

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority: Minutes

Date: 25 June 2025

Time: 2.00pm - 3.40pm

Venue: New Shire Hall, Alconbury Weald

Present: Cambridgeshire County Council:

Councillors: M Black, S Bywater, Y Deter, D Divine, I Gardener, Y Malinowski, C Morris, E Murphy, L Navarro, C Poulton, P Rees
D Watt, C Whelan

Peterborough City Council:

Councillors: A Bond, N Boyce, W Fitzgerald and M Jamil

Officers present: S Ismail, T Mirfin, T Oviatt-Ham, S Smith, W Swales and M Warren.

1. Election of the Chair

Councillor Chris Morris was elected as Chair of the Fire Authority for 2025-2026.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Councillor Andrew Bond was elected as Vice Chair of the Fire Authority for 2025-2026.

3. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

No apologies for absence or declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held 13 February 2025 and Action Log

The minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held 13 February 2025 were agreed as a correct record. The Action Log was noted.

5. Chair's Announcements

See Appendix 1 to these minutes.

6. Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies

It was resolved to agree the schedule of appointments outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.

7. Appointment of Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs: (i) Policy and Resources Committee; (ii) Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Neil Boyce was elected as Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee and Councillor Chris Poulton as Vice Chair for 2025-2026.

Councillor Christine Whelan was elected as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Yaniffer Malinowski as Vice Chair for 2025-2026.

8. Review of Community Risk Management and Plan 2024-29 Performance

Members received an update on the delivery against the Fire Authority's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2024-29. Officers explained that the five-year plan was reviewed at the end of every year highlighting what had been achieved, what was planned for the next year and where there needed to be a refocus. Officers drew Members attention to key areas in the plan including:

- **People Excellence:** An employee engagement survey had been undertaken, a leadership development programme had been established, further work had been carried out on transparency in the recruitment process including using an independent person on recruitment panels. 99.8% of DBS checks had been completed with two outstanding. Two major projects had been delivered: Trauma Welfare and the implementation of a new Occupational Health System. The first men's mental health day had also taken place.
- **Community Safety Excellence:** The award-winning collaboration between CFRS and East of England Ambulance Trust (EEAST) for Community Wellbeing Officers had been extended for a further 18 months. The Firebreak trial had also been extended. There had been a refocusing of crews on community engagement activities. The Service had lost funding for the road safety role and were looking at how the partnership could be supported in a different way. Recruitment was ongoing to a role that would look at the planned growth within the area and work with the planning departments in District Councils in order to understand growth and focus activity and to seek funding to support the Service going forwards.
- **Operational Excellence:** On-call trials as part of the Vision 2030 project were ongoing and the refreshing of the training records and competency system had taken place.
- **Value for Money Delivery:** A new mobilising system had been delivered, and the system was being further embedded as part of the uncoupling of the collaboration with Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service. The Service was looking at the technical infrastructure and the implementation of new mobile data terminals and the replacement of 999 lines to ensure sustainability in the future. There was a focus

on cyber security as a key risk and were currently recruiting to fill a cyber security role to support the service.

A Member questioned how the Authority could improve the recording of battery related fires. Officers explained that the old mobilisation system was limited in how incidents could be recorded. The new system identified these incidents more clearly.

A Member commented that the uptake of fire safety visits had dropped and queried how Members could support an increase in engagement. Officers explained that targeting the most vulnerable in the community was a challenge and Community Safety Officers worked with multi agency partners to get across the threshold and ensure that the most vulnerable individuals were supported.

A Member sought clarity on what the education and outreach work for educating the community on lithium-ion batteries and battery storage looked like and where people could access the information. Officers explained that there was an online community safety outlet 'Stay Wise' which was run by the National Fire Chiefs Council. The Service were also getting back into schools to give water safety, road safety and home safety advice which included information on the storage of lithium-ion batteries. Officers explained that advice on electrical vehicle safety was provided separately to community safety advice and that fire services were petitioning Government to legislate on the use of battery technology.

A Member requested further information on the single use plastic usage as part of the waste reduction targets. Officers explained that there had been a drive to purchase reusable bottles for water to use on appliances.

It was resolved to:

- a. note the contents of the report.
- b. note the CRMP performance measures update at Appendix 1.

9. Combined Fire Control Update

Members received an update on the position of Combined Fire Control (CFC) and the future direction of the function. Officers stated that the new Systel system had been running successfully for nine months, and that Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service had moved across to their separate Fire Control on 24 June 2025. The next steps for the project were to review the work practices in the Cambridgeshire Fire Control. There were two workstreams; the P157 Controls Works Project, which was focused on a number of enhancements to the system to further develop system efficiency. The upcoming version of the operating system, AEGIS, was a significant mandatory upgrade encompassing multiple software system upgrades which would further improve the system and P158 Control Review Project which sought to identify and implement ways to improve and modernise how the fire control function was delivered and utilising the modern mobilisation system and align the function with the wider organisational ways of operating to drive positive cultural change.

Members expressed their ongoing appreciation to the Fire Control staff throughout all of the changes and moving into new ways of working.

A Member questioned how much the uncoupling of the Fire Control had cost Cambridgeshire and if the money could be claimed back. Officers explained that there had been cross charging throughout the uncoupling process and that officers were still working on a final figure.

A Member queried how the staff were being supported throughout the change and the impact this had on retention and morale. Officers explained that they have had a visible presence of management at Fire Control throughout the changes and had endeavoured to keep communications at the right level and pace and that it had been a difficult process for all involved.

A Member asked what positives there had been from the decoupling process. Officers explained that the Fire Control staff were now able to get out into the wider service and develop their skills further as there had not been the opportunity to do this during the transition phase. The Chief Fire Officer stated that the upgrading of the system and the decoupling process had a significant impact on the Service over the last five years and staff had stuck with the Service through the uncertainty and that there was still some way to go in terms of the technology and putting in additional support. He thanked all of the control staff and everyone who had supported the Service.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note the significant progress made to date and current position of the CFC function,

10. Vision 30 Progress Update - June 2025

Members received an update on the Service's work to date and planned future work to ensure the Vision 30 project objectives were achieved, and that Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) had a flexible and resilient response to the growing risks across the county. Officers highlighted a number of areas of focus within the project which included

- a review of shift systems focusing on efficiency and effectiveness and included training on a broader range of skills including animal and water rescue. There was also a work focused on reviewing and implementing a mixed crewing policy which would see On-Call Firefighters crewing appliances with Wholetime Firefighters which would allow for a level of flexibility and would offer an alternative resilience model by ensuring degradation procedures were robust.
- putting processes in place to scale up the number of appliances available during times of need or reduce attendance to certain incident types during extremely busy operational periods.
- understanding potential risks (growth in domestic and non-domestic premises, new infrastructure and transport networks and responding by locating resources at locations best served to those risks.
- building a bespoke risk modelling tool that would help determine the best place to locate our resources to deal with risk and demand. The tool was expected to be tested later in the year.

- development of a Growth and Planning Officer role which was currently out to advert. The role would help support the gathering of information about growth across the county. Senior Officers were 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.
- a report on the new operational response planning scenarios would be brought to Fire Authority in December 2025 for ratification. This would then drive how the Service utilised its resources moving forward.

A Member highlighted a number of developments on the county's borders including the East Park Solar Farm, the anaerobic digester in Northamptonshire and increased warehousing in the Northamptonshire area and queried if they had been factored into the planning and if Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Suffolk authorities had the capacity to support critical incidents. Officers confirmed that they were engaged with all three authorities and their planning processes.

A Member queried how climate factors were being included in the modelling tool and how were climate caused risk increases being communicated to the public. Officers explained that that data that would be included in the modelling tool was over a 10-year period and was being gathered from a number of different areas. Officers explained that climate change was a key factor in this work, and it was envisaged that relevant data in this area would be integrated in early 2026 which would include some information from the Met Office, with the impact on summer and increased risk of flooding events. The historic data would be available by November 2025. Officers highlighted that the 10 highest demand days were in the last 5 years due to climate change.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note the contents of the report and make comment as they deem appropriate,
- b) agree the plan and timeframes for future works and associated reporting to the Authority outlined in Paragraph 7.

11. Fire Authority Productivity and Efficiency Return and Financial Business Continuity Planning Update

Members considered an update on the Service's productivity and efficiency return (completed for the Home Office) and the Service's financial business continuity planning. Officers explained that the Service was one of the lowest funded services in the sector and that the financial business continuity 2023-24 inspection was graded as outstanding and highlighted for best practice. To mitigate against the impact of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service withdrawing from the highly successful Combined Fire Control collaboration, leaving a circa £1.2 million funding gap, CFRS had increased precepts for this financial year by £4.95. This supported the Service in managing areas of increasing costs. Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL) funding of £700,000 had also been secured for the renovation of St Neots Fire Station which was now in progress and due to be completed imminently. Officers would be carrying out

an in-depth financial business continuity review. The outcomes of this work would be presented to the Fire Authority in conjunction with the budget setting in late 2025/early 2026.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) Productivity and Efficiency Report April 2025, attached at Appendix 1,
- b) note the update on financial business continuity planning for 2025/26,
- c) approve the financial business continuity plans for 2026

12. Update on Culture Related Work at Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service and Senior Leadership Team Structure

Members received a report on the culture related work being undertaken within the Fire Authority and an update on the structure of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

The Chief Fire Officer stated that there had been a number of independent reports on culture within the Fire Service at a national level. CFRS continued to work towards sustaining and improving organisational culture. This included reinforcing the Service values through leadership behaviour and systems and proactively addressing where behaviours do not meet the authority's values and expectations. Professional Development programmes had been developed tailored to the needs of developing first line and middle leaders, supported by the Learning and Organisational Development Team and senior leaders to bring diversity of thoughts and role model the Services commitment to development. The Service behaviours had also been updated to 'Welcoming, Respectful and Professional'. These values aligned heavily to the National Fire Chief Council Core Code of Ethics. The Service had also been recently recognised as a menopause supporting authority. The Chief Fire Officer highlighted the implementation of the Professional Standards Board back in September 2024 and asked Members to note that in the last meeting of the Board Councillor Simone Taylor attended on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and she reported that the meeting offered reassurance to the Service and Fire Authority that misconduct and professional standards were being taken seriously at CFRS and are receiving oversight at the appropriate level.

A Member questioned how the Service ensured that the culture and values of the organisation were maintained as there was an element of turnover within the organisation. The Chief Fire Officer explained that there was a values-based interview process that had been established, and this ensured the Service employed individuals with the right attitudes and behaviours.

A Member questioned how many employees had completed the Employee Engagement survey with 88% of employees that had completed the survey noting a positive culture at CFRS. The Chief Fire Officer stated that he would report back on the figure to Members. **Action Required.**

It was resolved to note the contents of this report.

13. Draft Pay Policy Statement 2025/26

Members received the Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26, for approval. The Chief Fire Officer explained that there was a statutory requirement for the Fire Authority to produce a draft Pay Policy Statement on an annual basis.

He explained that the National Employers for the National Joint Council (NJC) had announced that the Fire Brigades Union had agreed the 2025 pay offer and therefore Grey Book employees would receive a 3.2% pay increase with effect from 1 July 2025. Discussions around Gold Book pay have not yet concluded. He explained that at the time of writing the report, the National Employers for the NJC for Local Government Services had made a full and final offer to the recognised unions (GMB, UNISON and UNITE) of 3.2%, effective from 1 April 2025 for Green Book employees; this had not yet been agreed.

A Member sought further information on retention rates and overall performance of individuals working for the Service. The Chief Fire Officer commented that retention rates and overall performance within the Service were not resulting from pay increases but more from a community feel and belonging within the Service. Officers stated that there were direct links between people working in their communities which was a strong pull for On Call Firefighters in particular and their impact on the community and helping others and it was not just about monetary rewards. Officers stated that this had to be balanced with fair pay.

It was resolved unanimously to approve the draft Pay Policy Statement 2025/26, attached at Appendix 1, for publication.

14. Proposed Changes to Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure for Firefighter Pension Schemes

Members considered an overview of proposed changes to the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) for firefighter pension schemes.

The Chief Fire Officer outlined the changes set out in the report. He explained that the main change proposed was that going forwards Stage One applications were submitted to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer for decision within two months of the date of receipt and should it progress to Stage Two that it is referred for consideration by the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Fire Authority Chair.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) approve the proposed changes (with immediate effect) as outlined in Paragraph 5 below,
- b) authorise the Monitoring Officer to make the necessary amendments to the constitutional documents, namely the Terms of Reference and Appointments to Committees, Outside Organisations and Other Bodies.

15. Ratification of Assistant Chief Fire Officer Appointment

Members received an update on the outcome of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) assessment process and sought ratification of the appointment of the new ACFO. The Chief Fire Officer explained that there was a total of six applicants for the role, three were shortlisted to the first assessments stage and two for the final stage. The later stage involved an interview with the Assistant Directors, a media interview with a journalist and a final interview, conducted by a panel consisting of the CFO/CEO, DCFO, Head of People and Daryl Brown, the Chief Executive of MAGPAS. Stuart performed consistently high throughout the process and scored the highest in objective scoring criteria. The process was both challenging and probing, and Stuart was offered the post; an offer he accepted.

Members expressed their support for the appointment.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note the ACFO assessment process outlined in Paragraph 5 below,
- b) ratify the appointment of Stuart Smith as the new ACFO as required by the current Authority Scheme of Delegation

16. Overview and Scrutiny Minutes 15 January 2025 and Overview and Scrutiny Minutes 26 March 2025

Members noted the minutes

17. Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee 28 November 2024 and Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee 22 January 2025

Members noted the minutes

Date of Next Meeting

18 December 2025

Chair

CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS – THURSDAY 25 JUNE 2025

As this is our annual meeting and we have a full agenda, these announcements have purposely been kept short however there will be some additional general information announcements attached to the Minutes of this meeting when they are circulated/published.

Firstly, although the Service has already observed tributes, as this is the first Fire Authority meeting since, I would like us to observe a minutes silence to honour the memory of and pay our respects to the two firefighters, Jennie Logan and Martyn Sadler, and member of public, David Chester, who died during the tragic major incident in Bicester last month.

Minutes Silence

Thank you.

This tragic incident brings home the very real risks faced by our operational colleagues daily. The fire service is a close-knit community, and our thoughts remain with all those involved, their families, friends and colleagues.

Secondly, the recent election results have permeated down to a significant change in our proportionality. I am new to the Authority and would like to formally welcome the other eight new Members (you know who you are!) and sincerely thank Councillors Dew, Gowing, Hathorn, Kindersley, Rae, Reynolds, Smith, Slatter and Taylor for their significant contributions to the work of the Fire Authority during their respective tenures, some of which spanned decades.

Since 2021 Councillor Murphy has been Chair of the Authority and I am advised by Officers that they have found her to be highly supportive, facilitating genuine debate across the membership. Always an advocate of the Service, with her stalwart support, numerous funding challenges have been successfully negotiated allowing investment in the Service. Perhaps the most obvious examples of which were the opening of a state-of-the-art training facility and fire station in Huntingdon and the achievement of another positive HMICFRS inspection result. Edna, thank you for handing over an Authority in such good order. I look forward to meeting both the challenges and opportunities ahead and continuing to work collaboratively, building on what has already been achieved and delivering a safer, brighter future for our county and its residents.

We will now move to the next agenda item, Agenda Item 6, Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies.

Further Announcements (not to be read out but attached to the Minutes)

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection Update

HMICFRS has published its programme of inspections for 2025/27. Whilst the Service will still be assessed in Phase One, the on-site inspection will not take place until December 2025. Officers have gone through the latest information it was recently sent by the inspectorate and what they will be looking at. There are some new focus areas such as governance, competency, communication and engagement, discipline and grievance, and promotion and recruitment, as well as a greater overall focus on culture, values and leadership at all levels within the organisation.

The Chief Fire Officer and his senior leadership team will now begin to prepare for the inspection which will include bringing the new service liaison officer up to speed and ensure our story captures all the excellent work that has gone on since our last inspection.

Water Safety Advice

Although the Service perpetually issues community safety advice, after the tragic incident in April at Crown Lakes, Farcet involving a teenager losing their life in open water, the Communication and Engagement and Community Fire Safety teams got together to release water safety information to the media. The release can be found on the Service website.

- <https://www.cambsfire.gov.uk/news-and-incidents/news/2025-04-08-warm-weather-highlights-dangers-of-open-water>

Various media outlets picked up the release and published the information in an effort to highlight the importance of staying safe in open water, reminding and warning other youngsters and their families of the dangers in seemingly calm and safe waters (cold, rubbish, undercurrents) and what to do should anyone get into trouble whilst in open water. As the warm, sunny weather continues and the temptation to jump into rivers and lakes to cool off increases, I would urge you all to view the link and remind your constituents of the risks of swimming in open water.

To further demonstrate our efforts to communicate and engage with local communities I have included the latest available statistics on our social media accounts below.

Spotlight on Socials - Statistics

January-March 2025



What we've supported

- Biker Down
- Recruitment
- Excellence Awards
- Older Driver Workshops
- Electrical Safety Week
- Reg my appliance
- Incidents
- Bag it and Bank it
- LGBT+ Month
- Valentine's Day
- Careers Week
- Mother's Day
- Training Exercises
- Training Centre

Total figures for this quarter

2.1m Reach	2,944 Account Engagement
3,914 Link Clicks	81,599 Audience

Best performing posts

facebook
Photo - Valentine's Day
564,425 views, 420,946 reach, 4,933 interactions

Instagram
Photo - March dog rescue
3,034 impressions, 2,210 accounts reached, 165 likes

TikTok
Photo - Wholetime firefighter myths
32k views, 958 likes, 29 comments, 115 saves, 16 shares

facebook.

Page Reach**	1.7m
Followers	34,923
Page Views	1.7m

Instagram

Followers	8,716
Page Reach*	128.5k
Likes & Comments	3,522

TikTok

Followers	37,920
Page Reach	251,000
Likes & Comments	7,753

*Impressions = Total number of times that all of the posts have been seen **Reach = The number of unique accounts that have seen the posts

Award - Menopause Friendly Employer Accreditation

Last week an independent panel assessed the Service's submission that sought to demonstrate our effectiveness in five key areas: culture, training, policies, colleague engagement and working environment. Hayley Douglas, Assistant Director Communication and Engagement and Menopause Champion, received a call after the panel meeting to let her know the submission had been successful and that the panel had been really impressed by what the Service has done and nationally for fire and rescue services.

Henpicked: Menopause in the Workplace, who run the accreditation scheme, said.

"We are delighted to award Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service with Menopause Friendly Accreditation. This achievement recognises the organisation's exceptional commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive culture where menopause is understood, normalised and openly discussed. From embedding menopause awareness into mandatory training to leading national sector conversations, their passion, leadership and dedication are truly inspiring. They are not only supporting their own colleagues – they are helping shape the future of menopause support across the emergency services."

A big thank you to Hayley for leading this piece of work and to everyone who has supported it over the past few years. The conversations, sharing of experiences, filling out surveys and feedback forms and engaging positively in the menopause awareness events and training, has helped steer the organisation in the areas it needed to do more and gave reassurance that what was being implemented was making a difference.

Diary Dates

Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment

Applications will open on 14 July and close on 14 August 2025. The Service is recruiting for a cohort in January 2026 and to a holding list from which successful candidates will be allocated a further course as and when the Service establishment needs additional firefighters. In the meantime, there is a wholetime cohort currently at Training Centre (due to pass out early July) and a bridging course will run in August for wholetime transferees. The wholetime transferees will bridge the gap that has been created by increasing our establishment figure, allowing us to achieve the additional numbers quicker.

FIRE Conference 2025 13 November 2025, QEII Conference Centre, London

Delivered by the Institution of Fire Engineers, Fire Protection Association, National Fire Chiefs Council and the Fire Sector Confederation, this one-day conference brings together key voices from the UK and international fire community. Through a programme of plenary sessions, breakout discussions and expert panels, this year will concentrate on ensuring the built environment is fit for tomorrow.

It will include an early look at the UK's new administration and what it means for fire safety policy and the construction of homes; planned changes to Approved Document B and the Building Safety Regulator's updates; and rural and urban wildfire resilience, with an international panel exploring the latest global responses to this growing threat. Delegates will also hear reflections on the Phase Two Grenfell Tower report, and a compelling case study on the Moss Landing battery storage facility fire in California.