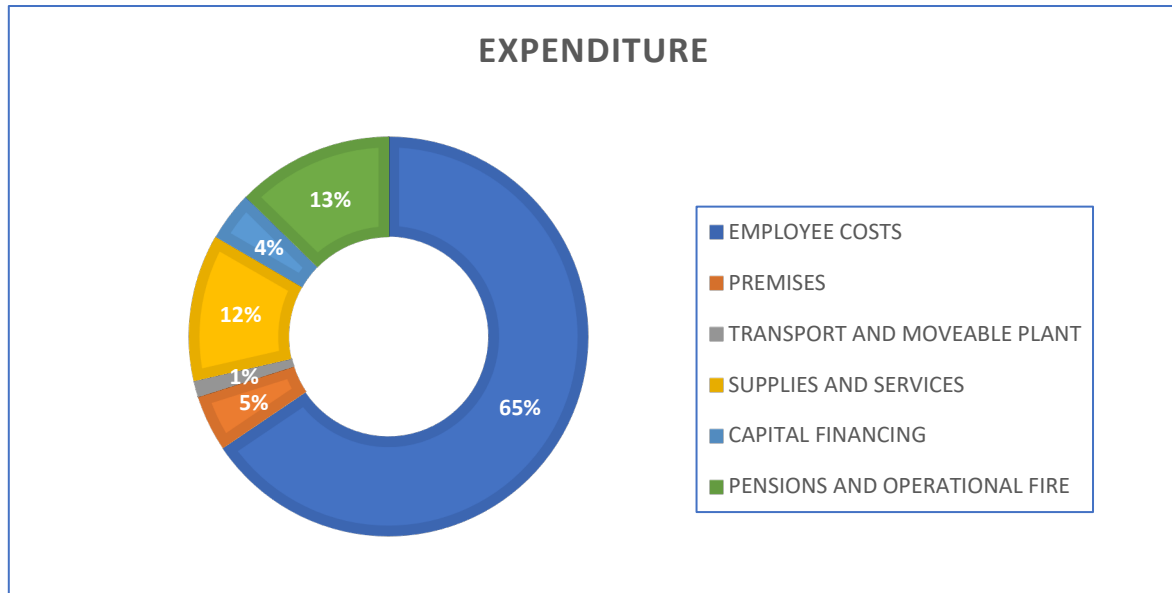
The table below shows the breakdown of where our funding comes from and how we spent it.

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 Per cent (%)
Full time firefighters	13,414	13,766	352	3
Control room staff	1,740	1,823	83	5
Local government employees	3,414	3,212	(202)	-6
Senior management	4,210	3,780	(430)	-10
Recruitment and training	640	530	(110)	-17
Fire allowances	698	724	26	4
<b>EMPLOYEE COSTS</b>	<b>24,116</b>	<b>23,835</b>	<b>(281)</b>	<b>-1</b>
Property maintenance	434	425	(9)	-2
Insurance	63	52	(11)	-17
Energy costs	429	472	43	10
Cleaning	49	37	(12)	-24
Rents and rates	658	670	12	2
<b>PREMISES</b>	<b>1,633</b>	<b>1,656</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1</b>
Car and cycle allowances	38	37	(1)	-3
Vehicle running expenses	180	247	67	37
Vehicle insurance	158	173	15	9
<b>TRANSPORT AND MOVEABLE PLANT</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>22</b>
Office expenses	306	222	(84)	-27
IT and communications equipment	2,369	1,956	(413)	-17
Fire equipment	324	375	51	16
Uniforms and clothing	503	357	(146)	-29
Other supplies and services	1,857	1,415	(442)	-24
<b>SUPPLIES AND SERVICES</b>	<b>5,359</b>	<b>4,325</b>	<b>(1,034)</b>	<b>-19</b>
Debt charges	1,378	1,452	74	5
External interest	(90)	(176)	(86)	96
<b>CAPITAL FINANCING</b>	<b>1,288</b>	<b>1,276</b>	<b>(12)</b>	<b>-1</b>
CONTROLLABLE EXPENDITURE	32,772	31,549	(1,223)	-4
Other income	(1,717)	(1,707)	10	-1
Other Government grants	(2,261)	(2,711)	(450)	20
<b>CONTROLLABLE INCOME</b>	<b>(3,978)</b>	<b>(4,418)</b>	<b>(440)</b>	<b>11</b>
NET CONTROLLABLE EXPENDITURE	28,794	27,131	(1,663)	-6
Pensions – lump sums	766	863	97	13
Operational fire budget	3,506	3,749	243	7
<b>SAFETY-NETTED EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>4,272</b>	<b>4,612</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>8</b>
NET EXPENDITURE	33,066	31,743	(1,323)	-4
Grant/precept income	(31,386)	(32,026)	(640)	

Transfers to/from earmarked reserves	(1,680)	276	1,956	
<b>CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	<b>(33,066)</b>	<b>(31,750)</b>	<b>1,316</b>	
CONTRIBUTION TO GENERAL RESERVE	-	7	7	

This information is also shown below in two pie graphs:



#### Key Budget points

Due to inflationary pressures and unbudgeted pay awards, the service used much of its reserves to fund its capital and revenue expenditure but still adequate reserves in place to help support any financial pressures in the short to medium term (the Service has carried forward a Finance Business Continuity Reserve of £1.319 million)

## What we own

Our assets include (as of March 2023):

### *Buildings*

1. Fire headquarters and operational buildings	28
2. Staff houses	5
o Total	33

### *Vehicles and Plant*

1. Fire engines (incl rescue pumps)	41
2. Aerial appliances	2
3. Rescue vehicles	2
4. Other special appliances	5
5. Reserve and training appliances	6
6. Other vehicles	107
o Total	163

\*During 2022/23 the Service sold Papworth Fire Station following the move of Papworth Hospital to Cambridge. In the absence of Papworth, Cambourne Fire Station became an operational fire station utilising the crew and equipment from the former station.

### *Capital Spending*

The Authority has purchased seven fire appliances totalling £1.779 million.

The Authority has purchased rescue equipment for the seven new fire appliances which included investment in new battery-operated cutting equipment for wholetime stations.

The Authority has carried out property works to existing properties and has completed the construction of a new fire station and training facility in Huntingdon, the total cost of this project was £11.355 million.

The Authority has purchased ICT systems, 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 within the sector the external audit of the 2021/22 and 2022/23 won't be taking place until later in the year, with the results not being available until each audit is completed.

### 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.

### Internal audit

The Fire Authority appoints internal auditors to ensure their 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 on making sure it knows how it makes the service affordable now and in the future. A lot of work has gone on in this area in this financial year to ensure we can meet any potential shortages in our budget as a result of the cost of living crisis and higher than budgeted pay awards. At the end of 2022/23, we were looking forward to sharing this with the HMICFRS during our imminent inspection.

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. The figures are provided by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

<b>Authority</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
Cambridgeshire	34.31
Northamptonshire	34.74
Merseyside	35.41
West Yorkshire	35.81
West Midlands	36.21
North Yorkshire	36.83
Dorset and Wiltshire	37.28
Staffordshire	37.48
Berkshire	37.5
Derbyshire	37.57
Leicestershire	37.68
Greater Manchester	39.26
Nottinghamshire	39.53
South Yorkshire	40.44
Cheshire	40.69
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	40.81
West Sussex	41.41
Cornwall	41.76
Cleveland	42.36
Essex	42.82
Devon and Somerset	43.19
Tyne and Wear	43.46
Kent	43.61
Durham	44.83
Bedfordshire	45.12
Humberside	48.11
Northumberland	48.18
Cumbria	48.5
London (LFC)	48.52
South Wales	48.84
East Sussex	50.25
Shropshire	71.5

## 12. Our inspection results

In the Spring of 2021, HMICFRS carried out a its second full inspection of the Service, where again we were rated as Good in all three pillar areas of effectiveness, efficiency and how we look after our people. This put us among the best performing fire and rescue services in the country.

The inspection team commented on the positive and constructive way that we engaged with the inspection and 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.

As the financial year drew to a close, we were preparing to welcome the inspection team back for their third full visit to Cambridgeshire.

## 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 third year of the current IRMP.

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

One of our key areas of work for the coming year is to prepare our next IRMP which will have a slight name change to Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). This will give us our strategic direction for the next five years. We will be drafting the plan and engaging with employees and our residents to include their input. The draft plan will be presented to the Fire Authority in Spring 2024.

## 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:

Just a note to say a really big thank you to the team who came out in the early hours and assisted the ambulance crew to get my poorly husband down our stairs. Hubby left in an ambulance and thanks to your swift actions and was operated on later that morning.

### **A resident in East Cambs**

I cannot find enough superlatives to express how fantastically the crew worked as a team. I took a lot of pics and videos, which I have shared with my sisters to show what really happens in a serious fire. They are all heroes!

### **A resident in Peterborough**

The PTA Team and everyone at Brampton Village Primary School wanted to say a huge thank you for coming down to our Summer Fayre. The day was a great success and it was so nice to see all the children having so much fun (despite the rain) and coming away with their haul of winnings.

They absolutely loved seeing the fire engine!

### **A school in Huntingdonshire**

Just want to say how amazing the crews were in attending a house fire in Werrington. I was absorbed at my bedroom window close by but safe. They were so thorough inspecting every inch, especially the chimney stack, which stubbornly remained a threat from what I could see. We are so grateful to all of you.

### **A resident in Peterborough**

Thank you so much to you, and your crews, for giving up your valuable time to come and talk to NFU members yesterday. Your session, along with the practical one in the workshop next door to you, were the greatest hits with members, and so I am sure members have learned something from your wise words.

Many thanks once again for all your planning, time, support and enthusiasm.

### **A representative from the National Farmers Union**

A big thank you to Stanground Red watch, for hosting my Guide unit and teaching them all about fire safety and showing them around the pump etc. I've had lots of messages from parents saying how much the girls enjoyed it.

Thank you for having us!

### **A resident in Peterborough**



I attended the Biker Down course and am writing to express how much I enjoyed it. The course was extremely well presented, in an engaging and professional manner by the two trainers and I found the content interesting, practical and 'real world' relevant. Full marks!

**A resident attending a Biker Down session**

We love and appreciate that you put your time aside to help us. There is no kinder act than helping others. As organisers we were so proud of all the educators and you exceeded our expectations to an extent that we were blown away with the enthusiasm, involvement and support that everyone gave on the day.

What a day it was! The event reached 3,000 children from five counties this year. Some 43 schools were present, coming together to learn where their food comes from, the importance of agriculture and our countryside.

Once again, please accept my heartfelt thanks for your invaluable help and support contributing to such a fantastic day that without the input of all you wonderful exhibitors this year's events wouldn't have been anywhere near as much fun!

Keep up the great work guys!

**An organiser of an event in Cambridgeshire**

I was unfortunate enough to come across an incident on the A1198 involving a car that had struck a lorry.

One occupant within the car was injured, so whilst I gave first aid, and kept them reassured, two of your appliances arrived quickly, and soon got to work, while I was in the rear of the vehicle ensuring minimal movement of the injured driver.

The teamwork involved, and the removal of the doors and roof around me, opened my eyes to how much public rely on the emergency service of the fire and rescue.

Very impressed with everything, from arrival, during and after, just wanted to say thanks for all the hard work and professional service these firefighters did today.

Thanks for all you do on the frontline and behind the scenes!

**A resident from 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

Hinchingbrooke Cottage

Brampton Road

Huntingdon

Cambs

PE29 2NA

Alternatively, you can share your thoughts via email at [feedback@cambsfire.gov.uk](mailto: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.