

Annual Report and Statement of Assurance for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority 2024-2025

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

The report covers the financial year 2024/2025 and summarises our performance over the 12 months, including how we spent public 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. Links to other documents and websites should be clearly identifiable (however these links 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 2024/2025.

April

The Service celebrated its first class of wholetime firefighter recruits completing their initial course at the new, state-of-the-art training centre in Huntingdon. The group of six firefighters displayed their new skills in front of their families and senior officers at the first pass out parade held at the training centre. Following the ceremony, the group then got together with some of their instructors to take on a charity challenge to raise money for The Fire Fighters Charity. Donning full firefighting PPE and breathing apparatus, they walked the 12-kilometer Kinder Scout route of the Peak District, raising more than £900.

Colleagues from across the Service gathered at Thalia Waste Management facility near Waterbeach to test new waste fire firefighting techniques, in partnership with the Environment Agency. Through two live test fires they developed and tested new techniques and observed the use of a new wetting agent water additive.

On-call firefighters at March Fire Station hosted the women's team from March Bears Rugby Club so they could try some firefighting activities and learn more about the role of an on-call firefighter. The team took part in an equipment carry drill and casualty drag, finishing off with trying the hose reel.

An exercise involving a temporary high rise structure took place at a factory in Wisbech. Trainee paramedics were also on hand to practice their life saving techniques. The exercise involved several casualties trapped within the high rise scaffolding structure, some with significant injuries. This presented somewhat unique challenges due to the height as well as the confined nature of the structure.

May

Firefighters from St Neots and our Community Fire Safety team visited Buckden Marina during Boat Fire Safety Week. They engaged with several boat owners providing them with smoke alarms, CO2 alarms and safety information to help them keep their home fire safe.

Hundreds of primary school children gained crucial safety skills as Safety Zones took place across Fenland. More than 650 children enjoyed hands-on activities covering an array of important safety topics when the workshops were hosted at fire stations in March, Whittlesey and Wisbech. They learned about fire safety in the home, staying safe in and around water bodies, road safety, dog behaviour, online safety, basic first aid including CPR and age-related product safety. These were organised with the Fenland Community Safety Partnership.

June

The Service was awarded the Tyre Safety in the Community award at the TyreSafe Awards 2024. The judges were impressed by the introduction of a new road safety initiative offering tyre checks at charity car wash events hosted at fire stations. Since introducing the tyre checks at car washes, more than 700 vehicles and 1,000 tyres have been checked, with 16 per cent found to have advisory/illegal tyres. Around 30 tyres were found to be illegal.

July

A new partnership highlighting how to stay safe around open water was launched for World Drowning Prevention Day. The Service partnered with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) to include more lifesaving advice on throwline stations at key locations along the county's

waterways. In addition to accessible throwlines to assist anyone having trouble in water, instructions for how to Float To Live were added to the stations via a QR code.

Crews across the county opened their station doors for various events. On-call firefighters at March celebrated their 60th anniversary at their current location by hosting an open drill night. St Neots held a charity car wash, raising more than £1,100 for The Fire Fighters Charity, Ely firefighters hosted a Brew With the Crew event and Gamlingay firefighters hosted the station's first ever open day, raising more than £1,200 for The Fire Fighters Charity.

Crews and colleagues engaged with the farming community at various events to highlight fire safety. Arson Liaison Officer Joe Gacon joined the watch from Wisbech at the National Farmers Union's annual health and safety event, attended by more than 200 farmers, to speak about business seminars, risk assessments and rural firefighting. Farmers were also briefed about the importance of relaying accurate incident locations using what3words, as well as informing them of our new water bowser hose couplings, an innovative idea supporting crews at incidents. By allowing them to access large quantities of water without having to do shuttle runs to the nearest hydrant. A group of young farmers also attended March Fire Station to learn about rural firefighting and fire prevention.

August

A new resource was launched for firefighters to assist members of the public involved in an incident. Cards that signpost residents to places they can find support, such as the Samaritans and the British Red Cross were made available on each fire engine. Also included is information about what to do after an incident, such as flooding.

September

The Service's new system to handle emergency calls and send fire engines to incidents was successfully launched. The Systel system went live after a robust period of testing and training, taking emergency calls for both Cambridgeshire and Suffolk residents.

To help celebrate its 50th birthday, the Service launched a competition inviting local children to design their own futuristic fire engine, showcasing their creativity and understanding of what the Service does, as well as thinking about how technology could advance over the next 50 years. After receiving more than 60 entries, the judging panel, consisting of colleagues from the Service as well as Scania, the current supplier of the Service's fire engines, chose the winners and runners up. They were awarded prizes and the opportunity to meet their local firefighters and see a modern fire engine up close as well as have a go with some of the equipment firefighters use.

October

The Service teamed up with various partners to help promote Restart a Heart Day. The annual initiative, led by Resuscitation Council UK, aims to increase the number of people surviving out-of-hospital cardiac arrests by helping more people learn CPR. A number of sessions were held across the county for support and operational colleagues, along with member of the public, to learn CPR.

November

Several external awards were celebrated as colleagues from the Service were recognised for their hard work. The highly successful collaboration with the East of England Ambulance Service Trust, plus other fire services in the region, scooped two awards. The collaboration won the Partnership Working Award at the National Fire Chiefs Council Prevention Awards, plus the Emergency Services Collaboration of the Year award at the Excellence in Fire Awards 2024. The Finance team also picked up the Digital Finance Project of the Year award at the Public Finance Awards 2024 for the launch of a new finance system.

December

A new Trauma Welfare Support process was launched providing colleagues with a proactive approach to managing psychological trauma. The process recognises that the nature of incidents, mainly operational crews, are exposed to can have significant emotional impacts. Trauma Welfare Support aims to identify, support and manage these impacts to ensure the wellbeing of our colleagues across the Service.

January

Excellence and long service were recognised at the Service's annual awards evening, which took place at the Delta Hotel, Marriott, in Huntingdon. Around 160 people attended and celebrated the achievements of colleagues from across different areas of the Service, highlighting outstanding accomplishments throughout the year.

One of the Service's longest serving firefighters called time on his career. Watch Commander Russell Gooderham retired after serving his local community in Kimbolton for more than 40 years as an on-call firefighter. Russell was given a fitting send off by Chief Fire Officer Matthew Warren, along with the serving crew at Kimbolton Fire Station and a host of colleagues past and present.

February

Renovation work to upgrade St Neots Fire Station began. The station will be the first in the county to be completely carbon neutral, making use of heat pumps and solar panels. The work is expected to be complete in the summer of 2025.

An animated approach was taken to business safety as the Fire Protection team launched a series of videos highlighting fire safety. This innovative approach to engaging with businesses allows owners to access important information about keeping their premises safe from fire in a more accessible way. Hundreds of businesses have viewed the videos, with more animations to be added to the series later in the year.

March

Crews and officers attended a multi-agency exercise in Kings Lynn hosted by Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service. The scenario involved a person in crisis at height, with multi-agency operational principles and collaboration being tested.

On-call firefighters from Yaxley took part in Peterborough's Big Sleep Out to help raise money for Light Project Peterborough. Taking place at Peterborough United's stadium, the crew joined others in raising more than £17,000 by spending the night outdoors in sleeping bags. Not only did the crew brace the cold and wet weather, they remained on-call for the duration of the night, responding to four calls in the city.

2. Forward

Welcome to our annual report and statement of assurance for 2024/2025.

This report looks back over the past financial year, highlighting how we have performed and some of our achievements during that time.

We always enjoy looking back and reflecting on what our employees have achieved across all areas of the Service. We're very proud of the dedicated people we have working for us and it is due to their hard work, continual drive for improvement and commitment to our Service that we continue to be one of the highest-performing fire and rescue services in the country.

Celebrating 50 years of Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service was certainly a highlight of the past year. It was fantastic to look back at the history of the Service and see how things have changed, as well as receive some lovely comments about the Service from people across the county. One thing that has remained consistent throughout those years is the commitment all our employees have shown to serving the communities of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough over that time.

We reached a huge milestone in September as we went live with our new mobilising system in Fire Control. This was a massively complex project that hit many bumps along the road, but thanks to our outstanding and dedicated colleagues in the Control room and those supporting the project, the system went live. The professional way everyone involved overcame the many challenges we had, approaching things in a solution focused way, shows the fantastic people we have working for us.

One of our key areas of focus this year has been ensuring we secure enough funding to continue delivering the excellent service that we do. Cambridgeshire has one of the fastest growing populations in the UK, meaning as more people choose to live here, the higher the risk becomes. We also have a thriving business sector that continues to grow at a quicker rate than other parts of the country. This not only presents us with more risk, but also many opportunities. We've been looking at several possibilities for grant funding, as well as securing more funding from business rates, to help us invest in making our service even better.

Being the first year of our community risk management plan, we have been working hard to ensure we are meeting the ambitious measures we have set ourselves, in consultation with our communities. We are now monitoring ourselves against a set of different criteria, which we have achieved in the last year. You can read more about how we are performing from page 22.

One area we are very passionate about is developing and harnessing the talent we have in our organisation and making sure we provide an environment where colleagues can thrive. We have seen first hand that we have developed excellent people from the promotion processes we have carried out over the past year to put our senior leadership team in place. Through our work with the Learning and Development and Training teams we are working hard to ensure we are providing the right environment and support to our colleagues to allow them to develop.

We would like to pay tribute to Councillor Edna Murphy, who stood down in May as the chair of the Fire Authority, a role she held for four years. We are delighted that she will remain on the authority, as her excellent leadership and dedication have been invaluable through some challenging times.

Thank you to everyone that has supported us over the past year. Whether you've helped by passing us information about a vulnerable resident, sharing a social media post, sent us a thank you message, supported an open day or charity event or made a cup of tea for a hard-working crew at an incident, we are extremely grateful and we really value that support.

We are always looking to celebrate what we do and keep people informed of the great work going on in all parts of the Service. Our social media channels are updated regularly with stories, as well as important safety advice and information. We're across Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok and Nextdoor so follow us to keep up to date with all our latest news and seasonal safety messages.

We hope you enjoy reading this annual report.

Councillor Chris Morris - Chair of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

Matthew Warren - Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive 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 government.

Statement of Assurance

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority is satisfied that its business during the financial year 2024/25 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:

Community Risk Management Plan - pages 13 to 25

Financial and governance matters - pages 33 to 37

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 and priorities set out in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

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 Douglas Dew, John Gowing, Ros Hathorn, Sebastian Kindersley, Catherine Rae, Kevin Reynolds, Philipa Slatter, Mandy Smith and Simone Taylor over the past year or more. Also, the Authority would like to record its thanks to Councillor Edna Murphy for her leadership and dedication in the position of chair for the last four years.

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

Current members of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

Councillor	Council	Party	District
Chris Morris (Chair)	Cambridgeshire County Council	Liberal Democrat	South Cambs
Mike Black	Cambridgeshire County Council	Labour	Cambridge
Andrew Bond (Vice Chair)	Peterborough City Council	Liberal Democrat	Peterborough
Neil Boyce	Peterborough City Council	Peterborough First	Peterborough
Simon Bywater	Cambridgeshire County Council	Conservative	Huntingdonshire
Yasmin Deter	Cambridgeshire County Council	Liberal Democrat	Huntingdonshire
Daniel Divine	Cambridgeshire County Council	Reform UK	Fenland
Wayne Fitzgerald	Peterborough City Council	Conservative	Peterborough
Ian Gardener	Cambridgeshire County Council	Conservative	Huntingdonshire
Mohammed Jamil	Peterborough City Council	Labour	Peterborough
Yannifer Malinowski	Cambridgeshire County Council	Liberal Democrat	East Cambs
Edna Murphy	Cambridgeshire County Council	Liberal Democrat	South Cambs
Luis Navarro	Cambridgeshire County Council	Liberal Democrat	South Cambs
Chris Poulton	Cambridgeshire County Council	Liberal Democrat	South Cambs
Peter Rees	Cambridgeshire County Council	Green	Cambridge
Des Watt	Cambridgeshire County Council	Reform UK	Huntingdonshire
Christine Whelan	Cambridgeshire County Council	Liberal Democrat	East Cambs

Our structure

Directors:

Name	Role	Responsibilities
Matthew Warren	Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive Officer	Ensuring the Service performs all of its statutory duties, along with specific responsibility for: - Business Support Group - Communication and Engagement - Executive Support - Finance
Jon Anderson	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	- Application Support Group - Business Intelligence and Performance - Cambridgeshire Fire Control - Commercial - Community Fire Safety - Democratic Services - Digital Transformation - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Fire Protection - ICT - Learning and Organisational Development - Legal - Occupational Health - People - Programme and Project Management - Recruitment - Safeguarding
Stuart Smith	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	- Fleet and Equipment - Health and Safety - Information Governance - Operational Response (wholtime and on call) - Operational Support - Payroll - Property - Resilience - Resource Management - Training

5. How we serve our community

Our Service

We currently operate from 27 fire stations across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Our Service Headquarters is in Huntingdon, hosting our Control room, leadership team and many of our support departments.

[See a map showing our fire stations.](#)

We employ 245 wholetime firefighters, including up to principal officers (establishment is 240) and 251 on-call firefighters. A total of 33 employees (establishment/full time equivalent is 36) operate our Fire Control. We have 155 colleagues working in professional support roles across different areas of the Service.

We have a fleet of 34 fire engines, three rescue vehicles, two turntable ladder aerial appliances and several other specialist vehicles.

[Read more about our vehicles and the equipment we use.](#)

[Read more about the make-up of the communities and area we serve.](#)

Everything we do is aligned to our vision and strategic aims and the way we deliver our services is reflective of our values – welcome, respect and professional.

Our priorities and how we target our resources are set out in our Community Risk Management Plan. This annual report describes what we have achieved in the previous financial year against what we said we would do in the CRMP.

Community risk management plan (CRMP)

Our CRMP is our corporate plan that looks at different risks across the county, how these could impact our work and what we plan to do to manage the risks. Our CRMP also looks at the opportunities we can take advantage of to help us achieve our aims of operational, community safety and people excellence and value for money.

Our latest plan covers five years from April 2024 to March 2029 and sets out what we will focus on over that time period. Further information about our CRMP can be found on page 33.

Within the CRMP we list actions we will take under each of our four strategic aim headings. These actions provide more detail about how we will address the risks and opportunities. We report on progress against these quarterly at our strategic management meetings and also to Fire Authority.

[Read the plan in full.](#)

Achievements against our CRMP 2024-2029

The next few pages outline what we delivered in 2024/25 against the actions in the CRMP, 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 plan to:

- Maintain and improve our positive and inclusive organisational culture and employee engagement and make us an employer of choice. This includes looking at how we communicate and facilitating more opportunities for colleagues from across different areas of the Service to engage with each other.
- Review how we manage, develop and diversify our people and our talent from within our Service, helping people to reach their full potential and supporting those who aspire to progress as leaders. This includes development pathways and programmes, talent management and succession planning.
- Review our processes for recruitment and progression, including our community engagement activity, to ensure they are accessible to people from a range of backgrounds and that they enable us to improve diversity over time, to greater reflect the communities we serve.
- Review our mechanisms for the management of safeguarding to protect our people and communities.
- Review our processes and means for supporting the health and wellbeing of our people.

To achieve this in 2024/25:

- We ran an employee engagement survey in October 2024. The results showed an improvement in engagement overall from the last survey in 2022, along with further improvements in many of the question areas. The Service remains above the sector benchmark average in the majority of areas. A detailed analysis of the survey results has been carried out, focusing on the areas with less satisfaction, feeding information into relevant projects and departments. This will continue into the next financial year.
- We evolved monthly manager seminars into Ask SLT (Senior Leadership Team) events. These enable colleagues to ask questions to a panel of Directors and Assistant Directors and are hosted on Microsoft Teams, to enable greater accessibility. These have been well attended and are also recorded to allow staff to catch up afterwards, either by watching the video or listening to the audio as a podcast.
- A number of events have been organised targeting different colleague groups to encourage greater engagement and networking. These include informal charity cake sales to a women's development day and planning a men's health event.
- A suite of leadership programmes have been introduced that align to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) products. These support the development of new managers up to middle leaders giving them the knowledge they need to excel in leadership roles. We have also developed a new accelerated development offering called the focused development pathway. This supports development from supervisory to middle manager in 12 months and is a mix of workplace and evidence-based learning.
- We have reviewed a range of evidence including our employee engagement survey, colleague listening groups and results of external audits to make recommendations to improve the experience of all those who engage in our promotion processes. We have implemented a range of changes to our induction process to streamline and improve the experience of our new starters and make us an employer of choice. Over the next 12 months we are implementing the recommendations to improve our promotion processes, improving fairness and transparency.

- We have reviewed and updated all service roles to ensure they have appropriate DBS checks in line with new legislation. We have continued our collaboration with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service who provide us with safeguarding support and resilience. We continue to provide dedicated training to colleagues to ensure they can meet their safeguarding duty and keep our communities safe. We have rolled out safer recruitment training to the people team.
- Our new trauma welfare support processes have been launched, which have been well received and well used.
- The new occupational health system has been implemented, improving visibility of the processes and allowing for self-service as well as putting in place protections for the sensitive data managed.
- On August 1, 2024, HMIFRS published its report entitled [Standards of Behaviour - The Handling of Misconduct in Fire and Rescue Services](#). This report followed a report in 2023 highlighting issues of unacceptable behaviour and culture in fire and rescue services nationally. This latest report made 17 recommendations for fire and rescue services to adopt. To date we have completed 11 of these actions, have four in progress and for two of the actions we are awaiting further information and guidance nationally. Progress on these actions [can be found on our website](#).

Case study – Our Employee Engagement Survey

We strongly believe that having an engaged and motivated workforce is key to our success in delivering a first-class fire and rescue service to our communities.

Under our People Excellence strategic aim, we strive to be an employer of choice, where people enjoy coming to work, can be themselves, feel valued and we have the right environment and opportunities to be the best they can be in their current role or as they strive for promotion.

So understanding how our employees feel about working at CFRS is an important part of this as it provides us with an opportunity to listen to feedback.

Our Employee Survey is carried out every two years and in October 2024 we ran our latest survey. The results were really positive and showed improvement from the previous survey in many areas. It also showed us scoring above the fire service sector in the majority of questions and provided us with feedback on areas we could continue to improve.

Colleagues were asked to describe the culture at CFRS in three words. Most frequently used words were welcoming, friendly, supportive, inclusive, positive, open, respectful, and professional, reflecting our corporate values of welcome, respect and professional. Seventy-five per cent of colleagues believed that CFRS has a positive culture, which is a seven-point improvement from 2022.

Our overall employee engagement score was 84 per cent which is seven points higher than 2022 and two points higher than the fire sector average. Colleague experience has become more positive since 2022 in most areas with highest increases in leadership, enablement and engagement.

When asked what the best thing is about working for CFRS, the most common key themes were around people and teamwork, values and culture, and work satisfaction.

Seventy-eight per cent of respondents would recommend CFRS as a great place to work, 83 per cent of respondents agreed they were motivated to give their best and 82 per cent were satisfied with CFRS as an employer. All of these were above fire service and all sector averages.

Chief Fire Officer Matthew Warren commented: “We are really pleased with the feedback we received from colleagues. These surveys help us understand if the culture we are trying to create is being felt by those working here and from the responses we can see that the overall picture is a positive one. There will always be areas we can improve and the survey provides us with an excellent indication of where those areas are, for example, explaining decisions more openly, sharing performance information more widely and creating more opportunities for colleagues from different teams to mix more, which is still a legacy from the pandemic.”

Matthew added: “We don’t just take the results and move on, we analyse them further, cross-matching different questions with employee groups to fully understand what our people are telling us. We share feedback with relevant managers such as project managers already working on improvements to the areas that are flagged as needing further improvement, or to heads of group who can help support improvements. We’re grateful to everyone who responds to the survey and hopefully when we rerun the survey in 2026, we will again see further positive steps forward.”

Community safety

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

- Collaborate further with health, social care and other partners to improve the ways we identify and meet the needs of those most at risk of fire.
- Continue developing our Firebreak programme to help vulnerable young people become resilient and valuable members of their communities. Explore other early intervention opportunities to positively influence children and younger people and keep them safe from harm.
- Continue working with central government, the NFCC and local partners to educate communities and responsible persons on the growing risk of emerging technologies, primarily lithium-ion batteries.
- Continue our work with partners from the road and water safety partnerships to reduce the number of people killed or injured on our roads and waterways.
- Ensure effective evaluation focuses our community safety and fire protection activity to keep our communities safe and bring together expertise from across the Service to reduce risk to people, places and events, continuing to build long-term relationships with our diverse communities.
- Build on work with our partners to protect and safeguard the most vulnerable in our communities and the most high-risk premises.
- Work with partner organisations to understand the projected growth plans for the county and create processes to continue to gather and feed this information into strategic planning activities. This will not only help us understand our current communities and risks but predict and plan for our future communities and risks.

To achieve this in 2024/25 we have:

- Extended the award-winning collaboration between the Service and East of England Ambulance Trust (EEAST) for Community Wellbeing Officers for a further 18 months. The Community Wellbeing Officers provide a first response to residents that have fallen. While attending the officers complete a safe and well visit, releasing capacity for EEAST and allowing the Service greater access to deliver intervention activities. This, along with data

sharing from external agencies and partners, has given us further access to some of the most vulnerable within our communities.

- Continued to grow our Firebreak programme, which is a highly successful young person intervention, run over a week at one of our fire stations by our community development instructors. The course provides the opportunity to help young people who may be out of education, already involved in crime or are vulnerable in other ways. You can read more about Firebreak below.
- Been actively involved with both the Water Safety Partnership and the Vision Zero Road Safety Partnership to provide education and safety advice in these areas. With the loss of funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office for our road safety officer role, we are exploring how we can still support the partnership in a different way.
- Continued to look for ways to ensure our community safety offerings are appropriate and effective. To ensure this we have created a quality assurance and evaluation officer post who will review all of our current processes to assess their effectiveness and ensure we are aligned with NFCC best practice.
- Worked closely with partners such as the NHS and Anglian Water and use data sharing agreements to ensure that the most vulnerable individuals are identified and provided with the correct level of support.
- Inspected high risk premises through following a risk-based inspection programme (RBIP), which ensures the most high-risk premises are inspected annually or bi-annually.
- Planned to develop a role that will work closely with planning departments within the city and district councils to better understand planned growth within the county. We also plan to further explore funding opportunities which are created through this growth to support us in delivering an effective service to the community.

Case study – Firebreak programme grows

Our Firebreak programme is well-established with education providers across the county. It is a recognised intervention, aligned to the National Early Intervention Framework. The courses, usually a week long, are based at fire stations and provide participants with input using firefighter skills and teamwork to help build confidence and self-esteem. The courses are funded by education providers and culminate in a pass out parade, similar to the event firefighters take part in when they finish their initial training.

The course is available to young people aged between 10 and 18 years that might be displaying risky behaviours, low self-esteem and confidence, have a history of truancy or not currently in education, employment, or training (NEET). It is also for those that have been identified as gifted and talented.

Station Commander Paul Clarke, Community Risk Manager, said: "We are now trialling a Fire Break Plus course, which continues the learning from the initial week through five further short sessions. These additional sessions include delivery from partners such as the air ambulance, police and the safer schools partnership. The aim of the additional sessions is to further embed the positive learning we have identified from the initial course to maintain the impact of the course for longer."

Over the last year the Service's Community Safety team has delivered courses for young people identified through serious violence duty practitioners. These courses have been developed to allow us to fulfil our responsibility under the new Serious and Violent Crime legislation. This new programme targets young people at risk of antisocial behaviour, knife crime, drug use, arson and county lines drug dealing, helping refocus their lives through developing vital life skills, teamwork, and confidence building.

Paul added: “Over the last year, 36 young people started a course with more than 90 per cent of them completing the week. The courses have been well received and had a significantly positive impact on reoffending rates. None of those who completed the course have reoffended.”

Operational Excellence

Working with everyone in the Service, we aimed to ensure the highest standards of operational response by:

- Aligning operational resources and skills (wholetime, on-call and fire control) to our risk and demand, understanding how we respond to incidents and the number of resources required to safely resolve them, plus ensuring that we are maximising our productivity and efficiency.
- Continuing to improve the collection and provision of risk data about identified premises, increasing knowledge of local risks and ensuring appropriate operational risk information is available for colleagues when responding to incidents.
- Continuing our ongoing work to ensure our emergency vehicles and equipment meet our identified emerging risks.
- Aligning our procedures with national operational guidance to improve firefighter safety and our ability to work with other fire services, ensuring appropriate business continuity arrangements are in place for contingency situations.
- Reviewing current arrangements for operational training and recording to ensure they meet the needs of operational colleagues and our identified emerging risks such as emerging technologies and extreme weather.
- Developing further assurance across all operational areas to achieve a high level of performance and support the on-going development of our people, ensuring we continue to learn from what we do.

To achieve this in 2024/25 we have:

- Continued to enhance our in-water rescue capability now having an additional six on-call stations providing water rescue response.
- Trialled two new ways of working for our on-call colleagues, with the aim to improve retention and increase operational availability. Both trials are currently under evaluation.
- Reviewed wholetime resource efficiency and are currently creating new resource modelling software to improve operational cover.
- Reviewed cross-border working practices to understand opportunities to improve efficiency.
- Continued to provide risk information to crews within the county and to our neighbouring services. Our crews are assigned risk work to complete each year, to review and familiarise themselves on operational risks.
- Provided operational exercise opportunities at risk sites to better embed our working relationships with the sites and to enhance awareness and understanding of responding crews.
- Introduced a concept fire engine, which considers our sustainability strategy and the risks posed to our firefighters from contaminants. This pilot has been in place at Huntingdon Fire Station and has seen us develop a fire engine that reduces the exposure of post fire contaminants on our firefighters, alongside battery operated technology equipment and removal of fossil fuelled equipment. The fire engine, when using hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) fuel, reduces emissions by around 90 per cent and will be the basis for our ongoing fire engine design.

- Started the procurement process to replace our existing water carrier with a modern and improved vehicle.
- Continued to align our operational procedures and guidance with National Operational Guidance (NOG), using this to develop and train our people. This has been done by working within the region alongside other fire services.
- Completed phase one and working towards completion of an action plan for phase two of the Grenfell Action Plan.
- Integrating the NFCC Fire Standards into the relevant group areas.
- Launched the Training Records and Competency System (TRaCS) review project in response to the feedback both from our previous His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services inspection (HMICFRS) and colleague feedback. This has seen a deep dive into how we train, record, and plan our training across all areas of the Service. Through this we identified opportunities to improve the time that is available to our on-call firefighters and support their planning of operational training. With a risk-based methodology a full upgrade to the system has been completed, improving the functionality of the recording system to make this more streamlined for colleagues to access learning materials and record the training they undertake. The creation of reporting and data now allows for everyone to have oversight of the training that is being recorded against the timescales set to ensure competence.
- Continued to assure all our operational activities through our various routes led by the Operational Support Group (OSG) and aligned to our Operational Assurance Strategy. With targeted areas we have identified trends which then are assured to gain understanding and awareness of any areas of improvements and any learning is shared both internally, and nationally via the Joint Emergency Services (JESIP) programme.

Case study – Investing in on-call to help improve retention

Throughout the last year there have been a number of investments in operational equipment and training to upskill on-call crews, as well as a number of trials to help improve retention of firefighters.

On-call firefighters have been given training to provide additional cover for in-water incidents. Crews at Cottenham and Yaxley joined those at March, Ely, St Neots and Wisbech who completed an in-water course delivered by Training Centre instructors. Advanced medical training was also given to operational crews to enable them to assist casualties better while waiting for an ambulance to arrive.

Area Commander Simon Thompson said: "This extra training not only provides the Service with added resilience, but it's an extra skill set for on-call firefighters bringing the possibility of attending more incidents. This expanded capability has filled the resilience gap identified by the on-call support team.

"Additionally, four more on-call stations began co-responding as part of our ongoing collaboration with the ambulance service. These crews now respond to cardiac arrests and other medical emergencies, as well as fire related calls. This long running partnership is improving lives for communities by getting medical help to those that need it quicker."

A trial is ongoing to increase the number of fire engines available at weekends by rotating on-call crews to work weekends at full time status. The fire engines roam in areas where cover is needed that day, rather than be based at their home fire station.

Simon added: "The trial has had a positive impact on retention of on-call firefighters as they have a greater chance of attending incidents. Crews working these weekend shifts also include home fire safety visits in their activities when not responding to calls.

The trial has already proven popular with colleagues, as well as other services who have been in touch to gauge how it is going as an innovative way to increase available fire engines.”

Value for money

Working with our managers and all colleagues to ensure we deliver high quality, value for money services, we aim to:

- Continue to update and enhance our mobilising systems, data, processes and procedures.
- Collaborate with other partner agencies, including a rationalisation and sharing of estates as well as looking for joined up working practices.
- Deliver efficient and effective working through existing and new technology, looking at how we can automate activities, enable greater mobile working and improve communication and engagement.
- Ensure our technology infrastructure and systems are robust and fit for our purposes, reducing the risk of cyber-attacks and ensuring our software is maintained and provides value for money.
- Deliver the Service’s sustainability strategies and plans.
- Continually review our commercial arrangements for our equipment provision and maintenance to ensure these are appropriate and meet our requirements for now and for the future.
- Carry out scenario planning for potential future budgetary constraints and new financial burdens and seek appropriate opportunities to create revenue streams across the Service.

To achieve this in 2024/25 we have:

- Introduced the new mobilising system in our Fire Control. This was the culmination of a five-year project, replacing the whole system that allows us to receive 999 calls, log incidents, identify resources, dispatch and communicate with crews. It is one of the most complex and critical systems that we have.
- Replaced the Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) on all fire engines moving to a commercial bearer, which reduces some of the restrictions on how we utilise the MDTs.
- Continued to work to improve our cyber security protection measures. New tools have been implemented and we are seeking to employ a new member of staff to look specifically at cyber security.
- Moved our people database so it is now stored using cloud based technology and are making similar moves of other systems, where it makes sense and presents value for money to do so.
- Completed a review of our technical strategy with work now commencing to implement this. Work will be focused on removing old systems and servers.
- Developed and improved our sustainability strategy through the five key areas of transport, people, procurement, offsetting and property. Through collaboration with Huntingdonshire District Council and internally, we have seen the introduction of hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) to be used instead of diesel in a portion of our fire engines. We have installed air source heat pumps at a selection of stations and building management systems (BMS) to support the efficient use of energy thus reducing our carbon footprint.
- Reviewed our procurement pipeline for the next 12 months and the appropriate route to market identified taking into account the flexibilities of the New Procurement Act. Commercial arrangements have been completely reviewed following the introduction of the new Act.

- Carried out scenario planning looking at the impact of changes in inflation, grant income and precepts, plus what alternative resources may need to be used and/or change in direction the Service may need to take should these occur. During 2024/25 we were able to take advantage of relatively high interest rates and maximise the potential of our cash by investing in short-term investments. This resulted in the Service earning a high level of investment interest far above that budgeted.
- Our Finance team was successful at the Public Finance Awards 2024, scooping Digital Finance Project of the Year for implementing a new financial management system.

Case study – A sustainable future at a sensible cost

Through prudent financial planning the Service has been able to look to a sustainable, greener future with the addition of its new fire engines.

Powered by hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) fuel rather than fossil fuel, the new trucks reduce carbon emissions by more than 90 per cent compared to previous fire engines. Stowed on these fire engines is new cutting equipment, for use at incidents like road traffic collisions, which are battery operated. This replaces the need for a petrol operated generator, as well as being quieter when being used, causing less distress for any casualty.

Area Commander Wayne Swales said: “Many services are looking to electric solutions for their fire engines, which come at a significant cost for a technology that it still being perfected. The Service has been able to purchase three new fire engines, along with the battery operated equipment to kit them out, for around the same cost as one electric powered fire engine.

“An HVO fuel store has been installed at the workshops at Dogsthorpe Fire Station, which allows the new fire engines to fill up with fuel. It currently also serves around 10 other fire engines as more of the operational fleet make use of the cleaner fuel.”

A partnership with a local authority also managed to reduce costs further. Working with Huntingdonshire District Council, a trial was introduced that saw the new engine at Huntingdon Fire Station use the HVO fuel dispenser at the council’s waste depot. During the trial the fuel was provided at no cost to the Service.

Our performance

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 in previous years, prolonged periods of rain 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 CRMP we set out the main performance areas we monitor that help us understand the progress we are making against the CRMP. Behind the scenes, we analyse much more data than this, but these are the headline data sets.

How we performed in 2024/25

We have set out a number of performance measures that we report on regularly:

1. We will respond to the most serious incidents within an average of 9 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.
2. We will be monitoring the following areas to ensure that we are making effective decisions about the targeting of our resources:
 - number of primary and secondary fires
 - number of associated deaths and injuries from fire
 - number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads
 - number and type of special services that we attend
 - number of Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) against our target groups.
3. We will be working to support businesses to ensure compliance with the Fire Safety Order and we will monitor this by tracking delivery against our risk-based inspection programme (RBIP), particularly:
 - the number of high-risk premises within Cambridgeshire
 - achievement of planned inspections of our high-risk premises
 - the county compliance rates with our inspections and actions taken to ensure compliance.
4. We measure our work towards People Excellence by looking at:
 - employee engagement, cultural surveys and metrics
 - number of safeguarding referrals made both internally and externally
 - percentage of employees who have a valid (and at the appropriate level) DBS check.
5. To ensure that we are delivering value for money for our communities, we will monitor:
 - spend against profiled budget.

Measure one - attendance times

Over this year we have responded to the most serious incidents in urban areas in 7.31 minutes, which is almost a minute and a half quicker than our performance measure of 9 minutes.

Rural attendance times have exceeded our measure of 12 minutes by 4 seconds for the second year. This is however an improvement of 14 seconds from the 2022/23.

We have had a fire engine arrive at an incident within 18 minutes on 95.5 per cent of occasions, which is consistent with last year's performance. This target has been consistently achieved over the past five years.

Measure two - number of incidents

In total there were 1,835 fires during the last financial year. These includes 941 primary fires, 866 secondary fires and 21 chimney fires. Compared to the previous 12 months there has been an 8.9 per cent increase in total fires, which comes from 2.2 per cent more primary fires and 6.5 per cent more secondary fires.

There were 31 fire incidents caused by lithium battery faults, overheating or careless disposal. Six incidents involved e-bikes and six incidents involved batteries igniting in bin lorries. The recording of lithium-ion related fire incidents is currently in free text fields, which can be difficult to identify, so these figures are a best estimate.

Sadly, there have been four fire deaths in the last financial year, all as a result of accidental fires. One of these occurred in a dwelling, one in an 'other residential' property (boarding house) and two in vehicles.

Analysis of the five-year data shows that males are at higher risk of dying in a fire compared to females (five-year average of 0.75 per 100,000 population males compared to 0.27 per 100,000 population females). People aged 75 and over are, on average, at higher risk than any other age group (five-year average of 1.01 per 100,000 population).

Over the past 12-months there have been 56 fire injuries. 22 less than in the previous year (78).

Analysis of the five-year data shows that males are at higher risk of being injured in a fire compared to females (five-year average of 7.03 per 100,000 population males compared to 3.67 per 100,000 population females). People aged 75 and over are, on average, at higher risk than any other age group (5-year average of 11 per 100,000 population), of injury if there is a fire.

There has been a 13 per cent decrease in people killed and seriously injured in road traffic collisions compared to the previous year, from 395 in 2023/24 to 342 this year. There is caution with this data as the 2024 police data is provisional only and may be subject to change following data validation. The number of road traffic collisions the Service has attended is up slightly (7 per cent) on last year, totalling 474 compared with 440 last year.

There has been an increase of 1 per cent in special service attendances. Co-responding incident figures continue to grow year on year, with 10 more incidents than last year and 20 more than the five-year average. We also end the year with a slight increase in assist other agencies incidents compared to last year, although numbers remain marginally below the five-year average. This suggests that such incidents may be stabilising at approximately 450 per year.

Throughout the year there has been a continued rise in special service incidents related to suicide/attempts, no action (false alarm), and effecting entry/exit. Conversely, incidents involving animal rescue have continued to decline.

There have been 8,095 home fire safety visits carried out in the last year, which is an increase of 26 per cent on the previous year (6,434). The resident uptake over this period was 70 per cent. Of the visits delivered, 90 per cent of households contained at least one person with at least one

vulnerability or risk factor. Also 82 per cent of all visits were carried out where a person in the household was more than 65 years old or has a disability (age and disability are specific NFCC stated vulnerabilities).

Measure three – supporting businesses

This year the number of total audits (851) has decreased by 9 per cent on the previous year. However, the proportion of total audits, which are full audits has increased by 17 per cent. These audits are longer and more in-depth and so take more time and capacity to complete. In addition, the onset of the risk-based inspection programme (RBIP) work means that that by the very nature of those premises, full audits are more likely to be required than short audits. Of the 851 audits carried out, 88 per cent were broadly compliant with our inspections.

There are 497 high risk premises in the RBIP (as at March 31, 2025). Currently, 87 per cent of the high risk premises have been audited within the last rolling two-years (431 premises out of a total of 497 premises). We have a 97 per cent compliance rate on our audits completed.

There are five main premises types which make up the 497 high risk (sleeping risk) premises. These are:

- Boarding/guest houses/bed and breakfast premises/youth hostels
- Care/nursing homes
- Fire stations
- Hotel/motels
- Sheltered accommodation.

Measure four – people excellence

The Service reviews a number of different metrics to understand the employee engagement and culture.

You can read about our latest employee survey results on page 15.

Total sickness across the Service has been stable at 3.88 days on average per employee per year, compared to 3.95 last year. Short term sickness was 1.37 days compared with 1.67 in 2023/24.

Staff turnover was also down, from 12 per cent last year to 9 per cent this year. This compares very well with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) UK average employee turnover, which is 21 per cent in public sector support roles and 34 per cent overall.

The number of safeguarding referrals is up by 50 per cent for internal referrals and 21 per cent for external referrals in the last financial year. This is positive and further work is planned to support our colleagues with further support and training in this area.

The roll-out of DBS checking for existing employees/volunteers started in November 2023. We have 631 employees and have completed 99 per cent of employee DBS checks at the levels in the updated legislation/guidance.

Measure five – value for money

Overall employee costs ended up as an underspend, due to some periods of under establishment from leavers during the year and other employee costs (namely clothing, training and occupational health costs), off-setting an overspend in wholetime operational budget.

There was an overspend in business rates mainly as a result of the delayed sale of the old Huntingdon station site and houses. This has been offset by reduced energy costs, including lower unit prices and further push for less wastage plus installation of more efficient heating systems.

There was an overspend on repairs, equipment and increased vehicle tax charges, which we have offset by lower fuel charges and usage. We also budgeted for summer spate conditions, which did not materialise in 2024.

We are currently showing an underspend for supplies and services. End of year transactions will impact on this as accruals and revenue to capital charges are finalised.

Other income is higher than budgeted, as a result of increased ICT costs being partially recharged as part of our shared service agreement, private fuel usage recharged and additional firebreak course funding.

6. 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 which are incorporated into our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

Our achievements against these objectives have been included in the People and Community Safety sections of this annual report, found on pages 14 and 16.

Equality impact assessments

We continued to complete Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) in 2024/25. This process helps identify potential discrimination by analysing policies, projects, practices, processes, procedures, services and decisions, to make sure they do not discriminate or disadvantage people and helps towards improving or promoting equality.

Carrying out equality impact assessments helps us meet our legal duties as well as bringing several benefits. They help us ensure that our decisions impact in a fair way, to make decisions based on evidence, to make decision-making more transparent and provide a platform for collaboration with the community and partners.

In this period, we improved the format and training of EQIAs to make them easier to complete and better understood.

[Read our annual Equality Compliance Reports.](#)

7. Sustainability

We are committed to embracing the broader sustainability challenges and seek to reduce our carbon footprint, with the ambition of achieving a net zero position by 2030. This is an extremely challenging aim and is underpinned by our sustainability strategy. This focuses on five key areas:

- People - we will focus on changing our behaviours and attitudes toward sustainability through communicating our intentions with our people.
- Transport - we will continue to reduce the emissions of our vehicles through the fleet replacement programme. This will be supported by the fleet strategy that will focus on how we use our vehicles, the size of our fleet, the fuel used within our vehicles and the move toward electric vehicles. From a wider transport perspective, we will seek to reduce the frequency of non-essential journeys.
- Property - we will focus on how we use the buildings we need. Technology will be essential in reducing our carbon footprint, with appropriate investment in these new technologies properly planned through the property capital programme.
- Offsetting - we will look at offsetting as a means for reducing our carbon footprint, where other solutions for reducing do not exist or are not effective.
- Procurement - our procurement process will consider the sustainability of the supply chain and consider procurement options should offset be an alternative contractual offer that is financially viable.

The Carbon Trust was brought into the Service in 2022 to evaluate and determine our carbon emissions and to support the development of our sustainability strategy.

What are our carbon emissions?

We provided data to The Carbon Trust to analyse to calculate our emission sources, hotspots and focus areas. Our top five sources of carbon emissions were found to be:

- Purchased goods – 29 per cent
- Capital assets – 23 per cent
- Fleet – 14 per cent
- Electricity – 12 per cent
- Natural gas – 12 per cent.

These account for 90 per cent of our total emissions.

How are we decarbonising?

Behind each strategic area, we have developed a detailed plan to identify a route map for carbon reduction. The carbon emissions against each of our strategic areas are:

- People – 7 per cent
- Procurement – 53 per cent
- Buildings – 26 per cent
- Fleet – 14 per cent.

What are we doing?

People

We recognise that our greatest impact on reducing our carbon footprint is through our people.

- We are looking at introducing sustainability champions to the Service.

- With the introduction of the new Learning Hub, we will be looking to refresh the training packages for environmental awareness soon to reflect our sustainability vision.
- We've been looking at our printing usage and how we can reduce the amount of printing done across the organisation, assessing whether it is achievable to have a paperless vision. Since 2019, the amount of printing done has halved and we hope to reduce that even further. We're also seeing a reduction in the amount of photocopying and postage, which takes us in the right direction. The ICT team is currently exploring the option of using recycled paper in our printers. The Sustainability Board will be working closely with departments across the Service to see how we can support teams to reduce printing and invest in systems to help. Colleagues are also encouraged to think before they print.
- The Logistics team has made great progress with refillable bottles, such as hand wash. We hope to see a reduction on plastic waste as this progresses. Around 8,000 less plastic bottles were purchased this year compared with the previous year.
- Sustainability has been added to the Station Assurance Programme.

Transport

Reducing our carbon footprint with our fleet has centred on trials using HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) in fire engines and replacing petrol vehicles with hybrid models.

- Hybrid vehicles - the roll out of hybrid vehicles is complete with all our response vehicles now being plug-in hybrid vehicles. Self-charging hybrids are also being rolled out and we are looking at introducing electric vans now that the technology is being development.
- Equipment – one of the next items we will be looking at is the sustainability of the equipment and kit used within the Service. While we have moved to battery operated equipment in some areas, we will be looking at more options alongside the Innovation group. We will also look to reduce the amount of cell batteries used.

Property

Improvements across our estate continue to be introduced to reduce carbon emissions and save money.

- Air source heat pumps offer environmental and cost saving benefits. These have already been installed at a number of our stations, including Dogsthorpe and Thorney.
- The roll out of charging bays continues to progress across stations. There are now more than 30 charging bays available.
- Work is progressing well on the St Neots fire station refurbishment. There is now no gas, adding to the carbon neutrality plan. We are also looking at having a HVO fuel tank in place for the future.
- Avoided emissions are the result of human activities that lead to lower or no CO2 emissions. For the period of April 2024 to April 2025, we have avoided more than 8,000kg of CO2 from all the charging miles delivered across the estate.
- Following recent tree maintenance work, we have now planted six new yew trees in the grounds of SHQ.

Offsetting

We remain committed to achieving a domestic recycling rate of 40 per cent. All waste continues to be diverted from landfill, with a recycling rate of more than 30 per cent recorded for the final quarter of the year. Waste production for the quarter totalled nine tonnes, representing a reduction of three tonnes from same period of the previous year.

Through our waste management efforts, we have avoided an additional CO2 output of 811kg for this financial year, the environmental benefit being the equivalent to planting three trees.

Procurement

As part of our strategy to reduce single use plastics across the Service, we have introduced initiatives that cut down on plastic waste created by cleaning products.

The Commercial team continues to request sustainability statements from suppliers, and this is now part of the decision during the procurement process.

8. 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

Throughout this financial year, we continued working in partnership with Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service to provide their emergency call and response function. When we began this collaboration in 2011 we became the first fire and rescue service to prove that the concept of a combined control room works, which has proven to be successful for the past 13 years. All 999 calls for both Suffolk and Cambridgeshire were 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 £500,000 each year.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service announced its intention to separate from this highly successful partnership to establish their own Control function. We have worked exceptionally hard to make the transition as easy and seamless as possible for both sets of residents. The collaboration came to an end in June 2025 when the new control room went live.

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 (CPLRF). The Service has fully supported and participated in the development of an agreed risk profile for the local area through the community risk register, in partnership with police and ambulance services, local authorities, NHS England, Public Health England, the Environment Agency and the military. The Service also employs several members of staff that carry out roles for the CPLRF.

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 have been working as one team for 11 years, bringing resilience and improved ways of working to both services.

Cambridgeshire 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

Fire crews utilise facilities in Melbourn, South Cambridgeshire thanks to a collaboration with the East of England Ambulance Service Trust. Crews in the area can use the Hazardous Area Response Team base to stop off or be based if needed. Fire stations are also used by ambulance service staff providing passenger transport services in rural areas, providing locations for vehicles and staff welfare facilities.

We have also introduced new Community Wellbeing Officers in partnership with the ambulance service. These are a split role supporting both partners through attending incidents and reducing risk to the most vulnerable members of the community. Between them the officers have delivered more than 700 safe and well visits, having attempted more than 1,100. They have also completed 48 safeguarding referrals to other agencies and attended more than 400 emergency calls on behalf of EEAST, being first in attendance at 363 incidents.

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. The partnership has generated around 300 referrals leading to safe and well visits to vulnerable residents in the county over the last year.

9. 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 and funding each year to ensure a balanced budget.

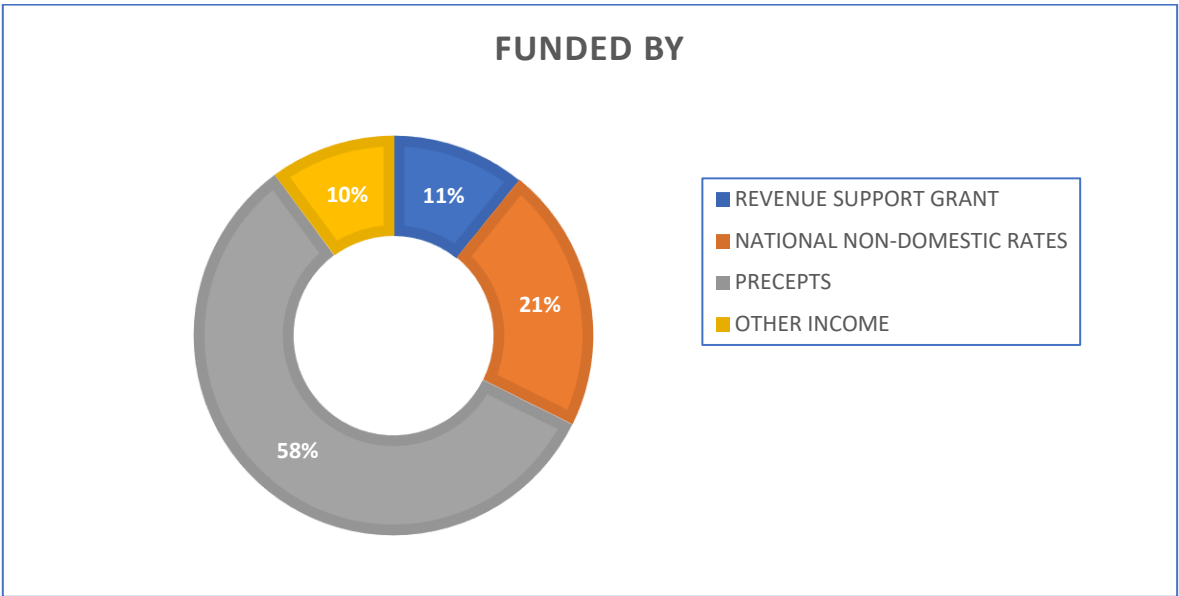
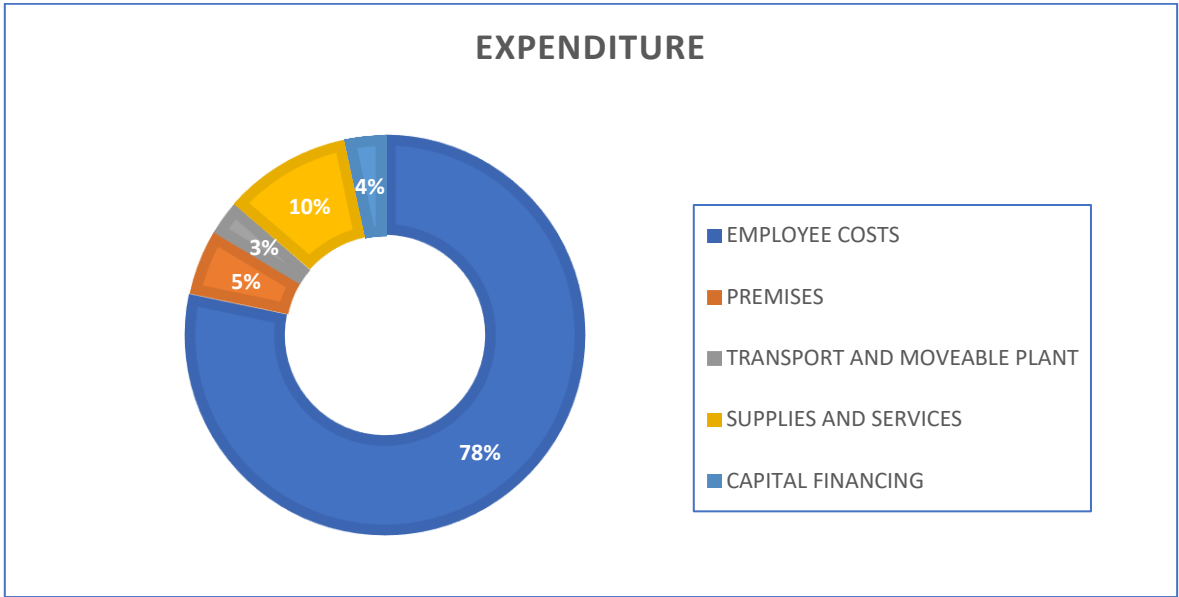
Where our money comes from and how much we spent

The Fire Authority's total net expenditure was £38,295,000. This is made up of £43,263,000 (expenditure) less £4,412,000 (other income). £25,242,600 was collected from council tax payers, which amounted to £82.26 a year for a Band D council tax household. This equates to £1.58 a week for your fire service – a similar cost to a four-pint carton of milk.

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

Description	Original budget	Revised budget	Actual to date	Variance	Variance
	£'000's	£'000's	£000's	£000's	%
Operational Wholetime	16,237	16,617	16,720	103	1%
Operational On-Call	3,599	3,803	3,740	-63	-2%
Operational Control	2,016	2,075	1,993	-82	-4%
Operational Other	924	924	999	75	8%
Support Mgt and Admin	2,114	2,368	2,342	-26	-1%
Support Mechanics	5,556	5,702	5,460	-242	-4%
Support Caretakers/Handymen	310	310	262	-48	-15%
Other Employee Costs	227	227	222	-5	-2%
EMPLOYEE COSTS	32,704	33,934	33,437	-497	-1%
Property Maintenance	505	558	553	-5	-1%
Building Insurance	45	45	46	1	2%
Energy Costs	761	766	596	-170	-22%
Cleaning	7	27	31	4	15%
Rents and Rates	942	942	988	46	5%
Other Property Expenditure	42	39	38	-1	-3%
PREMISES	2,302	2,377	2,252	-125	-5%
Equipment Expenditure	331	355	359	4	1%
Vehicle Running Expenses	694	696	704	8	1%
Vehicle Insurance	144	144	132	-12	-8%
TRANSPORT AND MOVEABLE PLANT	1,169	1,195	1,195	-	0%
Office Expenses	256	300	309	9	3%
IT and Communications Equip.	2,482	2,577	2,249	-328	-13%
Fire Equipment	52	60	31	-29	-48%
Insurance	36	36	50	14	39%
Other Supplies and Services	1,175	2,023	1,754	-269	-13%
SUPPLIES AND SERVICES	4,001	4,996	4,393	-603	-12%
Debt Charges	209	209	192	-17	-8%
External Interest	-70	-70	-556	-486	694%
Capital Financing	261	313	1,794	1,481	473%
CAPITAL FINANCING	400	452	1,430	978	216%
CONTROLLABLE EXPENDITURE	40,576	42,954	42,707	-247	-1%
Other Income	-1,631	-1,907	-2,213	-306	16%
Other Government Grants	-1,926	-2,015	-2,060	-45	2%
Secondments	-92	-126	-139	-13	10%
CONTROLLABLE INCOME	-3,649	-4,048	-4,412	-364	9%
NET CONTROLLABLE EXPENDITURE	36,927	38,906	38,295	-611	-2%
Grant/Precept Income	-38,777	-38,777	-39,219	-442	
Reserve Movements	1,850	-190	560	750	
CONTRIBUTIONS	-36,927	-38,967	-38,659	308	
CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENERAL RESERVE	-	61	364	303	

This information is also shown below in two pie graphs:



Key Budget points

The Service has managed to add £364,000 to its general reserves in 2024/25, and £560,000 to earmarked reserves, which will help support our medium-term revenue projects and potential medium-term financial pressures.

What we own

Our assets include (as of March 2025):

Buildings

1. Fire headquarters and operational buildings	28 (1 held for sale)
2. Staff houses	4 (all for sale)
o Total	32

Vehicles and Plant

1. Fire engines	34
2. Aerial appliances	2
3. Rescue vehicles	3
4. Other special appliances	6
5. Reserve and training appliances	8
6. Other vehicles	120
o Total	173

Capital Spending

The Service has purchased three new rescue appliances, and 24 silver fleet vehicles, costing £1,359,000 in total.

Improvements have been carried out to existing properties, including enhancements to buildings, costing £750,000. Additionally other plant and equipment have been purchased costing £30,000.

Investment has been made to the ICT network infrastructure and software, totalling £550,000. This includes the final costs of a new mobilising system which went live in September 2024 costing a total of £1,558,000.

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.

[Read our accounts.](#)

External audit

The Fire Authority has external auditors appointed by central government to assess its financial standing. The Authority has appointed auditor Ernst and Young for 2024/25 to complete 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 the significant backlogs with external audits in the public sector in recent years, only Value For Money audits were completed for financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23 by the backlog date set by government and therefore a disclaimer of opinion was given for both financial years. For the financial statements for 2023/24, although they have undergone a financial audit, the audit was incomplete. The backstop date issued by the Government for the 2023/24 financial statements has resulted in the external auditors not having had the time or resources available to fully complete all their audit tasks, in particular verifying the brought forward balances from 2022/23.

The audit for 2024/25 is currently underway and will be completed by the end of February 2026.

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.

10. 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.

The table below shows an estimate of net revenue expenditure by population, which gives a cost per head of population figure for delivering a fire and rescue service. Not all services are included in the table. The figures are provided by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). It shows that we are the fifth lowest at £39.74.

Authority	2024-25
Suffolk	£36.52
Surrey	£36.78
Hertfordshire	£37.30
Lincolnshire	£38.12
Cambridgeshire	£39.74
Gloucestershire	£40.23
Staffordshire	£40.57
West Sussex	£40.84
Merseyside	£41.02
Norfolk	£41.27
West Midlands	£42.33
Buckinghamshire	£43.10
West Yorkshire	£43.25
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	£43.50
Dorset and Wiltshire	£43.61
Avon	£43.87
Derbyshire	£44.00
Nottinghamshire	£46.38
Lancashire	£46.51
Hereford and Worcester	£47.12
South Yorkshire	£47.65
Essex	£47.67
Cheshire	£48.86
Warwickshire	£49.12
Devon and Somerset	£49.16
Kent	£50.45
Durham	£51.62
Cornwall	£52.32
Shropshire	£52.73
Cumbria	£52.78
Cleveland	£53.54
North Yorkshire	£54.49
Tyne and Wear	£54.65
London (LFC)	£56.25
Northumberland	£56.99
South Wales	£58.03
Humberside	£58.17

East Sussex	£58.63
Mid and West Wales	£69.94

11. Our inspection results

We were inspected by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in Spring 2023, with our report being published in August 2023.

We were assessed in 11 categories, all of which are scored separately. We received one Outstanding, six Goods, three Adequates, one Requires Improvement (no 'Inadequate'). This is shown in the diagram below:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
Best use of resources	Understanding fire and risk	Responding to fires and emergencies	Managing performance and developing leaders	
	Preventing fire and risk	Responding to major incidents		
	Public safety through fire regulation	Right people, right skills		
	Future affordability			
	Promoting values and culture			
	Promoting fairness and diversity			

In addition, innovative and promising practice was identified with our sustainability strategy, involvement of external assessors in recruitment of wholetime firefighters, our fitness equipment for firefighters and menopause and maternity provisions. We were also highlighted for being a neurodiversity friendly employer and having a 'positive working culture where staff feel valued and listened to'.

[Read our full report and response.](#)

We are looking forward to welcoming the HMICFRS inspection team in again at the end of 2025 for our next inspection.

12. Planning and future priorities

In April 2024 the Service launched its Community Risk Management Plan for 2024-2029. This provides our strategic direction and how we are planning for the next five years.

The draft plan was consulted on in the summer of 2023, with more than 1,000 responses received from people across the county. The plan was presented to the Fire Authority in February 2024 and approved.

This annual report looks back on our progress for the first year of the current CRMP.

[Read our Community Risk Management Plan and corporate priorities for 2024-2029.](#)

13. Letters of appreciation

Each week we get letters, cards and posts on our social media channels thanking our colleagues 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 people and the service we provide makes to others.

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

Just wanted to say a massive thanks to the fire service who turned up at our house tonight – they were on the scene really quickly and it's very much appreciated. Thank you so much.

A resident from Cambridge

I am so impressed with the help you gave me yesterday when I rang to say I had to dismantle my battery smoke alarm to stop it ringing (there was no fire/smoke). From the time I spoke to someone in the morning, to the visit that afternoon. I was kept well informed and the replacement was done efficiently. I wish more organisations handled their operations as well as you do. I in no way felt a nuisance and all aspects were carried out effectively, in a friendly manner, with useful advice given as well.

A resident from Huntingdonshire

Brilliant programme! My granddaughter thoroughly enjoyed her time doing her course.

A grandparent of a Firebreak participant

Well done to you and putting your life at risk to save someone's life.

A resident commenting on one of our award recipients

Well done to all the on-call firefighters, I know how hard you all work.

A resident from Cambridgeshire

We did the Biker Down session. It's a great course to do and would fully recommend. I was thankful for the information I received and would highly recommend this course to other riders. I, as many riders do, thought I was a good observant rider, but there was certain information I had never thought about and this course opened my eyes to my short comings. The two course leaders were excellent and informative.

A resident from Huntingdonshire

I did Firebreak last week as part of my job. The instructor and the other firefighters were amazing with the young people. A brilliant experience of everyone. Thank you so much.

A resident from Peterborough

A very big thank you to Cambs Fire for all they did when my daughter had a house fire. You were absolutely amazing and we can't thank you enough for all you do, putting your own lives at risk to help others. We were very lucky they all got out and are safe, it would have been a different story without you, we can't thank you enough.

A resident from Fenland

Thank you very much indeed for giving up your time, knowledge, and experience to us so that we and many, many others are able to feel more healthy, safe and secure in our home.

The work that Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service do is phenomenal. And we salute you all. Thank you. After your visit, we looked at the website and learnt about 'what 3 words'. We are now signed up and are telling our friends and family about it.

A resident from Huntingdonshire

Thank you for your good advice. Please take care and please keep safe.

A resident from Cambridgeshire

Thank you for inspiring my son who is 11 years old. He is a massive fan of you all and always loves when you visit school or when they visit your station. He went as a firefighter for world book day today.

A resident from Fenland

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

Alternatively, you can also write to us at the address below:

Fire Service HQ

Hinchingbrooke Cottage

Brampton Road

Huntingdon

Cambs

PE29 2NA

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

Thank you for your time.