



GROUP COMMANDER

Candidate Information And
Assessment Guide



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together to improve community safety



Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Stuart Smith

WELCOME

from our Assistant Chief Fire Officer

I am pleased that you are interested in finding out more about Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) and the role of Group Commander.

CFRS is a high performing service. We are willing to do things differently and constantly seek to improve. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services visited us recently, at the end of 2025 and we are awaiting publication of this report. Our previous report was published in August 2023. We were inspected in 11 areas. We scored one area of Outstanding, six Good, three Adequate and one Requires Improvement. We are very proud to have been recognised as an organisation that is seen as outstanding for the use of our resources, and Good for our culture - something we are very passionate about.

We are committed to protecting the community and it was particularly pleasing that the inspectorate recognised our understanding of the risks in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and how we manage these. They noted some of the positive work we have done to reduce that risk, working with partners to ensure that those in our communities most vulnerable from fire are protected as much as they can be. The full report inspection report can be found on our website.

We have worked hard to ensure we are making the best use of our resources across the county, being innovative to find new solutions to provide a better service. We understand that our county is growing and that the demand placed on our resources will be changing. We have employed a Growth and Planning Officer to help us better understand what our future resources need to look like and are one of the only services across the country to secure significant Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding from Local Authorities to assist us with meeting our changing demands.

If you are successful in your application, you will join a highly motivated and close knit team of leaders who are committed to leading the Service to operational and community safety excellence. As a Group Commander you will immediately be able to play a vital role in helping to develop and translate the Service's strategic direction into efficient, effective actions that produce clear and measurable outcomes. You will be selected because you have the knowledge and skills to successfully perform in the role but more importantly because you have the behaviours and qualities required to build a cohesive team able to deliver outstanding performance.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Stuart Smith
Assistant Chief Fire Officer



ABOUT

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Economy: Where Innovation Meets Opportunity

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough boast a thriving economy with robust GDP growth of 2.7% (as of 2022) and a vibrant ecosystem of tech enterprises, research institutions, and startups.

The county is home to the Cambridge Cluster, with a large number of high tech businesses focused on software, electronics, and biotechnology. The average income, consistently above the national average, reflects the rewarding nature of the professional landscape across the county.

Lifestyle: Where Tradition Meets Modernity

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough offer a rich tapestry of cultural experiences, picturesque landscapes, and recreational activities. Immerse yourself in the world-renowned Universities of Cambridge, where centuries of academic excellence unfold against the backdrop of iconic spires and cobblestone streets.

Explore the serenity of the Fens, where nature beckons with its tranquil waterways and lush green expanses. From vibrant market towns to the historic Peterborough Cathedral, each corner of the county resonates with a sense of community and heritage.

Communities: Where Diversity Flourishes

According to the latest census data, the region exhibits not only economic prosperity but also a rich mosaic of ethnicities and cultures. The population growth, outpacing the national average, underscores the attractiveness of this region. In Peterborough, for instance, the census reveals a population with roots in over 100 different countries, contributing to a dynamic cultural landscape.

Whether you're drawn to the cosmopolitan vibrancy of Cambridge or the welcoming warmth of smaller, rural towns, it's about being part of a dynamic, forward-thinking community that values progress, heritage, and the shared tapestry of diverse lives.



ABOUT

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority is the governing body responsible for delivering a fire and rescue service to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It was established in 1998 when Peterborough City became a unitary authority. Seventeen elected members make up the Authority, all of whom are serving councillors.

There are 13 members appointed by Cambridgeshire County Council and four members from Peterborough City Council, reflecting the proportion of tax payers in each of the two council areas. The political make-up of the Authority reflects the number of members from the political parties on each of the appointing county and unitary authorities. A Chairman and Vice-Chairman are elected annually.

Further information can be found [here](#).



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH
FIRE AUTHORITY**
Working together to improve community safety



ABOUT

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service

2024 was a milestone year for the Service marking 50 years since its formation. A lot may have changed over that time, but one thing remains constant and that's the commitment and care shown by our people and the constant strive for improvement which underpins everything we do.

We currently operate from 27 fire stations across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. We have four wholetime stations, three day crewed and the remainder are on-call stations, one of which is a voluntary fire station. Our fleet contains a number of different types of fire appliance, including rescue and light rescue pumps, aerial appliances, hazardous materials and command units, as well as a high volume pump. Management, professional support departments and our Fire Control, which takes emergency calls, are all based at our Service Headquarters in Huntingdon. We employ more than 600 members of staff, made up of 247 wholetime operational staff, including Principal Officers, around 200 on-call firefighters, 33 members of staff in our Combined Fire Control and 144 staff in professional support roles.

The Service is run by a Chief Fire Officer who is also the Chief Executive of the Service. The Chief Fire Officer is supported by a Deputy Chief Fire Officer and an Assistant Chief Fire Officer, who form the chief officers group. Each chief officer is responsible for a number of departments and functions and is supported by a management structure from across the organisation.





We are committed to creating a workplace that is welcoming, respectful and professional - the three core values we expect everyone role model at all times. We recognise that the work involved in improving culture is a continuous journey, however the results from our 2024 employee engagement survey confirmed our belief that we have a good culture.

We know we cannot be complacent though; the HMICFRS Culture Spotlight report and other events in the media show us that it is essential this continues to be a priority.

We use engagement and culture surveys, commissioned with external organisations to ensure it is unbiased, to help us understand how our people feel about working for our Service. We measure our culture through these surveys and other listening channels and metrics.

Our recent survey showed that we had improved employee engagement and that colleagues were proud to work for CFRS. It also showed us further areas that we could improve on, for example improving our system for recording training, facilitating more opportunities for colleagues across different areas of the Service to engage with each other and showing greater transparency with recruitment processes.

We will look at these, along with the recommendations from HMICFRS and NFCC, to continue to maintain and improve our positive and inclusive organisational culture - which are all essential elements of the Group Commander role.





Our Vision

Our vision is for safe communities where there are no preventable deaths or injuries from fire or other emergencies. Put simply, this means we will strive to reduce risk and save lives.



To succeed in this, we need to achieve **community safety** and **operational excellence** in the most cost-effective way, putting **people** at the centre of everything we do.

 <p>People</p>	 <p>Community Safety Excellence</p>
<p>We have a culture that embodies our values and expected behaviours.</p>	<p>We understand and target the risk in our communities.</p>
<p>We listen and engage with our people, communities and our partners to improve what we do.</p>	<p>We are inclusive in our approach and tailor our services to meet the needs of our diverse communities.</p>
<p>We develop our people and encourage them to reach their potential.</p>	<p>We work with partner agencies in a targeted, proactive and effective manner and are perceived as a key contributor to community safety.</p>
<p>We continually improve the service we deliver.</p>	<p>We have a high level of success in our community safety activities and evaluate our impact.</p>
 <p>Operational Excellence</p>	 <p>Value for Money</p>
<p>We have competent, confident and skilled people.</p>	<p>We actively seek collaborations.</p>
<p>We have the right skills, equipment and resources in the right places.</p>	<p>We evaluate the impact of working practices to strive for efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.</p>
<p>We have a learning culture looking to continually improve what we do and how we do it.</p>	<p>We continuously monitor how we are performing, sharing what we do and taking best practice from others.</p>

Our Values and Behaviours



 Welcoming	 Respectful	 Professional
<p>I am welcoming and inclusive.</p>	<p>I treat everyone with dignity and respect.</p>	<p>I always act with integrity and am accountable for my behaviour, actions and words.</p>
<p>I consider and support my colleagues' wellbeing.</p>	<p>I embrace diversity and difference.</p>	<p>I communicate clearly and listen attentively.</p>
<p>I appropriately address language and behaviours that are not in line with our values.</p>	<p>I am mindful of my impact on others.</p>	<p>I am open and receptive to feedback.</p>

ABOUT

The Role

As part of our leadership team, you will play a vital role in helping to develop and translate the Service's strategic direction into efficient, effective actions that produce clear and measurable outcomes.

You will be responsible for advancing and supporting the Service to deliver our vision of a safe community, where there are no preventable deaths or injuries in fires or other emergencies. You will strive for operational and community safety excellence, demonstrate value for money, and put people, in the communities we serve and our staff, at the centre of everything we do.

The role of Group Commander has broad reach and scope. You will be required to display strong leadership skills and actively participate in building an organisation that is inclusive and representative of the communities we serve.

Our values of Welcoming, Respectful and Professional will act as your guiding principles in every interaction with the people you work with and the communities we serve.

Full details of the main duties and responsibilities can be found in the job description and person specification.

Eligibility:

We welcome applications from all sections of the community, but this role has the following eligibility criteria:

- Be a substantive and fully competent Group Commander or a Station Commander ready to step up, serving in a UK Fire and Rescue Service
- Hold an Incident Command Level 3 qualification and assessment, or be a qualified Level 2 commander, with permanent appointment to GC subject to successfully achieving Level 3 qualification and assessment.
- Have no current capability or disciplinary processes in place
- Provide a base within Cambridgeshire when on duty
- Able to work and live in the UK free from any restrictions.

Job Description



Job Title	Group Commander
Responsible to:	Area Commander
Main Duties and Responsibilities	
Lead, monitor and support people to resolve operational incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and determine incident status. Assume responsibility and implement action to support those involved in the incident. Debrief following resolution of the incident.
Implement organisational strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocate roles and responsibilities for implementation of strategic plans. Delegate and provide support to those who will undertake implementation. Maintain effective working relationships with those who can assist with implementation of the strategic plan.
Implement and manage change in organisational activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities for improvement in activities. Evaluate proposed changes for benefits and disadvantages. Plan the implementation of change in activities. Agree the introduction of change. Implement changes in activities.

Plan and implement activities to meet service delivery needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and allocate work activities to meet service delivery needs. Agree budgets and resources for work activities. Implement and evaluate work plans to achieve objectives. Make recommendations for improvements to work activities
Determine effective use of physical and financial resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocate resources to meet service delivery needs. Make recommendations for expenditure. Control expenditure against budgets.
Manage the performance of teams and individuals to achieve objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocate and delegate work to teams and individuals. Agree objectives and work plans with teams and individuals. Assess the performance of teams and individuals. Provide feedback to teams and individuals on their performance. Resolve performance issues with teams and individuals.

Person Specification



QUALIFICATIONS			
CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	MEASURED BY
Current and valid light vehicle licence	x		Application Form
Completion of FSC Group Commanders Managing Incidents or Level 3 IC		x	Application Form
Appropriate management qualification or degree		x	Application Form
Other relevant qualification e.g. project management, Membership of IFE		x	Application Form

Knowledge			
CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	MEASURED BY
Understanding of the major issues being faced by the Fire and Rescue Service	x		Assessments
Good knowledge of CFRS key organisational aims and objectives	x		Assessments
Good understanding of the processes required for effective change management	x		Assessments
Good knowledge of the statutory role, powers and responsibilities of the FRS	x		Assessments
Knowledge of the principals and practical application of Project and Programme management		x	Application form/ Assessments

Person Specification



EXPERIENCE			
CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	MEASURED BY
Currently serving in a local authority FRS with extensive experience as a station commander on the flexible duty system/ Significant managerial experience as a temporary Group Commander/Manager	x		Application Form
Significant Operational Incident Command experience at Bronze level	x		Application Form/Assessments
Experience of leading and delivering change and improvement	x		Application Form/Assessments
Experience of developing effective working relationships with a range of stakeholders in order to improve outcomes	x		Application Form/Assessments
Experience of identifying and driving out financial efficiencies through working collaboratively with peers and managers across the organisation	x		Application Form/Assessments
Operational Incident Command experience at Silver level		x	Application form / Assessments

Skills and Abilities			
CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	MEASURED BY
Able to work effectively with a broad range of stakeholders to ensure achievement of organisational aims	x		Application Form/Assessments
Able to implement difficult decisions in an empathetic and emotionally intelligent way	x		Assessments
Able to analyse complex information and present in a simple manner that enables effective decisions to be taken	x		Assessments
Ability to communicate in a clear, concise and articulate way	x		Application Form/Assessments
Ability to effectively manage demanding and competing workloads whilst ensuring your team members and yourself maintain an appropriate work life balance	x		Assessments
Ability to positively impact on organisational culture by championing leadership throughout the organisation, encouraging strong interpersonal networks and a focused performance managed approach	x		Application Form/Assessments

Person Specification



Attitude and Approach			
CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	MEASURED BY
A clear role model, who is organisationally aware, focused on improvement, able to communicate effectively, and is action focused.	x		Assessments
Strong personal commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion	x		Assessments
Confident and resilient approach. Empathises with the needs of staff but embraces the need to demonstrably own and drive Service improvement	x		Assessments
Business focused and clear about how to develop a compelling business case and influence to persuade others.	x		Assessments
Takes personal responsibility and accountability for their own actions and those of their staff	x		Assessments
Committed to a mentoring/coaching style of management which encourages, recognises and rewards good performance and addresses poor and under performance effectively	x		Assessments

Attitude and Approach			
CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	MEASURED BY
Self-motivated with a positive, forward thinking, and solution orientated approach to problem solving	x		Assessments
A team player who puts team achievement above own interests	x		Assessments
Highly self -aware with a clear understanding of own strengths and weaknesses, with a current associated personal development plan	x		Assessments

ABOUT

The Selection Process

Applications open: 19 May 2026

Deadline to apply: 5 June 2026 at 12:00noon

Shortlisting complete: 8 June 2026

Assessment event: Week Commencing 22 June 2026

Final stage interviews: Week Commencing 29 June 2026

Ready to lead with us?

Candidates are required to complete an application form by 5 June 2026.

Successful candidates will be invited to participate in each stage of the process and are requested to please be mindful of the key dates.

Find out more

If you're interested in learning more about this opportunity but would like to have an informal and confidential conversation, please contact our recruitment team at recruitment@cambsfire.gov.uk to arrange a suitable time.



