

Agenda Item: 10

TO: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

FROM: Assistant Chief Fire Officer - Stuart Smith

PRESENTING OFFICER(S): Assistant Chief Fire Officer - Stuart Smith

Telephone: 07900 267 853

email: stuart.smith@cambsfire.gov.uk

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VISION 30 PROGRESS UPDATE

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Fire Authority on the Service's work to date and planned future work to ensure the Vision 30 project objectives are achieved, and that Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) has a flexible and resilient response to the growing risks across the county.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Authority is asked to;
- 2.1.1 note the contents of the report and make comment as they deem appropriate,
 - 2.1.2 agree the plan and timeframes for future works and associated reporting to the Authority outlined in Paragraph 7.

3. Risk Assessment

- 3.1 **Political** – unless the Service uses its operational resources efficiently and effectively, there is a high likelihood of a failure to meet the response standards set within our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024/29. This will lead to negative scrutiny from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and local politicians.
- 3.1.1 Re-distribution of resources will require engagement with local councillors and Members of Parliament. There is a risk that representative bodies and local communities may challenge any operational change. The Service must engage with all stakeholders to ensure the risks and benefits of any proposed course of action are understood.
- 3.2 **Economic** – the county's population growth continues, and to mitigate the risk of increased population, the right resources in the right location at the right time is vital. Recruitment and retention in the On-Call workforce continues to

challenge the Service and is also recognised as a national concern. If our operational availability maintains or worsens, the Service may not be able to meet its CRMP aims and objectives.

- 3.3 **Social** – changes to crewing arrangements and re-distribution of resources will impact our people and may create additional concern and tension within the operational workforce.
- 3.4 **Legal** – any proposals for change will need to be consulted on with affected colleagues to ensure the Service correctly follows employment law. The Service must ensure it is using its resources to provide the best operational response under its statutory duties within the Civil Contingencies Act 2005, the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and to meet the CRMP objectives.

4. Equality Impact Assessments

- 4.1 These will be completed as the process moves forward to understand the impact to all involved in the change.

5. Background

- 5.1 In November 2024, the Authority was briefed on the opportunities and risks the organisation is facing in the coming years when trying to manage the increased risk across the county due to the rapid growth plans that are being shared.
- 5.2 The Vision 30 project scope was developed and created to allow CFRS to effectively plan to manage future risks. The project has a number of workstreams and will enable us to ensure we have the correct resources in the most appropriate locations to deliver the most effective service for the public of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

6. Work to Date

- 6.1 Since November 2024 we have started to undertake a range of work known as Vision 30. The project, led by Area Commander Simon Thompson, has reviewed all the current processes and procedures relating to the current shift systems to make sure they are operating effectively and efficiently.
- 6.2 The project has reviewed its operational skillsets to properly understand the additional skills needed to appropriately provide the most effective operational response to incidents. As a result, crews have been upskilled in animal and water rescue. We have also enhanced the range of equipment on certain appliances to help deal with a broader range of operational incidents, including potential spate conditions. A number of our operational flexible duty response officers have also been trained in a broader range of skills to enable them to assist at specialist incident types.
- 6.3 The project has a vast scope and to aid in its delivery, a Group Commander has been seconded into the team to help deal with the significant workload. In

the short-term this role will focus on negotiating and implementing a mixed crewing policy that will allow On-Call firefighters to crew appliances with wholetime firefighters; something that does not currently happen within our wholetime shift system. In addition to affording more flexibility in how we crew our appliances, mixed crewing will also offer an alternative resilience model by ensuring our degradation procedures are robust. We will have processes in place to scale up the number of appliances we have available during times of need or reduce attendance to certain incident types during extremely busy operational periods. The role will also understand potential risks (growth in domestic and non-domestic premises, new infrastructure and transport networks and respond by locating resources at locations best served to those risks. This resource is also supporting our digital technology team to build a bespoke risk modelling tool that will help us determine the best place to locate our resources to deal with risk and demand.

- 6.4 The modelling tool is expected to be tested later this year with Officers being able to use its full capabilities early next year. This tool will allow us to programme where growth is being planned against resource availability, providing modelling solutions as to where we need resources to mitigate the risk and demand of incidents.
- 6.5 The Service is currently out to advert for a Growth and Planning Officer role to help support the gathering of information about growth across the county. This role will also be our presence at the discussions around funding through Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding. The Service currently has a relationship with an external partner who successfully supported a bid for funding from Huntingdonshire District Council of £700k for the upgrade to St Neots Community Fire and Rescue Station.
- 6.6 In addition, senior Officers are also engaged with growth partners on the borders of our county such as East-West rail link and station/terminal at Tempsford, as well as the new Universal Studio's build in Bedfordshire to best understand any potential impacts these may have on our service delivery model.

7. Work Planned and Next Steps

- 7.1 Where appropriate, consultation with representative bodies will take place to progress policies and procedures to improve resilience of our frontline services to the public.
- 7.2 The internal modelling tool will be used to create future modelling scenarios to ensure the Service is best placed to have an effective response to the public as growth in the county continues. The options will be reviewed as part of the Vision 30 project before being brought to Members for awareness.
- 7.3 A full review of operational rotas including Principal Officers through to Station Commanders will be undertaken.

- 7.4 It is hoped that we will be able to secure further funding year on year. In 2024/25 we received additional funding that allowed us to grow our wholetime firefighter establishment by eight. It is hoped that this same funding offer is available for the coming years ensuring we can increase resources across the Service (where needed) thus enabling us to respond to the rapidly growing risk across the county.
- 7.5 It is also hoped that we will be in a position to bring our new operational response planning scenarios to Members in December 2025 for ratification. This will then drive how the Service utilises its resources moving forward.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

| Source Documents | Location | Contact Officer |
|---|---|---|
| Vision 30 project documentation Fire Authority Reports and Minutes – various | Hinchingsbrooke Cottage Brampton Rad Huntingdon | Stuart Smith Assistant Chief Fire Officer 07900 267 853 stuart.smith@cambsfire.gov.uk |