



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

# **Annual Report and Statement of Assurance for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority 2020-2021**

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

The report covers the financial year 2020/2021 and summarises our performance over the 12 months, including how we spent your money in delivering priority services. It features highlights of the year, case studies and information about how we are working in collaboration with partners to improve our service to you.

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

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## **1. The year at a glance**

Here are some highlights from the year 2020/2021.

### **April**

Staff wellbeing was high on the agenda in April 2020 as the Service continued to navigate its way through the unprecedented challenges the Covid pandemic has brought. Chief Fire Officer Chris Strickland declared a major incident for the Service and business continuity measures were put into place to maintain a service to the public. The emphasis was on protecting those having to come into work whilst ensuring the mental health and wellbeing of colleagues working at home while also having to potentially home school children and look after vulnerable family members.

A new member of staff, of sorts, hit the headlines when three-year-old Darcey Cook from Whittlesey showed off her firefighting skills, learned from her firefighter dad Jamie, in her garden by using a hose to extinguish a (chalk) fire and save her baby doll. The video was a massive hit on social media, being viewed thousands of times and well-wishers from all over the world got in touch.

With the pandemic impacting health care providers around the county, staff were quick to show their support and arranged fundraisers to help. On-call firefighter Roger Pake from Cottenham Fire Station raised more than £2,000 to cover the cost of 700 masks for staff at Arthur Rank Hospice in Cambridge. Staff at Dogsthorpe Fire Station donated more than £1,000 from the station's sports and social club to Sue Ryder Thorpe Hall Hospice after a social media post highlighted the need for support.

### **May**

The pandemic presented many challenges but staff went above and beyond to provide support where they could. A group of on-call colleagues were seconded to drive ambulances to support the East of England Ambulance Service Trust and one of our wholetime firefighters returned to his previous job as a paramedic on a secondment. Firefighters also supported the county-wide community coordination hub by carrying out welfare checks on vulnerable residents who were shielding.

Staff across the Service mourned the loss of Peterborough Volunteer Fire Brigade Firefighter Will Baker and fell silent for two minutes to pay tribute to their colleague.

Smoke blocking curtains were added to fire engines around the county. The curtains are used to contain the smoke from a fire, helping to keep neighbouring residents safe and reduce the impact of smoke on the rest of the property. The specialist equipment is mainly used within multi-occupancy accommodation, such as care homes or flats, to help contain the smoke from a fire to the room where the fire started and keep hallways, other rooms and means of escape for other residents clear. While popular in Europe, we were amongst the first fire services in the UK to adopt them and we hosted an online seminar to show representatives from 15 other services how they are used, sharing our experience.

### **June**

Working with the Cambridgeshire Water Safety Partnership and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Police and Crime Commissioner, the community fire safety prevention team

installed 12 throwline stations at open water locations across the county. The potentially lifesaving equipment was installed in hotspots and high-risk sites that are known locations for people going into water, or where incidents have happened in the past where people have drowned or had to be rescued.

One of the Service's women watch commanders was recognised as a rising star for being a role model and blazing a trail for women and those that speak English as a second language. Agata Wieczorek, known as Aggie, was awarded runner up in the 'Firefighter Rising Star' category of the Women in the Fire Service Awards 2020. Aggie was nominated for her commitment and dedication, as well as her willingness to develop her skills and act as a role model for others.

A personal protection system (PPS) prevented a significant house fire. The PPS is a misting unit which is designed to suppress a fire to prevent it from spreading throughout a property, similar in principle to a sprinkler system. A unit installed at a home in Huntingdonshire activated when a fire started in a plastic bin from a discarded cigarette. The smoke from the bin activated the PPS, notifying fire control and immediately began to release a fine mist of water covering the room, extinguishing the fire before it could spread to the chair where the resident was sitting. When the crews attended, they rescued the resident who was treated for smoke inhalation.

## **July**

The chief fire officer wrote to the children of staff thanking them for sharing their parents during lockdown. The letter addressed the strange times we were in and thanked them for their support when mum or dad had to leave them to go to work or they had to be quiet when mum or dad were working from home and in online meetings.

The Service invested in drones in a unique collaboration with the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Joint Protective Services (BCH JPS) police command. The drones assist crews in their response to a wide range of incidents, providing a bird's eye view of the scene at incidents. See the case study on page 30 for more information.

## **August**

After significant work to change the delivery of training due to Covid restrictions, a group of on-call firefighters passed their initial recruits course. The cohort was split into two groups, training on different days, to help deliver the course as safely as possible. The course was repeated in January 2021 with 12 more recruits joining.

## **September**

To prepare for the opening of wholetime recruitment in January, an awareness campaign was launched to promote the role of a firefighter. The campaign involved several virtual information sessions and have-a-go events aimed at busting myths that surround a career in

the fire service and providing applicants with advice and guidance around the selection process.

## **October**

Crews around the county raised more than £7,500 for The Fire Fighters Charity by hosting car wash events. Despite the pandemic and the autumn conditions at many of the events, firefighters and volunteers saw all manner of vehicles pass through stations as residents came out in force to show their support.

Emergency call handlers were the focus of a Twitter takeover as the Service celebrated International Control Room Week. Blue Watch posted tweets throughout their shift sharing what life is like in the control room.

## **November**

With restrictions meaning the usual organised firework displays had to be cancelled, the Service launched a campaign encouraging residents to show respect on Bonfire Night and to stay safe. The campaign urged those thinking of holding their own displays in gardens to think twice and find an alternative. Fireworks night passed safely with few incidents.

## **December**

A whole community was left in shock and sadness when a house fire claimed the lives of two children in Eynesbury, St Neots. Fire crews did everything they could to battle the flames, but the fire had spread quickly throughout the house. Crews joined neighbours in laying flowers outside the house and were on hand in the days that followed, together with the community safety team, to reassure residents and offer fire safety advice.

The chief fire officer wrote to the children of staff again, telling them he was recommending them for Father Christmas's good list after being so supportive during lockdown. They each got a #TeamCambsFire Superstar rosette and 'Approved for the good list' sticker.

The Service was one of the first to introduce lateral flow testing for operational staff to add another measure to the mix for keeping staff safe from the Covid virus and preventing it being brought into the workplace.

The year ended with another major incident being declared in the days before Christmas as wide-spread flooding hit the county. Crews, officers and senior leaders were kept busy throughout the festive period helping those affected by the flooding and joining multi-agency calls to coordinate the emergency response. Our Combined Fire Control dealt with more than 600 incidents in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk, while also moving crews around the county to maintain cover for other emergencies.

## **January**

Chief Fire Officer Chris Strickland was awarded the Queen's Fire Service Medal for his distinguished service in the New Year Honours List.

The Service was at the forefront supporting the NHS with the national rollout of vaccinations against Covid. Staff from across all areas of the Service, from emergency call handlers and support staff to fire officers and both on-call and wholetime firefighters, started to volunteer,

both in and out of work time, at vaccination centres. More than 4,500 hours of volunteering was given by more than 100 members of staff. Some also volunteered to be trained to administer vaccines and have been continuing to do this in their own time.

Colleagues fell silent for two minutes to pay their respects to a much loved colleague when the Service's courier and former watch commander Tim Thompson died after a short illness.

Inspectors were left 'impressed' with how the Service had responded to the pandemic. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published its report following an inspection of all fire and rescue services in the country the previous autumn to see how the sector was responding to the pandemic. The inspection team had visited virtually in October and was impressed with how the Service had put the health and wellbeing of its people at the forefront of decision-making and how it had adapted its ways of working to support communities.

## **February**

Colleagues paid tribute to on-call firefighter Danny Granger who died in hospital after being admitted with Covid. Danny had served at Cottenham Fire Station for nearly 22 years and was described as 'the life and soul of the station'. Following a fundraising effort by his family and colleagues, 12 ipads were donated to Addenbrookes Hospital in Danny's memory.

Plans for a new training facility and fire station in Huntingdon were approved by the district council. The significant project involves building a modern, fit-for purpose training centre and new community fire station at St John's Park, north of Huntingdon. The project is scheduled for completion in late 2022.

The Service launched a new youth engagement and community safety initiative during National Story Telling Week. Jet the Dragon is an educational programme about fire and water safety for primary school children. More Jet stories are being put together by the community fire safety team with different advice and safety messaging.

## **March**

More than 50 firefighters tackled a large fire at an industrial building in Fenland. Cambridgeshire crews were joined by firefighters from three neighbouring counties and RAF Alconbury and worked hard to extinguish the fire and stop it spreading to other buildings. They were also assisted by staff at the site who used diggers to break up bales of paper.

The Service welcomed Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) for a second full inspection, following on from the first in 2018. Held virtually, staff were interviewed about a variety of subjects as the inspection team looked to gather evidence to see how effective and efficient the Service is and how it looks after its people. The report is due for publication later in the year.

## Foreword

Welcome to our annual report and statement of assurance for 2020/2021.

The report looks back at our performance and achievements from the last financial year...and what a year it was. We always enjoy putting the annual report together as it reminds us of what we have accomplished over the last 12 months and it enables us to showcase the work of our talented and committed staff, whose professionalism and passion for what they do, no matter what role they play in the organisation, makes us the Service we are, which is one we are extremely proud of.

We started the year last April, in a national lockdown and it's fair to say this year has been a year like no other. Together with all public sector organisations and services in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, we had plans in place for what we would do in the event of a pandemic but I don't think anyone was ready for the massive impact Covid has had and the amount of change that it has forced us to make - however, we have risen to the challenge. Our control operators have been there continually to take 999 calls and our fire crews have, without fail, responded to incidents day and night when they have been needed despite Covid illness and self-isolation hitting our workforce.

We quickly changed how we work and our procurement team pulled out the stops to buy personal protective equipment to ensure colleagues were kept as safe as possible as they continued to deliver an emergency service. Our support staff and operational officers set up work stations in their homes and continued remotely to play their part in ensuring the smooth and effective running of our service.

Our staff have been fantastic. They have yet again outshone themselves, adapting to new work environments, working flexibly to juggle other demands on their time, getting to grips with new PPE and being creative in finding different ways to achieve things. There is excellent work being done and we are incredibly proud of everyone and immensely grateful for the way they are helping us ride out the Covid storm.

Our report naturally has a heavy Covid bias to it. It has made us change how we work, how we deliver parts of our service and how we look after colleagues. But despite all this, we have also forged ahead with ongoing projects that will continually improve how we deliver our service and we highlight some of these in the report.

At the start of the year in April 2020, we launched our new four-year plan, called an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). It is something we have to produce that sets out the risks in our communities and to our Service and how we are going to mitigate those risks over a defined period. It also looks at the opportunities we can take to improve our service to you. We highlighted in the report that the ongoing pandemic may impact on our ability to deliver against the plan within the timescales set but we are pleased to say that progress has been made in all areas, albeit in some it has taken a different route to how we had intended. This really is down to our staff, across the whole of our Service, who really have given it all this year. And not only have we made progress against our plan, but we have also achieved far more as we supported our partners to respond to the pandemic and roll out the vaccination programme. You will read some incredible stories in this report demonstrating the selflessness of our staff as they volunteered to drive ambulances, fit face masks, procure PPE for partners, help at vaccination centres, and so much more.

The efforts of colleagues and our people focused decision making were applauded by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) when they came to complete an inspection in the autumn specifically on how we had responded to the pandemic. And as the financial year drew to a close, we were preparing to welcome

HMICFRS back again in April 2021 for our second full inspection. We look forward to the report later this year.

We were really pleased HMICFRS recognised how we had put people at the forefront of decision-making. This has been a conscious effort to do all we can to minimise the risk of exposure to the Coronavirus but also to reduce transmission at work. We have also been actively promoting positive mental health and wellbeing both in the workplace and at outside of work where for many the lines between work and home have become blurred over the last 15 months.

It has been an unprecedentedly tough year for many, not only battling the challenges Covid has brought, but we have also experienced incredible sadness this year with the loss of three serving members of staff and a member of the fire authority. Many people say that the fire service is like a family and never is that truer in times of grief. I have been so proud of the support our staff have given each other and the families of those who we have lost. They remain in our thoughts, as do their loved ones.

We ended the year very much with the future in our thoughts too. The financial impact of Covid may hit hard and we are preparing for potential budget cuts. It will not be easy, we are already a very lean Service, but by planning carefully now we can make well thought out decisions if it comes to it.

We also await the arrival of the Government's White Paper about the future governance of fire and rescue services. The paper will consult over whether to mandate the transfer of fire and rescue services to police and crime commissioners or the local mayor. As a fire authority we have been fighting against this for several years in Cambridgeshire and we will continue to do so, but whatever the outcome, we will ensure your fire and rescue service continues to be one of the best in the country.

Business continues as normal in the meantime as we navigate our way into the post-Covid world. We will work with colleagues to ensure our future ways of working take the positives and benefits from the last year to ensure we continue to work safely, efficiently and productively, while delivering the same, if not better, services to our communities.

We continue to provide updates on everything we do as a Service on our social media channels and welcome any feedback you can provide us. We are always interested in hearing the views of the people we serve. You can stay connected on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, as well as visiting our website [www.cambsfire.gov.uk](http://www.cambsfire.gov.uk).

Thank you to everyone that has supported us over the last year, whether that was passing on details of a vulnerable resident for us to visit, testing your smoke alarms, sharing our safety messages, sending us feedback, or working with us in whatever capacity, we are extremely grateful and we really value that support.

**Councillor Edna Murphy**  
Chair of Cambridgeshire  
and Peterborough Fire Authority

**Chris Strickland**  
Chief Fire Officer

Box: Stay safe, stay connected. Follow us on F T YT



## Statement of assurance

### Context

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

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

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

### Purpose

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

### Statement of Assurance

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority is satisfied that its business during the financial year 2020/21 was conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money was properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Authority is further satisfied that the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England have been met.

Evidence to support this judgement can be found within this report, specifically:  
Integrated Risk Management Plan – page 22  
Financial and governance matters - pages 45-48

Signed:

**INSERT SIGNATURE AND PIC**

Councillor Edna Murphy  
Chair of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

## **4. Governance arrangements**

### **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Transfer of Governance to the Police and Crime Commissioner**

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

In 2020, the Home Office announced it would not hear any cases for a transfer of power until after the May 2021 PCC elections, and as so much time has passed, a new business case would be required. The Fire Authority withdrew all active legal proceedings at this point. Earlier in 2021, the Government then announced it would consult on a White Paper in the summer of 2021 which would mandate the transfer of fire and rescue service governance to local PCCs or the mayor.

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

[Put near photos<sup>u</sup>]

The Fire Authority records its appreciation for the contribution of councillors Barbara Ashwood, Andrew Coles, Derek Giles, Lynda Harford, Bill Hunt, Jocelyne Scutt and Mike Shellens who served on the Authority during 2020/21. Special thanks and recognition goes to Councillor Kevin Reynolds who was chair of the Fire Authority from xxxx until June 2021 when a new chair was elected. We also remember with fondness and respect, Councillor Janet Goodwin who sadly died after a short illness in December. Janet had served on the Fire Authority since May 2018 and prior to that for a number of years on and off too. 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, [www.cambsfire.gov.uk](http://www.cambsfire.gov.uk)

### Current members of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

In June 2021, the Fire Authority welcomed a new chair and vice-chair. It is the first time a woman has been voted into the chair's role. Councillor Edna Murphy joined the Authority in May after successfully winning her district seat as a Liberal Democrat. Vice chair is now Councillor Mohammed Jamil, from Peterborough who represents the Labour party. Councillor Murphy said: "I am delighted to have been voted in as chair of the Authority and am very proud to be the first woman to hold the position. The Service has made great strides forward in recent years and works incredibly hard to ensure it remains an inclusive organisation, which I am very keen to continue to build on."

"I would like to pay tribute to Councillor Kevin Reynolds who was chairman of the Fire Authority up until June 2021. He has been a fantastic chairman during his tenure and I am taking on an Authority in excellent shape thanks to his leadership. His experience and knowledge will certainly continue to be a considerable asset to the Authority."

"I join at a very challenging time as we work to come out of the pandemic, but I am very confident that we have a very strong team that will continue to provide an excellent service to the people of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough."

Edna Murphy Chair	Mohammed Jamil Vice Chairman		
Andrew Bond	Simon Bywater	Hilary Cox-Condron	Ian Gardener

Bryony Goodliffe	John Gowing	Sebastian Kindersley	Peter McDonald
Mac McGuire	David Over	Kevin Reynolds	Philippa Slatter
Mandy Smith	Simone Taylor	Scott Warren	

## Our structure

(Design same as last year's report)

### Our structure

#### Our chief officer team



**Chris Strickland**  
**Chief Fire Officer**

Chief Executive of Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service

Responsible for ensuring the Service fully discharges its statutory duties in regard to the needs of individuals and communities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Specific line management for:

- Transparency, Engagement and Communication
- Democratic and Legal Services



**Jon Anderson**  
**Assistant Chief Fire Officer**

Responsible for:

- Resilience
- Service delivery and the command and control of our 38 operational fire stations
- Community Safety (Fire Prevention and Protection)
- Equality and Inclusion
- Resource Management and Occupational Health
- Operational Support
- Health and Safety
- Fleet



**Matthew Warren**  
**Deputy Chief Executive**

- Finance and Payroll
- ICT
- Programme Management and Planning
- Business Intelligence
- Property and Estates
- Procurement and Business Support
- Service Transformation and Efficiency Programme (STEF)
- Human Resources, Learning and Development and Recruitment

\*Former Assistant Chief Fire Officer Nick Hilton is currently on secondment to Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.

## **Our legal responsibilities**

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

### **Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004**

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

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

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

### **Civil Contingencies Act 2004**

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

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

More information about our emergency planning can be found on our website.

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

### **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**

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

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

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

## **Localism Act 2011**

The aim of the Act was to devolve more decision-making powers from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils. The Act covers a wide range of issues related to local public services, with a particular focus on the general power of competence, community rights, neighbourhood planning and housing. The key measures of the Act were grouped under four main headings:

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

The Department of Communities and Local Government published a plain English guide to the Localism Act:

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/5959/1896534.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5959/1896534.pdf)

## **Fire and Rescue National Framework for England**

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

The priorities within the framework are for fire and rescue authorities to:

- Make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents
- Identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue risks their areas face
- Collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide
- Be accountable to communities for the services they provide
- Develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

Full details of the Fire and Rescue National Framework can be found on the Department for Communities and Local Government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england>

## **Equality Act 2010**

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

Our progression in this area during 2020/21 will be published in our equalities compliance report due out in December 2021.

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

### **Policing and Crime Act 2017**

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

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

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/3/contents/enacted>



## **5. The communities we serve**

### **Our community**

The population estimate of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is approximately 859,830 which is a 6.8 per cent increase from the Census 2011 population of 805,000. This growth varies considerably across the district council areas.

The social demography of Cambridgeshire varies considerably too, with the cities of Peterborough and Cambridge being particularly multi-cultural and multi-racial with more than 16 per cent of the population from a non-white ethnic group (Census 2011 data).

In comparison, the other four districts have a non-white population of between 2.9 per cent and 6.8 per cent. The number of migrant workers in both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has grown very quickly since 2004, with the Polish community now being one of the largest European groups in the county.

The population of Cambridgeshire is ageing with the number of people aged 65 and over accounting for 15 per cent of the population (120,750 people), with 2 per cent being 85 and over (16,100 people). Those most at risk from a fatal fire in the home are vulnerable people aged 65 and over.

Further information on our communities can be found in our IRMP 2020-2024 which is on our website.

We await with interest the 2021 census data for more up to date information on our communities.

### **Our built environment**

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

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

In order to accommodate the expected increase in population, a number of new sustainable developments are under construction with the aim of creating 75,000 new homes by 2021, including the country's first eco-town Northstowe, being built just 5 kilometres from the city of Cambridge.

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

### **Our heritage**

Cambridgeshire is a county of contrasts in the East of England. The county's towns and cities are steeped in history and have evolved over centuries. Cambridge is a university city of old streets, ancient colleges and bridges spanning the River Cam. Ely has a magnificent Norman cathedral and Huntingdon was the birthplace of Oliver Cromwell. Wisbech in the

Fens has fine examples of Georgian street architecture whilst the Fens themselves are renowned for their impressive agricultural landscapes. The city of Peterborough is a mixture of the ancient and modern. The renowned 11<sup>th</sup> century cathedral dominates the city centre landscape, with new townships sited around the existing urban centre.

### **Our natural environment**

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

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

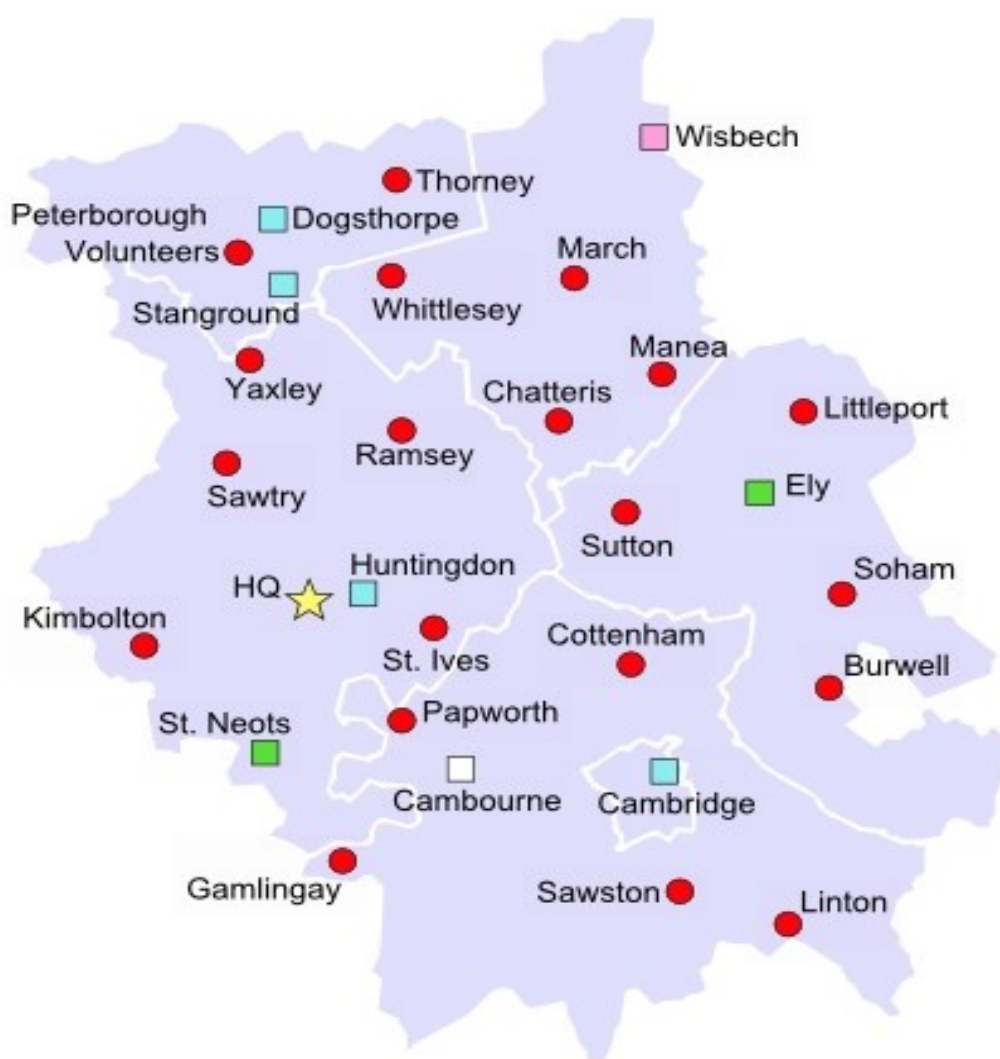
There are three principal rivers, the Nene in the north, the Cam to the south and the Great Ouse in the northwest.

## 6. How we serve our community

### Our Service

The Service is run by a management team headed by the Chief Fire Officer (see page 13 for structure) and is currently governed by a Fire Authority, made up of 17 councillors from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Members of the Fire Authority can be found on page 11. Further details of the Fire Authority including committee structure and meeting dates can be found on our website.

We currently operate from 28 fire stations across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, 27 of which are operational. Management, professional support departments and our Combined Fire Control are all based at our Service Headquarters in Huntingdon.



### ADD KEY

We employ 253 wholetime firefighters, including up to principal officers (establishment is 242) and 253 on-call firefighters. A total of 45 staff (establishment/full time equivalent is 36) operate our Combined Fire Control, mobilising appliances across Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Suffolk. 160 staff (130.85 full time equivalent) work in support roles across the Service in essential operational and business support functions, including Learning and organisational Development, Health and Safety, Recruitment, Property, Fleet and Equipment, Finance and Human Resources.

We have a fleet of 35 fire engines, two rescue vehicles, two turntable ladder aerial appliances and a number of other specialist vehicles. More information about our vehicles and the equipment we use can be found on our website.

## **Our values**

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

These key values are:

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

## 7. Achievements towards our strategic aims

### Our vision and strategic aims

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

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

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

These are therefore our strategic aims.



### Integrated risk management plan (IRMP)

Our IRMP is our corporate plan and it focuses on how we plan to achieve our strategic aims. It is a public facing document covering a set period. This annual report looks at our achievements against the first year of the new 2020-2024 IRMP ([link below](#)).

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

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

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

The current 2020-2024 IRMP, can be found on our website  
<https://www.cambsfire.gov.uk/transparency/documents/>

### **Achievements against our IRMP 2020-2024**

The next few pages outline what we delivered in 2020/2021 against the priorities in the IRMP, set out under each of the four strategic aims:

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

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

### **Operational excellence**

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

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

### **To achieve this in 2020/21, we have:**

- Responded flexibly to ensure our communities still received an excellent service during the Covid lockdown, while putting in measures to keep our staff safe
- Had the way we responded to Covid generally, and from a health and safety perspective, validated by the British Safety Council and HMICFRS (the inspectorate for fire and rescue services)
- Continued to recruit staff for our operational fire stations, Combined Fire Control and professional support services, despite the national restrictions
- Introduced additional roles at our training centre to help increase our capacity to deliver necessary training and improve operational competency
- Completed and introduced new handheld radios to improve our effectiveness at incidents
- Purchased and introduced two new turntable ladders which will replace our aging Multistar aerial appliances at Cambridge and Peterborough.
- Continued to implement a new mobilising system in our control room which will improve the way we despatch our fire engines, specialist vehicles and resources
- Redesigned and undertaken, within the Covid restrictions, promotion processes from crew commander to assistant chief fire officer to ensure we have the right people with the right skills in the right place
- Upgraded our BA sets

- Continued to improve our training facilities by starting work on our new training facility at Ely
- Begun work on our new training centre and fire station at St Johns, Huntingdon, to replace the existing fire station and training facility in Hartford Road
- Reviewed the trial crewing agreement at our day crewed stations and are currently working with our staff to implement longer term the most successful parts to improve the levels of service we deliver in those areas
- Continued to adapt our on-call recruitment processes and courses to reduce the time it takes for potential new recruits to access courses and improve the ways initial training is delivered to on-call staff
- Established a working group to better understand how we can use our operational resources better to improve our attendance times to the most serious incidents in rural areas
- Undertaken a review of our current operational assurance processes, which has resulted in improvements in our de-briefing and training exercise programmes.

Our performance data can be seen on page 32.

## **CASE STUDY**

### **Introducing two new aerial appliances to the fleet**

Two hi-tech new turntable ladders were introduced to our fleet at the end of the year to assist at incidents involving working at height.

Replacing the two Multistar aerial appliances, the new high spec vehicles will be based at Stanground, in the north of the county, and at Cambridge, in the south. Both are a Magirus32L/AS, which have been supplied by Emergency One and are mounted on a Scania chassis, which was chosen for maximum manoeuvrability and a high level of visibility for the driver.

The most prominent feature of the new appliances is the 30m ladder with an articulated section, which will enhance our capability when working at height. Other features include a cage with a retractable access platform and connections for attaching a stretcher and a detachable thermal imaging camera. The cameras can be mounted on the cage and can be live streamed to officers and Combined Fire Control so they can better understand what is going on. An added bonus is improved capabilities for observing incidents from above.

They are a more robust design, more responsive to drive, easier to manoeuvre, faster to set up (at just 30 seconds) and have greater rescue capabilities.

After arriving in the Service last year, vigorous training has taken place so crews fully understand their capabilities and are familiar with how to use them safely for maximum effect. With everyone trained, the vehicles are now ready for use.

Speaking about the investment, Head of Fleet and Equipment Graham Wiggins said: "We want to ensure we provide our firefighters with the best possible equipment to be able to respond to emergency calls and protect their local community effectively. This means investing in new equipment and making sure they have the right vehicles to respond to the job. These new fire appliances are an exciting and innovative addition to the county's fleet and will be a great asset to the Service when responding to incidents, especially those at height."



## **Community safety excellence**

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

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

### **To achieve this in 2020/21 we have:**

- Adapted the way we complete our Safe and Well visits during the pandemic to safely continue face to face support for those most at risk of fire through complex social needs.
- Continued to install and service our portable misting systems to those people at extremely high risk of fire. A number of activations from these confirms that they are essential life-saving machines for those most at risk from being injured or killed in a house fire.
- Improved our evaluation of community safety activities to better understand the benefits of our prevention work.
- Contributed to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Road Safety Partnership – collectively adopting the ‘vision zero strategy’ where there are no fatalities or serious injuries on our roads. We have been working with our key partners to achieve this and taken on the work stream for ‘safer vehicles’.
- Built on our close relationships with statutory and non-statutory agencies by having members of our community safety team sit on local problem-solving teams and a county-wide hoarding group.
- Continued to deliver our essential fire safety awareness training Olive Branch to several more social care agencies across the county, including social services and hospital discharge teams, which has provided us with details of those who may benefit from our Safe and Well service.
- Reviewed and adapted many of our community engagement activities such as Safety Zone, Be Water Aware and Biker Down allowing it to be used as an online learning package by schools and for home schooling during the pandemic restrictions.
- Worked with health partners to design and implement an emollient safety campaign. This was recognised at the national PrescQIPP awards, beating over 50 other nominations to win the ‘improving patient safety’ category and then going on to win the gold award for best initiative across all categories.
- Adapted our approach to our business fire safety audit activity in reaction to Covid, remaining focussed on our highest risk premises.
- Evaluated our business seminar activity and launched a new webinar to allow businesses to receive business safety information remotely.
- Evaluated our Risk Based Audit Programme (RBAP), which is how we assess non-domestic premises for risk, and used new and advanced data to compile and launch our new audit programme.
- Completed audits on all residential buildings over 18 metres tall as part of the government’s Building Risk Review (BRR) and have now extended this to focus on 11-18m high premises.

- Reviewed and changed our business engagement process for firefighters to provide further ongoing support for businesses.

Our performance data can be seen on page 32.

## **CASE STUDY**

### **Keeping you safe and well in more than one way**

When we first went into lockdown it was quite a conundrum for the community and fire protection team. All their work involved face to face visits with either residents, schools, community groups or businesses. How could they continue to ensure the elderly and most vulnerable were safe and businesses were compliant with fire safety legislation when non-essential visits weren't allowed?

Area Commander for Prevention and Protection, Stuart Smith explained: "It was a tough challenge for us for many reasons. We have a statutory duty to ensure businesses are compliant with fire safety regulations and we have a moral duty to ensure our most vulnerable are safe from fire. We had to look for innovative ways to continue doing what we do but doing it safely, avoiding face to face contact where possible, and where that we couldn't avoid that, how we kept our staff and residents safe, recognising those most at risk from fire were likely to be most at risk of Covid too."

The teams set about redesigning what they do so it could be done remotely. Webinars were set up to replace face to face business seminars, telephone audits were designed as a first stage audit for businesses, materials for schools were produced and put on the website and some did virtual tours of the fire station and fire engines. Personal protective equipment was provided for those needing to go into people's houses where high risk cases were identified but some of the visit was carried out over the phone to minimise the amount of time in the house.

It was important to carry on installing portable misting systems in the homes of those at very high risk of fire, for example bed bound and a smoker. This decision has paid off with a number of activations of the systems saving lives.

The Biker Down workshop for motorcyclists was filmed and put online so riders could access the learning material at home. Fun, fire service related educational resources were put on the website as well to help parents with home-schooling, including maths sheets and problem solving.

The Service teamed up with the community hub helping those shielding to provide leaflets about fire safety in the home and safe and well visits to try and identify those who had not already been contacted by the fire service.

Per Middleton, Group Commander for Community Safety added: "The team have really pulled out the stops to do what they can within the restrictions. It has been hugely frustrating for them not being able to carry out their role in the usual way and help people but that energy has been channelled positively into looking at what we do and identifying how we can still do it but in a different, Covid safe way.

"As much of our work is face to face, it was inevitable that the number of Safe and Well visits we do wasn't going to match that of previous years, but we have worked differently, engaged in new ways and made the best we could of a challenging situation. Credit for that goes to the team who have done all they could to think differently to keep people safe, and where they had additional capacity, they have been supporting our partners, ringing those isolating,

checking up on them and helping at vaccination centres – so keeping people safe but in different ways. I'm hugely proud of them."

## 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:

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

There is a large overlap between community safety excellence and people, therefore to avoid duplication, our efforts in relation to improving things for people in our community are detailed in the community excellence section on page 25.

To achieve the bullet points above is 2020/21 we have:

- Undertaken informal reflections exercises throughout the year to understand how staff were affected by the changes to our working practices as a result of the pandemic and their thoughts on how we had responded generally.
- Worked with an independent specialist provider to survey our staff to understand how the Covid pandemic may have affected employee engagement levels and to gain important data to help us further develop how we support the good mental health and wellbeing of colleagues.
- Supported leaders at all levels to consider their responsibility for employee engagement in the context of the pandemic and provided tools to help them have good quality conversations with their team members.
- Focused significantly on supporting the good mental health and wellbeing of our people. You can read more about what we have done in the case study on page 28.
- Promoted our inclusion ambassadors and supported them to fulfil their roles championing the different protected characteristics in equality legislation as well as pregnancy, paternity, mental health and menopause.
- Launched a neurodiversity working group and started work to better understand the impact of the menopause on women firefighters.
- Embedded use of our bespoke Personal and Leadership Development Framework, which is based on a national tool produced by the National Fire Chiefs Council and enhanced for our own needs.
- Developed further virtual events for staff to continue learning whilst working remotely.
- Delivered and evaluated further cohorts of our leadership development programmes.
- Used our new succession planning tool to ensure wholtime firefighters who are considered ready to progress their careers within the next couple of years are supported with their development.
- Built a team of staff trained and accredited to be coaches to help others develop.
- Designed and began to implement a new two-year positive action workplan, to engage and build relationships with diverse communities to benefit both recruitment and community safety work.
- Adapted all recruitment and assessment processes where possible to be able to deliver them virtually, ensuring that promotion processes and recruitment of all roles could continue to be met throughout the pandemic.
- Reviewed our entry criteria for joining the wholtime service and implemented changes which we hope will help us to reach and attract a wider applicant pool.

- Agreed recommendations to change our approach to assessing readiness for promotion in the future.
- Began work to be able to offer work placements to young people via the Government Kickstart scheme.
- Completed the implementation of a new pay structure for professional support staff at management band level. This had been a key area of focus in the equal pay action plan developed following an equal pay audit in late 2018/19.

Our performance data can be seen on page 32.

## **CASE STUDY**

The mental health and wellbeing of our staff was already high on our agenda before the pandemic struck.

Our IRMP (corporate plan) for 2020-2024 already included a commitment to develop and improve the ways in which we support the mental health of our staff. But when the full impact of Covid hit the country and we went into lockdown, never had the wellbeing of our staff been more important. On top of the normal challenges of life came working from home for some, coming into work in the midst of a highly transmissible virus for others, managing staff remotely, contending with working and home-schooling, concern for vulnerable family members, self-isolation and a whole list of other complication that caused added anxiety, stress and concern. We knew our people had to be at the centre of all decision making. We created a wellbeing hub on our intranet, allowing our staff easy access to trusted resources to support different wellbeing needs, such as financial and family wellbeing, as well as resources to support general good mental health. We added to this during the year as different events triggered a different focus such as bereavement and men's mental health.

The Chief Fire Officer wrote to every member of staff at their home address to stress our commitment to good mental health at work, and to provide written information about core wellbeing services, making it accessible to families as well as to colleagues who can't always easily access our intranet.

Chief Fire Officer Chris Strickland explained: "It's been a really tough year for us and providing people with information about where they can get additional support, and encouraging them to do so, has been really important. It's not just been the Covid impact affecting us this year, we had a particularly traumatic incident in December as well as the very sad deaths of three serving members of staff over the course of the year. We've made sure colleagues have been supported with each of these events, not just in the immediate aftermath but in the weeks that followed too.

"We have also carried on with the work which we started before the pandemic to challenge the stigma around poor mental health and we've supported individuals to share their own stories as part of this. It has been both humbling and heart-warming to hear how some of our colleagues have approached and overcome their own poor mental health, and to hear how others have been helped by the telling of their stories."

Our Wellbeing Strategy formally launched during the year and focuses on how we can support our people to build their positive mental health, to deal with the challenges in life that we will all inevitably face and ensure we have the right support in place when it is needed.

As part of this commitment, we commissioned the design and delivery of bespoke training for all managers. This goes beyond mental health awareness training with the additional benefits of equipping managers with the knowledge, skills and confidence to take action to

prevent, manage and support good mental health and wellbeing in their teams. We have also prepared to roll similar training out to all staff this year.

Towards the latter part of the year we worked with the mental wellbeing and awareness training provider to survey our staff in order to understand how the Covid pandemic may have affected employee engagement levels and to gain important data and information about staff's mental health and wellbeing levels and thoughts to help us further develop our work in this area and embed our strategy.

Taking this forward will be our new mental health and wellbeing advisor who we appointed at the end of the year to create more capacity and bring specialist expertise into the Service. We look forward to them starting with us and continuing our work in this vital area.

Chris concluded: "The mental health and wellbeing of our colleagues will continue to be a priority for us into the next year. As challenging as living and working through a pandemic has been, coming out the other side this next year we know may prove to be an even greater challenge for some, as we try and get back to a life that more resembles life before Covid. We also have some great feedback from staff through the survey we will explore further to improve how we support colleagues in areas that cause higher levels of stress, anxiety or poor mental health and we look forward to reporting back next year on what we have done."

## **Value for Money**

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

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

### **To achieve this in 2020/21 we have:**

- Made good progress with the implementation of our new mobilising system – the system used by our combined fire control to alert crews and officers and dispatch fire engines when a 999 call comes in. The new infrastructure is in place for the secondary control room (our back up if our main control fails due to a power cut or other issue), the necessary equipment has been installed at all fire stations to alert crews, the new mobilising system has been through satisfactory testing and has now been delivered to the Service. We are now testing the new equipment and training will then begin.
- Continued to explore opportunities for collaboration with other blue light partners. Working with the police, this year has seen the introduction of drones across Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire, providing resilience and a reduction in overall costs of this new piece of technology for us. See the case study below.
- Continued to automate data collection, removing paper-based processes including a new cloud-based process for recording sickness absence which included the collection of Covid sickness related data.
- Improved value for money in our software licencing, introducing Microsoft 365 to improve access to information from any location and to provide the ability to more easily collaborate and share information with partners.
- Provided laptops for staff who can work remotely to improve working conditions
- Provided video conferencing facilities at all premises to enable all staff to be fully engaged in virtual meetings.
- Worked with partner organisations in the local resilience forum to procure Covid related goods and services to consolidate buying power and reduce unit costs.

## **CASE STUDY:**

### **New collaboration gives incident management a boost with eye in the sky technology**

This year we partnered with police colleagues from three forces and invested in new equipment to assist crews and incident commanders respond to incidents with a bird's eye view of the scene.

In a unique collaboration with the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Joint Protective Services (BCH JPS) police command, new drones have been introduced to the Service.

The drones will help incident commanders make decisions about the best way to deal with an incident by improving the ability to see and understand what is happening from above. This also helps to reduce risks to firefighters, the public and other emergency services colleagues. They will also assist with search and rescue incidents and for fire investigations. The Service has used drones at incidents previously, but they have been operated by the BCH JPS Operational Support Unit policing team. However, through the collaboration,

several of our own staff have received training on how to use them and have become licenced pilots.

Three drones have been introduced to the Service located at Huntingdon fire station on the incident command unit, and in Peterborough and Cambridge.

The drones are fitted with high-definition cameras for image photography and video recording, as well as a thermal imaging camera that can detect hot spots, fire spread and people. The footage can be live streamed through an app by our Fire Control, as well as on the incident ground via the incident command unit, to allow incident commanders to assess the incident quicker and easier than was previously possible.

The BCH JPS command team, who hold the Civil Aviation Authority permission to fly, have governance over our drone team and provide expert guidance to the Service.

Watch Commander Steve Peacock, who led the project for the Service, said: "The drones provide real benefits to us when responding to large scale incidents. The thermal imaging camera is able to quickly identify any heat sources and give incident commanders on the ground the information they need to deal with the incident safely, whether that's fighting a fire, or assisting with a search and rescue."

Area Commander for Operational Support, Wayne Swales, added: "It's really important to us that we invest in modern technology to improve our capability as a fire service.

Having aerial footage and a view of incidents we have never had before is a huge benefit to us. We will be able to deal with incidents more effectively and they will help us keep residents, our firefighters and other emergency service staff safer at incidents. They are a fantastic piece of equipment and the project demonstrates our commitment to collaboration across blue light services, while also ensuring best value for money."

## Our performance data

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

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

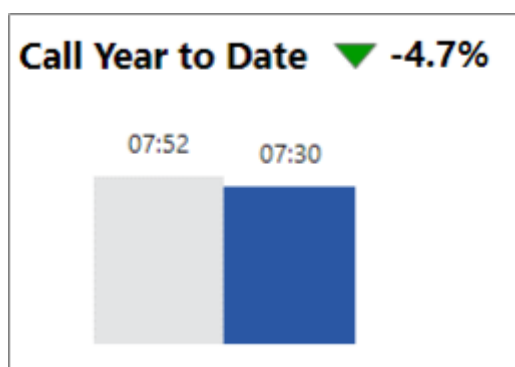
We have three performance measures relating to how long it takes our fire crews to get to an emergency. These are:

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

How we performed in 2020/21:

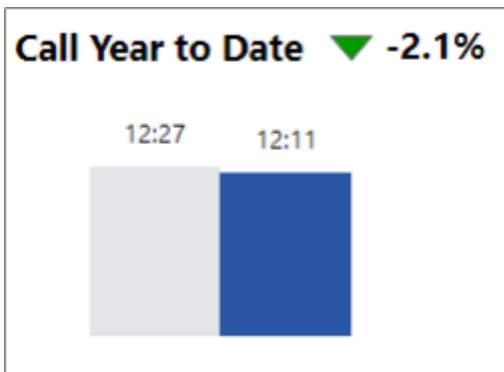
Our average attendance in urban areas was under nine minutes and in rural areas it was 11 seconds over the 12 minute target but 16 seconds quicker than the previous year. We achieved the first fire engine attending all incidents within 18 minutes on 95 per cent of the time, which is on target and an improvement on the previous year.

Our improvement in the rural measure this year we believe has largely been down to having more of our on-call fire engines available more of the time as many on-call firefighters were furloughed from their main employment during the height of the pandemic. We are looking at ways we can continue to improve performance in this area to meet our 12 minute target.

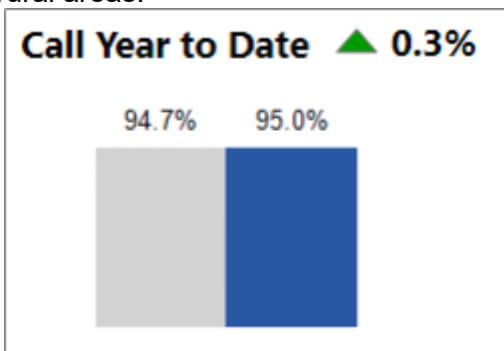


First fire engine to respond to the most serious incidents within an average of nine minutes in urban areas.





First fire engine to respond to the most serious incidents within an average of 12 minutes in rural areas.



First fire engine to respond to all incidents in our authority area within 18 minutes, 95 per cent of the time.

Monitoring the following areas also allows us to make effective decisions about how we target our resources and activities.

- The number of primary and secondary fires
- The number of associated deaths and injuries from fire
- The number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads
- The number and type of special services that we attend

Although we compare to the previous year, we aim for a continual downward trend over five years as we know numbers will fluctuate year on year.

There were:

- 825 primary fires (most serious fires) compared to 919 the year before – a 10 per cent reduction.
- 868 secondary fires (outdoor fires, bin fires etc) compared to 1,033 the year before – a 16 per cent reduction.
- 5 fire related deaths over the past 12 months resulting from four separate incidents. Two incidents were accidental dwelling fires and two incidents were road traffic collisions from which fires started. There were 3 deaths from fire the year before.
- 43 injuries from fires (compared to 44 the year before) resulting from 36 separate incidents. 25 incidents were dwelling fires, five were non-residential premises, three were road vehicle fires, two were outdoor fires and one was a boat fire. In terms of severity, one person was sent to hospital with serious injury, 26 people were sent to hospital with slight injury, 12 people had first aid at the scene and four people had a check recommended.
- 304 killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions which is down by 34 per cent from the previous year.

- 316 road traffic collision incidents which we attended. This is down on last year by 27% which is most likely down to the reduction in road journeys during the lockdown periods.
- 1,057 special service incidents we attended which is up from 1046 the previous year (1 per cent increase). These include things like water rescues, flooding, animal rescues, assisting other emergency services, removal of people from objects, corresponding calls, hazardous materials etc. Flooding incidents have been noticeably higher this year (158) compared to last year (88). We have also seen an increase in water rescues this year (33) compared to last year (24) due to spate flooding in December.

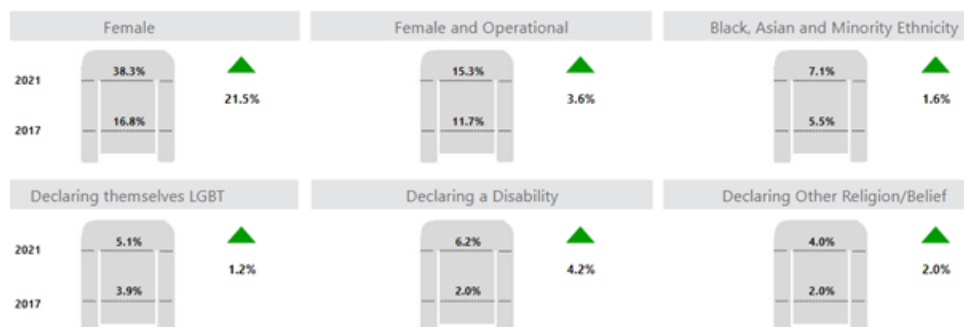
The numbers per head of population are shown in the table below for the last five years:

Category	Number per 100,000 population				
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Primary Fires	118	115	113	107	96
Secondary Fires	112	121	146	121	101
Fire Deaths	0.24	0.24	0.35	0.35	0.58
Fire Injuries	6.66	4.84	8.91	5.14	5.02
Total Fires	237	243	265	232	201

One of our objectives in the IRMP for People Excellence is to attract a more diverse workforce that better reflects the communities we serve. To understand how we are doing in this area we monitor the diversity of job applicants and employees. The tables below show our progress. We know we have a lot more work to do in this area but it is encouraging that the graphs showing five year trends demonstrate an increase in all areas. Although some measures remain static this year, we continue to out-perform similar fire and rescue services to us, in terms of the proportion of female staff (including operational female staff) and BAME staff in our workforce. Here are the highlights:

#### Applicants:

- Positive increase in the number of women applying for jobs overall (248) and for operational roles specifically (51)
- Positive increase in BAME applicants at 7.1 per cent of total applicants (equivalent to 46 people)
- Positive increase in people declaring themselves lesbian, gay or bisexual at 5.1 per cent of total applicants (equivalent to 33 people)
- Positive increase in people declaring a disability at 6.2 per cent of total applicants (equivalent to 40 people)
- Positive increase in people declaring other religion or belief at 4 per cent (equivalent to 26 people).



Current workforce:

- Positive increase in females overall (175) and female operational staff (40)
- Positive increase in BAME staff at 3.4 per cent of total staff (equivalent to 26 people)
- Positive increase in people declaring themselves lesbian, gay or bisexual at 2.9 per cent of total staff (equivalent to 22 people)
- Slight decrease in people declaring a disability at 6.5 per cent of total staff (equivalent to 49 people) – this is based on 79 per cent of staff completing their personal details on our employee data system.
- Slight decrease in people declaring other religion or belief at 2.2 per cent of total staff (equivalent to 17 people).

	BAME Staff		Female Staff		Female Ops Managers	
Staff Group	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
Wholetime	2.9%	2.3%	7.0%	8.3%	2.8%	5.5%
On-Call	2.4%	3.2%	6.8%	7.2%	2.5%	2.4%
Control	2.4%	2.3%	83.3%	81.8%	-	-
Support	5.3%	5.5%	46.5%	49.3%	-	-

	Percentage of Total Staff				
Category	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Total BAME Staff	2.9%	3.3%	3.5%	3.3%	3.4%
Total Female Staff	20.2%	20.7%	21.4%	21.5%	23.1%
Total Female Ops Managers*	19.8%	20.6%	20.3%	21.1%	21.7%

\* % of total  
managers

Category	Number of Staff				
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Total BAME Staff	19	22	24	24	26
Total Female Staff	133	139	147	156	175
Total Female Ops Managers	47	51	53	57	61

In our IRMP, we explain how we will be working to support businesses to ensure compliance with the Fire Safety Order and that we will monitor this through:

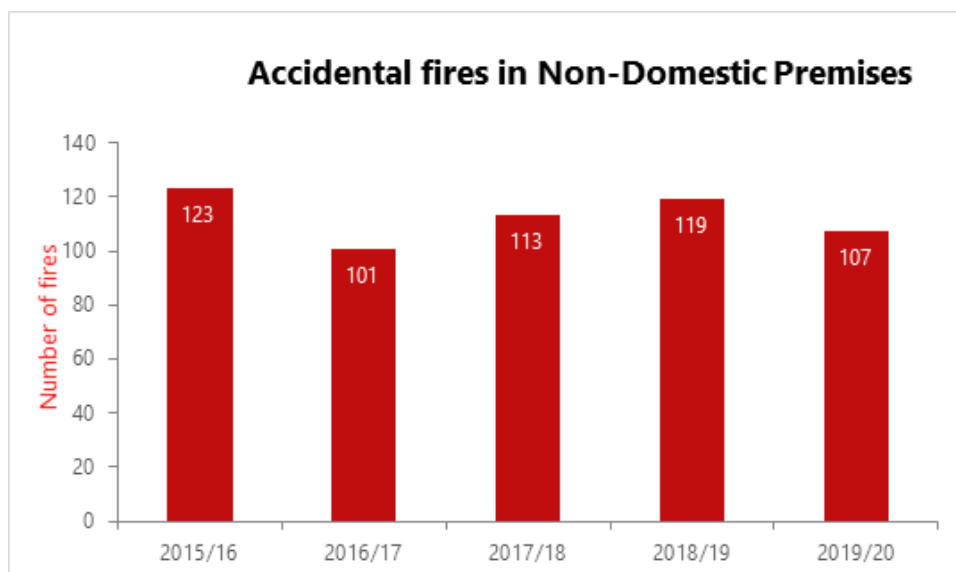
- The number of non-domestic fires
- The number of business engagements identified through our risk-based audit programme.

There were 160 non-domestic fires in 2020/21 compared to 159 in 2019/20. This figure is fairly static year on year with small fluctuations. Of the 160 non-domestic fires, 112 were accidental which is 3 per cent increase from 109 the previous year and 48 were deliberate compared to 50 the previous year.

The number of business engagements was severely impacted by the pandemic as many businesses such as shops, leisure facilities and restaurants were closed for much of the year and our crews focused on responding to incidents to minimise their contact with others to reduce the risk of transmission.

A 'business engagement' is where firefighters visit business premises to check compliance with fire safety legislation. We conducted 16 business engagements in 2020/21 compared to 825 in 2019/20. Through the pandemic, we revised some of our processes to make them more efficient ready for when we could start visit again and we also provided additional fire protection training to our firefighters.

We maintained business safety inspections to our highest risk premises though, changing our inspection method to desktop audits instead where required and managed to complete 655 inspections.



#### Additional performance data (compared to 2019/20)

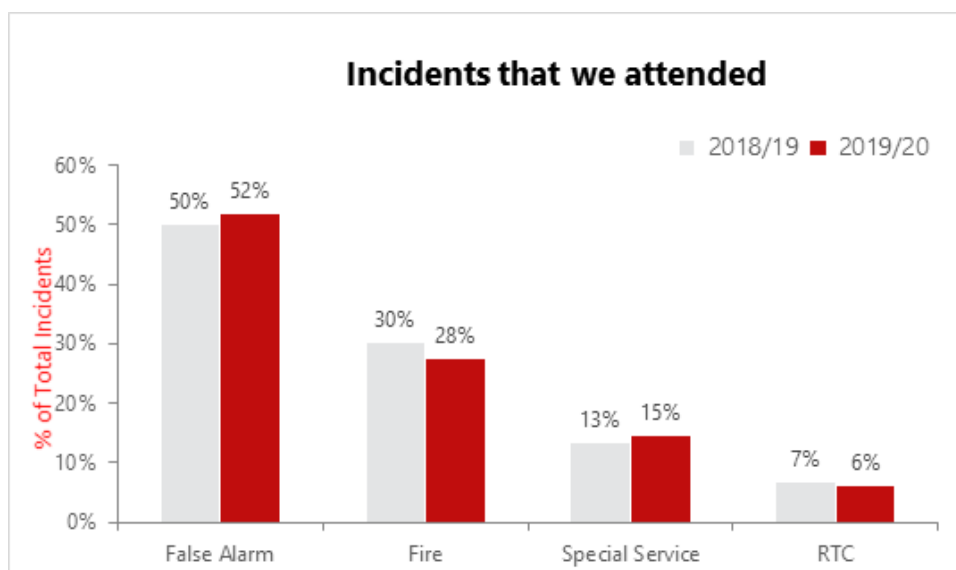
There are a number of other data sets we monitor carefully to understand how we are performing generally.

We attended 6,471 incidents in 2020/21, which is a decrease of 10 per cent on the previous year's 7,209 incidents.

Breakdown in the type of incidents we attend:

[Data table for updating graphs:](#)

Incident Type	% of total incidents	
	2019/20	2020/21
False Alarm	52%	52%
Fire	28%	27%
Special Service	6%	5%
RTC	15%	16%



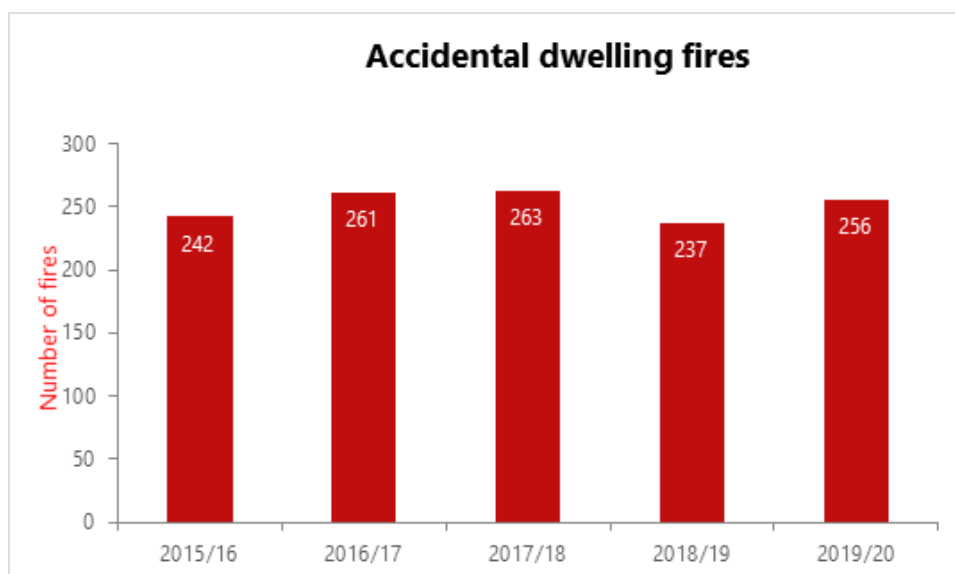
There was a 3 per cent reduction in accidental house fires from 256 to 249. There was a potential for us to see an increase in accidental house fires last year with people being at home for a greater amount of time due to lockdowns so this is a positive reduction.

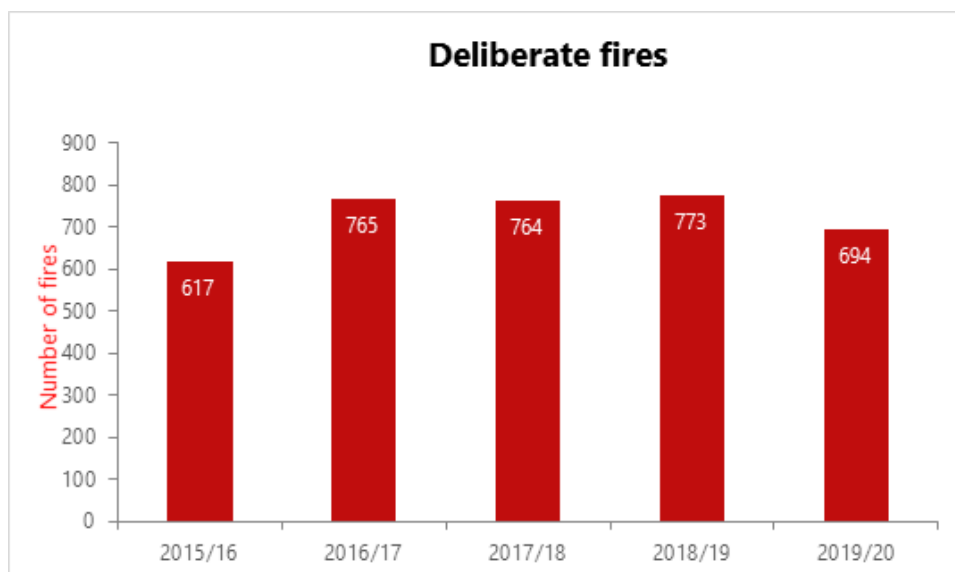
There was a 16 per cent increase in false automatic fire alarm calls affecting business premises (from 1,450 to 1,233). This may be because more premises were unoccupied for longer during lockdowns.

The number of deliberate fires reduced by 32 per cent from 694 to 470. Of the total deliberate fires, 203 or 43 per cent were fires in the open. Again, we believe this significant reduction is down to the lockdowns over the last year.

*Data for the charts below:*

Category	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Accidental dwelling fires	261	263	237	256	249
Deliberate fires	765	764	773	694	470





To monitor our Value for Money objectives to ensure we are delivering a cost effective service we set out in the IRMP that we will look at:

- Our collaborations and the benefits that these bring to us, our partners and to our communities.
- Savings that we achieve through improving our business practices. These may be financial savings and/or more efficient ways of working.

We collate details of all our collaborations on our collaboration register and monitor the benefits that these are delivering whether to the Service, to the community or to our partners.

Savings made throughout the year are monitored and recorded on our savings register. We are also required to submit returns to the Home Office on these. We log savings made through contracting and collaborations.

## OUR COVID YEAR IN NUMBERS

**Will be designed as an infographic**

- Driver training trained 24 EEAST drivers
- Checked on approx 350 of our most vulnerable residents, supporting the central county community hub who were knocking on the doors of those shielding
- 12 staff were trained to drive ambulances
- 3 of our on-call firefighters have since signed bank contracts to support EEAST further and 2 are going through the EEAST apprenticeship programme to become technicians.
- 6 members of staff trained to deliver face mask fitting at Addenbrookes.
- 22,500 lateral flow tests were purchased to allow operational and key staff to test regularly before coming into the workplace.
- 158 staff volunteered to help at vaccination centres and have completed 4,540 hours between them.

To help provide partner agencies in the Local Resilience Forum with personal protective equipment, and for use by our own staff, we purchased in excess of:

Item	
Nitrile Gloves	1,500 boxes (150,000 individual gloves)
Polycarb Faceshields	1,100
FFP2 Masks	800
FFP3 Masks	45,000
Type IIR	180,000
Infection Control Aprons	2,000
Hand Sanitiser (in various sizes)	1,650 Litres



## 8. Equality and Inclusion

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

To do this, and in compliance with our public service equality duty, we set ourselves objectives in our Equality Strategy 2018-20 that detail what we are going to do to achieve improved equality outcomes for our communities and staff. The full strategy can be found on our website: [https://www.cambsfire.gov.uk/media/2299/edi\\_strategy\\_and\\_priorities\\_2018\\_-\\_20\\_.pdf](https://www.cambsfire.gov.uk/media/2299/edi_strategy_and_priorities_2018_-_20_.pdf)

Our objectives have been to:

- Improve attendance of all communities in Cambridgeshire at fire safety business seminars
- Reduce the risk of domestic fires by increasing Safe and Well visits to the most vulnerable, including those who may find it difficult to access visits
- Improve confidence and skills of operational, community safety and fire safety staff in engaging with different communities
- Improve gender diversity among operational and control staff and BAME diversity among all staff
- Ensure decision making in selection, training, development and promotion is as equitable as possible
- Improve wellbeing and retention of staff in under-represented groups
- Deliver the RESPECT action plan to improve the reporting and management of inappropriate, bullying or harassing behaviours and reduce the incidents of observed or experienced bullying or harassment
- Take action to understand and reduce our gender pay gap
- Ensure staff have skills and knowledge to achieve and value a diverse workforce
- Ensure leaders at all levels can demonstrate due regard to equality, diversity and inclusion in decision making and with when management staff.

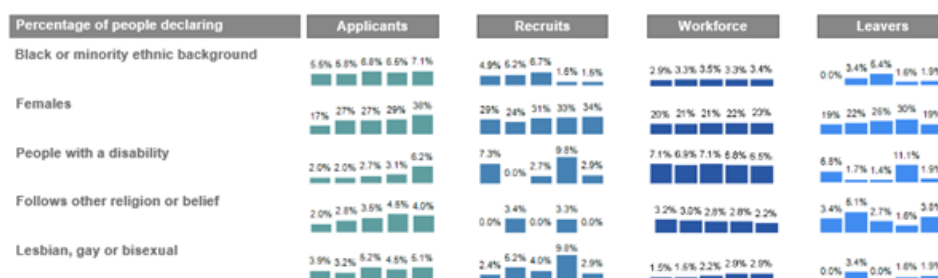
Highlights of our achievements last year:

- Our positive action officers worked hard to maintain relationships and contact with diverse community groups throughout the pandemic, through virtual engagement opportunities. They also continued to explore and build new relationships.
- The number of diverse applicants applying for roles across the Service has seen a year on year increase in most areas (see data below). However, we know we still have room for significant improvement in some areas. Therefore, we developed and agreed a new two-year positive action plan during this period, to enable us to continue to focus our efforts in this important area.
- We continued to deliver training and informal awareness sessions for managers and all staff on inclusion topics, such as inclusive leadership and making fair and inclusive decisions.
- We ran informal conversation sessions with teams to explore the principle of 'getting serious about inclusion'. These were all delivered virtually due to the pandemic.
- We began a programme of engagement with teams across the organisation to highlight everyone's personal responsibility and accountability for embedding our RESPECT principles.
- Our gender pay gap has reduced this year, from 12 pence in the pound last year to 9.8 pence in the pound this year. It is, in fact, the lowest gap seen since reporting started in 2017. We believe that this is the result of more promotions of our female operational staff and the impact of the increased contractual maternity pay that we

introduced last year. The gap in mean bonus payments is also considerably reduced, from 9.94% last year to 1.49% this year. Again, this is the smallest gap since reporting began.

- This year we completed the implementation of a new pay and grading structure for our professional support management band staff. This work had started last year and was the key recommendation from our equal pay audit conducted in 2019.
- The number of women operational staff increased to 40 (7.8% of operational staff, an increase of 1% from last year). We have also seen an increase in women operational managers, up from 2.7% to 4.1% year on year. We have 175 women staff overall, which means the overall proportion of women in the Service has increased from 21.3% last year to 23.1% this year.
- The number of men in our combined fire control stands at 18.2%, an increase of 1.5% from last year. We continue to seek to improve the gender diversity of our Combined Fire Control as in all areas of the Service.
- We have seen the number of requests for dyslexia assessments continue to increase in the last year. We have also formed a neurodiversity working group and appointed a neurodiversity inclusion ambassador, to be able to better support and explore issues that matter to our neurodivergent colleagues.
- We engaged with an independent specialist provider to hold structured listening sessions with staff about the death of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement. This included sessions held specifically with our BAME staff and our senior leadership team.

Data as at 31.03.2021:



*We collect and review each quarter equality data about our workforce, those applying for all job vacancies and staff leaving the organisation. Highlights of the data for the last financial year show that:*

- BAME applicants and disabled applicants are up year-on year across operational roles and support
- Female applicants are up in all areas year on year which is welcomed in all areas except Control where men are the under-represented group
- Applicants declaring other religion or belief are up for support, down slightly for operational staff and down significantly for Control, giving a slight overall decline year on year
- LGBT applicants are up in all areas where we recruited, including notably for operational roles.

See our performance section on 32 for further information.

## 9. Partnerships and collaborations

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

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

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

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

Examples of some of our collaborations are:

### **Combined Fire Control with Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service**

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

### **Mutual Aid Agreements**

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

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

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

### **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Resilience Forum (LRF)**

Local Resilience Forums aim to plan and prepare for localised incidents and catastrophic emergencies. They work to identify potential risks and produce emergency plans to either prevent or mitigate the impact of any incident on their local communities. Our senior managers are actively engaged in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Resilience Forum which is chaired by our chief fire officer. The Service has fully supported and participated in the development of an agreed risk profile for the local area through the community risk register, in partnership with police and ambulance services, local authorities, NHS England, Public Health England, the Environment Agency and the military.

The LRF has worked tirelessly over the last year to coordinate the strategic and tactical response to the pandemic to ensure a coordinated effort by all partners. We were instrumental in procuring PPE for staff in many of the services utilising our existing network of suppliers and proactively finding others where necessary, to fulfil demand.

### **Shared ICT Service with Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service**

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

### **NHS Blood and Transfusions**

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

### **Cambridge Water Safety Partnership**

Cambridgeshire Water Safety Partnership was established in December 2018, initially funded by us and 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.

## 10. Financial performance and governance

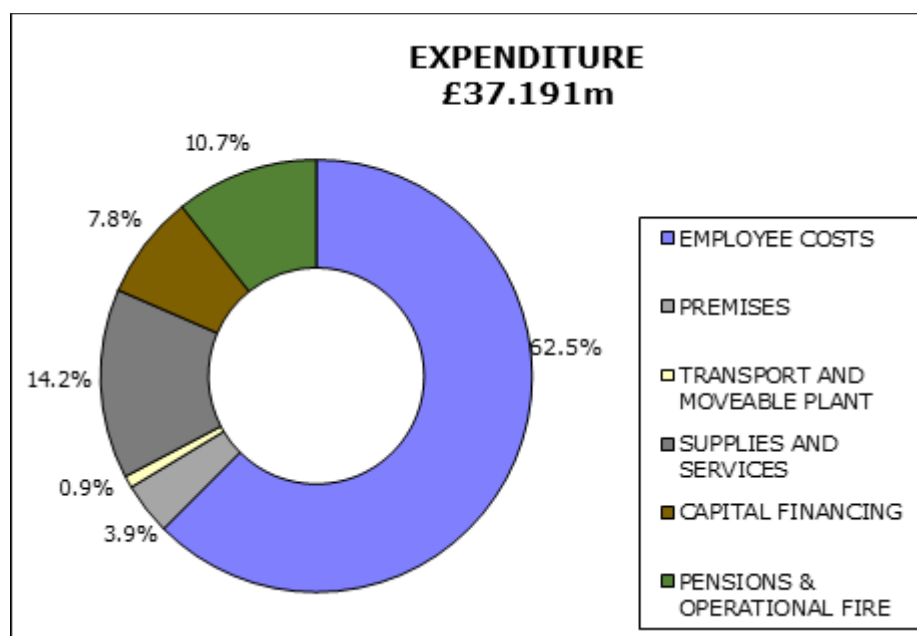
Ensuring we have an efficient service that offers value for money, underpins everything we do. Although the pressures on our budget through a continued reduction in government grant since 2010 have been felt across the Service, with innovative thinking and more collaborative working, as well as the support from our communities and staff, we have managed to find the necessary savings each year to ensure a balanced budget. It gets tougher each time we need to find savings as we are now a lean organisation and have been recognised as an effective and efficient Service by HMICFRS. Any future budget cuts are likely to be felt hard.

### Where our money comes from and how much we spent

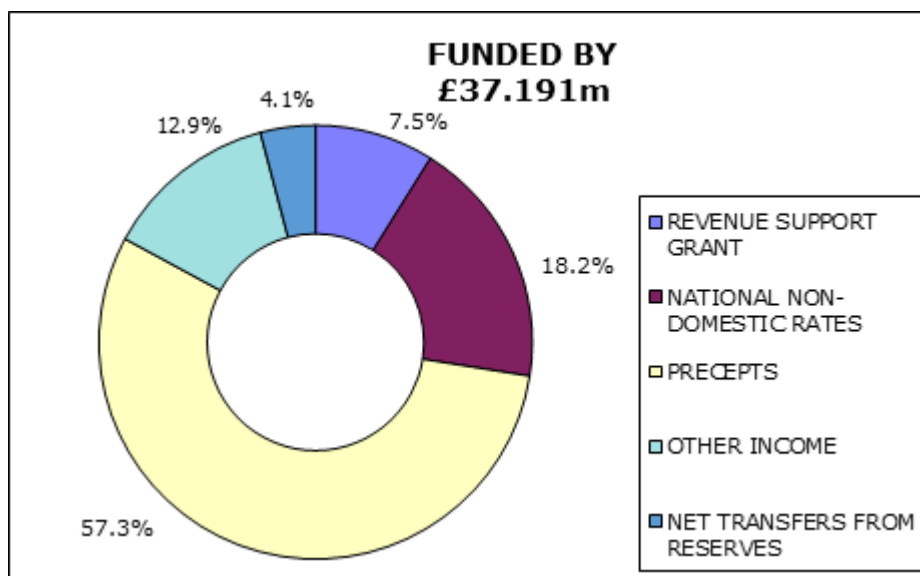
The Fire Authority's total net expenditure was £32.387m. This is made up of £37.191m (expenditure) less £4.804m (other income). £20,547,000 was collected from council tax payers. This amounted to £72.09 a year for a Band D council tax household which equates to £1.39 a week – the price of a four pint carton of milk.

The following charts show where the monies we received came from and how we spent it.

#### Expenditure and income charts



Income



### Summary Financial Table

Description	Revised budget £000's	Actual to date £000's	Variance £000's	Variance %
Full time firefighters	12,852	13,409	557	4.33%
Control room staff	1,641	1,678	37	2.25%
Local government employees	3,850	3,412	-438	-11.38%
Senior management	3,096	3,386	290	9.36%
Recruitment and training	699	641	-58	-8.30%
Fire allowances	644	712	68	10.55%
<b>EMPLOYEE COSTS</b>	<b>22,782</b>	<b>23,238</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>2.00%</b>
Property maintenance	412	364	-48	-11.66%
Insurance	65	51	-14	-23.08%
Energy costs	320	278	-42	-13.13%
Cleaning	167	112	-55	-32.93%
Rents and rates	729	641	-88	-12.08%
<b>PREMISES</b>	<b>1,693</b>	<b>1,446</b>	<b>-247</b>	<b>14.59%</b>
Car & cycle allowances	69	61	-8	-11.60%
Vehicle running expenses	173	147	-26	-15.03%
Vehicle insurance	162	143	-19	-11.73%

<b>TRANSPORT AND MOVEABLE PLANT</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>-53</b>	13.12%
Office expenses	321	227	-94	-29.29%
IT and communications equipment	2,070	2,530	460	22.22%
Fire equipment	272	292	20	7.35%
Uniforms and clothing	394	303	-91	-23.10%
Other supplies and services	1,288	1,929	641	49.76%
<b>SUPPLIES AND SERVICES</b>	<b>4,345</b>	<b>5,281</b>	<b>936</b>	21.54%
Debt charges	1,619	2,894	1,275	78.75%
External interest	-90	-37	53	-58.89%
<b>CAPITAL FINANCING</b>	<b>1,529</b>	<b>2,857</b>	<b>1,328</b>	86.85%
<b>CONTROLLABLE EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>30,753</b>	<b>33,173</b>	<b>2,420</b>	7.86%
Other income	-1,351	-1,986	-635	47.00%
Other Government grants	-1,539	-2,781	-1,242	80.70%
<b>CONTROLLABLE INCOME</b>	<b>-2,890</b>	<b>-4,767</b>	<b>-1,877</b>	64.94%
<b>NET CONTROLLABLE EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>27,863</b>	<b>28,406</b>	<b>543</b>	1.94%
Pensions - injury awards	647	778	131	20.24%
Operational fire budget	3,192	3,203	11	0.34%
<b>SAFETY-NETTED EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>3,839</b>	<b>3,981</b>	<b>142</b>	3.69%
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>31,702</b>	<b>32,387</b>	<b>685</b>	2.16%
Grant/precept income	-30,420	-30,855	-435	
Transfers to/from earmarked reserves	-1,282	-1,622	-340	
<b>CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	<b>-31,702</b>	<b>-32,477</b>	<b>-775</b>	
<b>CONTRIBUTION TO GENERAL RESERVE</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>-90</b>	<b>-90</b>	

Key budget points

- Uncommitted money that was underspent has been used to help finance capital spending and reduce our borrowing requirement

**What we own**

Our assets include (as of March 2021):

**Buildings**

Fire headquarters and operational buildings	29
Staff houses	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>

**Vehicles and Plant**

Fire engines (incl rescue pumps)	35
Aerial appliances	4*
Rescue vehicles	2
Other special appliances	6
Reserve and training appliances	8
Other vehicles	115
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>

\*We purchased two new turntable ladder aerial appliances which replaced the existing Multistar aerial appliances. The Multistars have now been sold but these figures were at end of financial year 2020/2021).

**Capital Spending**

During the year the Authority:

- Purchased 22 new silver fleet vehicles and completed the construction of two new aerial appliances totalling £1,640k
- Undertook equipment and IT projects totalling £202k
- Carried out building works totalling £2,126k which included the purchase of land for a new fire station and training centre in Huntingdon
- Carried out work on ICT assets under construction totalling £1,417k. This includes costs associated with a new mobilising system for our Combined Fire Control.

**Financial governance**

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

**External audit (UPDATE IF 2020/21 CONCLUSION IS AVAILABLE AT DESIGN)**

The Fire Authority has external auditors appointed by central government to assess its financial standing. The Authority's appointed auditor, BDO LLP, undertakes an annual audit of the financial standing of the Fire Authority. The auditors are required, under the Code of Audit Practice, to highlight all issues of significance arising from an audit, in the form of an annual audit letter.

The independent auditor's report to members of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority for 2020/21 concluded that:

*'On the basis of our work, having regard to the guidance on the specified criterion published by the National Audit Office in November 2017, we are satisfied that, in all significant respects, the Authority put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2019'.*



**Governance matters (UPDATE AT DESIGN STAGE IF 2020/21 STATEMENT IS RECEIVED)**

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority also 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.

The 2019/20 annual governance statement of the Authority can be accessed on our website. The external auditor's opinion confirmed assurance in the governance arrangements.

**Internal audit**

The Fire Authority also 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**

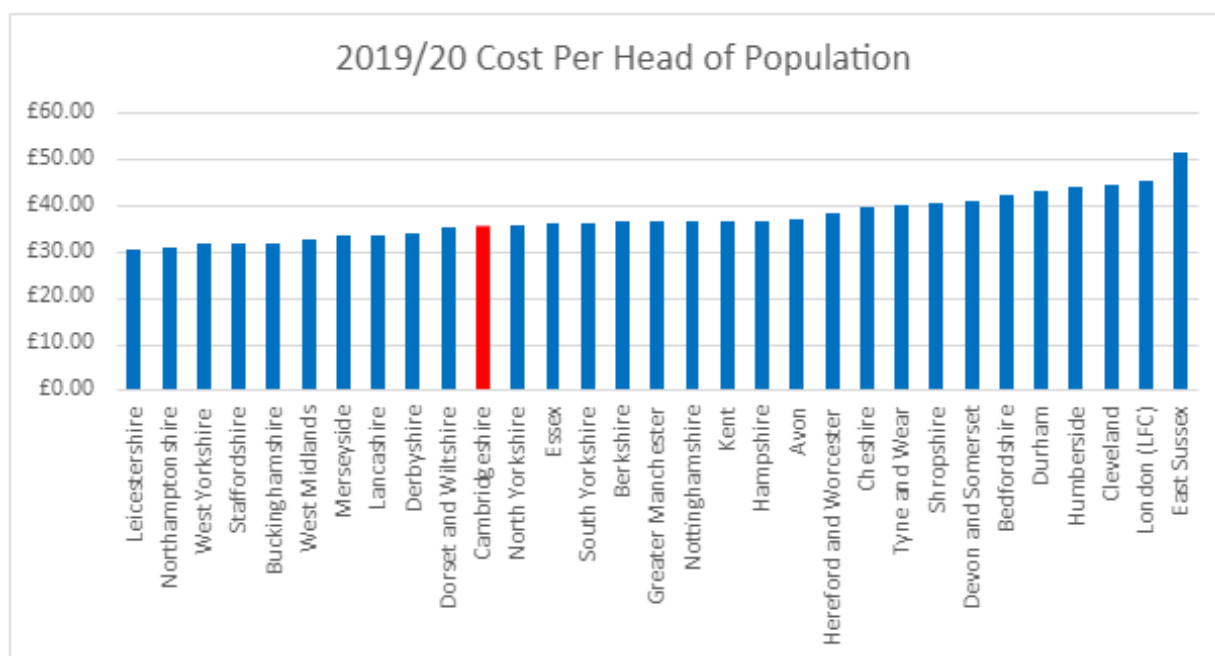
The Local Government Transparency Code 2015 is a tool to embed transparency in local authorities, which includes fire and rescue authorities and sets out the minimum data that local authorities should be publishing, the frequency it should be published and how it should be published. To streamline and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

## 11. How we compare nationally on value for money

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

In our 2018 HMICFRS inspection, we were awarded 'Good' in the Value for Money assessment. Having been inspected again in April 2021, we are awaiting our most recent outcome.

The graph below shows the 2019/20 (most recent available) cost per head per population for 27 fire and rescue services in England, using Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) data. We are shown in the lower half (however not all fire and rescue services are included in the figures).



## 12. Our HMICFRS inspection results

In October 2020, HMICFRS carried out a specific inspection of every fire and rescue service to understand how it had responded to the pandemic. Our assessment was very positive and the additional responsibilities our staff undertook to support partners such as ambulance driving and driver training, fitting face masks and visiting those shielding was recognised and applauded.

Our full Covid response report can be found online [add link]

Having had our first HMICFRS inspection in 2018, we were due to receive our second inspection in April 2020 but due to Covid this was postponed until April 2021. The outcome will not be published until the end of 2021.

Our first inspection was in the summer of 2018, when HMICFRS inspected our Service to assess how effective and efficient we are in our activities to prevent, protect the public against and respond to fires and other emergencies. They also assessed us on how well we look after the people who work for us.

All fire and rescue services were inspected over an 18-month period and the outcomes were published. Our Service compared extremely well and came in the top four fire and rescue services in the country, based on being only one of four to get either good or outstanding in not only the three key areas of assessment, but also across the 11 supporting areas.

The three main areas they looked at were:

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

There are four possible outcomes in the judgement criteria:

- Outstanding
- Good (this is where the HMICFRS expect every service to be)
- Requires Improvement
- Inadequate (serious or critical failings in policy, practice or performance).

### **13. Planning and future priorities**

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

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

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

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

**\*INSERT IMAGE OF FRONT PAGE OF IRMP\***

## 14. Letters of appreciation

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

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

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

I just want to a very big thank you to your Community Safety Officer who came and sorted my smoke alarm, when it was carbon monoxide that was the problem. I had it going off for over a month and my housing association wouldn't help. He came and sorted it out and I can't thank him enough for that as I've had no sleep these last weeks, what a hero. Big thank you.

### **Resident in Cambridge**

I had need for Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service today and even under the current situation and pressure they were amazing. All my neighbours applauded as they left too. Thank you so much for saving my home.

### **Resident in Wisbech**

I wanted to send a personal message of thanks to the Huntingdon Fire Station for their display on the 23rd April 2020.

I am originally from Ramsey yet work in London and have done for six years now and I was on my way home on Thursday and heard on Heart radio about the clap about to start at 8 o'clock. I hadn't since this started managed to even stand out and see or take part in one because of shift work and running over my hours due to the current times and through working two hours away. So I pulled over near the junction and watched Huntingdon Fire Station come out and put on a display.

To see the public come out around me from their homes and to watch them and cheer, clap and want to make that bit of effort was so heart-warming and lovely to see. To be honest, that day I had done multiple back to back Covid 19 calls and unfortunately most didn't even make it, so to pull over, stand a minute very tired and quite emotional already, to watch this station make such an effort and encouraged the public to support was so appreciated.

But I'd also like to thank the one firefighter (who I don't know his name or who he was) but who spotted me standing across the junction and turned to me and clapped towards me. After the day I'd had it bought a lump in my throat and tears to my eyes because times are extremely hard at the moment and I'm so grateful for how the emergency services are pulling together, supporting each other and really stepping up during these tough times.

So please pass on my thanks and appreciation to the station for boosting moral and getting the public out and to the individual firefighter for even noticing me stood there, you brought a tear to my eye but made me a very happy paramedic to work alongside you all.

**Resident in Ramsey and paramedic**

One of the paramedics that came to my house yesterday afternoon was a firefighter. He said that nine firefighters have been assigned to help the ambulance service in Cambridge as they're really busy and needed more ambulances. They're mainly being used to drive and the other person is the actual paramedic. Good on firefighters for stepping up to help the ambulance service and people like me. Thanks to these firefighters we have more ambulances on the road. The firefighter who was partnered with the paramedic yesterday was brilliant at treating me and rushing me to hospital and I didn't even suspect he wasn't a paramedic he was that good!

**Resident in Cambridge**

We just wanted to take a moment to thank you for coming to the Emergency Department to clap with us for key workers. Businesses, public services and the public's generosity and kindness have meant so much to us during these challenging times. Our staff really appreciated it, just what we needed to keep us going during a busy shift. Thank you for your dedication and hard work.

**Emergency Care staff, Cambridge**

We want to say a massive thank you to the crews that attended the house fire in Chatteris last night. They did a great job in getting the fire under control. Prevented it spreading into our home. We clap for you.

**Resident in Chatteris**

Thank you more than we can say to @cambsfrs for such a speedy response today to put out our neighbour's tree. Young children and their mum living in that house, as well as houses both sides, eternally grateful. Could have been so much worse, so quickly! What heroes!

**Resident in Cambridge**

Just wanted to send you an email to say how much we, the families and residents of Peterborough, appreciate the hard work it took to control the gas fire last night/early this morning. You actually saved our homes and lives. When we were evacuated from our house we honestly thought that we would be coming back to a disaster or at the worst, no houses to come back to at all. We thought that the fire would travel down the trees and take out all of the fences.

We were kept informed through the early hours by police and residents that had been taken to the Cresset and looked after by the Red Cross, again, amazing people. When we got back to our home we were amazed to see that everything was OK and there was no damaged to any of the properties that were so very close to the fire. Incredible!

You are all so fantastic and thank you from the bottom of our hearts. It could have been a lot worse and we will not forget the passion and hard work you all give to keep us safe.

**Resident in Peterborough**

A huge thanks to the guys from Huntingdon Fire Station for saving our chocolate Labrador when he got into difficulty a lake. We are forever in your debt.

**Resident in Huntingdon**

Hi, just want to say a huge thank you to your crew for coming out today after a gas meter was hit by a car and gas was escaping at a very dangerous level. They evacuated us so fast and they helped make our home safe again. We really are blessed to have such amazing emergency services.

**Resident in St Neots**

Dear St Neots Firefighters,

We wanted to send you this card to say how much we appreciate all your hard work. The bravery, strength and courage you showed on Thursday was exemplary and we cannot thank you enough for all you did!

I hope that in this Christmas season you can find some time to rest and celebrate with your loved ones.

From the bottom of our hearts we also want to say a big thank you to the team that came around on Saturday to provide community support. These events have been shocking and heart breaking for all the neighbours but we've got many children in this estate and this has had an even bigger impact. They were left saddened, confused and scared.

The reassuring words you gave my two children on Saturday, the tour of the fire engine and the escape plans you provided made such a difference.

You gave them the answers that we didn't have. You made them know they were safe. After days of struggling to go to sleep and nightmares, on Saturday they were finally able to relax and settle through the night.

My four year old firefighter obsessed son had his firefighter costume back on and him and his sister played firefighters and re-enacted their escape routes. You don't know how much this means to us. Keep up the hard work, we truly appreciate it.

**Resident of St Neots**

On behalf of the residents of Alconbury can I pass on their thanks to all the crews for their tireless work making sure that everyone was safe over the course of yesterday and today.

Please pass on my best wishes to the crews, another example of Cambridgeshire Fire Service providing excellent service to its residents.

**Resident in Alconbury**

Can you pass on that as someone who lives in Earith can I just say thanks again for pumping out our village. I can see from our house that crews have now returned to check the houses opposite that were flooded. Diabolical conditions last night.

**Resident in Earith**

I would just like to say from the bottom of my heart the biggest thank you to all the crews who attended the fire at the industrial estate. The 100% team effort and bravery of everyone we will be eternally grateful for.

**Resident/business owner in Ramsey**

## **15. Tell us what you think**

We would very much welcome any comments you may have about this document to help us improve the way we report back to you on what we have done and what we plan to do. We would be very grateful if you could take the time to provide us with any comments and send them to us at the address below. Alternatively you can share your thoughts via email at [feedback@cambsfire.gov.uk](mailto:feedback@cambsfire.gov.uk), via our website [www.cambsfire.gov.uk](http://www.cambsfire.gov.uk) through the 'contact us' section, or post a message on our Facebook or Twitter pages.

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

Thank you for your time.

Please write to:  
Fire HQ  
Hinchingsbrooke Cottage  
Brampton Road  
Huntingdon  
Cambs  
PE29 2NA