

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting

Date: 26 March 2025

Time: 2.00 p.m. – 2.55 p.m.

Venue: Fire Service HQ

Present: Councillors S Taylor (Vice-Chair), A Bond, W Fitzgerald, I Gardener, and R Hathorn.

114. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Councillors Rae, Gowing and Dew.

There were no declarations of interest.

115. Minutes – 15 January 2025 and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

While noting the Action Log, Members:

- learnt that whilst availability figures were still awaited, the On-Call trial had received positive feedback from the crews and anecdotally availability had increased by two additional appliances at the weekend. Once availability figures were available, they would be circulated with Members – **action required.**

116. Community Risk Management Plan Performance Measures

The Committee received a report on the Service's performance against the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) performance measures.

While discussing the report, individual Members:

- noted that battery fires in e-scooters were increasing and queried if the recent vehicle fires were from electric cars. Officers agreed to provide the information in future reports but informed Members that they could not report historic data – **action required.**
- suggested that officers attend Parish Council Annual General Meetings to inform residents on fire safety in their homes. Officers agreed to review – **action required.**

- queried the aim of the safeguarding training. Members learnt that there would be an increase in reporting due to increased awareness. This would allow MASH referrals, where necessary, to provide the assistance required.
- requested additional information regarding the safety audits. Officers agreed to include the target audience in the next report and would share a document with Members to explain who was audited and why – **action required**.
- questioned what happened to used tyres. Officers believed that information regarding used tyres was included in the contract but would check this – **action required**.
- established that there was an increase in sickness in Quarter 3, with the highest increase in the Combined Fire Control due to the stress and uncertainty of the future arrangements. Members were informed that work was being undertaken to calculate the number of staff needed in the control room following Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service's (SFRS) departure. Staff had been hired on fixed term contracts in the control room to avoid the need to make permanent staff redundant. Officers were offering assurances to staff, but understood it was an uncertain time.
- queried the number of associated deaths and injuries from fires in non-domestic properties, boarding houses for homeless people or asylum seekers. Members were informed that they were involved in the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) for fire protection. The buildings would become higher risk premises due to any language barriers and risk assessments would be undertaken. The Vice-Chair stated that following the election, new Members may be interested in hearing about the partnership work.

It was resolved unanimously to:

note the contents of the performance report in Appendix 1 which covered the first three quarters of the year (1 April to 31 December 2024).

117. Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service Community Safety Activities Update

The Committee received an update on the breadth of community safety activities currently being undertaken by the Service, outlined future activities and requested Member support of one collaboration in particular.

While discussing the report, individual Members:

- sought further information on the older driver workshops and asked how residents were informed. Members learnt that they were advertised on social media, but officers would review magazines and other mediums to ensure the right target audience were aware of the workshops. A Member suggested contacting village magazines or parish councils; officers agreed to review this – **action required**.

- asked for guidance on how to instigate conversations with older drivers regarding when to stop driving. Officers agreed to ask the relevant officers and would circulate information – **action required**.
- welcomed the Biker Down course and hoped to see positive outcomes.
- learnt that the East of England Ambulance Service (NHS) Trust (EEAST) community wellbeing officer trial was extended for a further 18 months with the cost divided 60/40 (EEAST/CFRS).
- queried potential partnership work regarding mental health needs. Members learnt that this had been discussed between the police, ambulance service and fire service. There was the Right Care, Right Person (RCRP) model which aimed to ensure the most appropriate agency attended where necessary.

Having provided views and comments on the current and future community safety activities detailed at Paragraphs 4 and 5, it was resolved unanimously to:

acknowledge the success to date of the trial with East of England Ambulance Service (NHS) Trust (EEAST) and support the extension of the provision for a further 18 months as detailed at Paragraphs 5.7 and 5.8.

118. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority Internal Audit Progress Report

The Committee received the internal audit progress report. The presenting officer stated that one report had been issued in the area for IT Asset Management with partial assurance. Two pieces of work were currently in progress. The Control System review had been postponed until June 2025 as the new system went live in September 2024 and the postponement would allow the embedding work for the new system to be completed before being audited.

It was resolved unanimously to note the contents of the report.

119. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority Auditor's Annual Report

The Committee received the Fire Authority Auditor's annual report. No significant weaknesses were identified. The certificate could not be issued until National Audit Office (NAO) had confirmed no further assurances would be required.

It was resolved unanimously to note the contents of the report.

120. Member-Led Review

The Committee received a verbal update on the Member-Led reviews.

'TRiM Replacement' had been delivered at a previous meeting.

'Employee Recruitment and Retention (On-Call)' the final report would be presented at the July meeting.

'Impacts of Planning and Growth on the Service' had been paused and would reassessed once the proposed Growth and Planning Officer had been appointed.

It was resolved unanimously to note the update.

121. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

The Committee noted its work programme.

Chair