

FIRE AUTHORITY



Date: Thursday, 20 June 2024

14:00hr

Red Kite Room

New Shire Hall, Alconbury Weald, Huntingdon, PE28 4YE

AGENDA

Open to Public and Press

1. **Election of Chair**
- verbal item
2. **Appointment of Vice-Chair**
- verbal item
3. **Apologies for absence and declarations of interest**
4. **Chair's announcements**
5. **Minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held 15th February 2024 and Action Log** 5 - 18
6. **Annual Review of Performance – Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2024** 19 - 38
7. **Final Revenue and Capital Budget position 2023-24** 39 - 56

8.	Draft Pay Policy Statement 2024-25	57 - 66
9.	Recommendation for appointment of Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive Officer	67 - 70
10.	Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies	71 - 74
11.	Appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs: (i) Policy and Resources Committee; (ii) Overview and Scrutiny Committee <i>- verbal item</i>	
12.	Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held 22 January 2024 - for noting	75 - 80
13.	Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held 22 April 2024 - for noting	81 - 86

The Fire Authority comprises the following members:

For more information about this meeting, including access arrangements and facilities for people with disabilities, please contact

The Fire Authority is committed to open government and the public are welcome to attend from the start of the meeting.

It supports the principle of transparency and encourages filming, recording and taking photographs at meetings that are open to the public. It also welcomes the use of social networking and micro-blogging websites (such as Twitter and Facebook) to communicate with people about what is happening, as it happens. These arrangements operate in accordance with a protocol which can be accessed via the following link below or made available on request.

Public speaking on the agenda items above is encouraged. Speakers must register their intention to speak by contacting the Democratic Services Officer at least three working days before the meeting.

Full details of the public speaking scheme for the Fire Authority is available at:

<https://www.cambsfire.gov.uk/fire-authority/meetings/>

Councillor Edna Murphy (Chair) Councillor Mike Black Councillor Andrew Bond
Councillor Neil Boyce Councillor Simon Bywater Councillor Douglas Dew Councillor
Wayne Fitzgerald Councillor Ian Gardener Councillor John Gowing Councillor Ros
Hathorn Councillor Mohammed Jamil Councillor Sebastian Kindersley Councillor Catherine

Rae Councillor Kevin Reynolds Councillor Philippa Slatter Councillor Mandy Smith and Councillor Simone Taylor

Clerk Name:	Dawn Cave
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Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority: Minutes

Date: 15th February 2024

Time: 3:22-4.23pm

Venue: New Shire Hall, Alconbury Weald

Present: Cambridgeshire County Council:

Councillors: S Bywater, D Dew, I Gardener, B Goodliffe, J Gowing, R Hathorn, S Kindersley, E Murphy (Chair), C Rae, K Reynolds, P Slatter, M Smith and S Taylor

Peterborough City Council:

Councillors: A Bond, W Fitzgerald, M Jamil (Vice Chair) and S Warren

Officers present: J Anderson, D Cave, S Ismail, C Strickland and M Warren

102. Apologies for absence and declarations of Interest

There were no apologies for absence, or declarations of interest.

103. Minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held 20th December 2023 and Action Log

The minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held 20th December 2023 were agreed as a correct record. The Action Log was noted.

104. Chair's Announcements

See Appendix 1 to these minutes.

The Chair spoke warmly about the valuable service of Councillor McGuire, who had sadly passed away in December. The Fire Authority observed a minute's silence to mark his passing.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Fitzgerald, who had replaced Cllr Over. The Chair thanked Cllr Over for his work for the Fire Authority over the years.

105. Fire Authority Budget 2024-25 and Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2024-25

The Fire Authority considered a report on its budget requirement and precept for 2024/25 Council Tax. The budget had been considered at a Policy and Resources Committee meeting in January, and had been endorsed by that Committee. The proposed budget was based on a precept increase of 2.9%, with the increase predominantly relating to salaries. Notification had been received in January,

confirming Section 31 income totalling approximately £1.5M. However, it was stressed that this should be regarded as a one-off receipt, and it would not be included in the baseline budget going forward. The main budgetary risk was around pay, with the pay settlement not being negotiated until the summer. The level of Reserves should be sufficient to maintain services in the 2024/25 financial year.

In response to a Member request, officers explained how Reserves would be utilised for one-off projects, such as the upgrade of St Neots Fire Station, enhancing the Service without putting a burden on the long-term financial situation.

A number of Members praised officers, acknowledging that they had put an incredible amount of work into the preparation of the budget for these essential services. The Chair agreed, and thanked officers on behalf of the Fire Authority for keeping Members updated and for the extensive consultation.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a. approve the budget book attached at Appendix 1, including the following recommendations:
 - i. approve a Fire Authority budget (as detailed in Appendix 1) to the requirement of £35,591,539;
 - ii. approve a recommended Fire Authority precept for Tax from District Authorities and Peterborough City Authority of £25,242,649;
 - iii. approve an Authority Tax for each band of property, based on the number of band D equivalent properties notified to the Fire Authority by the District Authorities and Peterborough City Authority (306,864):

Band	2023/24	Authority Tax	2024/25	Band	2023/24	Authority Tax	2024/25
A	£53.28	+£1.56	£54.84	E	£97.68	+£2.86	£100.54
B	£62.16	+£1.82	£63.98	F	£115.44	+£3.38	£118.82
C	£71.04	+£2.08	£73.12	G	£133.20	+£3.90	£137.10
D	£79.92	+£2.34	£82.26	H	£159.84	+£4.68	£164.52

- iv. approve the Capital Programme detailed in Appendix 2.

- b. approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement at Appendix 2.

106. Community Risk Management Plan 2024 to 2029

The Fire Authority received a report which provided an overview of the consultation feedback for the draft Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2024-29, along with the final version of the document, for approval for publication. The CRMP was effectively the strategic plan for the next five years, setting out how risks and opportunities had been identified. The current CRMP was due to expire at the end of March 2024.

Members were reminded how the CRMP had been developed, and that they had approved the draft version for consultation at the last Fire Authority meeting. There had been 22 internal and 42 external responses to that consultation, which had closed on 31/01/24. Those responses had been reviewed and changes made where appropriate. The main points raised in the consultation were that the CRMP was easy to read and understand; it included all significant risks for Cambridgeshire, and it included appropriate actions to address the identified risks and opportunities. It was noted that most comments received were around clarity and language, and how issues were defined. No substantive points had been raised around risks or actions to mitigate those risks.

Arising from the report, a Member thanked officers for the work in developing the CRMP and dealing with the consultation responses. He welcomed the inclusion of Climate Change concern, as this impacted significantly on both the frequency and severity of events that the Fire Service deals with. He also observed that there had been a lot of discussion in the report on the growth in population and its implications. He noted the announcement made by Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in relation to the Cambridge 2040 plan for an additional 250,000 homes across the region. As such rapid development was not alluded to in the CRMP, he suggested that preparing for such population growth may be best dealt with through a review by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Officers confirmed that they were aware of the announcement, but without detail e.g. exactly where the homes would be, or what funding would be available to mitigate risks, it was very difficult to prepare or respond.

It was resolved unanimously to:

approve, for publication, the Community Risk Management Plan for 2024 to 2029 attached at Appendix 1.

107. Review of Service Headquarters Use (Project P143)

The Fire Authority considered a report on the review being undertaken in relation to Service Headquarters (SHQ).

Service Headquarters was the Service's oldest building, and it was expensive to maintain, being the least sustainable building in the property portfolio, with the highest level of emissions. It was also used much less frequently than in the past. A review was currently taking place to assess options for the Service's future headquarters requirements, and further updates would be provided in due course.

It was resolved unanimously to:

note the content of the report.

108. Report on the use of Lithium-ion Batteries and response by Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service

Members considered a report on the rising use of lithium-ion batteries, and specifically their use in increasingly popular micro mobility items such as e-scooters and e-bikes. The report set out the issues presented by these items in terms of fire risk.

The primary risk associated with lithium-ion batteries used in micro mobility products was thermal runaway. This resulted when a battery cell overheats and burns at extreme temperatures, without the need for oxygen or other ignition sources to sustain it. Whilst there was limited data nationally on the number of lithium-ion fires, London Fire Brigade had reported a 60% increase in the number of related fires, year on year. In Cambridgeshire, the most significant incident had tragically resulted in three fatalities.

A risk mitigation had been identified in the CRMP Action Plan, involving educational safety activity, and training was being provided to all operational staff on the risks and tactics for firefighting where lithium-ion batteries were involved. Nationally, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) had seconded an officer to lead the work around emerging technologies across the workstreams of prevention, protection and operations

A Member observed that the more traditional mobility scooters ran on these type of batteries, and that there may be a temptation to undertake quick fixes. She asked if the right sort of advice available for the users of mobility scooters? Officers agreed there were similar issues, with the same sort of chargers and batteries. However, the report focused on *emerging* risks, whereas mobility scooters had been around for many years. It was noted that the places where fires were occurring was changing, and that people of all ages and demographics were using micro mobility devices.

A Member asked whether the devices themselves or the batteries were the main cause of fires and thermal runaway? Officers confirmed that the main cause was off the market chargers, which were either substandard or not designed for that kind of product, and there was a lack of regulation around these products. Additionally, some people were undertaking DIY repairs.

A Member expressed concern around the lack of a national data due to the absence of an incident reporting system, which needed to be addressed. Officers confirmed that the data was currently not being captured, and the NFCC was trying to address this nationally. It was agreed that a letter from the Fire Authority would be helpful. It was agreed that a letter signed by the Fire Authority would be helpful, and it was also suggested that Members could explain the situation to their local MPs.

A Member suggested that there should be strong engagement with Peterborough landlords, given that these type of mobility devices were best suited to cities such as Peterborough and Cambridge. Officers agreed to check and action this if necessary.

It was resolved unanimously to:

note the content of the report.

109. Financial Business Continuity Planning

Members considered an update on the Service's business continuity arrangements with regard to financial planning. It was important for a plan to be in place that would enable the organisation to downsize, if required, in a measured way, maintaining the best possible service for communities .

Financial business continuity planning has been conducted for the financial year 2024/25. This has identified that there are minimal savings to be taken at Impact 1 and 2. These would equate to £24K of Impact 1 savings and £62K of Impact 2 savings that could be taken over the next two years. If the Service experienced any further

reductions to its budget, in real terms, aspects of the Financial Business Continuity Plan would need to be implemented.

The decision of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service to withdraw from the Control Centre collaboration would have a significant financial impact on CFRS's ability to support and deliver core services.

Arising from the report:

- a Member asked what the budget gap was created as a result of Suffolk's departure. Officers confirmed that this would be a minimum of £700,000, and this would result in significant levels of reduction in the organisation. There was still some uncertainty around Suffolk's position, and it was hoped that they would reconsider their decision, given the good service delivered to them since 2010. Whilst the Command and Control system was changing, business continuity would be maintained and provided, and a very good service would continue to be provided. The Chair would be writing to Suffolk, highlighting the benefits of the collaborative arrangements, with a view to reopening those discussions. The rationale behind Suffolk's decision remained unclear. It was confirmed that there had been discussions with other Fire Services about potential collaborations, but no interest had been secured to date.
- In response to a Member question on risks, it was confirmed that Fire and Rescue Services' funding settlements were agreed annually, i.e. there was no security of funding going forward. A further risk was that the budget was agreed months before the staff pay increases were negotiated.
- A Member noted that the financial impact of the withdrawal of Suffolk was a *minimum* of £700k, but it could be as costly as £1.2M. It was confirmed that the impact level would be between Level 3 and 5, but Level 6 (inability to meet statutory responsibilities) was not anticipated. The Member commented that the Service needed to be explicit around that risk, and it was noted that Suffolk had set a timescale of withdrawal by December 2024, and the financial impact of that withdrawal would be felt shortly after. Any length of notice period after December would need to be negotiated.

It was resolved unanimously to:

note the work completed and status of the financial business continuity plans.

110. Safeguarding Update

Members considered an update on the safeguarding arrangements within Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS).

CFRS carried out its first safeguarding self-assessments against the nine different protected characteristics in February 2022, resulting in 6 subsections being rated Red, 38 Amber and 17 Green. Since that initial assessment, there had been significant improvements. The current position was 2 Red, 20 Amber and 40 Green. It was noted that in July 2023 there had been a change of legislation to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (England & Wales) Order 2023, enabling fire and rescue authority employers to require a minimum of a standard DBS check for all employees. This change has been embraced and DBS checks have been rolled out for

all staff, focusing first on firefighters and public-facing staff. DBS checks were also automatically being taken up for all new entrants to the Fire Service.

A new e-learning sector-specific training package has been made available, and was mandatory training for all staff and volunteers, covering areas such as Domestic Abuse, Hoarding and Modern Slavery.

Arising from the report:

- It was confirmed that culture was a key part of the audit with regard to safeguarding;
- Members welcomed the progress made, as indicated by the improvements in the “RAG” indicators;
- Members noted how the reporting system worked when there was a safeguarding issue, and how this fed into national Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, with oversight by key individuals within the Service, including the Head of People, Assistant Chief Fire Officer and Head of Safeguarding;
- A Member advised that the County Council now regarded *Experience of Care* as a protected characteristic.

It was resolved unanimously to note the contents of this report and in particular the progress to date and continued commitment to working towards a safeguarding culture and good practice throughout the organisation.

111. Dates of Fire Authority Meetings 2024-25

It was resolved unanimously to agree the schedule of meetings for 2024/25.

112. Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies

Members considered an updated appointments schedule.

It was resolved unanimously to:

agree the updated schedule of appointments, as appended.

Chair

CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS – THURSDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2024

At the start of this meeting I would like to mark the sad passing of our colleague **Cllr Mac McGuire** who served the Fire Authority with distinction for many years. Many of us attended his funeral and more recently this week were able to witness him posthumously receiving the accolade of Honorary Alderman. We will miss him. For now let us mark his passing with a minute's silence.

I must also be the bearer of other sad news, the passing of Chief Fire Officer for West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service, **Wayne Brown**, who died at the end of January. Our own Chief Fire Officer has sent a letter to West Midlands to pass on the condolences of everyone here and let them know they are in our thoughts. I understand that Wayne was an inspirational leader and a great champion of inclusion and as such his loss will be felt hard across the wider fire and rescue service family. I have included a link to the book of condolence should anyone wish to send their individual condolences.

[Wayne Brown - West Midlands Fire Service \(wmfs.net\)](https://www.wmfs.net)

I would also like to welcome **Councillor Fitzgerald** who was appointed to the Authority following full Council at Peterborough last month. Cllr Fitzgerald takes the position previously held by Councillor David Over who has given a combined total of 15 years' service to the Authority and we thank him for his contributions.

Members will know that Chris Strickland has announced his plans to retire from the Service later this year. There is a lot we could say but let us save that for another opportunity when we can properly highlight and celebrate Chris' many achievements in the Service over 41 years, during which he has served with distinction. For now it is obvious that he will be a tough act to follow and we will need to turn our attention to recruiting his successor – of which more details will be forthcoming soon.

MEMBER SEMINAR

May I also thank those Members that were able to, for giving up their time to attend the very informative seminar this morning on our On-Call service. It is imperative that we all understand it fully. For those not able to attend this morning there is another seminar scheduled for 6 March 2024.

LGBT+ HISTORY MONTH

As we are in February, we turn our minds towards LGBT+ History Month. Like other years, the month carries a specific theme throughout and this year the focus is medicine, **#UnderTheScope**, celebrating LGBT+ peoples' contribution to the field of medicine and healthcare both historically and today.

As an organisation, we are members of the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI). This membership opens the door to a plethora of resources and I encourage everyone to visit enei.org.uk or lgbtplushistorymonth.co.uk.

As always, we will be supporting the month by flying the LGBT+ progress flag at SHQ and new for 2024, a small number of badges any colleagues can opt to wear to show support for the LGBT+ community will be available, free of charge via the BSG ServiceDesk SHQReception@cambsfire.gov.uk

Finally, the Service are considering the creation of an LGBT+ network for colleagues. If any Councillor would like to take part, please make yourself known at any time to ACFO Anderson.

Date for your diary – Cambridge Pride is returning to Jesus Green in the city centre on Saturday 15 June 2024; the event is in the early planning stages and updates can be found on cambridgepride.co.uk.

Enjoy the month, access the resources and we hope you learn something you previously didn't know regarding the LGBT+ community.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The mental health and wellbeing of everyone in our organisation is of paramount importance and the Service has further demonstrated its commitment to the wellbeing of staff by signing the **Dying to Work Charter**. The campaign, organised by the Trades Union Congress (TUC), is pressing for additional employment protection for terminally ill workers who may require time off, often many months, to get treatment or recover. Guidance has been produced by the TUC and others to deal with cases of long-term illness or return to work for those who are disabled as a result of an illness or injury. The Service does its best to offer a wide variety of support for its colleagues and their families and has signed the Charter to show how it will continue to support colleagues should they have the tragic diagnosis of a terminal illness.

COLLABORATIVE NEW ROLE – COMMUNITY WELLBEING OFFICER

I wanted to take this opportunity to let you all know about a new role within Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The **Community Wellbeing Officer** (CWO) role is a collaboration between the Service and the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST), with a primary aim to deliver a blend of response, preventative and protective intervention.

The trial role will be completely funded by EEAST, with no cost to the Service, for an initial 12 months. Two Community Wellbeing Officers, Megan Cantwell (Business Support Group) and Joshua Berrisford (Peterborough Volunteer Firefighter) have completed their three-week training course with EEAST, along with training from the community safety team, to be able to also carry out preventative work.

They will respond to calls via EEAST dispatch, while simultaneously identifying any preventive and protective needs of each patient attended. They will also attend Category 1 life threatening calls if they are the closest resource available. When not carrying out this vital work they will be completing safe and well visits to help reach the most vulnerable people in our communities.

By working and responding together, EEAST and the Service will save lives, enhance patient experiences and subsequently improve community welfare. This is yet another example of our continued commitment to collaborative blue light working and we wish Megan and Joshua all the best in their new role.

COMBINED FIRE CONTROL

Although we do not have a substantive agenda item today relating to our Combined Fire Control and no further status update from Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, as promised under Minute 93 of our last meeting on 20 December 2023, I am pleased to report that we are aiming to start the transition process to go live by March 2024. Once we are assured that the new system is ready, we will begin the process of transition, but we won't move over until we are certain our staff are confident in using the new system.

Minutes - Action Log

This is the updated action log as at **11th June 2024** and captures the actions arising from the most recent Fire Authority meetings and updates Members on the progress on compliance in delivering the necessary actions.

MINUTES FROM THE 20 DECEMBER 2023 MEETING					
88	Draft Community Risk Management Plan 2024 to 2029	Head of Service Transformation (now Assistant Director Service Transformation)	A Member asked if data was available on the variation of appliance callouts throughout the day. Officers confirmed that this information was collected and it formed the background data for the CRMP. That data could be circulated to Members.	Update 15 February 2024 Verbal update to be given at the meeting. Update 20 June 2024 An email with a summary of data (five years historic with a focus on 2023) showing appliance availability versus incident demand (broken down to show variances at weekends and weekdays) was circulated to Members on 13 February 2024 @ 1649 hours.	Complete

MINUTES FROM THE 15 FEBRUARY 2024 MEETING

106	Community Management 2024 to 2029	Risk Plan	Scrutiny and Assurance Manager	<p>Arising from the report, a Member thanked officers for the work in developing the CRMP and dealing with the consultation responses He also observed that there had been a lot of discussion in the report on the growth in population and its implications. He noted the announcement made by Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in relation to the Cambridge 2040 plan for an additional 250,000 homes across the region. As such rapid development was not alluded to in the CRMP, he suggested that preparing for such population growth may be best dealt with through a review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Officers confirmed that they were aware of the announcement, but without detail e.g. exactly where the homes would be, or what funding would be available to mitigate risks, it was very difficult to prepare or respond.</p>	<p>Update 20 June 2024 At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April 2024 it was agreed that a Member-led Review into the impact(s) of population growth on the Service would be undertaken (Minute 84 refers).</p>	Complete
108	Report on the use of Lithium-ion Batteries and Response by Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service		Area Commander Wayne Swales (now Assistant Director Operational Support)	<p>A Member expressed concern around the lack of a national data due to the absence of an incident reporting system, which needed to be addressed. Officers confirmed that the data was currently not being captured and the National Fire Chiefs Council was trying to address this nationally. It was agreed that a letter from the Fire Authority would be helpful and it was also suggested that Members could explain the situation to their local MPs.</p>	<p>Update 20 June 2024 Verbal update</p>	Extant

			A Member suggested that there should be strong engagement with Peterborough landlords, given that these types of mobility devices were best suited to cities such as Peterborough and Cambridge. Officers agreed to check and action this if necessary.	Verbal update	Extant
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To: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority
From: Assistant Director Service Transformation – Tamsin Mirfin
Presenting officer(s): Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) - Jon Anderson
Telephone: 07711 444201
email: jon.anderson@cambsfire.gov.uk

Date: 20 June 2024

Annual Review of Performance – Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2024

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Fire Authority with an (annual) update of delivery against our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2020 to 2024.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Authority is asked to note the contents of the report and make comment as they deem appropriate.

3. Risk Assessment

- 3.1 **Political** - the IRMP process, outlined in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, requires the Authority to look for opportunities to drive down risk by utilising resources in the most efficient and effective way. The IRMP has legal force and it is therefore incumbent on the Authority to demonstrate that its IRMP principles are applied within the organisation.

- 3.2 **Economic** - the management of risk through a proactive preventable agenda serves to not only reduce costs associated with reactive response services but also aids in the promotion of prosperous communities.

- 3.3 **Legal** - the Authority has a legal responsibility to act as the enforcement agency for the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. As a result, ensuring both compliance with and support for business to achieve are core aspects of the fire and rescue service function to local communities.

4. Equality Impact Assessment

- 4.1 Due to the discriminative nature of fire, those with certain protected characteristics are more likely to suffer the effects. Prevention strategies aim to minimise the disadvantage suffered by people due to their protected characteristic; specifically, age and disability.

5. Background

- 5.1 The IRMP is a public facing document covering a four-year period and represents the output of the IRMP process for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The Service's IRMP 2020 to 2024, published in April 2020, covered the period from April 2020 to March 2024. This report focuses on the progress made against the action plan in year four (2023 to 2024).
- 5.2 The integrated risk management process is supported using risk modelling. This is a process by which performance data over the last five years in key areas of prevention, protection and response is used to assess the likelihood of fires and other related emergencies from occurring; we term this 'community risk'. This, together with data from other sources such as the national risk register and our strategic and tactical risk, is then used to identify the activities required to mitigate risks and maximise opportunities, with measures then set to monitor and improve our performance.
- 5.3 The IRMP delivery is broken down in to four areas for management and monitoring purposes in line with our excellence statements. These four areas are Community Safety Excellence, Operational Excellence, People and Value for Money. Under each area there are several activities we committed to deliver in our IRMP for 2020 to 2024. These are listed in Paragraphs 6 to 9, accompanied by a brief explanation of progress made in this year for the closure of the IRMP 2020 to 2024.

6. People Excellence Update

- 6.1 **Continued work to develop our organisational culture and to enhance staff engagement, including ensuring mechanisms are in place to properly feedback to staff and facilitating opportunities for colleagues from across different areas of the Service to engage and work with each other more.**

We carried out an employee engagement survey in October 2022, presenting the outcomes to all colleagues in January 2023. The results showed a 9% improvement in overall employee engagement compared to 2019 and an overall engagement score of 79%. In many areas we scored above the fire service sector benchmark used by the external provider. In May and June 2023, the insights were explored with managers in culture seminars and throughout the year the leadership team held workshops with our wholetime colleagues to listen to their views about a variety of topics in the engagement survey, including a women's development day.

In our wider culture journey work, we completed an equality and inclusion maturity model self-assessment tool to reflect on our current work and identify next steps. The actions from this became part of our people plan. The maturity model tool was created by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) in partnership with Deloitte.

We reviewed the spotlight report on culture that was published by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) at the end of March 2023 and integrated the actions into our people excellence plan. The progress against these actions has been published on our website. We reviewed and completed gap analysis on other fire and rescue services independent reports on culture and any agreed actions have been built into our people plan.

We had our third inspection and were graded 'Good' for promoting values and culture and promoting fairness and diversity.

We refreshed our Service values and behaviours in consultation with colleagues and with due consideration to the national code of ethics, through workshops and surveys we gathered feedback and modernised and simplified the language whilst keeping the core values that make our Service culture positive and inclusive.

We reviewed the channels in place should colleagues need to raise a concern and in addition to the internal procedures we have in place to support colleagues, we introduced an external independent reporting line and have received positive feedback about its introduction in the event that colleagues may need to use it in the future.

We completed an annual equality and inclusion benchmarking assessment with the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion and are proud that we were given a silver award.

We reviewed our internal engagement channels post-pandemic to ensure that we have the most appropriate channels in place to give all managers and colleagues the opportunity to speak with the leadership team on a regular basis.

Using feedback from colleagues, we reviewed and relaunched our recognition channels to bring nominations into one simple process.

6.2 Developing and improving the ways in which we support the mental health and wellbeing of our staff.

A Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner has been appointed which has enabled the provision of low-level counselling within the Service. This continues to be supplemented by a contract with a provider for specialist counselling where required.

Online training courses continue to be delivered by the Fire Fighters Charity which are well received by colleagues.

Work is ongoing with our medical insurance provider to raise awareness of offerings available to colleagues to support their mental health and wellbeing.

We have started a project to review our post traumatic incident support for operational colleagues.

We reviewed how we can further support the wellbeing of colleagues who, due to our shift patterns, have secondary contracts of employment. We put in place an updated policy and procedure to give leaders greater visibility and oversight of total hours worked per person, including internal and external secondary contracts. This has enabled managers to have meaningful, supportive wellbeing conversations.

6.3 On-going work to improve the diversity of our workforce, including continuing to build long-term relationships with our diverse communities through our community engagement and positive action programmes.

We reviewed the latest census data and updated our station community engagement dashboards for watches to focus their engagement activity on all groups in our community.

We created and launched an online community engagement forum to ask members of the community their views on a variety of topics; we received good interest and feedback through promotion of this on social media. We used this channel, as well as social media, local media and partner networks as part our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024 to 2029 risk consultation with the community and

received feedback from over 1000 members of the community, from a diverse range of backgrounds. We will use information collected from the CRMP survey to enhance our external communicational channels for future communication about our services and recruitment.

We reviewed our provision for colleague neurodiversity support and put in place a new provider for specialist coaching and a process to engage further with 'Access to Work' for enhanced advice and support, in addition to the existing neurodiversity support procedure. We reviewed our process to enhance collaboration between occupational health and our people team to provide holistic support. We worked with an external training provider to create a new workshop on managing neurodiversity at work that has been well attended.

In addition to the menopause workshops and risk assessment that we launched last year, we reviewed our menopause guidance and developed menopause training that is now being rolled out to all colleagues in the organisation. We reviewed our menopause support and introduced more sanitary provisions and portable toilets on appliances for use at longer incidents. We have led the setting up of a national network of menopause champions and secured agreement and support from the NFCC to hold a national 'Menopause in Fire' conference which took place in September 2023 with excellent feedback.

6.4 Expand our programme of development activities to prepare staff for future roles and opportunities, including:

- **collaborative development programmes with other fire services and partner organisations,**
- **building leadership and management skills for the future,**
- **strengthening opportunities for staff to be responsible for their own learning, balanced with growing managers' accountability for facilitating development of their staff.**

We developed a face-to-face inclusive leadership training session for all managers with an external provider, the content was based on feedback from managers, our values and current case studies. This has been rolled out to all full-time managers and is now being delivered to On-Call managers. We also developed values and inclusion training sessions that are now being rolled out to all employees focused on our inclusive values.

We reviewed and updated our safeguarding policies and introduced a new eLearning module for all employees and new starters.

We started a review of our training records system, which included a survey to all employees and meetings with stakeholder teams. This review had led to us starting a project to look at the options of how we improve our training records system, starting with the reporting of operational training.

We reviewed and relaunched our leadership development programmes including our effective leadership programme with Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire fire and rescue services and the NFCC Supervisory Leadership Development Programme.

6.5 Continuing to embed an understanding of the value of quality conversations to enhance personal performance and development.

We reviewed our approach to 360 feedback and researched a range of tools available, choosing one that is based on the FACET personality profile that nearly all employees have completed in previous years. The FACET 360 tool for leaders and managers

mitigates the bias found in more traditional 360 tools that only present the feedback against a standard leadership model. The new 360 tool is now being rolled out to all leaders and managers with the purpose of raising self-awareness and enhancing personal development.

We reviewed our suite of skills workshops, including a survey to all colleagues, to ensure that the topics being covered are current and meeting the needs of those who wish to develop in their current roles or for progression. We relaunched the new suite of workshops; they were well attended and received positive feedback.

We reviewed the content of our leavers conversation to ensure that it encourages a broad conversation about our culture and service delivery so that we can review the feedback from these conversations and identify any areas for improvement.

6.6 Strengthening the ways in which we understand our succession planning needs and identify and match an individual's potential to those needs, including;

- **exploring the introduction of a shadowing programme to help give greater insight into and understanding of more senior roles,**
- **considering and evaluating our provision of apprenticeship schemes within the Service, offering greater opportunities for formal qualifications which support the careers of existing staff and promote the different professions available within the Service to those looking to start a career with us.**

We reviewed the development portfolios we launched last year for wholetime and Combined Fire Control progression from firefighter through to crew commander, watch commander and station commander, based on national operation guidance, our values and leadership attributes. We created the second version, based on feedback from colleagues and relaunched them with the aim of continuing to support progression to meet our succession planning needs.

We reviewed our approach to talent and succession, including coaching and mentoring and have scoped a project that will commence in the next CRMP year.

We took the opportunity to bring in three new apprentices across the Service, into fleet and digital learning.

6.7 Continual review of our recruitment and promotion processes to provide equality of opportunity and remove any unnecessary barriers to people joining or progressing their careers within the Service.

We have created a new attraction strategy for the Service that includes promoting our good culture and approaches to equality and inclusion. This initiative has now been scoped with stakeholders and the actions will continue into the new CRMP year. The aim is to remove any unnecessary barriers, perceived or process, to people joining the organisation.

We have created a pool of external assessors who have started to take part on interview panels for senior leadership roles. External assessors are people in our community who are in senior leadership roles outside of our organisation, who can provide an independent view to the internal interview panels which mitigates unconscious bias.

We also refreshed our pool of community assessors for our wholetime recruitment assessment days. Community assessors come from a range of backgrounds and are

given training in assessing so that they can provide an independent view to the internal interview panels which mitigates unconscious bias.

In our last wholetime campaign, in addition to our general information sessions and “Have a Go” days we also offered women only sessions to the community for positive action. Although these were attended, many female applicants did feedback that they preferred to attend mixed sessions as they felt this would be a more realistic experience of what the role would be like if they joined.

7. Community Safety Excellence Update

7.1 **Further collaboration with health, social care and other partners to refine ways to identify and reach those most at risk of fire.**

We continue to refine the use of partner data sets to target prevention activities to the most vulnerable in our community. Data sharing agreements with Anglian Water and NSR (hospital bed data) is allowing us to better target vulnerable people. Last year we did this on 84% of occasions. More intelligent use of data has also increased the times our crews are getting across the doorstep, up to 76.4% from 70.2% the previous year. Last year we delivered safe and well visits to over 6,445 vulnerable households compared with 6,244 the previous year. We continue to improve the referral pathways used by our partners using our online home fire safety tool, Safelincs, which is available on our website. Working in collaboration with fire and rescue services across the region and with EEAST, we have also introduced two community welfare officers. Primarily responsible for responding to falls in the community, these resources funded by EEAST and hosted by our service, also undertake community safety activity supporting vulnerable people.

7.2 **Develop our Fire Break Programme to support the safety, health and personal development of identified young people.**

Last year we continued to deliver and evaluate our Fire Break offering to vulnerable young people. The introduction of the Serious Violence Duty, in which fire services are a specified duty holder, has led to us delivering two Fire Break courses using Home Office funding. These are specifically targeted at vulnerable young people at risk of knife crime and has involved us establishing fruitful new networks with diversionary teams in Peterborough. We have also included knife awareness in the continuous professional development training received by our instructors delivering Fire Break. This allows them to better support young people in this vulnerable group.

7.3 **Explore opportunities to offer early intervention and positively influence children and younger people.**

We continue to focus our early intervention efforts on Fire Break and Fire Setters. We also promote the NFCC ‘Stay Wise’ programme across our offerings and social media platforms. To reach reception and key stage 1 children, we have also developed a character called Jet the Dragon. Jet has been designed specifically to deliver safety messages to early learners. To date, there have been four stories from Jet, covering general fire safety, inland water safety, coastal water safety and Halloween safety. Jet the Dragon also features on the ‘Stay Wise’ virtual resource available nationally. We have also re-introduced ‘Safety Zone’ which brings local schools and partners together to educate young children on subjects including emergency first aid, road, water and fire safety.

7.4 Work with partners and local authorities to support businesses to comply with regulation and ultimately create safer places to live, work and visit.

We have continued to engage with businesses through seminars and webinars as well as targeting businesses that are more likely to have a fire in a non-domestic premises. The attendance at these events has not been as successful as in previous years. Therefore, moving forward we are looking to create digital videos and infographics to help support businesses with fire safety matters.

Days of action across the county have taken place regularly throughout the year to ensure non-domestic premises are compliant with the fire safety order. We will continue to work with the local authority building control and partners to ensure the built environment is safe for the public who may live, work or visit as well as the newly formed building safety regulator (BSR) that will oversee new planning applications and current tall buildings across the county. We also sit on the Police Serious Organised Crime group (SOC Fusion) which involves sharing of risk information and joint visits to disrupt criminal activities.

7.5 Continue to lobby and work with developers and local authorities to increase public safety through the fitting of sprinklers where relevant.

We continue to engage with developers and local authorities to recommend the fitting of sprinklers where legislation does not require it. The plan is to deliver a sprinkler conference in 2024/25. With the introduction of new legislation and the forming of regional multi-disciplinary teams (who work for the BSR) there will be far better consultation when in scope buildings are being planned and designed allowing us to have a greater voice at an early stage of planning.

7.6 Continue to work with partners from the road and water safety partnerships to reduce the number of people killed or injured on our roads and waterways.

We have recruited a dedicated community road safety officer. This role is hosted by us and funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). This partnership approach ensures the police and fire and rescue service are aligned with the community casualty reduction focus set out by the OPCC, through the Vision Zero Road Safety Partnership. Our road and water safety team have delivered several initiatives to the public, successfully delivering 20 'Biker Down' sessions to 200 members of the public and 'Be Water Aware' sessions to approximately 4,500 students in schools throughout Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, specifically to key stage 2 and 3 students.

7.7 Develop and embed systems to effectively evaluate our activity to keep the community safe.

Last year we supported the NFCC in the development of its home fire safety visit (HFSV) and competency framework. Our intention in our new CRMP is to rebrand our existing safe and well visits to HFSV's and update the training all colleagues receive to align with the new offering. This will help us standardise and improve our HFSV delivery in line with the NFCC person centred framework. This will give us greater confidence in the HFSVs being delivered by our colleagues and allow us to effectively evaluate them. We continue to use the NFCC model of change to evaluate

our Fire Break offering and are looking at new ways to improve how vulnerable young people engage with this.

7.8 Bring together expertise from protection, prevention, and community resilience to reduce risk to people, places, and events.

We continue to use expertise from across the Service to help understand and reduce risk to our communities. The community risk awareness group (CRAG), continue to act as a conduit for managing complex risk information and ensures the correct actions are taken when existing risk sites are updated or new ones are identified. We have also established a Battery Energy Storage Group (BESS). This is in recognition of the growing risk of sites within our county that are identified as using energy storage systems. We also continue to play an active role in partnership groups such as community safety partnerships, county safety advisory groups and the new high harm board. These include our role in the local resilience forum where we have been working with partners and communities to build resilience through the use of the new www.cpprepared.org.uk website.

8. Operational Excellence Update

8.1 Continue to align operational resources to our risk and demand, understanding our response model options and the number of resources required to achieve them.

The Operational Risk Review Project is in its final stages and has continued this year to deliver outcomes and recommendations that will help us to better understand our resourcing requirements across the county to ensure we are as productive and efficient as we can be, providing the best possible level of service to the public. We have negotiated and consulted on two new trials across the On-Call duty system. This will see two additional wholtime status fire appliances on a Saturday and Sunday as well as giving some flexibility and better remuneration back into the On-Call duty system. We have also improved our 4x4 response by purchasing two new vehicles as well as enhancing our specialist skill sets across the county to help mitigate the need for our city fire appliances from having to attend calls in rural areas, leaving them available to cover the risks in the city more often.

8.2 Continue to develop the use of our On-Call crews to improve our operational service to the public.

We have consulted on a new way of working across weekends. This will see two On-Call fire engines on a Saturday and Sunday become wholtime status across those days from 0800 to 1800 hours and provide flexible fire cover across the county whilst also delivering prevention and protection activities. Crews of three has continued to provide approximately 1,100 additional hours of cover per month and seen an increase in mobilisations for most On-Call stations. We have also seen a reduction in our attendance times to rural incidents over the last reporting period. We will continue to strive to ensure we have appliances that are mobilised with crews of four or more but where we can't, crews of three will be utilised.

8.3 Continue to explore and implement improvements to support the working experience for our On-Call employees.

The On-Call contract variation trial which has been negotiated over the last few months will offer a more flexible approach for On-Call fire fighters when providing the organisation with availability. This will also include a trial of pro rata annual leave to come in line with availability everyone else provides. At present, regardless of the

hours of cover an individual provides, each person receives the same amount of leave. This will be trialled at four to six stations initially and if successful will roll out across the On-Call for a full in-depth trial. We have continued to offer additional training sessions and exercises at our new training facility to allow On-Call colleagues an opportunity for better realistic training scenarios.

8.4 Review the structure and resourcing in our Combined Fire Control to ensure the continual provision of a high quality, sustainable control function.

We continue to work hard developing our new mobilising system which will improve our resilience and efficiency in fire control. A high level of service delivery from our fire control continues. This was best demonstrated in our response to Storm Babet in October 2023. The storm front, which landed mainly in Suffolk and saw them declare a major incident, had a significant impact on our control room. During a 24-hour period approximately 1,500 calls came into the control room with 640 incidents being created. This call volume eclipsed anything we had previously experienced and demonstrated the resilience and professionalism of our control colleagues. In June 2023, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service served notice on our highly successful 12-year combined fire control collaboration. We are currently focusing our efforts on 'going live' with our new mobilising system before we start to work on what implications the collaboration ending will have on our control room and the service it provides.

8.5 Continue our ongoing work to ensure our emergency vehicles and equipment meet our identified risks.

We have completed and updated our strategy to include sustainability within our identification and procurement of vehicles and equipment alongside maximising lifespans to support financial efficiencies. Linking into our risk work and operational learning to enhance our response, seven new fire engines with the latest technology and specialist rescue equipment have been brought into the Service across our fleet with three more to enter service in July 2024. We have procured and are developing with our manufacturer a concept fire engine to meet the needs of our future vehicles to support firefighter contamination reductions and aligned to our sustainability strategy.

8.6 Continue to align service procedures with national operational guidance to improve firefighter safety and our ability to work with other fire and rescue services.

We continue to work through our plan to fully adopt and align to the National Operational Guidance (NOG). This sees us working collaboratively with all services within the eastern region to share both resources and peer review the information being provided to ensure, where appropriate, standardisation in response and share learning.

8.7 Continue to develop our central training facility to support the delivery of risk critical operational training.

In January 2023, we successfully moved from our training facility in Hartford Road to our new facility in Percy Road, Huntingdon where all centralised training is now delivered from. This has seen risk critical training, which has previously required the use of external venues and travel, now being undertaken on one site. We can maximise time and content of training due to the quality of the new facility.

8.8 Review current arrangements for operational training to ensure they meet the needs of operational staff.

We continue to proactively review the current arrangements for operational training. The new shift system we have implemented for our training instructor team ensures a seven day and evening provision to meet the needs of our wholetime and On-Call firefighters. This also provides on watch training delivery for key specialist skills to be delivered by training centre colleagues to our wholetime watches whilst they are on duty. We have introduced two posts for an initial period of two years to support additional training delivery for our On-Call colleagues and provide oversight and support of our new wholetime firefighters from recruitment to the end of their probationary period.

We have delivered a flexible bridging course programme to best recognise the skills and attributes of our On-Call firefighters who have moved into the wholetime system through our recruitment programme. We have also created and delivered our first internal wholetime firefighter training course with the second underway currently.

8.9 Develop further our assurance across all operational areas to ensure a high level of performance and support the continued development of our staff.

We have put in place a programme to provide external verification and learning of our operational skills. This supports the ongoing assurance of our operational training and development of our staff. We work within a newly established regional operational assurance group to benchmark against others in the sector. A key area of this is incident command where through external verification we can ensure robust assurance of our commanders. We continue to use our operational assurance programme at incidents to collect and share operational learning information nationally and internally. We have launched a project to review and deliver an improved training and competence recording system which will improve the management and oversight.

9. Value for Money Delivery Update

9.1 Introduce the replacement national emergency service communication system.

The Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme is run by the Home Office. This programme has seen several delays. We endeavour to continue to respond to requests for information or actions within the required timescales. We have stood down our resources supporting this project until further notice due to the current project challenges.

9.2 Deliver new emergency mobilising technologies into operational service as well as review existing technologies to deliver enhancements to these.

The project is making positive progress and working towards an end of summer 2024 'go live'. Training is underway for all control colleagues. Final user acceptance testing is progressing positively, and preparations are underway to transition to the new system. We have also taken over key activities on behalf of our partner fire and rescue service, which has impacted our capacity on this and to deliver other works, however the organisational priority remains to progress this project to 'go live'.

9.3 Deliver efficiencies, through the Service Transformation and Efficiency Programme (STEP), by the automation and improvement of business processes, reducing manual intervention and freeing up resources from administrative tasks to focus on value adding activities.

The On-Call Payment Process continues to work well. The digital transformation team (previously known as STEP) monitors the interface during each cut-off period and meets with the payroll team regularly to take feedback and scope suggestions for further improvements.

The first release of our On-Call recruitment process went 'live' in June 2024; this allows interested parties to create an online account and complete an electronic application form to become an On-Call firefighter. The content of the application is shared with the recruitment team electronically, reducing manual interactions and physical paperwork. This is the first phase of a much bigger process that will see the automation and movement of information through every stage of the On-Call recruitment process. We are currently scoping phase two of this process which includes suitability assessment and point of entry testing. Each stage of this process is being designed with a view to re-using as many elements as possible in future development of the recruitment processes in the other areas of the business (wholetime, control and professional support).

We have recently completed collating the requirements for the health and safety accident and near miss reporting and investigation processes. This will replace an existing Microsoft form. The proposed solution will involve development of new database integrations to improve data movement between third party systems, support data reuse and centralise internal and external reporting on the information gathered. We are working with our platform provider to confirm resources and anticipate development of this process will begin in July 2024.

9.4 Ensure technology delivers opportunities for more efficient and effective ways of working, with a particular emphasis on ensuring our software provides value for money while enabling better mobile working and joint working opportunities.

A change in Microsoft software licensing has resulted in cost savings. Additional tools have been implemented to enhance our cyber security and are working effectively. Work is continuing to complete the rollout of the new mobile data terminals (MDTs) to improve the accessibility of information on the fireground. During this MDT rollout, the ability to use the devices off the fire appliance has been incorporated to further improve accessibility.

The move away from the PSTN has continued and we are well placed to be off this legacy technology in time for the original switch off date of December 2025 (this has recently been delayed nationally until January 2027).

9.5 Review spend across departments and contractual arrangements to inform enhancements and improvements to our procurement processes.

With the new finance system implemented, the team can interrogate spend data to assist with procurement planning and enabling contracts, eventually leading to supplier rationalisation. With the new procurement act coming into effect in October 2024 this should support the team with the transparency requirements.

Spend data requests for both the Home Office and NFCC Procurement Hub/Blue Light Commercial Organisation have continued to provide insight and valuable information in relation to our spend data across the Authority and highlighting collaboration opportunities.

Procurement is currently in the six-month transition period for the New Procurement Act going live on 28 October 2024. This means all our processes, forms, templates and the way we procure goods and services will change considerably and by default will enhance processes and reporting as well as provide opportunity to refine our procurement processes to fit the needs of the organisation for each related activity. This transition was expected to happen last year with 'go live' earlier this year therefore some work has already been done to streamline processes, put in more robust contract management and onboarding processes.

Whilst savings opportunities have lessened over recent months the team have still identified some considerable savings and once again these have been recorded and submitted to the Home Office.

The Procurement Exemption Request forms which require greater detail and sign off have been fully implemented and the next stage is to look at integrating this process into the new finance system rather than a word-based document. We now have a fully developed supplier risk and impact tracker; this is regularly reviewed and forms part of agenda discussions with key suppliers.

The draft sustainable procurement strategy will be finalised in accordance with the new Procurement Act for 'go live' in October, however this is now an integral part of our procurement and tendering process along with modern slavery checks, social value requirements and ethical procurement.

The new Procurement Act requires all our strategies and contract standing orders to be redrafted and work commenced on this in the final quarter of 2023/24.

9.6 Ensure that financial awareness and greater accountability for budgets are in place to ensure that spend is efficient and effective.

Continued financial awareness training has been provided throughout 2023/24 and is included in the onboarding of new heads of departments as part of the finance training. A high-level session has also been provided to the middle management group so they can support their managers in managing their financial resources. Financial reporting and discussions continue in the monthly head of groups meetings as well as the quarterly 'Value for Money' meetings as a fixed agenda item.

A new financial accounting system has been implemented during the year. Improved procurement controls have been configured giving the commercial team and managers enhanced controls and visibility of purchase order requisitions and improved visibility of spend using procurement cards, as well as total spend against budget.

Heads of groups are encouraged to identify any in-year savings which can be put into a tactical reserve which was established at the beginning of 2022/23 so that any in-year budget pressures at head of group level can then be covered by this reserve. The requester provides a business case to the group when requesting funding from the reserve and this must be approved by the group and then reviewed by the 'Value for Money' Committee. This enforces discussions around what is the best use of the funds.

Budget and expenditure reports are provided at monthly or bi-monthly meetings where material variances are analysed and discussed in addition to the finance system having up-to-date budget verses actual reporting; this allows the budget holders to have a better understanding of the cost drivers and budget pressures.

A zero-based budgeting approach has been used again to build the 2024/25 budget meaning that budget holders were forced to do a deep dive review of their current spend and expected future spend.

9.7 Ensure that the digital drivers across the Service are understood, scoped and prioritised. Reviewing digital capacity to ensure that they are sufficient to meet the needs.

Cross training between the digital teams has taken place to build resilience and remove single points of failure. A review of capacity within the digital teams has taken place which has resulted in enhanced provision within the development team. Digital capacity does remain an issue, and regular briefings take place with managers to highlight the digital roadmap so that expectations are appropriately managed. The Microsoft365 Project is continuing to improve the understanding and use of the provided tools across the organisation, focusing on four key workstreams.

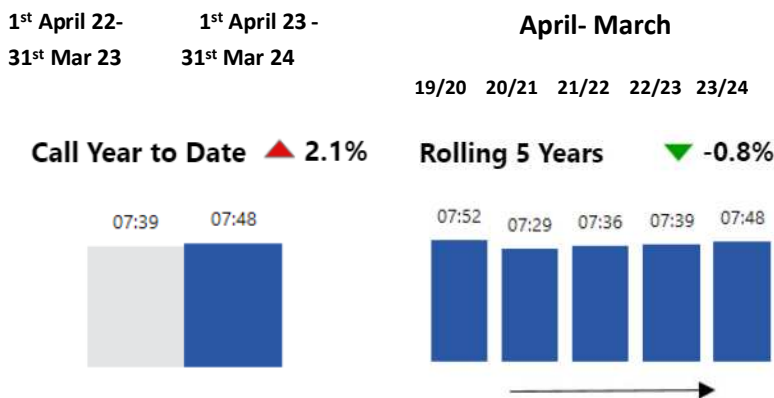
9.8 Ensure that the Service has sustainability strategies in place and the mechanisms by which to measure and evaluate these.

We continue to develop and work towards our sustainability goals with key strands in place to support the strategy. We utilise the review of the key areas by the Carbon Trust with an action plan being developed to drive areas of good practice, and deliver the improvements identified. We are actively working in collaboration with other partners to further explore areas of shared improvement such as the sharing of hydrogenated vegetable oil or HVO fuel. This will support our drive to net zero by 2030.

10. IRMP Performance Review 2023/24 - End of Year Performance

10.1 We will respond to the most serious incidents within an average of 9 minutes in urban areas and 12 minutes in rural areas for the first fire engine in attendance and we will respond to all incidents in our authority area within 18 minutes for the first fire engine in attendance 95% of the time. Most serious are defined as fires, rescues from water and road traffic collisions.

Attendance times – first pump – most serious incidents – urban area within 9 minutes.



The measure remains within the attendance time measure for the most serious incidents. We ended the call year with an average of 07:48 for the first pump to most serious incidents in rural areas.

Attendance times – first pump – most serious incidents – rural area within 12 minutes.

1st April 22- 1st April 23 -
31st Mar 23 31st Mar 24

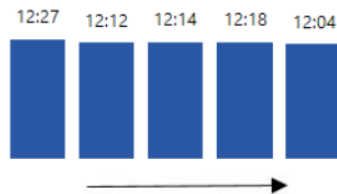
April- March

19/20 20/21 21/22 22/23 23/24

Call Year to Date ▼ -2.0%



Rolling 5 Years ▼ -3.1%



The first pump rural attendance to most serious incidents finished the year slightly above our attendance time of 12 minutes at 12 minutes 4 seconds. However, this is an improvement on previous call years.

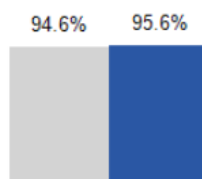
Attendance times – first pump – all incidents within 18 minutes on 95% of occasions

1st April 22- 1st April 23 -
31st Mar 23 31st Mar 24

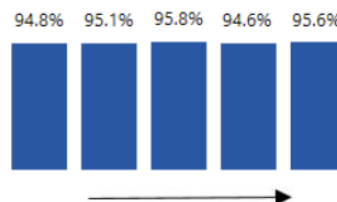
April- March

19/20 20/21 21/22 22/23 23/24

Call Year to Date ▲ 1.0%



Rolling 5 Years ▲ 0.8%



Attendance within 18 minutes to all incidents by the first pump is above our performance measure at 95.6%.

10.2 We will be monitoring the following areas to ensure that we are making effective decisions about the targeting of our resources:

- 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.
- The diversity of job applicants and employees.

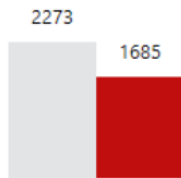
Total Fires

1st April 22- 1st April 23 -
31st Mar 23 31st Mar 24

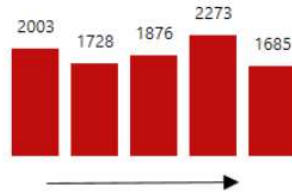
April- March

19/20 20/21 21/22 22/23 23/24

Call Year to Date ▼ -26%



Rolling 5 Years ▼ -16%



There was a significant decrease in the number of fires over this call year compared to the previous year. One factor for the decrease, in particular for outdoor fires which make up a large proportion of secondary fires, has been the persistent wet weather, which has seen a significant decrease compared to the summer period of 2022/23.

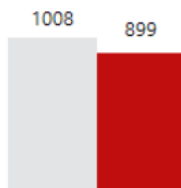
Primary Fires

1st April 22- 1st April 23 -
31st Mar 23 31st Mar 24

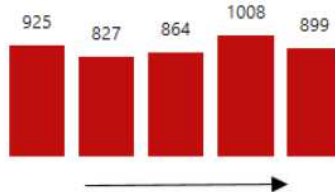
April- March

19/20 20/21 21/22 22/23 23/24

Call Year to Date ▼ -11%



Rolling 5 Years ▼ -3%



There was a decrease in the number of primary fires over this call year compared to the previous year. This is due to the spate conditions of 2022/23.

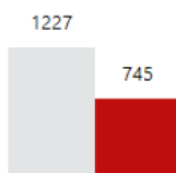
Secondary Fires

1st April 22- 1st April 23 -
31st Mar 23 31st Mar 24

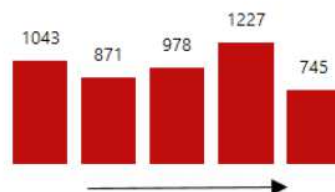
April- March

19/20 20/21 21/22 22/23 23/24

Call Year to Date ▼ -39%



Rolling 5 Years ▼ -29%



There was a significant decrease in the number of secondary fires over this call year compared to the previous year. Outdoor fires which make up a large proportion of secondary fires, has seen a decreased due to the persistent wet weather. There has been a significant decrease in secondary fires compared to the summer period of 2022/23.

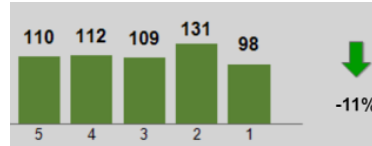
Number of non-domestic fires

1st April 22- 1st April 23 -
31st Mar 23 31st Mar 24



April- March

19/20 20/21 21/22 22/23 23/24



There was an 11% decrease in the number of accidental non-domestic fires over the rolling five years.

The peak in 2022/23 is related to the incidents that we experienced in July and August 2022.

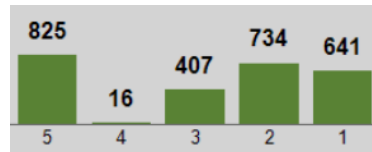
The number of business engagements identified through our risk-based audit programme.

1st April 22- 1st April 23 -
31st Mar 23 31st Mar 24



April- March

19/20 20/21 21/22 22/23 23/24

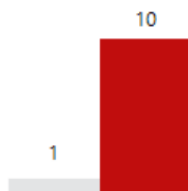


There has been a decrease in the number of business engagements that have been conducted in 2023/24. This is because we are upskilling watch-based personnel to deliver short and full audits and balancing assurance activities with delivery work.

Fire Deaths

1st April 22- 1st April 23 -
31st Mar 23 31st Mar 24

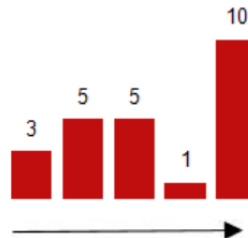
Call Year to Date



April- March

19/20 20/21 21/22 22/23 23/24

Rolling 5 Years



Sadly, we have had 10 fire death this year. These occurred in seven separate incidents; three in Peterborough, two in Cambridge City, one in Fenland and one in Huntingdonshire.

There has been no significant change in profile of people affected over the past five years. People aged 65 years and over are at most risk of dying in a fire if they have a fire.

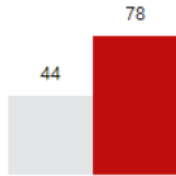
Fire Casualties

1st April 22- 1st April 23 -
31st Mar 23 31st Mar 24

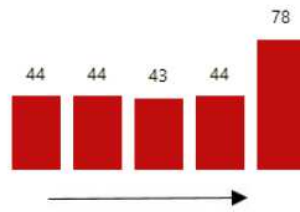
April- March

19/20 20/21 21/22 22/23 23/24

Call Year to Date ▲ 77%



Rolling 5 Years ▲ 77%



There were 78 fire casualties in the last 12 months. The majority of these occurred in Peterborough with the main injury type reported as requiring hospital treatment for minor injury. We have seen the number of people sent to hospital increase over the past five years.

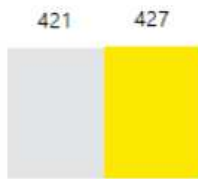
Road traffic collisions attended

1st April 22- 1st April 23 -
31st Mar 23 31st Mar 24

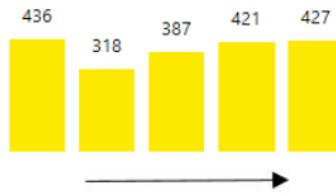
April- March

19/20 20/21 21/22 22/23 23/24

Call Year to Date ▲ 1%



Rolling 5 Years ▼ -2%



There has been an 1% increase in the number of road traffic collisions that we have attended compared to the previous year. The five-year figures show a decrease of 2%. Our five-year numbers will show the impact of COVID where people were not travelling or commuting on our roads.

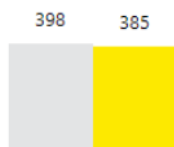
People killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions

1st April 22- 1st April 23 -
31st Mar 23 31st Mar 24

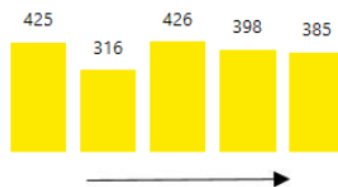
April- March

19/20 20/21 21/22 22/23 23/24

Call Year to Date ▼ -3%



Rolling 5 Years ▼ -9%



The number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions has slightly decreased this year against last year and we have seen a 5% decrease over the rolling five years. 2020/21 is a particularly low year and this was due to the COVID lockdowns.

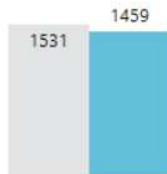
Special services attended

1st April 22- 1st April 23 -
31st Mar 23 31st Mar 24

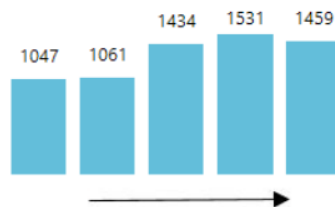
April- March

19/20 20/21 21/22 22/23 23/24

Call Year to Date ▼ -5%

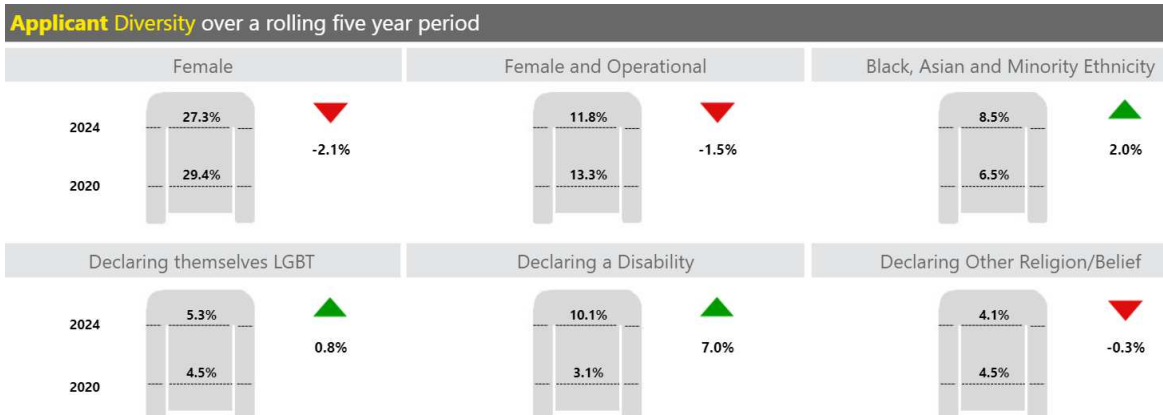


Rolling 5 Years ▲ 39%



We have seen a 39% increase in special services over the past five years. In the last quarter of 2023/24 release of objects from people, road traffic collisions, Stand By – No Action and effecting entry/exit were the largest growth areas in special service incidents; however all increases in these types of incidents are marginal in comparison.

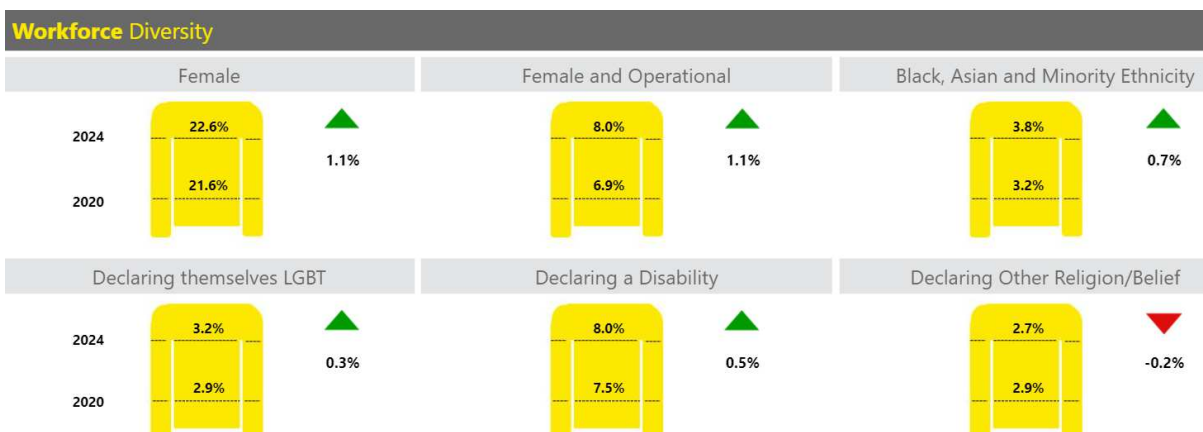
Applicant Diversity



We have seen an increase in the number of LGBT+ applicants in On-Call however this has not translated to appointments; further work will be conducted to understand the reasons behind this and identify any potential barriers. Work is still required to analyse the data of the wholetime recruitment.

We have also seen increases in those declaring a disability and those who identify as Black, Asian or minority ethnic applying for roles with us. We have seen slight decreases in all other areas.

Workforce Diversity



Our workforce diversity has increased in all areas of diversity apart from those declaring other religion or belief. However, this has only seen a minor decrease on 0.2%. The national average for operational women is 8.2%, ours has increased by 1.1% to 8%. The national average for women in fire control is 77%, ours is 78.9%. We have 50% women in professional services compared to the national average of 54%.

To ensure that we are delivering value for money for our communities we will monitor:

Our collaborations and the benefits that these bring to us, our partners and to our communities.

We monitor our collaborations to ensure that they are continuing to deliver benefits to the Service or our communities. We will cease collaborations if we find that they are not delivering the benefits as required.

We have been saddened and disappointed by Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service deciding to terminate the highly successful Combined Fire Control collaboration in this year. This collaboration started in 2010 to deliver the first truly combined Fire Control in the country in September 2011. Since then, we have continued to deliver an efficient and effective service to the communities of both Cambridgeshire and Suffolk.

We actively seek to collaborate and over the past year have entered new collaborations, with Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC). We are excited to work with HDC and seek to explore further opportunities to collaborate with them.

Savings that we achieve through improving our business practices. These may be financial savings and/or more efficient ways of working.

The Service looks to use technology to automate business processes and deliver improvements using technology. Work is delivered through the digital strategy to achieve these. Work has also been conducted to look at spend and identify ways to reduce these as well as engagement with suppliers to jointly look at ways to reduce the impacts of increased costs of goods. The Service continually evaluates activities to ensure that they are delivering the anticipated benefits and that we are making best use of our resources. The Service has also been engaged in reviewing finances and considering Financial Business Continuity Plans. In recent contract renewals several significant savings have been achieved through negotiations and looking to the exchange rates on contract values.

Source Documents

IRMP 2020 to 2024

IRMP Action Plan 2022/23

Location

Hinchingbrooke Cottage, Brampton Road, Huntingdon

Contact Officer

Tamsin Mirfin, Assistant Director Service Transformation

07900 267944 tamsin.mirfin@cambsfire.gov.uk

To: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

From: Deputy Chief Executive Officer - Matthew Warren

Presenting officer(s): Deputy Chief Executive Officer - Matthew Warren
Telephone 01480 444619
matthew.warren@cambsfire.gov.uk

Date: 20 June 2024

Final Revenue and Capital Budget position 2023-24

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Fire Authority with the final 2023/24 revenue and capital budget outturn position.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Authority is asked to:

2.1.1 note the revenue and capital budget outturn position (Appendix 1),

2.1.2 approve the requested budget holder carry forwards (Appendix 2),

2.1.3 note the contents of the Annual Treasury Management Report (Appendix 3).

3. Risk Assessment

3.1 **Economic** - the carry forwards and maintenance of adequate reserves will continue to be critical over the coming years to ensure that the Authority can respond to any future spending reviews whilst minimising the impact on service delivery.

4. Background

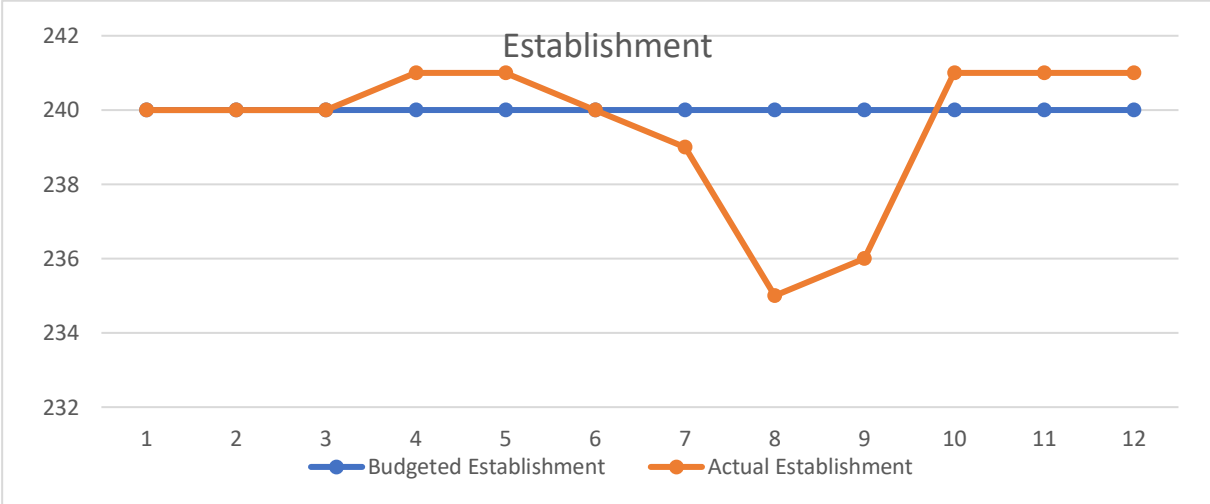
4.1 The budget for 2023/24 was approved at the Fire Authority meeting held in February 2023 (Minute 65 refers). The total budget was set at £34.672m with a total precept of £24.137m.

4.2 At its meeting in June 2023 the Authority approved a revenue carry forward of £1.636m (Minute 77 refers). The carry forward included grant income of £0.641m. The revised revenue budget for the 2023/24 financial year is therefore £36.308m. Further adjustments have been made in respect of additional business rates income and expenditure, making a final revised budget £33.066m.

- 4.3 The financial year 2023/24 was very challenging owing to a number of factors including but not limited to inflation, employee retention and uncertainty about pay awards along with the possibility of industrial action. Throughout the year, the Service has monitored its spend carefully and proactively worked with its budget holders to ensure that the position was well understood.
- 4.4 Overall, the Service has managed to balance the budget for the financial year. The primary reasons that have enabled this position is that the final business rates income figure was higher than anticipated and the level of professional support staff vacancies through the financial year. The final position is a £30k overspend and is included within the draft statement of accounts, that were published on the Authority’s website on 31 May 2024.

5. Final Revenue Outturn Position

- 5.1 The budget for full-time firefighters was overspent at year-end by £125k owing to the agreed pay award being higher than that budgeted. The Service continued to vigorously monitor and manage overtime along with robust modelling of future recruitment to ensure control over this budget whilst maintaining crewing levels at an appropriate level.



- 5.2 The underspend against the budgets for other employee groups offset the overspend on firefighters pay. The underspend was a result of a significant increase in professional support staff turnover and subsequent delays in recruiting replacements into the vacant positions. This has resulted in the Service having to prioritise objectives in year to ensure workloads are appropriately managed.
- 5.3 The premises budget overspent by £23k. The primary reason for this is the increased cost of energy.
- 5.4 Transport costs also overspent last financial year. The reasons for this were fuel inflation and additional servicing costs resulting from an aging fleet. It is hoped that fleet replacement will progress through 2024/25 as the vehicle supply chain stabilises post pandemic.

- 5.5 The supplies and services budget is underspent. However, included within this budget is the ESMCP grant that will be carried forward. In addition to this specific grant, budget holders have requested that most of this underspend is carried forward to fund specific projects in the next 12 months.
- 5.6 The other grant budget has again seen significant changes during the 2023/24 financial year. These changes are primarily around the legacy grants applied throughout the pandemic for business rates. The Service continues to seek clarity around the future of these grants and implications for future funding. However, it is anticipated that the full position will not be known until a new Government completes a full funding review.

6. Results for the Year

- 6.1 The final outturn position on the revenue budget, before application of carry forwards, reflects the spending trend reported to the Policy and Resources Committee throughout the financial year. After applying these, the final position is an overspend of £30k. This will be transferred from the general reserve. A simple summary of the final outturn is shown below; further details, in normal budgetary control format, are set out in Appendix 1.

Budget Area	Under (-) / Over (+) £'000
Controllable expenditure/income	-2,066
Interest receivable	-269
Capital Financing	2,215
Additional Business Rate income	-504
Committed Revenue Expenditure (orders raised but not paid)	373
Delegated Budgets Carried Forward requests	315
Transfer from Earmarked Reserves	-34
Final Under(-)/Over spend from 2023/24	30

- 6.2 The carry forwards requested (detailed breakdown attached at Appendix 2) are required for:

Funding Requirements	£'000
Staffing	120
ICT and digital development	100
Financing	32
Equipment replacement projects	26
Trauma welfare support	20
Service initiatives	10
Local resilience forum	7

7. Balance Sheet and Reserves

7.1 Particular attention is drawn to the position relating to the Authority reserves that provide financial flexibility when dealing with unexpected circumstances. Specific reserves are set aside to provide for known or predicted liabilities.

7.2 A summary of movements in existing reserves is shown in the table below; the useable general reserve is £2,110k.

	Note	Balance at 1 April 2023	In year Movement (-) funding out / funding in	Balance at 31 March 2024
		£000	£000	£000
General Reserve	7.2	2,140	-30	2,110
Property Development Reserve	7.3	-	1,400	1,400
Financial Business Continuity Reserve	7.4	1,319	-459	860
Tactical Reserve	7.5	297	-	297
Wholetime Reserve		400	-	400
Pension Reserve		523	-	523
Total		4,679	911	5,590

7.3 The Property Development Reserve was set aside to finance the costs of current and future refurbishment and development of the Authority estate. This fund was used to build the new Huntingdon Community Fire and Rescue Station and Training Centre. Contributions will be made back into this reserve when the former (Huntingdon) site is sold.

7.4 The Financial Business Continuity Reserve has been increased using additional income from business rates. The fund will be used to fund the additional pressures resulting from agreed pay awards and inflationary pressures moving forward.

7.5 The Tactical Reserve was formerly the Community Safety Reserve. It is proposed that this reserve will be used by Heads of Group to fund specific projects and improvements across the Service. The award of funds will be subject to a business case.

8. Capital Programme

8.1 The final expenditure figures on the Capital Programme are detailed in the table below:

		Original Budget	Order Carry Forwards	Revised Estimate	Total Committed to Date	Actuals to Date
		£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Expenditure						
Vehicles	8.2	900	688	1,588	1,565	832
Land and Buildings	8.3	1,515	955	2,470	1,617	1,485
Equipment	8.4	53	120	173	248	217
IT and Communications	8.5	530	1,001	1,531	1,678	594
		2,998	2,764	5,762	5,108	3,128
Financing						
Capital Receipts		-2,959	-	-2,959	-2,959	-627
Loan/Borrowing		-	-	-	-	-
Application of Reserves		150	-2,764	-2,614	-1,960	-128
Revenue Contribution		-189	-	-189	-189	-2,373
		-2,998	-2,764	-5,762	-5,108	-3,128

- 8.2 This budget covers the purchase of operational and non-operational vehicles. The purchase of new vehicles is in line with the revised Fleet Strategy and Plan. It also considers the new Sustainability Strategy. The revised forecast provided for new hybrid flexi duty vehicles (the Service has seen significant delays in replacing parts of its silver fleet after the existing supplier, withdraw from the market). The procurement of a foam water carrier has been carried out in 2023/24 and funding will be carried forward to 2024/25.
- 8.3 This budget covers the maintenance of existing properties and also includes the refurbishment of the station at Stanground which was partly funded by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) provided by Peterborough City Council in 2023/24.
- 8.4 The equipment expenditure budget relates to a new breathing Apparatus (BA) washing machine and thermal imaging cameras. The carry forward related to expenditure committed in the last financial year for new battery-operated cutting equipment that has now been purchased and rolled out and a new BA washing machine at our station in Huntingdon.
- 8.5 The IT and communications capital budget covers the purchase of major IT systems, hardware and the upgrade of communications equipment. The purchase and implementation of the new ICCS and mobilisation system is included within this budget.
- 8.6 The outstanding capital schemes that were started and not finished will be completed in 2024/25 financial year. The funding that has not yet been applied to these schemes will be drawn down at the appropriate time, after consideration has been given to the current Treasury Management Strategy. A separate report, detailing adjustments, will be presented to the Policy and

Resources Committee later in the financial year, providing an update on the detailed position.

Source Documents

Final accounts working papers

Fire Authority and Committee Reports and Minutes – various 2023/24

Location

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Brampton Road
Huntingdon

Contact Officer

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Deputy Chief Executive Officer
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07786 023436

SUMMARY OF FINAL OUTTURN POSITION

Summary Financial Table

Description	Original	Revised	Actual to	Variance	Variance
	Budget	Budget	Date		
	£'000's	£'000's	£000's	£000's	%
Operational Wholetime	14,233	14,682	14,807	125	1%
Operational On-Call	3,297	3,373	3,152	(221)	-7%
Operational Control	1,860	1,909	1,934	25	1%
Operational Other	871	871	1,131	260	30%
Support Mgt & Admin	7,302	7,495	7,139	(356)	-5%
Support Mechanics	260	265	291	26	10%
Support Caretakers/Handymen	206	211	211	-	0%
Other Employee Costs	1,513	1,829	1,549	(280)	-15%
EMPLOYEE COSTS	29,542	30,635	30,214	(421)	-1%
Property Maintenance	466	505	566	61	12%
Building Insurance	45	45	41	(4)	-9%
Energy Costs	619	619	702	83	13%
Cleaning	17	12	15	3	25%
Rents & Rates	759	759	956	197	26%
Other Property Expenditure	35	28	33	5	18%
PREMISES	1,941	1,968	2,313	345	18%
Equipment Expenditure	290	320	325	5	2%
Vehicle Running Expenses	703	706	658	(48)	-7%
Vehicle Insurance	129	129	117	(12)	-9%
TRANSPORT AND MOVEABLE PLANT	1,122	1,155	1,100	(55)	-5%
Office Expenses	164	226	168	(58)	-26%
IT & Communications Equip.	2,082	2,354	2,244	(110)	-5%
Fire Equipment	59	59	16	(43)	-73%
Insurance	24	24	34	10	42%
Other Supplies & Services	1,556	2,429	1,088	(1,341)	-55%
SUPPLIES AND SERVICES	3,885	5,092	3,550	(1,542)	-30%
Debt Charges	188	188	188	-	0%
External Interest	(70)	(70)	(339)	(269)	384%
Capital Financing	450	450	2,665	2,215	492%
CAPITAL FINANCING	568	568	2,514	1,946	343%
CONTROLLABLE EXPENDITURE	37,058	39,418	39,691	273	1%
Other Income	(1,387)	(1,584)	(1,942)	(358)	23%
Other Government Grants	(1,863)	(1,881)	(1,958)	(77)	4%
Secondments	(137)	(234)	(191)	43	-18%
CONTROLLABLE INCOME	(3,387)	(3,699)	(4,091)	(392)	11%
NET CONTROLLABLE EXPENDITURE	33,671	35,719	35,600	(119)	0%
Grant/Precept Income	(33,671)	(35,671)	(36,175)	(504)	
In-year Reserve Movements	-	(48)	604	652	
CONTRIBUTIONS	(33,671)	(35,719)	(35,571)	148	
CONTRIBUTION FROM GENERAL RESERVE	-	-	(29)	(29)	

No	Area of Responsibility	Group	Requester	Description	Value	Category
1	ACFO	Hydrants	Phil Thacker	To provide new racking and accessories for the new hydrant 4x4 vehicles	£18,000	Revenue
2	ACFO	Operational Support Group	Mark Hodges	Foam replacement provision	£8,000	Revenue
3	ACFO	Operational Support Group	Kev Andrews	Defuser and stress debrief training - trauma welfare support	£20,000	Revenue
4	ACFO	Combined Fire Control	Clare Smith	Combined Fire Control stand down uniform	£2,000	Revenue
5	ACFO	CPLRF	Josh Muir	Ringfenced Cambridgeshire and Peterborough local resilience forum budget	£4,653	Revenue
6	DCEO	Media	Hayley Douglas	Ringfenced local resilience forum funding	£2,278	Revenue
7	DCEO	Recruitment	Christine Doody	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive Officer recruitment	£10,000	Revenue
8	DCEO	Application Support Group	Dave Reeson	CFRMIS - cloud migration	£20,000	Revenue
9	DCEO	Finance	Ursula Bird	Revised minimum revenue position contribution	£32,000	Revenue
10	DCEO	STEP	Tamsin Mirfin	Digital transformation projects	£80,000	Revenue
11	DCEO	Corporate		Performance related pay	£110,000	Revenue
12	DCEO	Occupational Health	John Fagg	SHQ gym set up and gym equipment replenishment	£8,000	Revenue

Annual Treasury Management Review

2023/24

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority
June 2024

Annual Treasury Management Review 2023/24

1. Introduction

This Authority is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2023/24. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, (the Code), and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, (the Prudential Code).

During 2023/24 the minimum reporting requirements were that the full Fire Authority should receive the following reports:

- an annual treasury strategy in advance of the year
- a mid-year, (minimum), treasury update report
- an annual review following the end of the year describing the activity compared to the strategy, (this report)

The regulatory environment places responsibility on members for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. This report is, therefore, important in that respect, as it provides details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlights compliance with the Authority's policies previously approved by members.

2. Treasury Position as at 31 March 2024

At the end of 2023/24 the Authority's treasury (excluding borrowing by Public Finance initiatives (PFI and finance leases) position was as follows:

DEBT PORTFOLIO	Principal 31 March 2023	Rate/ Return	Average Life years	Principal 31 March 2024	Rate/ Return	Average Life years
Total Debt	£5.700m	3.56%	36	£5.700m	3.56%	35
CFR	£9.981m			£9.689m		
Over / (under) Borrowing	(£4. 281)m			(£3. 989)m		
Total Investments	£3.628m	2.31%		£4.444m	4.92%	
Net Investments	(£2.072) m			(£1.256) m		

INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO	Actual 31 March 2023 £000	Actual 31 March 2023 %	Actual 31 March 2024 £000	Actual 31 March 2024 %
Treasury Investments				
Banks	£3,628	100	£4,444	100
Building Societies - rated	£nil		£nil	
TOTAL TREASURY INVESTMENTS	£3,628	100	£4,444	100

Investment Outturn

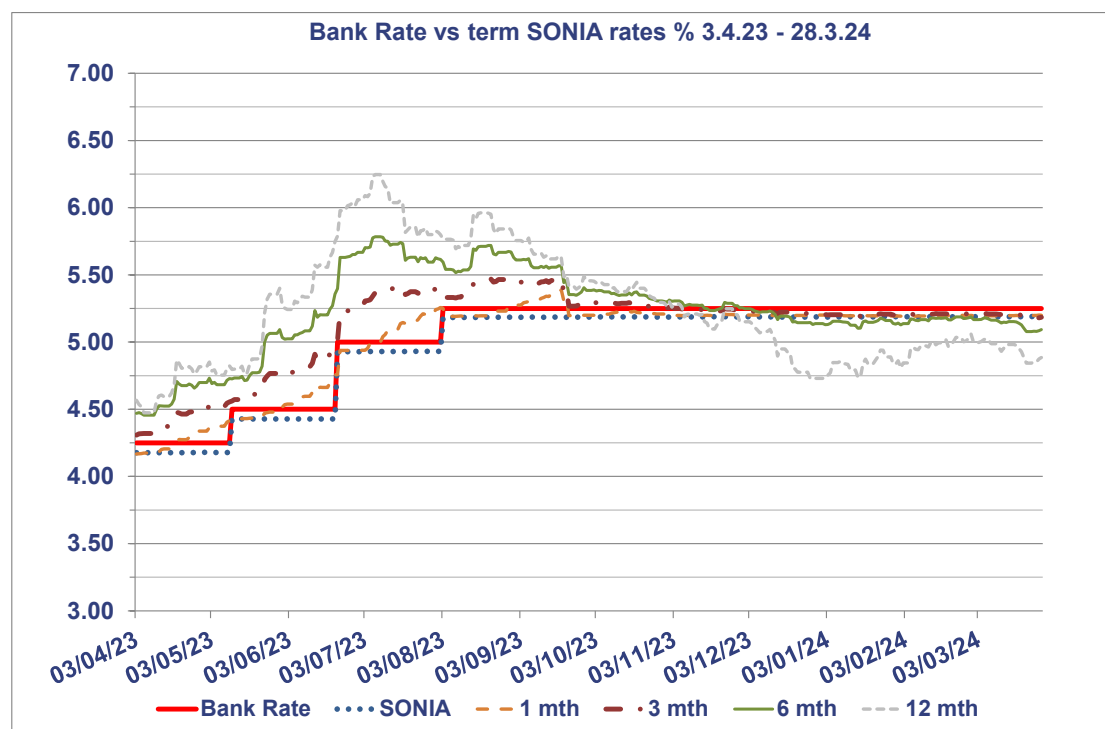
Investment Policy – the Authority's investment policy is governed by MHCLG investment guidance which has been implemented in the investment strategy approved by the Authority in February 2018. This policy sets out the approach for choosing investment counterparties and is based on credit ratings provided by the three main credit rating agencies, supplemented by additional market data such as rating outlooks, credit default swaps and bank share prices etc. The investment activity during the year conformed to the approved strategy and the Authority had no liquidity difficulties.

Resources – the Authority's cash balances comprise revenue and capital resources and cash flow monies. The Authority's core cash resources comprised as follows:

Balance Sheet Resources (£m)	31 March 2023	31 March 2024
Balances	£2,139	£2,110
Earmarked Reserves	£4,293	£4,897
Usable Capital Receipts	-	-
Useable Capital Grants	-	-
TOTAL	£6,432	£7,007

3. The Strategy for 2023/24

3.1 Investment strategy and control of interest rate risk



Investment returns picked up throughout the course of 2023/24 as central banks, including the Bank of England, continued to respond to inflationary pressures that were not transitory, and realised that tighter monetary policy was called for.

Starting April at 4.25%, Bank Rate moved up in stepped increases of either 0.25% or 0.5%, reaching 5.25% by August. By the end of the financial year, no further increases were anticipated. Indeed, the market is pricing in a first cut in Bank Rate in either June or August 2024.

The upward sloping yield curve that prevailed throughout 2023/24 meant that local authorities continued to be faced with the challenge of proactive investment of surplus cash, and this emphasised the need for a detailed working knowledge of cashflow projections so that the appropriate balance between maintaining cash for liquidity purposes, and “laddering” deposits on a rolling basis to lock in the increase in investment rates as duration was extended, became an on-going feature of the investment landscape.

With bond markets selling off, UK equity market valuations struggled to make progress, as did property funds, although there have been some spirited, if temporary, market rallies from time to time – including in November and December 2023. However, the more traditional investment options, such as specified investments (simple to understand, and less than a year in duration), have continued to be at the forefront of most local authority investment strategies, particularly given Money Market Funds have also provided decent returns in close proximity to Bank Rate for liquidity purposes. In the latter part of 2023/24, the local authority to local authority market lacked any meaningful measure of depth, forcing short-term investment rates above 7% in the last week of March.

While the Authority has taken a prudent approach to investing surplus monies, it is also fully appreciative of changes to regulatory requirements for financial institutions in terms of additional

capital and liquidity that came about in the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis of 2008/09. These requirements have provided a far stronger basis for financial institutions, with annual stress tests by regulators evidencing how institutions are now far more able to cope with extreme stressed market and economic conditions.

3.2 Borrowing strategy and control of interest rate risk

During 2023/24, the Authority maintained an under-borrowed position. This meant that the capital borrowing need, (the Capital Financing Requirement), was not fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Authority's reserves, balances and cash flow was used as an interim measure. This strategy was prudent as although near-term investment rates were equal to, and sometimes higher than, long-term borrowing costs, the latter are expected to fall back through 2024 and 2025 as inflation concerns are dampened. The Authority has sought to minimise the taking on of long-term borrowing at elevated levels (>4%) and has focused on a policy of internal and temporary borrowing, supplemented by short-dated borrowing (<5 years) as appropriate however no borrowing was required in 2023/24.

Against this background and the risks within the economic forecast, caution was adopted with the treasury operations. The Finance Department therefore monitored interest rates in financial markets and adopted a pragmatic strategy based upon the following principles to manage interest rate risks:

- if it had been felt that there was a significant risk of a sharp FALL in long and short-term rates, (e.g., due to a marked increase of risks around a relapse into recession or of risks of deflation), then long-term borrowings would have been postponed, and potential rescheduling from fixed rate funding into short term borrowing would have been considered.
- if it had been felt that there was a significant risk of a much sharper RISE in long and short-term rates than initially expected, perhaps arising from the stickiness of inflation in the major developed economies, then the portfolio position would have been re-appraised. Most likely, fixed rate funding would have been drawn whilst interest rates were lower than they were projected to be in the next few years.

Interest rate forecasts initially suggested further gradual rises in short, medium and longer-term fixed borrowing rates during 2023/24. Bank Rate had initially been forecast to peak at 4.5% but it is now expected to have peaked at 5.25%.

By January it had become clear that inflation was moving down significantly from its 40-year double-digit highs, and the Bank of England signalled in March 2024 that the next move in Bank Rate would be down, so long as upcoming inflation and employment data underpinned that view. Currently the CPI measure of inflation stands at 3.4% but is expected to fall materially below 2% over the summer months and to stay there in 2025 and 2026.

Nonetheless, there remains significant risks to that central forecast, mainly in the form of a very tight labour market putting upward pressure on wages and continuing geo-political inflationary risks emanating from the prevailing Middle East crisis and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

4. The Economy and Interest Rates

4.1 UK Economy

Against a backdrop of stubborn inflationary pressures, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and war in the Middle East, UK interest rates have continued to be volatile right across the curve, from Bank Rate through to 50-year gilt yields, for all of 2023/24.

Markets have sought an end to central banks' on-going phase of keeping restrictive monetary policy in place on at least one occasion during 2023/24 but to date only the Swiss National Bank has cut rates and that was at the end of March 2024.

UK, EZ and US 10-year yields have all stayed stubbornly high throughout 2023/24. The table below provides a snapshot of the conundrum facing central banks: inflation is easing, albeit gradually, but labour markets remain very tight by historical comparisons, making it an issue of fine judgment as to when rates can be cut.

	UK	Eurozone	US
Bank Rate	5.25%	4%	5.25%-5.5%
GDP	-0.3%q/q Q4 (-0.2%y/y)	+0.0%q/q Q4 (0.1%y/y)	2.0% Q1 Annualised
Inflation	3.4%y/y (Feb)	2.4%y/y (Mar)	3.2%y/y (Feb)
Unemployment Rate	3.9% (Jan)	6.4% (Feb)	3.9% (Feb)

The Bank of England sprung no surprises in their March meeting, leaving interest rates at 5.25% for the fifth time in a row and, despite no MPC members no longer voting to raise interest rates, it retained its relatively hawkish guidance. The Bank's communications suggest the MPC is gaining confidence that inflation will fall sustainably back to the 2.0% target. However, although the MPC noted that "the restrictive stance of monetary policy is weighing on activity in the real economy, is leading to a looser labour market and is bearing down on inflationary pressures", conversely it noted that key indicators of inflation persistence remain elevated and policy will be "restrictive for sufficiently long" and "restrictive for an extended period".

Of course, the UK economy has started to perform a little better in Q1 2024 but is still recovering from a shallow recession through the second half of 2023. Indeed, Q4 2023 saw negative GDP growth of -0.3% while y/y growth was also negative at -0.2%.

But it was a strange recession. Unemployment is currently sub 4%, against a backdrop of still over 900k of job vacancies, and annual wage inflation is running at above 5%. With gas and electricity price caps falling in April 2024, the CPI measure of inflation - which peaked at 11.1% in October 2022 - is now due to slide below the 2% target rate in April and to remain below that Bank of England benchmark for the next couple of years, according to Capital Economics. The Bank of England still needs some convincing on that score, but upcoming inflation and employment releases will settle that argument shortly. It is noted that core CPI was still a heady 4.5% in February and, ideally, needs to fall further.

Shoppers largely shrugged off the unusually wet weather in February, whilst rising real household incomes should support retail activity throughout 2024. Furthermore, the impact of higher interest rates on household interest payments is getting close to its peak, even

though fixed rate mortgage rates on new loans have shifted up a little since falling close to 4.5% in early 2024.

From a fiscal perspective, the further cuts to national insurance tax (from April) announced in the March Budget will boost real household disposable income by 0.5 - 1.0%. After real household disposable income rose by 1.9% in 2023, Capital Economics forecast it will rise by 1.7% in 2024 and by 2.4% in 2025. These rises in real household disposable income, combined with the earlier fading of the drag from previous rises in interest rates, means GDP growth of 0.5% is envisaged in 2024 and 1.5% in 2025. The Bank of England is less optimistic than that, seeing growth struggling to get near 1% over the next two to three years.

As for equity markets, the FTSE 100 has risen to nearly 8,000 and is now only 1% below the all-time high it reached in February 2023. The modest rise in UK equities in February was driven by strong performances in the cyclical industrials and consumer discretionary sectors, whilst communications and basic materials have fared poorly.

Despite its performance, the FTSE 100 is still lagging behind the S&P 500, which has been at an all-time high for several weeks.

4.2 USA Economy

Despite the markets willing the FOMC to cut rates as soon as June 2024, the continued resilience of the economy, married to sticky inflation, is providing a significant headwind to a change in monetary policy. Markets currently anticipate three rate cuts this calendar year, but two or less would not be out of the question. Currently, policy remains flexible but primarily data driven.

In addition, the Fed will want to shrink its swollen \$16 trillion balance sheet at some point. Just because the \$ is the world's foremost reserve currency (China owns over \$1 trillion) does not mean the US can continually run a budget deficit. The mix of stubborn inflation and significant treasury issuance is keeping treasury yields high. The 10 year stands at 4.4%.

As for inflation, it is currently a little above 3%. The market is not expecting a recession, but whether rates staying high for longer is conducive to a soft landing for the economy is uncertain, hence why the consensus is for rate cuts this year and into 2025...but how many and when?

4.3 Euro-zone Economy

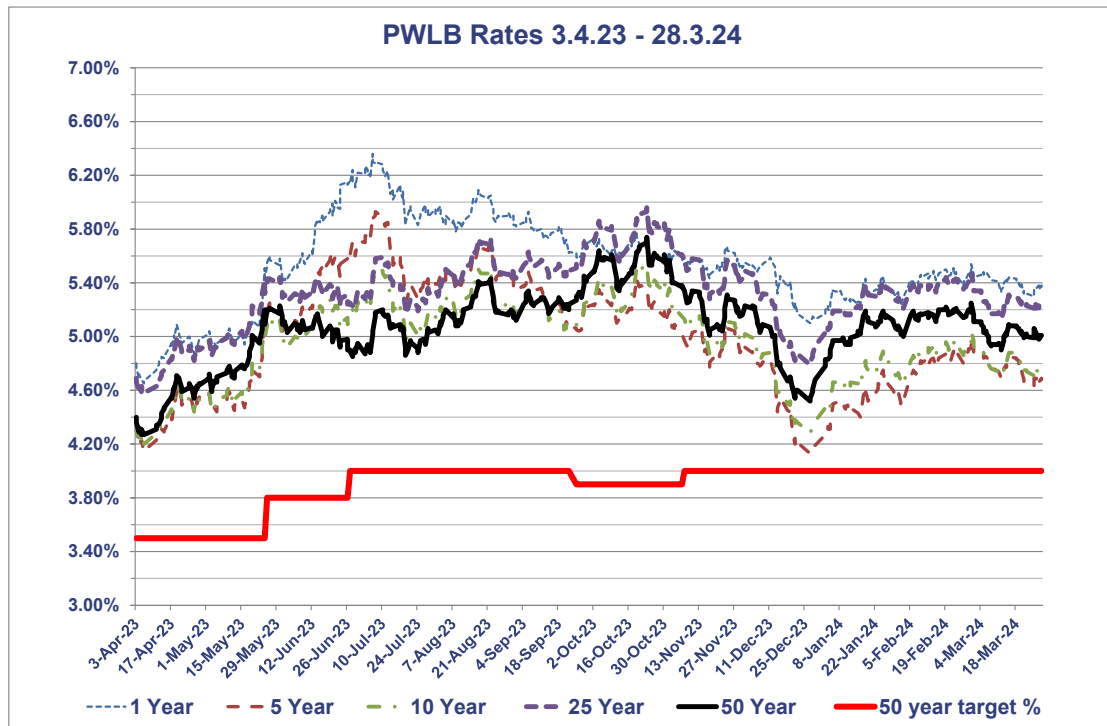
Although the Euro-zone inflation rate has fallen to 2.4%, the ECB will still be mindful that it has further work to do to dampen inflation expectations. However, with growth steadfastly in the slow lane (GDP flatlined in 2023), a June rate cut from the current 4% looks probable.

Appendix 1: Prudential and treasury indicators

-	Budget 2023/24 £m
	£m
Capital Financing Requirement	9.720
Operational Boundary Actual External Debt as at 31 March 2024	12.134
Authorised Limit	13.634
Upper limit for fixed interest rate exposure Net principal fixed rate borrowing / investments	100%
Upper limit for variable interest rate exposure Net principal variable rate borrowing / investments	100%
Upper limit for total principal sums invested for over 364 days	0%
Maturity structure of new fixed rate borrowing during 2023/24:	
	Upper Limit
under 12 months	100%
12 months and with 24 months	100%
24 months and within 5 years	100%
5 years and within 10 years	100%
10 years and above	100%

Appendix 2: Borrowing and Investment Rates

PWLB RATES 2023/24



INVESTMENT RATES & FORECASTS

Link Group Interest Rate View	08.01.24												
	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27
BANK RATE	5.25	5.25	4.75	4.25	3.75	3.25	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
3 month ave earnings	5.30	5.30	4.80	4.30	3.80	3.30	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
6 month ave earnings	5.20	5.10	4.60	4.10	3.70	3.30	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10
12 month ave earnings	5.00	4.90	4.40	3.90	3.60	3.20	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.20	3.20
5 yr PWLB	4.50	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.50	3.50	3.50
10 yr PWLB	4.70	4.50	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70
25 yr PWLB	5.20	5.10	4.90	4.80	4.60	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.20	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10
50 yr PWLB	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.60	4.40	4.20	4.10	4.00	4.00	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.90

To: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

From: Deputy Chief Executive Officer - Matthew Warren

Presenting officer(s): Deputy Chief Executive Officer - Matthew Warren
Telephone 01480 444619
matthew.warren@cambsfire.gov.uk

Date: 20 June 2024

Draft Pay Policy Statement 2024-25

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Fire Authority with a Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25 for approval.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Authority is asked to approve the draft Pay Policy Statement 2024/25, attached at Appendix 1, for publication.

3. Risk Assessment

- 3.1 **Political** – in recent years remuneration has increasingly come under the spotlight. In approving and publishing their policy, the Authority is demonstrating its commitment to transparency whilst being mindful of future changes to ensure flexibility of their approach toward remuneration levels.
- 3.2 **Legislative** – the Authority is now required to produce a Pay Policy Statement in accordance with the Localism Act 2011; any statements must be published on our website.

4. Background

- 4.1 Since financial year 2013/14 the Localism Act 2011 (s38) has required a relevant local authority to produce an annual pay policy statement. This follows Will Hutton's 2011 Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector which has been a key driver for the Government's aim for greater transparency and value for money in terms of senior public sector pay.
- 4.2 Having been reviewed and strengthened in line with recommendations made following a Member-Led Review of Pay Policy in January 2014, the attached policy meets the legal requirements and clearly sets out the Authority's position in terms not only of its remuneration for Principal Officers but also other employees, including the lowest paid.

- 4.3 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 require the Service to publish information relating to any gender pay gaps. Whilst compliant with this requirement, based on recommendations arising from an independent 2019 equal pay audit and subsequent approval from the Authority, the Service implemented a new management band pay structure for professional support service roles in 2020. This action further demonstrates our commitment to best practice, equality and transparency.
- 4.4 The Pay Policy Statement is based on known information relating to the previous financial year; in this statement the pay multiple has decreased from that in the previous statement (1.8.12) to 1.7.73 (Paragraph 1.7 refers).
- 4.5 Members are aware that the Service continue to face several significant financial planning challenges not least of which is nationally negotiated pay awards for its employees. Last month the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services agreed an increase of 4% on Grey Book pay rates and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) with effect from 1 July 2024. It also agreed to make some changes to the On-Call retainer fee structure however these changes will not come into effect until 1 January 2025. In the interim, the usual On-Call rates will apply with the 4% increase.
- 4.6 The NJC agreement also included an improvement in Grey Book maternity provision to 26 weeks at full pay (inclusive of all allowances and CPD) followed by 13 weeks at Statutory Maternity Pay.
- 4.7 At the time of writing the Green Book pay award had not been confirmed. The NJC has made a full and final pay offer in response to the recognised unions (GMB, UNISON and UNITE) claim. The unions are currently balloting their members and the ballot is not due to close until early July 2024.
- 4.8 The Service will incorporate the above (Grey Book) information and any Green Book pay award into next year's statement. In the meantime, it will continue to proactively monitor and report on the national landscape whilst working with key stakeholders to ensure its financial plans are as robust as possible.

Source Documents

Localism Act 2011
NJC Circulars 2024

Location

Hinchingbrooke Cottage, Brampton Road, Huntingdon

Contact

Matthew Warren, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
01480 444619 matthew.warren@cambsfire.gov.uk

PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024/25

Introduction

This statement of Pay Policy is provided in line with Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011 and is authorised by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority.

Purpose

The purpose of this statement is to provide transparency to the Pay Policy adopted by Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Accountability

The Fire Authority is responsible for establishing the Pay Policy for the employees of Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The Fire Authority is directly responsible for reviewing the pay structure for Principal Officers.

The Chief Fire Officer has delegated responsibility to establish appropriate grading and salaries for all other employees of Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Pay Negotiating Bodies

The Authority applies the annual pay settlements negotiated by the:

- National Joint Council for Local Government Services;
- National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services;
- National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services.

The Authority undertakes negotiation with its recognised representative bodies on local agreements which affect the terms and conditions of its employees and which may include agreement of local allowances.

The representative bodies recognised for negotiating purposes are the:

- Fire Brigades Union;
- Fire Officers Association;
- Fire Leaders Association;
- Fire and Rescue Services Association;
- UNISON.

Section One - General Pay Policy

- 1.1 The Authority applies the pay scales adopted by the respective National Joint Councils (NJC) for all its employees up to the level of Principal Officer.
- 1.2 Local pay arrangements for Principal Officers are established through the provisions of the NJC for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services and are reviewed bi-annually by the Fire Authority. Further details are set out in Section 2.
- 1.3 The number and level of roles within the Service are determined by the Fire Authority on advice from the Chief Fire Officer.

- 1.4 Pay Policy reflects the different roles, duties and responsibilities undertaken by service employees. This is reflected in pay differentials between different groups of workers and between workers in the same pay group. The pay bands established are based on nationally applied role maps (operational employees) or grading bands established through a job evaluation process (professional support services employees).
- 1.5 Pay Policy reflects adherence to the principle of “equal pay for work of equal value”. Since April 2018 the Service has complied with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and reported on any gender pay gaps; it will continue to do this annually and is committed to taking relevant action to reduce any such gaps.
- 1.6 In applying its policy, the Authority will work to eliminate any elements which may, directly or indirectly, discriminate unfairly on the grounds of sex, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, age, marital status, having dependants, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, trade union activity, disability or any other factors. Part-time workers receive the same pay and remuneration as full-time workers undertaking the same job role on a pro-rata basis.

Generic Pay Information

1.7 Pay multiples

The idea of publishing the ratio of the pay of an organisation’s top earner to that of its lowest earner has been recommended in order to support the principles of Fair Pay (Will Hutton 2011) and transparency.

The current lowest ratio is 1:7.73; this will be monitored each year within the Statement of Pay Policy.

Section Two - Pay Policy for Principal Officers

2.1 General Principles

2.1.1 National pay awards negotiated by the NJC for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services are applied by the Authority on an annual basis. This represents a cost-of-living increase.

2.1.2 The Performance Review Committee undertakes an annual review of performance, in accordance with the performance system in place for Principal Officers (Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Officer). Members of this Committee agree a series of objectives at the start of the financial year; these objectives are formally assessed by the Committee at the end of the financial year.

2.1.3 Performance related pay for Area Commanders was paid in 2023/24 at a rate of 4% of their basic pay plus flexi and Group Commanders were paid 3% of their basic pay plus flexi, weekend resilience and positive hours.

2.2 Establishing the Pay of the Chief Fire Officer

2.2.1 The base salary for the Chief Fire Officer role at Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service is currently set at £172,826 per annum. This is established through a local pay review, details of which are set out below.

2.2.2 Additionally a car is provided for operational and business use and where applicable, pension contributions are paid at the appropriate rates as detailed in Paragraph 3.7.1.

2.3 Local Pay Review

2.3.1 In 2008 the Authority, through its Performance Review Committee, approved a methodology for the review of Principal Officer pay based upon a comparator for the role of Chief Fire Officer. The review compared the pay levels of fire and rescue authorities and established a benchmark salary. This was updated in 2016 when the current Chief Fire Officer was appointed.

2.4 Other Principal Officer Pay

2.4.1 The Authority has established a policy that Principal Officer roles below that of Chief Fire Officer are paid as follows:

- Deputy Chief Executive - £150,679
- Assistant Chief Fire Officer - £140,263

Salaries of newly appointed Officers will be reviewed and determined in line with the conditions of the local pay review.

2.5 Publication of Principal Officer Pay

2.5.1 Details of Principal Officer Pay are published on the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service internet site and can be found by clicking on the section Home – Transparency – Senior Officer Pay.

2.6 Principal Officer – Internal Pay Comparators

2.6.1 In 2023/24, the lowest paid role within the Service was £22,366 (full time equivalent); the highest paid role within the Service was £172,826. The Service does not have a policy of direct correlation between the highest and lowest paid roles (it does not apply a pay multiple in establishing Principal Officer pay).

2.6.2 The ratio of pay between the highest paid employee of the Service is set out in Paragraph 1.7 above.

2.6.3 The pay, including rota allowances, of the most senior officer below Principal Officer (Area Commander) is 52% (with CPD) of Chief Fire Officer pay.

2.6.4 The pay of the most senior professional support services role below Principal Officer is 40% of Chief Fire Officer pay.

2.6.5 It should be taken into account that the salaries of Principal Officers and other flexible duty officers include an allowance for the associated additional responsibility and hours of work required to provide duty cover on a 24/7, 365 basis.

2.7 Severance Payments

2.7.1 Principal Officers are subject to the same severance arrangements as other service employees; these are set out in more detail in Section 6.

Section Three - Pay Policy for Firefighters

- 3.1 This policy applies to wholetime and On-Call firefighters and combined control staff.
- 3.2 National pay awards negotiated by the NJC for firefighters of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services are applied by the Authority on an annual basis. In March 2024, the Service received notification from the NJC that it had agreed a pay increase of 5% effective from 1 July 2023.
- 3.3 Pay is based upon the role undertaken and the stage of competence of each individual for example, trainee, in development and competent.
- 3.4 A formal assessment of individuals is undertaken at each stage of development before moving to the next salary level. Maintenance of competence is a requirement at all levels of the Service and is reviewed annually.
- 3.5 Progression between roles is subject to a competitive selection process.

3.6 On-Call Duty System

- 3.6.1 Employees employed on the On-Call duty system are paid an annual retaining fee based on their availability and receive subsequent payments based on attendance at incidents and other activity including attendance at drill nights, disturbance fees, turnout fees, attendance and training fees, other authorised duties and compensation for loss of earnings. All payments are made in line with nationally agreed pay scales and rates.

3.7 Other Allowances and Payments

- 3.7.1 Pension contributions. The Service makes an employer contribution to the Firefighters Pension Scheme 2015 of 28.8% of salary. The employee made a contribution in 2023/24 of between 11% and 14.5% of pensionable pay for the scheme. Combined control staff contributions are detailed at Paragraph 4.7.1.
- 3.7.2 Flexible duty payment. Under national conditions of service, a flexible duty payment is made to Station Commanders, Group Commanders and Area Commanders who provide flexible duty cover on a 24/7 rota basis and who are available to attend emergency incidents when required and provide Duty Officer cover. This is paid at an allowance of 20% of base salary.
- 3.7.3 Area Commander rota payment. Under local arrangements, Area Commanders are paid an additional 9% for additional responsibilities carried out under their shared operational duties rota with Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- 3.7.4 Acting up. An allowance is paid on a daily basis where employees temporarily undertake the duties of a higher graded role. This is paid at the rate applicable to the role being undertaken; employees must be qualified to undertake the higher level role.
- 3.7.5 Overtime rates. These are paid for roles below Station Commander at time and a half or double time on public holidays or time may be granted in lieu at the appropriate enhanced rate. We also pay pre-arranged overtime which would be at single time for Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service meetings and voluntary development training courses or overtime rates for mandatory critical need courses.

- 3.7.6 Detachments. We pay overtime for travelling time for standby duties (when operational employees are required to provide cover at other stations) based on a matrix depending on station travelled to.
- 3.7.7 Recall to duty. These are paid at a minimum of three hours at double time rates.
- 3.7.8 Continuous Professional Development Payment (CPD). Under national conditions of service, a CPD payment is approved annually on an individual basis for employees with more than five years of service (since attaining competence in role). It is an annual payment of £691 for wholetime and for On-Call it is pro-rata based on availability (100%/75%/50%/25%). The payment is made by application and authorised at middle or senior management level. To be eligible, an individual must demonstrate evidence of CPD over and beyond that required for competence and have a good attendance, performance and disciplinary record.
- 3.7.9 Additional Responsibility Allowance (ARA). We pay Training Centre employees 5% of basic pay (non pensionable) for providing weekend training courses. We also pay Officers with a HDIM qualification £500 per annum (paid monthly) and firefighters with the 'Safe to Ride' qualification £500 per annum (paid monthly). We pay On-Call Watch Commanders for additional administration duties, equivalent to one hour per week (paid monthly).
- 3.7.10 Local resilience payment. A local payment is made for employees, at Station/Group Commander level, volunteering to provide operational cover for periods when the Service struggles to provide an operational response owing to external factors for example, industrial action. Current payments are £1,158.75 per person per annum.
- 3.7.11 Travel allowance. A local allowance to cover additional travel costs when an operational employee is compulsorily transferred to another work base including substantive and temporary promotion. A payment is made of the difference in mileage undertaken and is paid for four years (compulsory transfer). We also pay our professional support service employees an excess travel payment for the mileage as well as a travelling time allowance.
- 3.7.12 Reimbursement of medical fees. This only applies to employees whose service commenced before November 1994. The reimbursement of fees covers dental, optical and prescription fees and is paid at NHS rates.
- 3.7.13 Holiday Pay. Any entitlement to holiday pay will be paid annually.

Section Four - Pay Policy for Professional Support Services Roles

- 4.1 This policy applies to employees covered by the NJC for Local Government Services and includes all non-operational staff.
- 4.2 National pay awards negotiated by the NJC for Local Government Services are applied by the Authority on an annual basis and represent a cost-of-living increase. For 2023/24 the NJC for Local Government Services agreed an uplift of £1,925 per full time employee be applied; pro-rata for part time employees.
- 4.3 The pay structure for non-management band professional support staff is aligned to a spinal column point system. Spinal column points are configured into groups to provide incremental pay points. The incremental rises occur on 1 April and employees progress incrementally through their respective grade until they reach the maximum point.
- 4.4 In 2020, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service implemented a new management band pay scale for professional support staff in order to replace the previous wide and significantly

overlapping management pay bands with narrower bands which have no overlap and even, incremental steps, with an equal number of steps within each grade. The new management band pay structure resulted from the recommendations of an independent equal pay audit undertaken in 2019. Movement along the existing pay grade is not automatic but depends on assessment against prevailing market rates for similar roles and must be authorised by the Deputy Chief Executive. A 5% pay award was applied by the NJC for Local Government Services from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

- 4.5 Starting salary for non-management band roles may be uplifted along the incremental structure if experience and knowledge warrant this approach. Starting salary on management band scales (which each cover 16 scale points) may exceptionally be uplifted beyond the top of the lower quartile, if experience and market pressures warrant this, at the discretion of the relevant Chief Officer. Where this is the case, justification will be recorded by the recruitment team. Movement between grades is through a competitive selection process.
- 4.6 Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service apply the Hay analytical job evaluation process that systematically ranks each job objectively and fairly. The Hay Group evaluation system is a recognised best practice, non-discriminatory method of ranking jobs against a predetermined scale. The evaluation process assesses all roles and allocates an appropriate grade according to the duties and responsibilities undertaken. A review of the grading of a role is undertaken where permanent, substantial and material changes have increased the level of duties and responsibilities attached to the role. Any substantive changes to grade or pay scale must be authorised by the Deputy Chief Executive.

4.7 Other Allowances and Payments

- 4.7.1 Pension contributions. The Service makes an employer contribution of 18.6% of salary for all members of the Local Government Pension Scheme. The employee will make a contribution of between 5.5% and 12.5% of pensionable pay depending on their salary band.
- 4.7.2 Additional responsibility. An allowance, at the discretion of the Deputy Chief Executive, may be requested and paid if an employee is required to fill a higher level role.
- 4.7.3 Honorarium. A discretionary payment may be made, with the approval the Deputy Chief Executive, for duties undertaken outside of the normal job requirements for an extended period of time.
- 4.7.4 On-Call. Employees required to attend work outside of normal office hours or to be on-call are paid an allowance depending on the nature of the arrangements.
- 4.7.5 Disturbance. An allowance is paid when an employee is required to move work location (see also Paragraph 3.7.11).
- 4.7.6 Holiday Pay. Any entitlement to holiday pay will be paid annually.

Section Five - Policy on Re-engagement and Pension Abatement

- 5.1 This applies where individuals retire from the Service, draw pension benefits and are subsequently re-engaged into the same or other role with Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service. The policies set out below apply to all employees; re-engagement of Principal Officers is subject to Fire Authority consideration and approval.

- 5.2 The Service operates a Re-engagement Policy, which has been authorised by the Authority, for operational employees. This permits re-engagement if there is a tangible benefit for public safety. During any period of re-engagement the employee has full abatement of pension i.e. when combined with salary their pension cannot make the employee earn more than in their previous role. This complies with the provisions of the Firefighters Pension Scheme and is in accordance with the revised National Framework for England.
- 5.3 The Service operates a Flexible Retirement Policy for employees in the Local Government Pension Scheme which allows employees to take their pension benefits and be re-employed on reduced hours or at a lower grade without abatement of pension. This complies with the provisions of the Local Government Pension Scheme.
- 5.4 Where employees who have taken retirement benefits (either as former service employees or employees of another public sector organisation) apply for a professional support services role with Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service as part of a competitive selection process and are successful, abatement of pension could be applied.

Section Six - Severance Payments

- 6.1 In the event of redundancy, the Service applies statutory redundancy payments under the provisions of its Redundancy Policy. This applies to both compulsory and voluntary redundancy situations. All relevant legislative requirements are adhered to.
- 6.2 In 2023/24 there were three settlement agreements, when the employment of an employee was terminated by the Service, or in settlement of a claim. Such agreements are subject to confidentiality clauses.

Early Payment of Pension Benefits

- 6.3 Under the provisions of the Local Government Pension Scheme employees aged over 55 who are made redundant, or who are retired from Service on the grounds of efficiency, are awarded early payment of pension benefits.
- 6.4 In this case, a charge is made against the Fire Authority by the pensions fund; this is referred to as actuarial strain.
- 6.5 In 2023/24 the Service had one agreement for the early payment of pension.

To: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

From: Assistant Director People - Christine Doody
christine.doody@cambsfire.gov.uk

Presented by: Chair Appointments Committee - Councillor Edna Murphy
edna.murphy@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Date: 20 June 2024

Recommendation for appointment of Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive Officer

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Fire Authority approval of the recommendation from the Appointments Committee for the appointment of the next Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive Officer.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Authority is asked to approve the appointment of Matthew Warren as the next Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive Officer as recommended unanimously by the Appointments Committee.

3. Risk Assessment

- 3.1 **Political** – the scheduled general election in July 2024 does not affect this recommendation. The new Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive Officer will defer any induction meetings with Members of Parliament until after the general election has taken place.
- 3.2 **Economic** – the appointment will be made in line with the current Pay Policy and the outgoing Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive Officer salary. No increase in budget is required.
- 3.3 **Social** – the recommendation has received media coverage. An internal communication update was sent to Service colleagues. Internal and external communications will be sent following the decision of the Fire Authority.
- 3.4 **Legal** – our safeguarding safer recruitment responsibilities and Equality Act 2010 responsibilities were built into the appointment process.

4. Equality Impact Assessment

- 4.1 The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive Officer role was advertised nationally on online job sites and through organisations that represent diversity, including the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion, Women in the Fire Service and the Asian Fire Service Association. The job description and person specification were reviewed to mitigate gender bias. The questions asked throughout the selection process were reviewed to ensure bias was removed. The first stage process included a panel of colleagues from across the Service, a senior leadership team interview and a media exercise with an external organisation. An external assessor was present in the final stage interviews and presentations. An equality impact assessment was completed and did not highlight any negative impact(s).

5. Background

- 5.1 In February 2024, the Authority was advised that the current Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive Officer would shortly announce his intention to retire.
- 5.2 An informal paper was circulated in March 2024 that set out the job description, person specification, suggested selection process and the members of the Authority Appointments Committee were confirmed.

6. Selection Process

- 6.1 The role was advertised nationally between 22 March and 15 April 2024, with the agreed job description and person specification.
- 6.2 On 19 April 2024, the Appointments Committee reviewed the CVs and personal statements received against the job description and person specification; two candidates were shortlisted.
- 6.3 The Appointments Committee asked Officers to facilitate an assessment day on 7 May 2024 to gather feedback on the shortlisted candidates. This included completion of a personality profile, interviews with a panel of colleagues from across the Service, the senior leadership team and an external media assessor. All the questions asked of the candidates were related to the job description and person specification. The feedback was collated and shared with the Appointments Committee.
- 6.4 On 22 May 2024, the Appointments Committee assessed the shortlisted candidates through interviews and presentations based on the job description and person specification. The Chief Executive of Cambridgeshire County Council, Stephen Moir, was present as an external assessor. Assistant Director of People, Christine Doody, was also present as an observer.
- 6.5 The Appointments Committee is assured through the thorough and robust selection process that Matthew Warren meets all the essential requirements of the job description and person specification for the role; these are strategic

leadership, significant experience at Director level, multi-agency gold incident command and strategic incident command in fire qualifications, in-depth understanding of the sector, experience delivering innovative change, developing strategic relationships and sound people, financial and resource management.

- 6.6 Therefore the Appointments Committee recommendation is that Matthew Warren is appointed to the role of Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive Officer, on the same salary as the outgoing post holder; this is currently £172,826.00.
- 6.7 The total cost of the selection process, paid from the existing external recruitment budget, was £4,113.00. Costs were significantly reduced by Officers from the Service's People Group facilitating the process instead of it being outsourced to a recruitment agency. Agency fees are typically 15 to 30% of the salary for the role being recruited.

Source documents

None

APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES, OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER BODIES

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE (9 members)

KEVIN REYNOLDS	C
NEIL BOYCE	PF
SIMON BYWATER	C
SEBASTIAN KINDERSLEY	LD
MANDY SMITH	C
EDNA MURPHY	LD
PHILIPPA SLATTER	LD
MOHAMMED JAMIL	L
MIKE BLACK	L

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(8 members not to be appointed to the Policy and Resources Committee)

WAYNE FITZGERALD	C
JOHN GOWING	C
IAN GARDENER	C
SIMONE TAYLOR	IND
ROS HATHORN	LD
DOUG DEW	LD
ANDREW BOND	LD
CATHERINE RAE	L

APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE (7 members)

KEVIN REYNOLDS	C
JOHN GOWING	C
SIMON BYWATER	C
EDNA MURPHY	LD
SEBASTIAN KINDERSLEY	LD
MOHAMMED JAMIL	L
DOUG DEW	LD

PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE (3 Members + 3 Substitutes)

MOHAMMED JAMIL	L	
KEVIN REYNOLDS	C	
EDNA MURPHY	LD	
SIMON BYWATER	C	Substitute
DOUG DEW	LD	Substitute
MIKE BLACK	L	Substitute

APPEALS (PENSIONS) COMMITTEE (3 Members + 3 Substitutes)

MIKE BLACK	L	
SIMON BYWATER	C	
ANDREW BOND	LD	
IAN GARDENER	C	Substitute
SEBASTIAN KINDERSLEY	LD	Substitute
MOHAMMED JAMIL	L	Substitute

FIRE AUTHORITY DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE (3 Members + 3 Substitutes)

WAYNE FITZGERALD	C	
CATHERINE RAE	L	
PHILIPPA SLATTER	LD	
JOHN GOWING	C	Substitute
ANDREW BOND	LD	Substitute
MIKE BLACK	L	Substitute

FIRE AUTHORITY APPEALS COMMITTEE (3 Members + 3 Substitutes)

KEVIN REYNOLDS	C	
MOHAMMED JAMIL	L	
SEBASTIAN KINDERSLEY	LD	
MANDY SMITH	C	Substitute
DOUG DEW	LD	Substitute
CATHERINE RAE	L	Substitute

COMBINED AUTHORITY

Combined Authority	EDNA MURPHY	LD
	(SUBSTITUTE: MOHAMMED JAMIL)	L

MEMBER CHAMPIONS/LEAD MEMBERS

[Not subject to proportionality]

Equality and Inclusion	MANDY SMITH
	MOHAMMED JAMIL

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

EDNA MURPHY	LD
MOHAMMED JAMIL	L
KEVIN REYNOLDS	C

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION FIRE SERVICE COMMISSION

EDNA MURPHY	LD
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Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting

Date: 22 January 2024
Time: 2.00pm - 3.00pm
Place: Fire HQ, Huntingdon
Present: Councillors: S Bywater, M Jamil (Chair), E Murphy, K Reynolds, P Slatter and M Smith
Officers: Tamsin Mirfin, Jon Anderson, Matthew Warren, Chris Strickland, Dawn Cave and Sophie Rankine

60. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Councillor Goodliffe and Councillor Over.

There were no declarations of interest.

61. Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held 31st October 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 31st October 2023 were approved as a correct record.

62. Action Log

The Action Log was noted. All actions were completed or in hand.

63. Draft Fire Authority Budget 2024-25 and Medium-Term Strategy 2024-28

Members received a report for the Fire Authority budget and precept for 2024/25 and medium-term financial strategy for 2024/28. This detailed the strategy that was presented to the Committee in December. Officers remarked that there would be a 2.99% increase in the Council Tax which would result in a balanced budget, but this was predicated on a 3% increase in employee costs, and the pay award could be higher. It would be hard to plan for the next financial year with the withdrawal of Suffolk Fire and Rescue from the Combined Fire Control function.

Individual Members raised the following points in relation to the report:

- Sought clarity on two figures in relation to the loss of Suffolk and income from the Combined Control Centre. Officers clarified that there would be a potential deficit of £1 million in income but that could be brought down to £700k.
- Queried the use of savings and reserves. Officers answered that the reserve levels were healthy and at a sufficient level (£2.5 million). Reserves could be accessed throughout the year if issues were to arise. If for example, the sale of the Huntingdon site went through, that would help bolster reserves. There were no current plans to use reserves for the next financial year.
- Questioned if the Service would be liable to be marked down in future inspections from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) for not acting on their recommendations. It was confirmed that HMICFRS could make observations, but those recommendations were not prescriptive. Officers reassured Committee that they would have to provide rationale for their decisions which meant they would not be marked down.
- It was clarified that capital receipts must go back into Reserves, and could not be used for revenue costs, unless there were exceptional circumstances. There was still uncertainty regarding the date of Suffolk's departure: the proposal was for them to withdraw in December 2024, but the process had not yet started.
- Observed that significant capital projects were underway, and questioned if it was wise to commit to the expenditure when the medium term is unclear, with regard to St Neots. Officers stated that they had applied to Huntingdonshire District Council for £750K Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and a view would be taken when the outcome of that bid was known. There would be careful consideration before any action was taken.
- Queried the budget regarding the Silver Fleet as a significant amount of money was being invested and asked if there would be scrutiny of that investment Officers stated that there was an ongoing review process regarding the Silver Fleet. There had been a change of supplier as Volkswagen removed themselves from the 'Blue Light List' and been replaced by Hyundai. The new supplier had provided a discount which included a service plan. Whilst this expenditure seemed to be large, there had been a three-year backlog. There was a review on non-Officer cars in the fleet. **Action required - Wayne Swales to bring a report to next meeting.**
- Questioned the technical rules regarding reserves, and whether these could be used as a cash flow buffer? If so, was there the potential for unsustainability? Officers reassured that the budget was sustainable and

general reserves were adequate for the next 12 months. The risk around inflation was an unknown but there were adequate reserves to cover the uncertainty. There could be a review in next year's budget if there was a need to use reserves.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Endorse the budget book attached at Appendix 1 including the recommendations detailed on Page 18,
- b) Endorse the revised medium term financial strategy attached at Appendix 2.

64. Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2023/24

Members received a report which provided the Policy and Resources Committee with an update on revenue and capital spending as of 31 December 2023. Officers stated that Appendix 1 was presented in a revised format due to the new financial system. It was evidenced that the Service were in a good financial position with overall underspending, although there were some areas that would catch up before the end of the financial year.

Members were informed that there would a stricter carry forward plan with money that was unspent being reallocated to other projects. However, Members were reassured that money would only be reallocated if it were deemed necessary and there would be sufficient deterrents for budget holders not spending the money for the sake of not losing it in the next budget.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the position on revenue and capital spending.

65. Fire Authority Programme Management- Monitoring Report

Members received a report which provided the Policy and Resources Committee with an update against the projects for 2023/24.

The Integrated Communication and Control System (ICCS) and Mobilising System had been progressing well and had received good feedback from staff, despite a few IT issues. It was hoped that the transition would take place in February, but care had been taken to ensure that there would be a continuation of service for a smooth transition; it would not be forced, and the existing system would not be decommissioned until staff were confident. A Member queried how staff had found training. Officers replied that there were User Acceptance (UA) training and different training modules. Two of the six modules had been completed, with the remaining four to be undertaken in February. There were workshops for control management and day teams to learn to input data and deal with different scenarios. Another Member sought clarification on how much of Cambridgeshire would be covered in the initial

launch, and it was confirmed that all of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough would be live. The existing system was very stable and would be able to perform as a backstop for a period before it was decommissioned.

The Review of Operations update regarding financial system project had gone live and had been moved to phase two and had additional modules.

Microsoft 365 implementation: Officers stated that they wanted to enhance and get the best use out of the software.

TRIM replacement: this related to post traumatic stress support. Members noted why this was being replaced.

PPE and uniform replacement had commenced and was due for completion in 2027/28.

Occupational Health System Replacement: the team had agreed on a system. There would be a quick implementation and it was hoped to go live before summer.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the Programme Status Report, as of December 2023, attached at Appendix 1.

66. Property Portfolio Update

Members received an update on the sale of the former Huntingdon Fire Station site and progress on the sale of the St Ives site.

Officers informed Members on the sale of Huntingdon Fire Station site. The site was split into two lots: the fire station, and the four houses that are adjacent to the station. They had received two offers, one for both sites and one for just the fire station. They were proceeding with the (£1.5 million) offer for the fire station and hoped to sell the houses separately and receive up to £2.5 million in total for the entire site. It was optimistically envisaged that this would be resolved by the end of the financial year.

There was slower progress regarding the St Ives site: the Service was working with the Health Service to sell the land collectively. Further updates would be brought to Committee. One Member questioned if there were plans in place to consult with the local Town Council so that they were aware of the plan to move, rather than lose the fire station entirely. Officers replied that it was their intention to consult with all existing and potential stakeholders at the appropriate time.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the report.

67. Strategic Risk and Opportunity Management Register - Monitoring Report

The Committee considered the updated strategic risk report, as of January 2024, which highlighted those risks that are considered above the risk appetite of the Authority.

The current financial situation remained one of the highest risks, especially given the withdrawal of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service from the Combined Fire Control arrangement.

Cyber-attacks remained a high risk.

Emerging technologies and particularly electric vehicle (EV), hydrogel fuel and battery energy storage systems were also significant risks.

An officer highlighted point 5.5 from the report, general employment risk. There were longer than average timescales to fill vacancies and that had a subsequent impact on Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) delivery.

Individual Members raised the following points in relation to the report:

- Queried if there were arrangements with other authorities to help with emergency staff transfers if necessary. The officer clarified that they could reach out if needed and gave examples such as the Digital Integration Specialist.
- Raised the need for emergency planning in relation to extreme weather, especially flooding. Officers responded that there was no statutory responsibility on fire services to deal with flooding. However, the Service was a key member of the Local Resilience Forum which was legally required to plan for emergencies.
- Officers commented that three risks in the register linked to the improvement of On-Call services. The Service were inviting conversations with local communities and Parish Councils to discuss these issues and to help people understand how services were delivered. The Service wanted to invite and involve people to get feedback.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the strategic risk report.

68. Committee Work Programme

Members noted the forward Work Programme.

Chair

Fire Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes

Date: 22 April 2024
Time: 2.00 p.m. – 3.33 p.m.
Venue: Fire and Rescue Services Headquarters
Present: Councillors Gowing, Hathorn, Kindersley (Chair), Rae, Taylor, Warren

76. Verbal Update from Ernst & Young

An auditor from Ernst & Young (EY) presented a verbal update to the Committee. Members were informed that EY's focus was on concluding historic audits to then have the ability to focus on the 2023/24 audit. There had been a 'back stop' date released that all auditors had to publish an audit opinion on all audits up to and including 2022/23, by 30th September 2024. This would allow for a reset for 2023/24 audits to be completed by 31st May 2025. EY aimed to have 2023/24 audits completed by 30th November 2024. This subsequently meant that auditors would have to provide a 'disclaimed audit opinion'. Over the next three-to-four-year period, auditors would have to build up assurances over opening audits. 2023/24, 2024/25 and possibly 2025/26 would have a modified audit until full assurance could be given. This applied to approximately 90% of Local Government audits.

Individual Members raised the following points in relation to the update:

- queried the political consequences. The auditor and Officers informed Members that to have a completed audit they required a draft set of accounts prepared and the ability to audit them. There had been a combination of issues such as a shortage of auditors, financial reporting issues and specific council issues that have made this difficult. It was important that all authorities have robust close down arrangements, draft accounts and to be ready to be audited. Additionally, audit fees had increased.
- sought clarity that full audit procedures would be completed, but full audit assurance could not be given.

The Committee noted the verbal update.

77. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Councillor Bond and Councillor Fitzgerald. There were no declarations of interest.

78. Minutes – 4th October 2023 and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Action Log was noted.

79. Integrated Risk Management Plan Performance Measures

The Committee considered a report on the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) performance measures between 1st October and 31st December 2023.

Attention was drawn to Appendix 1 which detailed attendance times for urban and rural areas and first pumps at all incidents, total fires, primary and secondary fires, fire deaths and casualties, road traffic collisions, people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions, special service incidents attended, applicant and workforce diversity, the number of non-domestic fires, and the number of business engagements identified through the risk based audit programme.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer also informed Members of two collaborations. The first was with Huntingdonshire District Council around the use of HVO fuel. The second collaboration was to provide Community Welfare Officers to support East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) with both fall and community safety work. The two Officer posts were funded by EEAST but operated by Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS). This was a one-year trial collaboration.

As per a request from the previous meeting, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer updated Members on crews of three. The crews of three offered an average of 1160 hours per month and they attended around 20 incidents per month this quarter; 50% of these incidents saw the crew of three appliance being first in attendance. A report would be brought to the July meeting.

Individual Members raised the following points in relation to the report:

- noted that the most recent deaths were not linked to lithium batteries.
- sought clarification regarding the 'special service incidents attended' section.
- welcomed the HVO collaboration but asked if *Huntingdon* District Council could be changed to *Huntingdonshire* District Council.
- queried the collaboration work with EEAST. Officers informed Members that CWO's would attend those who had fallen in their home to assist the ambulance service. They would also provide community safety advice whilst in the home where appropriate. Members were informed that the collaboration had been ongoing since the start of the year and an update report would be brought back to Committee - **action required**.
- questioned if the data regarding religion reflected a larger trend within society.

It was resolved unanimously to:

note the contents of the performance report in Appendix 1 which covers Quarter 3 of the year 2023/24, 1 October to 31 December 2023. The Committee is also asked to make comment as they deem appropriate.

80. Fire Authority Programme Management Monitoring Report

Members received the Fire Authority Programme Management Monitoring Report. The report provided a timely update on the performance against current Service projects as set out in Appendix 1.

The Integrated Communication and Control System (ICCS) and Mobilising System was scheduled to go live on 11th June, however that would be reviewed by 10th May to ensure it would only go live once ready. Systel supported the aim to go live in June. There were remaining (data) issues with Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). Training was underway and the first four stages were completed. Stage 5 was due to begin next week and stage 6 two weeks thereafter. Members learnt that the control room would be moved to St Ives and would use the current system, while installation of the new system and equipment was carried out at the Huntingdon site. The Officer emphasised that they would not change the system if it was not deemed ready and safe.

A Member queried what would happen to SFRS. The Officer informed Members that the data needed to be available this week and if they did not receive it, they would not be able to mobilise pumps safely. SFRS were due to leave the collaboration on 31st December 2024. CFRS had contacted the Home Office regarding the change of finances for when SFRS has left and were awaiting a meeting.

The Review of Operations was still ongoing with a pilot due to run this weekend to provide resilience. The estimated go live date was the 1st June 2024. ICU were now out of the contract and there was an interim solution. Members sought clarification on the public consultation regarding the closure of three stations. Officers responded that they had corresponded with Parish Councils in the affected areas and there was a lack of understanding regarding the On-Call service. To help increase awareness they were hosting open days at the station(s). The Officers highlighted the struggle to recruit especially in areas such as Manea and St Ives.

The Financial System Software Replacement Project had implemented all the modules and phases.

Trauma Welfare Support (TRiM Replacement) was working well and Officers emphasised that they were passionate about offering support to those that need it.

It was resolved unanimously to:

note the Programme Status Report, as of February 2024, attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

81. Strikes Minimum Service Levels Act 2023

The Committee received a report regarding the Service's approach to implement the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023 during times of industrial action, whilst safeguarding the positive culture. Minimal service levels (MSLs) aimed to limit the impact of strike action on the Service. The presenting Officer emphasised the importance of maintaining good relationships with the unions. The Act set the expectation that all emergency calls must be answered and assessed and that a minimum of 73% of vehicles and appliances normally available would remain available. Where possible, the Service would like to operate how they had done in previous strikes. Work notices would be the last resort. Members were informed that if people ignore work notices, they lose their protection in strike law. Members learnt that the Act applied to all emergency services.

It was resolved unanimously to:

note the contents of this report.

82. Internal Audit Strategy 2024/25

The Committee received a report regarding the Internal Audit Strategy 2024/25. Attention was drawn to section 2 of the report which included succession planning and talent management, asset and fleet management, control system, IT assets, medium term financial planning, key financial controls, follow up and management. The presenting Officer highlighted that culture would be carried forward from 2023/24 to avoid duplication as a survey was currently being conducted.

Individual Members raised the following points in relation to the report:

- clarified that IT assets were misplaced due to staff leaving and an asset register would help complete an accurate list of purchased IT assets.
- learnt that the data from the culture survey would help aid the internal audit report.
- sought clarity on how areas of audit were chosen.

It was resolved unanimously to:

note the report.

83. Internal Audit Progress Report April 2023/24

The Committee received a report which provided a summary update on the progress of the internal audit. Attention was drawn to the three drafts issued and two which have been finalised. Procurement was still in progress but was due to have a completed draft by the end of the week. The report would return to Committee once all work had been finalised.

It was resolved unanimously to:

note the report.

84. CPFA Scrutiny Function and Areas for Future Scrutiny Consideration

The Committee received a report which provided an update on the current scrutiny function within the Authority and suggested areas for future scrutiny.

Members reviewed the potential scrutiny areas and rated them high and low priority. Members set a relaxed time frame however hoped to hear an update within the next four months.

Those classed as high priority were assigned Members:

Employee Recruitment and Retention was deemed high priority, especially the On-Call service and Councillor Hathorn and Councillor Gowing were appointed.

Impacts and consideration due to population growth was classed as high priority and Councillor Kindersley and Councillor Taylor were appointed.

TRaCS and the implementation of the new post traumatic incident support process was high priority and Councillor Rae was assigned.

Service improvement project (operational response review) was deemed high priority however due to elections in Peterborough, the Committee decided to wait to appoint to this piece of work.

Other areas of scrutiny were:

Code of Conduct was discussed in the Fire Authority meeting in February 2022 and in subsequent Member seminars. It was working well so was deemed a low priority area.

Pay Policy/Employee Pay was deemed low priority.

Service Culture was deemed important but would benefit from the results of the survey (Minute 82 above refers) so would be brought back to Committee.

Fire Authority structure to include membership size and Constitution was deemed low priority but an area for reflection and potential as a future piece of work.

New mobilising system in Combined Fire Control seemed low priority as it would be premature to scrutinise now.

Performance and talent management would be brought back to Committee at the end of the financial year.

Productivity and efficiency were classed as low priority.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- i. agree the areas to be subjected to scrutiny,
- ii. prioritise the agreed areas to be scrutinised,
- iii. allocate every Member of the Committee to at least one agreed area to lead and drive the review,
- iv. determine a timeframe for each agreed area to start.

85. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

The Committee resolved unanimously to note its work programme.

Chair