

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service Productivity and Efficiency report

April 2024

Introduction

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) has worked hard over the years to continuously strive to work more efficiently and effectively whilst maintaining a good, if not outstanding, service to the community, providing a value for money service.

With the unpredictable increases in costs and unknown pay settlements over the years, the Service has concentrated even more to see where further efficiencies can be made and put contingency plans in place should the costs outweigh our funding.

The cost of materials and services, as well as the cost of living pay increases, have been higher than those budgeted for 2022/23 and 2023/24, where the budget was set before the pay award for 2023/24 was agreed.

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service continues to operate as a lean service. To cover the significant increases in costs in 2022/23 and 2023/24, we needed to utilise the allowable increase of up to £5 on Council Tax precepts for 2023/24 (our increase in 2023/24 was £4.95). The impact of those increased costs is expected to continue into 2024/25 and we have increased our precepts for the year by 2.93% (£2.34) to help manage those increases.

The housing growth in our region has declined slightly from 1.95% to 1.61%. The overall impact of this on funding is an additional £1,106k. For future years we have assumed a 1.2% growth in housing year on year and a 3% increase per annum on precept per household, with inflation and pay increases expected to be between 2-5%. In November 2023, the annual inflation rate in the UK was 3.9%, its lowest since September 2021, dropping from 4.6% in October 2023.

With currently only annual settlements, CFRS must operate an annual Financial Business Continuity planning process to allow forward planning. The plans are developed in alignment with budget preparation to understand when savings could be made should the funding not be sufficient to meet the budgeted spend for the up-coming year.

Financial Risk

In July 2023, Suffolk announced that it would be withdrawing from our hugely successful Combined Fire Control collaboration. Cambridgeshire has been delivering 999 call handling and dispatch services to Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service since 2011. This effective collaboration has delivered substantial savings to both services over this time. The withdrawal of Suffolk from the collaboration will leave CFRS with an annual deficit of £1.2M. CFRS is already a lean service having made substantial savings over the years. This will create a significant funding gap that may result in cost savings directly impacting the frontline services that CFRS provides to the communities of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

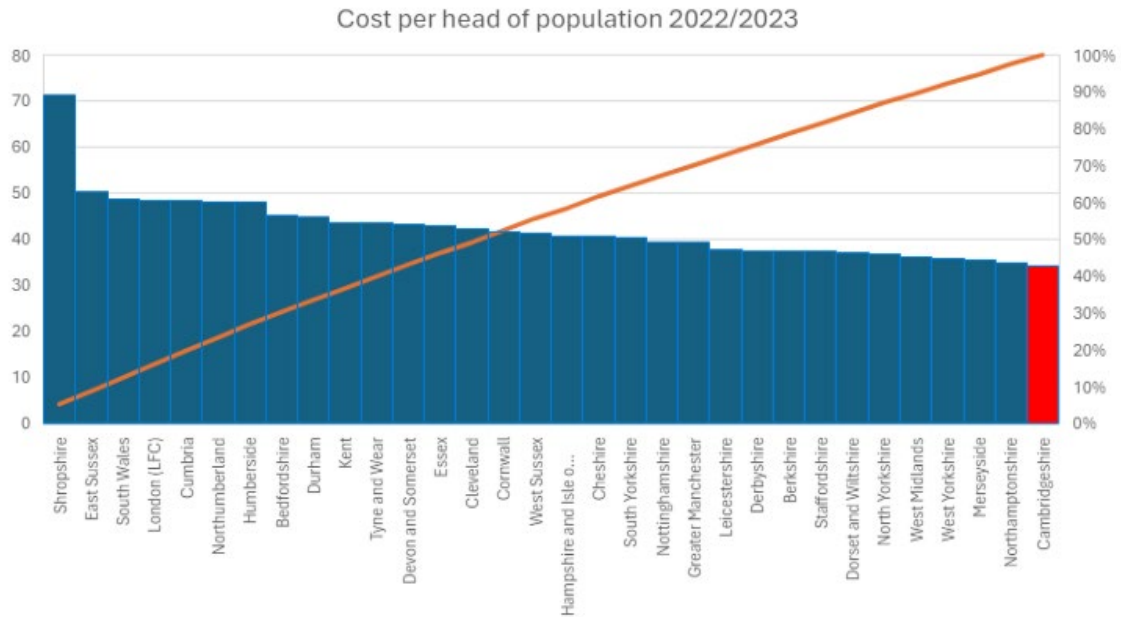
Budget 24/25

Below is our budget for 2024/25. Our complete budget book which includes our medium-term budget (capital and revenue), reserves policy and financial strategies can be found on our [website](#).

Expenditure areas	Original Budget 2024/25 £'000
Employee costs	30,426
Premises costs	2,217
Supplies and services costs	5,525
Transport costs	720
Agency charges	183
Capital charges	469
Total income	-3,948
Revenue improvement projects	1,850
Net Revenue Expenditure	37,442
Revenue support grant	-3,402
Section 31 NNDR relief and top-up grants	-3,793
National non-domestic rates	-5,004
Fire authority precept	-25,243

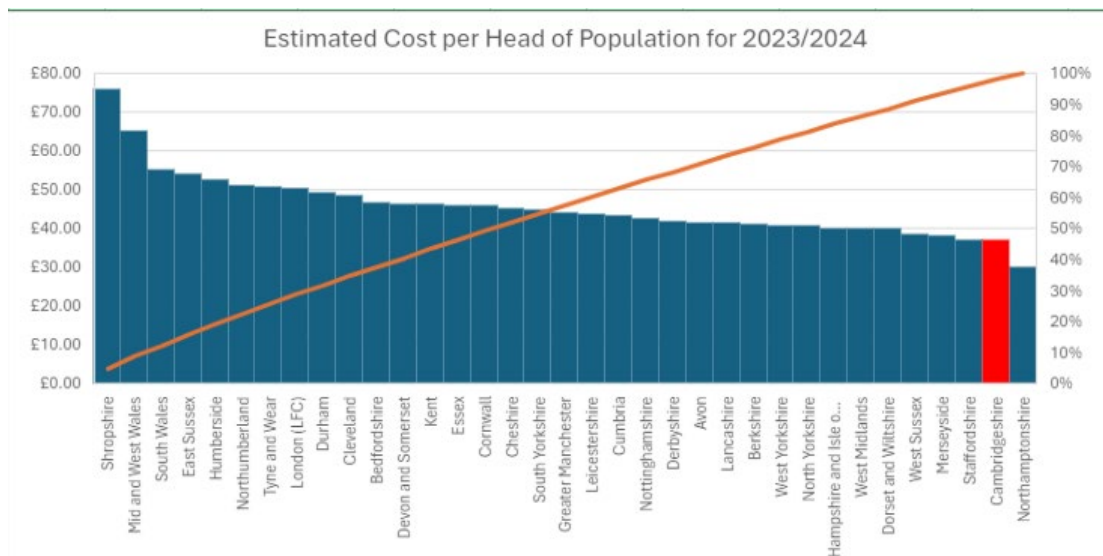
Cambridgeshire is one of the lowest cost per head of population Fire and Rescue Service in the country. In 22/23 we were the lowest and in 23/24 the second lowest. As a comparator to the population that it serves, we are providing a highly efficient and cost-effective fire and rescue service to the community.

The graphs and tables below show the cost per head of population for each service (based on those that supplied the data) for 2022-23, then the estimated cost per head of population for 2023-24.



Authority	2022-23
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



Authority	2023-24
Cambridgeshire	£37.02
Northamptonshire	£29.93
Merseyside	£38.03
West Yorkshire	£40.93
West Midlands	£39.96
North Yorkshire	£40.90
Dorset and Wiltshire	£39.95
Staffordshire	£37.27
Berkshire	£41.09

Derbyshire	£42.00
Leicestershire	£43.83
Greater Manchester	
Nottinghamshire	£42.59
South Yorkshire	£44.88
Cheshire	£45.21
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	£40.15
West Sussex	£38.43
Cornwall	£45.90
Cleveland	£48.55
Essex	£45.98
Devon and Somerset	£46.43
Tyne and Wear	£50.74
Kent	£46.35
Durham	£49.22
Bedfordshire	£46.57
Humberside	£52.60
Northumberland	£51.33
Cumbria	£43.25
London (LFC)	£50.35
South Wales	£55.32
East Sussex	£54.27
Shropshire	£76.06
Lancashire	£41.52
Avon	£41.69
Mid and West Wales	£65.33

Reserves

Reserves are required to provide the Authority with financial flexibility when dealing with unexpected circumstances. Specific reserves should also be set aside to provide for known or predicted liabilities.

The Service has utilised its reserves as we had planned, significantly enhancing the quality of the Service's training facilities.

Our reserves have more than halved in the last two years, this is due to CFRS utilising the Property Development reserve to fund the building of our new Huntingdon Fire Station and state of the art Training Centre.

The table below shows the amount of reserves in various areas for 2022/23, then a yearly breakdown until 2026/27.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Estimated Reserves at Start of Financial Year	11,706	4,679	6,252	6,352	4,719
Property Development Reserve	8,350	1,400	2,032	1,032	1,032
Capital Property Improvements	-8,350		-3,699	-3,709	-802
Capital Receipts		632	2,699	3,709	202
General Reserve	2,433	2,437	4,287	3,537	1,904
Capital Financing/Short Term Revenue Projects			-750	-750	
Revenue Under/Overspends	4			-883	-517
Finance Business Continuity Reserve	1,319	860	860	860	860
Operational Firefighter Reserve	400	400	400	400	400
Pension Reserve	523	523	523	523	523
Estimated Reserves at Year End	4,679	6,252	6,352	4,719	3,602

General Reserves at Year End	2,437	2,437	3,537	1,904	1,387
Earmarked Reserves at Year End	2,242	3,815	2,815	2,815	2,215

In the next 3-5 years, in line with our Medium Term Financial Plan, we plan to utilise our reserves as follows:

The **Property Development Reserve** is earmarked to fund major property improvement and new capital schemes. The new Training Centre and Fire Station in Huntingdon became operational in January 2023. Most of this reserve was used to finance the build. Future capital expenditure is being partly financed through the expected sale of land at St Ives and the old Huntingdon Fire Station. Investing in sustainability is now a key consideration and this reserve will also support that in the medium-term.

The **General Reserve** will be used for expenditure that cannot be budgeted for such as spate conditions, maternity leave, unexpected cost increases etc.

The **Financial Business Continuity Reserve** is a new reserve generated by the underspend in 2021/22, as a result of consciously holding back on spending to help manage future budgetary pressures and expected cuts in grant income.

The **Operational Firefighter Reserve** will be used to ensure any fluctuations in our establishment can be maintained.

The **Pension Reserve** is held to fund ill health retirements that are often unexpected and to fund any current funding shortfall owing to the revaluation of the Firefighter Pension Fund in addition to the uncertainty around the Matthews, McCloud and Sargent remedy cases. This will be reviewed once all claims are settled.

Efficiency

What we have achieved to date

Cambridgeshire FRS has focused on efficiency since 2010, reducing its budget by around £8 million in real terms (when inflation is applied). Despite the reduction in available finances, the Service has streamlined and continued to deliver an efficient and effective fire and rescue service that looks after its people, as evidenced by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in 2019, 2021 and 2023. In the 2023 report, HMICFRS graded CFRS Outstanding for 'making best use of resources' and noted innovative practice stating: "Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service's financial and resource planning is agile and flexible".

As a service, we have changed our wholetime shift system multiple times, saving significantly whilst improving operational availability and productivity. Alongside these efficiencies, the professional support functions were re-structured also saving considerable amounts from the budget. Aside from these cashable savings, we also implemented shared service functions focused on enhancing the efficiency of the Service and enabling the use of technology.

All of these savings, and the Service standing as a high performing low-cost service, should be considered to understand the scope for making further efficiencies and savings.

As stated above, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service is the second lowest cost per head of population Fire and Rescue Service. To enable the Service to continue to improve, we must now first find savings to allow improvements to be funded.

Through the detailed Financial Business Continuity planning that CFRS conducts, we are aware of areas for future potential savings and the impacts that these would have on the communities we serve. This process now demonstrates to us that it is becoming increasingly difficult to make future savings without impacting on our service delivery.

CFRS commenced Financial Business Continuity planning in 2022/23 to enable the funding of the above-budgeted pay award. This saw £116,000 efficiency savings from 2022/23. Further savings were made however these were required to contribute to funding the pay increase.

CFRS operates zero based budgeting and so entering 2023/24 we delivered 2.7% of saving against the 22/23 budget, a total saving of £846,000 in real terms. This was redistributed to pay for the pay increase and to enable continuous improvement and delivery of the service. This was achieved across the following areas.

Description	Saving £'000	Realisation update
Telecommunications and technologies	251	This was completed through a review of technologies and contracts.
Reductions in the number of operational and professional support staff and canteen costs	210	There were greater in year savings realised due to the delays in filling professional support posts.
Flexible working and working methods	150	There was an improved use of ICT to reduce travel costs and postage and printing costs. However, we did under achieve on the projected saving by £10k.
Community Safety	82	Revised ways of working delivered this saving and in real terms there will be a further reduction of £30k in 24/25.
Insurance Premiums	50	Quick reporting and investigation of incidents, carrying out relevant checks and providing relevant security measures to drive premiums down and reduce claims delivered this saving
Operational and support training	69	To deliver this, operational training was brought in-house utilising the new training facility in Huntingdon. The use of remote learning and on-line training for professional support colleagues contributed to this saving.
Occupational health	34	The health cover provided was renegotiated, aligning service to needs. This saving will decrease in 24/25 due to the rise in medical insurance premiums.
Total saving	846	
Total net budget 2022/23	31,226	
Saving as a % over 22/23	2.7%	

Efficiency for the future

The 23/24 forecasted savings of £289k are expected in two predominated areas - professional training and development and fuel costs.

Fuel costs

In 2023/24 we saved fuel costs. This has been caused by two factors. The first is we budgeted for higher fuel costs and we also budgeted for a summer spate period which did not occur in 2023/24. In 2024/25, we set the budget aligned to the lower fuel costs and took actions to improve our use of the courier services and pool car locations and increased our use of hybrid and electric vehicles, to drive down our fuel use. This will deliver an estimated saving of £79,000.

Decrease usage

In 2022/23 we made a £74,000 saving through reduced printing, postage, advertising and office equipment. Another key contributor to this was the reduction in our cleaning contract. In 24/25 we plan for a further reduction in this area of £11,000.

Fleet savings

Capital savings were made through reviewing the Service's plans for flexi-duty vehicles and officer/support fleet. This will reduce borrowing costs. Work has also been conducted to review vehicle maintenance, a provision that has seen a further saving of £70k for vehicle procurement and £63k over the vehicles' four-year lifespan.

Net Borrowing costs

Our planning indicates that we will save £169,000 in borrowing costs in 2024/25. The Service has reduced borrowing and used reserves and capital receipts to fund the capital programme. The Fleet review above has also contributed to this.

Utilities

Our utility costs are increasing in all areas but we are planning for this to have a cost neutral impact. Significant efforts have been implemented to reduce the use of gas and electricity across the Service. This means that whilst we do not see the savings from this work, it does mean we do not need to find additional funds to pay the increased unit costs. We are reducing our gas consumption through investment in building management systems and swapping gas boilers for air source systems. We are also conscious of our sustainability and linked to these efficiencies is a reduction in our use of fossil fuels and our carbon footprint. We are putting in place monitoring to measure the efficiencies that we achieve with these improvements.

Collaborations

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service has many ongoing and long-standing collaborations. We strive to look at the potential for new opportunities as a matter of business as usual whenever we review or change a process or need to procure a new contract. The Service actively reviews these collaborations to ensure we are still receiving benefit from these.

The table below identifies these collaborations along with any savings or efficiencies.

Activity	Description	Other Party	Host	Cost savings/efficiencies
Control Room	Joint control room function	Suffolk FRS	CFRS	£400k (in 2011) per annum for each service, over £546k at current pricing.
ICT Shared service	Joint information technology internal support	Bedfordshire FRS	CFRS	Provides resilience and enables greater resourcing at the same cost
Gazetteer Manager Service	Managed database service	Bedfordshire FRS	CFRS	Sharing of skills and expertise with Bedfordshire.
Safeguarding	Provision of safeguarding oversight and support	Essex FRS	Essex FRS	£28,000 per annum
Drone and Operational Training	Joint training	Cambridgeshire Constabulary	CFRS	Allows for training of pilots to be shared with Police and shared governance of drone use provides significant savings on costs to train and certificate.
Shared space	Use of meeting rooms	Cambridgeshire Constabulary	CFRS	Allows greater flexibility and reduces room and venue hire costs through allowing

				use and access to other service's facilities.
Shared space	Use of fire station facilities	East Ambulance Service	CFRS	No cost saving for CFRS. Welfare for other blue light service providers.
Co-responding	Currently eight stations delivering co-responding	East Ambulance Service	CFRS	Cost recovery for co-responding activities, allowing the EEAST to use capacity and at no extra cost to CFRS.
Internal Audit	Joint contracting of internal audit programme	Bedfordshire FRS & Essex FRS	Joint	Knowledge shared, endorsing best practices.
Shared network contract	Shared VMB contract for network provision	Bedfordshire FRS	CFRS	£500K over the 5-year contract period for CFRS.
Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC)	Insurance consortium-mutual management of risk, provide discretionary cover and purchase external insurances.	12 FRSs	FRIC	Savings on insurance premium tax (5-7%), enhanced management support and risk management. Aims to optimise each member's risk transfer programme and reduce costs. Reserve pool surpluses are distributed back to members.
Incident command and cross-border working	Common basis for the actions of FRSs undertaking their responsibilities	Beds, Herts, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk FRSs	Joint	No cost saving but increased resilience

	as a result of agreements made under S.13 and 16 of the Fire Rescue Services Act 2004.			
Specialist operational equipment sharing	Share equipment across all three services	Cambridgeshire Constabulary and East Ambulance Service	Joint	Allows greater access to resources if the service requesting does not have the resources available. Cost saving of recalls to duty and increased asset availability.
Supporting the most vulnerable	Working with Adult Social Care teams to support services through the Safe and Well visits. Identify data that will assist our vulnerable risk profiling.	Peterborough Plus, Solutions for Health, Everyone Health, Insight, Leap (local energy assist programme), Health and Wellbeing network (VOLORG), Peterborough County Council, Camquit		Improved targeting of activities
Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	Working together on safeguarding concerns in the following key areas: Child Protection, Vulnerable	Cambridgeshire constabulary, Probation Service		Improved safeguarding

	Adults and Domestic Abuse			
Shared information	Share information on vulnerable individuals in order to provide support	Anglian Water	AW	Improved success rate for Home Fire Safety Checks.
Shared rota for Area Commanders and principle officers.	Provision of officer cover across both counties	Bedfordshire	CFRS/ BFRS	Allows for services to manage the rota with one less resource.
HVO Huntingdon District Council	Shared use of HVO fuel between HDC and CFRS operational vehicles	Huntingdon District Council (HDC)	HDC	Allows for CFRS to understand the impacts of use of HVO and HDC to learn of the impacts to different vehicle types.
USAFE Collaboration	MoU with USAFE Alconbury	United States Air Force (USAFE)	CFRS	Provides access to 2 x water carriers for operational response, joint training opportunities and sharing of sites for exercising. Shared resource for driver training which provides CFRS with additional capacity to deliver driver training courses and refreshers

The collaboration with Huntingdon District Council has been highly successful and we will work with our new partner to continue to explore and expand our collaboration opportunities.

The decision by Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service to terminate the highly successful and efficient Combined Fire Control collaboration in December 2024, will have a considerable detrimental impact on Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue, meaning we will have to make service delivery impacting savings to fund this estimated £1.2m shortfall unless alternative funding is made available.

Transformation projects

The following projects are currently in progress or planned for 2024/25.

Mobilising and Integrated Command and Control System (ICCS) Project

The project to replace the Mobilising and Integrated Command and Control System (ICCS) is due to complete in 2024/25. The Service is already live with the new system for voice over radio communication using the new ICCS, the remainder of the system will transition to live this year. This is replacing aging technologies and providing compliance with future technology requirements, e.g. Despatch Communications Servers (DCS) and Emergency Services Network (ESN).

Review of Operational Response Project

This project is ensuring the Service takes an evidence-based case for effective and efficient use of operational response resources to inform our Community Risk Management Plan 2024/29 and to increase operational productivity.

We will be enhancing our response at weekends by using on-call fire appliances to provide wholetime status cover allowing 40 hours of additional productive hours each weekend to focus on community fire safety activities, training and operational risk planning etc.

We will be seeking to create a risk reduction pot for each station with the aim to reduce risk in our hard-to-reach communities using on-call firefighters to deliver community fire safety activities, operational risk planning and technical fire safety activities

We are working to increase the skill sets across the on-call to better support our specialist response to incidents allowing our city resources to remain available in the risk areas and not get pulled to rural areas as often to support these specialist incidents.

A productivity review has been completed which has led to changes to our Wholetime performance measures and community fire safety activities, operational risk planning and technical fire safety activities.

Changes to our Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) response procedure has led to an increase in available time for community facing activity.

CFRS will be looking to trial a new on-call contract system to reduce the reliance on standbys and increase availability.

We have reviewed our incident data and resource usage and will introduce changes in 2024/25 to our categorisation of calls which, being supported by Systel, our new mobilising system, will focus our resource to the highest priority incident types.

To make better use of our resources we have made changes to how we operate our Incident Command Unit and have reviewed the technology that we utilise on this. This has reduced the maintenance costs attached to this vehicle and its technology.

We have reviewed our incident data and considered our Service degradation. We are looking to explore changes to Cambridge city cover (south city) to improve response times and increase available time for community fire safety activity and technical fire safety activities. This is also to include standby procedures and reviews of the strategic stations to provide assurance regarding resource placement.

We have been making and continue to make changes to equipment and vehicles to better respond to climate related incidents, reducing the time on scene and the appliances required to conclude incidents.

Microsoft S65 project (MS365)

The Service already uses MS 365, this project looks to develop the use of this technology platform across the Service to increase collaboration and increase efficiency. The project will also contribute to our sustainability goals through the reduction of emails.

Replacement Finance System

We have recently completed a project to replace our finance system. The way in which we worked with the system supplier will deliver the project an £8k-£10K underspend. This project will deliver efficiencies in removing other systems, eliminating double processing and reducing software and printing costs. This efficiency will improve data quality through removing the risk of data inaccuracies.

Trauma welfare support project

The Service has reviewed how it provides trauma welfare support to its people. A new solution has been identified and is being implemented. One of our core priorities is the mental health and wellbeing of our people and through looking after our people's mental health and wellbeing we anticipate that in the long term we will see reduced sickness and ill health retirements linked to traumatic incidents.

Workwear and PPE Project

The Service is reviewing its workwear and PPE provision, we are working with the national working groups to consider the best solution to meet the needs of the Service.

Training records and competency recording system project

This project is about reviewing how we record and report the competencies of our operational colleagues. The Service is looking at the efficiencies in the recording process and to ensure the health and safety of our people in the delivery of our operational service.

Occupational health system implementation

This project will remove paper-based processes and introduce a single point of recording for medical information and data relating to our occupational health provision. This project is anticipated to deliver efficiencies that will increase capacity of the occupational health team and improve the service provided to our people.

HR system move to cloud

This project is the migration of our HR system from an on-premise solution to a cloud based solution. This will enable access to greater system capabilities and reduce maintenance activities required by the Service ICT team. 2024/25 will focus on moving data to the cloud provision. The following years will focus on maximising the system's capabilities to deliver process improvements and efficiencies.

Future projects

Service Headquarters (SHQ) Review

In 2024, the Service will be starting a project to scope the future requirements of an SHQ. Post-Covid ways of working have now established and have changed the way in which we use our buildings. As a Service we also have a distributed estate. This Project will look at the current and future requirements of SHQ and consider how these requirements can be met. This will be a longer-term project once the options are scoped and understood.

Asset database review

The Service will review how it records, tests, fault reports and manages its assets. This project will review the technology solutions that we utilise to support this and deliver process improvements and efficiencies.

Returns on Investments

As with many of the efficiency areas already mentioned there is a strong link to our sustainability strategy, this is the same with our return-on-investment work.

We have embarked on boiler replacements at eight of our sites, installing more efficient boilers - there are now none over 10 years old within the estate and we predict a saving of between 5% and 10%.

Several of our fire stations have flat roofs. We have completed roof replacement at 12 of our sites with the roof insulation upgraded to current Building Control standards. Energy savings are unknown at present but could be up to 25%. We have installed a Bauder high performance flat roof system. CFRS will be monitoring the impacts of these improvements over time.

CFRS has installed building management systems at five of our sites. The systems are linked to heating and cooling systems which are then available to control remotely via a laptop. Again, the savings are unknown at present, but monitoring is in place that will measure reductions in energy usage.

The Service has installed Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points at six sites with more planned. This has helped to reduce our vehicle fuel usage and subsequently a reduction in carbon emissions. All Service vehicles used by operational officers will be hybrids, with charging available at fire stations.

Planned for this year we are conducting an LED lighting replacement project. Putting in place a further six building management systems and upgrading insulation in our premises.

We will be trialling an air source heating pump at one of our stations to understand the benefits and return on investment that this provides. Solar panels will be installed at two of our sites.

We have started to deliver our own Wholetime recruits training programme, this has delivered considerable savings estimated to be £18,400 per course. This is a saving of 80%.

Charging Policies

The table below lists the charges the Service makes to recover our costs. There is a reference to Special charges which can be found on our [website](#).

Activity	Description	Charging Basis
Special Service Charges	Attending special service operational incidents e.g. lift release, locked out of properties, where a charge is due (charges do not apply to vulnerable persons).	Set fee based on costs to provide the service
Hire of equipment	The loan of salvage sheets at incidents such as roof fires or house fires where the equipment needs to be left in situ	Set fee based on costs to provide the service
Hydrant testing	The testing, examination and repair of private fire hydrants	Set fee based on costs to provide the service
Photocopying	A charge set for printing in both black and white and colour at CFRS site for non-authority use	Set fee based on costs to provide the service
Fire reports and fire investigation reports	To provide insurance companies and private clients with a fire report when requested.	Set fee based on costs to provide the service
Cylinder recharge	The costs to private companies and other Fire and Rescue Services to recharge a cylinder of air	Set fee based on costs to provide the service
Automatic Fire Alarms charges for collecting stations	An annual charge for access to dedicated telephone lines to our combined control for automatic fire alarms	Set fee based on costs to provide the service
Interviews with fire investigation officers and incident commanders	Charges for interviews between fire investigation officers and incident commanders for the purpose of insurance and loss adjusters	Set fee based on costs to provide the service

Cross border charges	Charges for providing assistance to and from other fire and rescue services for the provision of fire and rescue activities	MOU agreements - charging based on previous LGA charging Mechanism (Average of 3 years incidents - set rate per incident) unless agreed differently otherwise
Charging to other Local Authorities	Charges to other local authorities for shared services and collaboration activities	MOUs with specific agreements. Charging based on actual costs incurred
Firebreak Course	Charging to provide 1 day or 1 week fire cadet courses to schools	1 day - £45 per student 1 week - £4,500 per course based on costs incurred to deliver courses
Primary Authority Scheme	Charging to local organisations for primary authority activities	Costs based on actual activity delivered
Portable Misting Systems	Charges for the installation and maintenance of portable misting systems installed into properties	Installation costs shared with house owner for the installation of the unit. Maintenance and call charges based on actual costs.
Co-responding	Charges due to East of England Ambulance Service for attendance to co-responding incidents	Charges based on actual costs incurred by authority to attend the incident
Staff costs	Charging for costs incurred by the authority for an employee. E.g. private mileage	Charged based on expenditure incurred
Rents	Charging for rent for use of Authority properties	Charges based either on market value of property or nominal amount agreed
Cycle scheme	Charges to employees for the provision of a salary sacrifice cycle to work scheme	Charges based on cycle scheme agreement

Awards sponsorship	Sponsorship packages available for specific supplier to contribute and attend the annual Authority Awards evening	Gold Package - £2,500 Silver Package - £1000 Bronzer Package - £500 Only provide packages up to the cost incurred for holding the event.
Road Safety Officer	Host the post for the vision zero partnership	We charge the Cambridgeshire Police and Crimes Commission for this post at £45K per annum for two years.

Equipment and Assets

Our capital investment programme can be found within our Budget Book 2024/25 on our website.

Below we have highlighted areas which we are actively working on improving productivity and/or efficiencies.

Activity	Description	Benefit
Equipment and appliance checks and inventories	Checks are carried out and recorded on our asset management system every time equipment is used and/or repaired. Any defects are recorded.	This is not a new process, so no new benefit or saving, but continued monitoring of equipment and inventories ensure efficient ways of working.
Mobile/hybrid working	Covid19 meant the issuing of laptops and working away from the office happened during 2020-2021. The adoption of hybrid working during 2021/2022 and 2022/23 is now the accepted way of working. The introduction of Office 365 enables files to be shared easily, reducing the need to print documents and travel for meetings. Since 2023/24 this is driven further by focusing on sustainability, erasing unnecessary cost drivers and working efficiently.	A sustained reduction in printing, postage and travel.
Investment in Rescue and Emergency Vehicles	5 year procurement pipeline to secure pricing for chassis cabs. Move to upgrading of fleet to align to HVO fuel use will also see lifespan increase by two years to drive savings	Lower priced chassis costs secured and decreased capital outlay due to lifespan increase on vehicles.
Silver Fleet - cars	Full fleet of Flexi Duty System cars (37 vehicles) replaced by the end of 2024 and wider pool fleet to be	Capital and revenue cost savings delivered. Costs of borrowing also reduce through the use of Capital receipts.

	upgraded on a rolling basis. These vehicles are Hybrid 4x4's. Lifespans extended to a minimum of 4 years and aligned with a full warranty and service plan to provided budgeted costings	
Silver Fleet - small/medium vans	Review of van requirements for areas of delivery and increase of lifespan. Electric vans being trialed for area of high usage to drive emission reductions.	Reduced fuel costs. Increased lifespan of vehicles and review of working practices to reduce

Resourcing/models for delivery

As a small service with limited resources, we need to continually look at ways to adjust and adapt to the changing demands and to ensure that we utilise our resources in the most efficient and effective way. Part of our operational review project has led to us initiating further changes to how we resource our delivery model.

In our 23/24 efficiency plan we outlined our crews of three agreement and changes to our day-crewed systems, these continue to operate and provide benefits to the Service and our communities.

Crews of three have been operational since January 2023, this has delivered additional hours of cover for the communities of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. For 2023, the additional hours provided were 13,952.25 hours. These resources attended 253 incidents and helped to improve our attendance times across the county.

The table below details the plans in place as part of our CRMP 2024-29.

Title	Description	Saving/efficiency
On-call contract variation trial	We are looking to introduce in the coming months a trial to look at recompensing on-call firefighters for giving cover during high-risk peak demand times. This would mean paying additional money when cover is given during high-risk times. We are also looking to make contracts more flexible and also paying those individuals who go over and above their contract consistently over a 3-month period.	Providing better availability during peak demand times, enabling us to provide a better service to the public
Pro-rata annual leave for on-call	Looking to pro-rata annual leave to enable us to provide better cover because firefighters will receive leave in line with their contract and not the full entitlement as currently in place.	More availability and efficiency of providing annual leave in line with contract rather than paying full annual leave entitlement for contracts less than 100%

<p>On-call roaming appliances trial</p>	<p>At weekends we will resource two on-call appliances to wholetime status. Each station will do this every six weeks to help us provide better guaranteed weekend fire cover focusing on our high-risk areas of the county.</p>	<p>Should the trial work, we will look to redistribute (close) three on-call stations (circa £400K) that have low availability due to not being able to recruit and retain firefighters, low risk areas of the county and low call demand. This money will be reinvested into this weekend roaming appliance model, strengthening our flexible available resource allowing us to plug gaps in fire cover across the county. Furthermore, it will allow the appliances to provide additional productive work during this time such as community fire safety, fire protection activities and operational risk work as well as support ongoing training and development</p>
<p>Station Commander (SC) Rota</p>	<p>We have introduced some changes to our SC flexi rota. In principle the rota is now self-sustaining. Should it fall short due to sickness, leave, courses the other SCs will provide cover for a set sum of money making it cheaper than using over time.</p>	<p>The older model meant overtime was used so this was expensive when shortfalls were high. Now it is managed via the SC themselves we have seen huge reduction in costs to cover and maintain the rota.</p>

Procurement

The table below, listing savings and/or efficiencies, has been made by the commercial procurement team. This has been done by considering whether purchasing through a framework, by tender or by direct award is the best route in each individual case; by challenging terms and conditions and renegotiating rates.

Description	Benefits/cost savings
Provision of alternative gloves to female firefighters. Initially quoted £11,000 for the purchase of these. Negotiated with supplier to have them added to our existing contract as part of the managed service.	Saving of £10,778.40
Purchase of Battery-Operated Cutting Equipment	Price reduction utilising National Framework £65,755.32. This was a Capital saving, however this will also have delivered a saving in borrowing costs.
Provision of NGAV Security Software	Cost avoidance getting 30 free licenses at no extra cost saving £54,541.00
Fleet Vehicles through Blue Light framework	Ongoing replacement of pool vehicles and increase of lifespan alongside service/warranty plans to give a 'lifecost' of each vehicle. This delivered a capital saving of £240,000 over two years again reducing borrowing costs.
5 year procurement plan for appliances	Known replacement schedules for appliances and associated equipment will ensure our fleet maintenance costs can be managed efficiently. This will see our fleet ages managed and the associated costs reduced.
PA system contract renegotiation	£35,757 per annum for 2 years 23/24 & 24/25
Fire Protection Business Intelligence changing provider and through collaboration. Acorn data now utilised.	£6k saving each year for 5 years from 24/25
UPS and Generators maintenance. New 3-year agreement with incumbent service provider.	Savings of letting a 3 year contract total saving of £984k over the 3 years + year on year uplifts (£328k pa 23/24-25/26)

Local Initiative and Volunteers

CFRS benefits from resources provided by some local charities and organisations. The table below outlines the benefits we gain with local initiatives and volunteers.

Initiative	Description	Saving/efficiency
Bobby Scheme	A charity who work on behalf of the police who undertake home fire safety checks.	156 visits completed at cost of £1,436
Community champions	Community outreach work - help with recruitment and community safety activities such as talks.	6 Community Champions who undertake over 100 hours of work for us. Engaging with communities and attending events etc.
Anglian Water referral process	Communication both ways, data set for vulnerable people, meaning we don't have to go door-knocking	Improved door entry to the vulnerable by 25%
Peterborough Volunteer Fire Brigade	A crew of volunteers	Approximate saving is £70k pa
NRS Bed data	Circa 600/month high risk vulnerability data from company delivering hospital bed equipment to homes.	Free data, efficiency on reduced door knocking/admin and targeting.
Community Welfare Officers	Posts funded by EEAST and hosted by CFRS to deliver medical response and Community Fire Safety work	£90k over 2 years
Change Community Fire Safety data set	Experian Mosaic date sets changed to CACI Acorn dataset	£13k now £7k - detailed above in procurements
Community Road Safety Officer	Funded by Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to deliver/coordinate road safety objectives	£79k over 2 years

Firebreak	Youth targeted intervention scheme funded by local authorities.	£4.5k per course approx' 10 courses/year
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Productivity

CFRS has been working to deliver increased productivity of wholetime firefighters for some time. Following a review we have implemented further increases to watch activity, this includes a 50% increase in operational risk activity, and a 10% increase in protection activity. The Service's review of the Automatic Fire Alarm attendance policy has increased available time allowing for a more productive week Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm.

We have recently undertaken a full review of maximum theoretical output for each watch. This is based upon actual data demonstrating average activity duration. Utilising assurance we have cross-checked this with actual performance. This has allowed us to identify higher and lower achieving locations.

The Service sets performance measures and activity targets for its wholetime firefighters. The crews have measures for training, prevention, protection, operational risk and community engagement activities. The activities undertaken are aligned to our CRMP and are based upon our highest risks within our county. We also adapt these targets if required to allow for a flexible approach to emerging risks or requirements.

We monitor performance through regular 1 to 1 meetings, performance dashboards and we have quarterly excellence meetings which review the performance and achievements and report this information to the strategic management team.

Following the review, the time allocated to various tasks has been updated to reflect the realistic delivery time. This time has then been used to support an increase in measures.

Below are areas where productivity has been enhanced and directed or recorded and the expected levels of productivity.

Training

Crews are expected to align training activities within the wholetime (WT) Training, Record and Competency System (TRaCS) Training Planner. There is an appreciation that operational incidents and other commitments may mean occasional deviation from the planner. Additionally, all WT and on-call (OC) staff are expected to attend up to four training days per year as allocated by the Training Centre. TRaCS is to be used to record training and capture any additional evidence from incidents, training exercises etc.

Operational survey jobs

OSG will allocate a number of operational review and operational survey jobs at the start of the year with watches able to self-allocate operational familiarisation jobs and operational exercises (OPX) via CFRMIS (our risk database). The OSG Team will provide any additional

support and guidance as required. OPX linked to reduced Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) policy below (which creates capacity within the current working time available).

Automatic fire alarm attendance policy

CFRS has undertaken a review of its attendance of AFA's, from 1st April 2023 there will be an increase in productivity hours available across the establishment. OPX has been identified as a tangible activity to increase operational readiness. The requirement will be one OPX per watch per month. This will be achieved in the completion of tabletop exercises or the preferred option (where possible) a practical exercise at the risk venue. Further increases have been made to OPX measures for all watches as detailed above.

Technical fire safety (TFS) jobs

Crews can now self-allocate TFS jobs using the designated CFRMIS quick screen. There is an expectation that watches will select a variety of premises types to gain a broad understanding of inspecting premises. The Fire Protection Team provides any additional support and guidance as required.

Community fire safety jobs

Watches are allocated Safe and Well visits based on the appropriate data sets via CFRMIS. Additional Safe and Well visits may arise from incidents and ad-hoc requests. The Fire Prevention team provide any support and guidance as required.

Community Engagement

Utilising census data, we are able to identify hard to reach communities, make links, engage with them, target recruitment, and have local events.

Watch activity

There is currently no recording of watch activity, however vehicle checks and health and safety tasks should continue to be recorded on the MIQUEST platform. Monthly cost reports, detailing the cost of different pay activities, such as overtime, and numbers in establishment are monitored closely and corrective action taken if necessary.

Fitness testing

All operational staff are required to complete a fitness test every 12 months. This will be monitored by Occupational Health Unit with reminders sent to staff accordingly.

Personal Development Reviews (PDRs)

Watch management and professional support management should ensure staff attend regular PDRs. These meetings should include a quality conversation around all aspects of

welfare, training and personal development. The People Team are available to provide support in the delivery of PDRs.

Contaminants

It's critical for the welfare of our staff to ensure we are managing and monitoring contaminated Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) accordingly. There is clear messaging to all operational staff around our expectations around this issue, backed up with policy and procedure. Station Commanders should inspect PPE regularly and check Bristol return records. The Service continually reviews these risks and makes changes to policies and procedures to maintain the right level of protection.

Our targets for each wholetime crewing type are detailed below.

Wholetime watch targets

Training - 8 hours per tour

Operational jobs - 20-30 per year, depending on station

TFS jobs - 33 per watch per year

Day crewed station watch targets

Training - 8 hours per week

Operational jobs - 20 per year

TFS jobs - 66 per watch per year

Roaming fire appliance targets

Training - 14 hours per week

Operational jobs - 20 per appliance per year

TFS jobs - none

The table below details the anticipated time allocations for each wholetime crewing type.

Anticipated time allocation

Wholetime stations (hours per tour)

- Total Available: 29 hours (8.5 hours per day / 6 hours per night)
- 46 tours per year
- Training: 8 hours minimum
- CFS: 3 hours minimum Community Engagement: 2hrs minimum
- TFS: 3 hours minimum
- OPS: 4 hours minimum
- Ops Calls: 5 hours (10% of all time)
- Available: 4 hours (to include routines, emails, admin, bookings, personal study and additional hours for any of the above).

7 day crewing (hours per week) (Two watches)

- Total Available: 59.5 hours (8.5 hours per day)
- Training: 8 hours minimum
- CFS: 4 hours minimum Community Engagement: 2hrs minimum
- TFS: 3 hours minimum
- OPS: 4 hours minimum
- Ops Calls: 5 hours (10% of all time)
- Available: 7.5 hours (to include routines, emails, admin, bookings, personal study and additional hours for any of the above)

5 day crewing (hours per week)

- Total Available: 42 hours (8.5hrs per day)
- Training: Minimum 8 hours minimum
- CFS: Minimum 8 hours minimum Community Engagement: 3hrs minimum
- TFS: 6 hours minimum
- OPS: 4 hours minimum
- Ops Calls: 5 hours (10% of all time)
- Available: 8 hours (to include routines, emails, admin, bookings, personal study and additional hours for any of the above).