

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service Productivity and Efficiency report

April 2025

1. Introduction

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) has worked hard over the years to continuously strive to work more efficiently and effectively whilst maintaining a good, if not outstanding, service to the community, providing a value for money service.

With the unpredictable increases in costs and unknown pay settlements over the years, the Service has concentrated even more to see where further efficiencies can be made and put contingency plans in place should the costs outweigh our funding.

CFRS continues to operate as a lean service. We are situated in a growth area and have seen significant housing and population growth over the last decade and yet we have managed to maintain a good service to the public whilst significantly reducing our costs in real terms. We now need to consider the impact of this growth and how we can sustain delivering a good service in the medium-term and as such we need to invest in our people and estates.

Coupled with this, Suffolk's departure from the highly successful Combined Fire Control (CFC) collaboration which has created a financial impact of £1m. This is a huge impact to CFRS's budget and therefore ability to invest and grow the Service. We continue to see uncertainty about when Suffolk will actually depart the collaboration leading to repeated short-term planning implications, hindering our ability to proactively plan and act.

The housing growth in our region has declined slightly from 1.61% to 1.2% but is expected to increase further based on the planning information that we are gathering. For future years we have assumed a 1% growth in housing year on year although Government plans for Cambridgeshire suggest a significant future increase in population and commercial enterprise. Prudent budget planning means that for 25/26 a £4.95 increase in precept per household has been applied. Inflation and pay increases are expected to be between 2-3%.

With currently only annual settlements, CFRS must operate an annual Financial Business Continuity planning process to allow forward planning. The plans are developed in alignment with budget preparation to understand when savings could be made should the funding not be sufficient to meet the budgeted spend for the up-coming year.

2.1 Reserves

RESERVES (£000)					
	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
General Reserves	2407	3692	2392	2392	2392
Earmarked Revenue Reserves	923	923	923	923	923
of which MRP reserve					
Earmarked Capital Reserves	1400	1400	0	0	0
Other Reserves					
of which revenue	860	860	860	860	860
of which capital					
Total	5590	6875	4175	4175	4175

The Authority maintains a General Reserve to cushion impacts of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing. It acts as a contingency in the event of unexpected emergencies or unforeseen spending. In recent years it added a Finance Business Continuity Reserve from revenue savings from 2021/22 and 2022/23 in anticipation of new budgetary pressures and unpredictable funding in the medium term. In 2023/24 the Authority utilised £459k of the reserve to fund pay awards which were above budgeted.

As at 31st March 2024 the Authority's usable General Reserve balance was £2.4m and £3.3m including the Finance Business Continuity Reserve. The General Reserve will be used in line with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The Authority also maintains three earmarked reserves to fund known or predicted liabilities. These reserves are a Property Development Reserve to finance the future capital programme relating to properties and avoid borrowing or poor return on investments, a Pension Reserve to fund ill-health retirements above budgeted, and a Wholetime Recruitment Reserve to allow for fluctuations in firefighter establishment.

The Property Development Reserve at 31st March 2024 was £1.4m (£nil at 31st March 2023). This funding has been allocated to the upgrade of St Neots Fire Station which commenced in 2024/25 and will continue into 2025/26. The cost of borrowing continues to be greater than the return on cash investments, it is therefore more cost effective to borrow internally, using funds currently held.

The Wholetime Recruitment Reserve is £400k. This reserve will be used to ensure any fluctuations in our establishment can be maintained.

3. Efficiency data

EFFICIENCY DATA (£000)

	Actual 2023-24		Actual 2024-25		Forecast 2025-26	
	Recurrent	Non-recurrent	Recurrent	Non-recurrent	Recurrent	Non-recurrent
Opening Revenue Expenditure Budget (Net)	35534		40704		42147	
Less Total Direct Employee Costs	-27999		-31011		-33439	
Non Pay Budget	7535		9693		8708	
Efficiency Target (2% of non-pay budget)	150.7		193.86		174.16	
Efficiency Savings						
<u>Direct Employee</u>						
Reduction in Prevention/Protection/Response Staff				81		
Reduction in Support Staff		257		90		
<u>Indirect Employee (e.g. training, travel etc.)</u>						
All Indirect Employee Costs		9		53	6	
<u>Premises</u>						
Utilities				201		
Rent/Rates						
Other Premises Costs		1				
Shared Premises					6	
<u>Transport</u>						
Fleet						
Fuel				77		
Other Transport Costs			6	10		
<u>Supplies and Services</u>						
National Procurement Savings	48	70	10			
Local Procurement Savings						
Other Technology Improvements		55				
Decreased Usage						
<u>Capital Financing</u>						
Revenue Expenditure Charged to Capital		333				700
Net Borrowing Costs				21		
<u>Other</u>						
Other Savings 1 (Please Specify)				23		
Other Savings 2 (Please Specify)			20			
Other Savings 3 (Please Specify)						
Total Efficiency Savings	773	70	592	201	712	
Efficiency Savings as a Percentage of Non-Payroll Budgets	10.26%		6.11%		8.18%	
Efficiency Savings Target	2.00%		2.00%		2.00%	
Over/(Under)	8.26%		4.11%		6.18%	

4. Income

INCOME						
£000						
	Actual 2023-24		Actual 2024-25		Forecast 2025-26	
	Recurrent	Non-recurrent	Recurrent	Non-recurrent	Recurrent	Non-recurrent
Income generated from charging policies	438	37	283	50	92	
Income generated from trading operations	20		20		20	
Income generated from shared premises						
Income generated from interest on investments	70	269	70	388	70	150
Income generated from other sources	1265	372	1610	209	307	342
Total	1793	678	1983	647	489	492

Income generated from other sources is made of income from Suffolk for the Combined Fire Control (CFC), Bedfordshire for the ICT shared service and the GIS/Gazetteer managed Service, and income from East of England Ambulance Service for the Blue Light Community Welfare Officer Collaboration.

5. Efficiency narrative

5.1. Direct Employee

With Suffolk leaving the CFC collaboration, permanent recruitment has been frozen to move back to pre-collaboration resource numbers through natural wastage to avoid future redundancies. This does however mean that the CFC is operating below establishment. The continued delays of Suffolk leaving the collaboration (originally 31st December 2024, 31st March 2025, 19th May 2025 and now end June 2025) are now impacting Cambridgeshire's operating assumption and ability to transition to new operating assumptions.

There were two posts budgeted within our Business Support Group which were frozen to allow for a review of the roles to better understand if these were required. It was agreed, because of the review, that recruitment activity did not proceed for these posts.

5.2 Indirect employee

There have been reductions in clothing pending a review of the existing contract. Quantities have been reviewed with the intention of moving in the longer-term to a more incident specific Personal Protective Equipment approach. Training costs have been reduced by bringing First-Aid training in-house and using a hybrid model, limiting the requirement for external training; this not only saves on the cost of courses but also travel and transport costs and employees' time. The Service has also reduced recruitment costs by using local initiatives from stations and social media rather than incurring external advertising costs. We continue to deliver our New recruit and bridging course in house. We have had 14 individuals joining the operational service in 24/25, running this training internally has saved us (non cashable) £44,000 based on the previously known training costs, this excludes any accommodation and travel and subsistence savings.

5.3 Premises

The Service Sustainability strategy is a core priority across the Service. We have a proactive drive to reduce utilities, encouraging a culture of smart use of heating and lighting. This combined with unit costs reducing has delivered efficiency savings. We have introduced building management systems, air-source heat pumps and lighting replacement initiatives; it is too early in the programme to establish the consistent savings that these will deliver into the Service. We have done a review of our stations looking at contamination and welfare of crews and work is underway to make them more efficient in managing contamination and the clean-up following incidents. We have continued to fit gyms to On-Call stations where possible to allow fire fighter to be more productive in terms of enabling them to still be on call when training rather than for some that had to travel away to a gym as there wasn't one in the local area. These are ongoing initiatives that we continue to deliver as part of our estates' programme including solar panels as part of a station extension.

5.4 Transport

There has been a fuel saving of £77k in 2024/25. This has been achieved in a number of ways. Firstly, we have been part of a HVO fuel trial with Huntingdon District Council (HDC) allowing the Service to test the fuel economy of moving to an alternative, more sustainable fuel source and allowing HDC to broaden the types of vehicles utilising this fuel source. This delivered a cashable saving to CFRS of approximately £4k and provided evidence to support our move to HVO fuels where possible. We have replaced many of our silver fleet vehicles with hybrid or electric vehicles, therefore, using less fossil fuel, installing a further 9 EV chargers during 2024/25, meaning a total of 16 of our sites now have EV chargers. We did not see the summer spate conditions anticipated, which meant less fuel was consumed and the decrease in cost per liter has contributed to this efficiency.

The service has renegotiated the roadside assistance contract delivering further cashable efficiencies.

5.5 Supplies and Services

National procurement savings have been delivered through the contract negotiations to reduce costs on telecommunications. Software contract negotiations have seen further reductions by removing software modules that were not being utilised. These were achieved during 2024/25 and budgets reduced as a result for 2025/26.

5.6 Capital Financing

We have a focused cash management system in place which has meant the Service has managed its cash flows without the need for external borrowing to fund the capital programme for 2024/25, a saving of £21k in interest charges.

We have invested in a consultant to assist with our grant applications and have succeeded in securing a substantial grant for our St Neots property development through a £700k Huntingdon District Council Community Infrastructure Levy grant which we did not plan for in our budget.

5.7 Other

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service's positive performance, quick reporting and investigation of incidents, carrying out relevant checks and providing relevant security measures drive insurance premiums down and reduces the number of insurance claims, this has meant that we have not seen insurance premium increases and received a credit adjustment, resulting in a cashable saving of £23K through the Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company.

There has been £20k saved through the removal of printing and scanning costs, and reductions in postage. achieved through the implementation of a new finance system. Changes in working practices and proactive engagement with suppliers have improved processes, making them much more efficient and effective.

5.8 Future efficiencies

Our Vision 2030 project aims to look at a more dynamic approach to resourcing and exploring different models to allow us to continue to deliver an efficient and effective service. We have already commenced the development of digital tools to enable us to better model and predict resource requirements, work will continue this year to test and refine this and then look at scenarios to enable us to improve operational availability in a targeted way.

In our non-cashable efficiencies we have saved £493k which will be realised more fully in 2025/26 through a complete risk-based review of our training packages for operational colleagues. This has reduced 140 hours of on-line training to 76 hours for every Firefighter. This time has been reinvested into community engagement activities as well as supporting Phase 2 Firefighter development, which is an increasing requirement.

We have developed and delivered our own Menopause awareness training, we have delivered 40, hour-long, menopause awareness training sessions in the past 12 months rather than commissioning an external supplier. This saved approximately £7k. We also refreshed our Values and behaviours guidance - we reviewing and updating our values and expected behaviours in-house, engaging colleagues in the process through a survey and workshops. An external supplier would have charged approx. £8-10k for this work.

Our Community and Operational Intelligence project aims to review the data and technologies that are required by our colleagues working within the communities to put in place technical solutions to reduce administration activities, improve efficiencies and ensure that our people have the data required to enable them to do their jobs.

We are looking at our Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking process going forward, establishing what good practice looks like, what our processing options are and what the most efficient and effective method is for us. Initial reviews suggest, for a small investment, non-cashable equivalent savings of at least three times the amount can potentially be made.

We will continue to work on our Training Records and Competency System to further refine and review how we deliver and record training and competencies information. Refining our information governance online training has seen approximately £10k worth of non-cashable savings during 2024/25 and into the future.

We continue to work with partners to explore further opportunities to collaborate. We will be working with another Fire and Rescue Service to look at providing a joint station/response model, we are also investigating the feasibility of a joint fleet workshop with another party.

5.9 Collaboration

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service has many ongoing and long-standing collaborations. We strive to look at the potential for new opportunities as a matter of business as usual whenever we review or change a process or need to procure a new contract. The Service actively reviews these collaborations to ensure we are still receiving benefit from these.

The table below identifies these collaborations along with any savings or efficiencies.

Description	Date initiated/ duration	Cost savings/efficiencies
Combined Fire Control Room providing a joint control room function for Cambridgeshire and Suffolk FRS hosted in CFRS. Although this collaboration has been hugely successful, Suffolk's decision to end this at some point in 2025 will lead to increased costs for Cambridgeshire (circa £1m) and for Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (Circa £800k)	2011	£400k (in 2011) per annum for each service, over £546k at current pricing.
ICT Shared Service with Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service providing joint information technology internal support	2019	Provides resilience and enables greater resourcing at the same cost
Gazetteer managed service for Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service providing a managed database service and specialist skill sets provision to Bedfordshire.	2011	£72k income and shared contract managed by CFRS.
Safeguarding resources and services, provision of safeguarding oversight and support to CFRS from Essex Fire and Rescue Services	2021	£28k per annum cost to CFRS
Drone and Operational joint training in collaboration with Cambridgeshire Constabulary.	2019	Allows for training of pilots to be shared with Police and shared governance of drone use provides significant savings on costs to train and certificate.
Shared space - Use of meeting rooms between Cambridgeshire Constabulary and CFRS		Allows greater flexibility and reduces room and venue hire costs through allowing use and access to other service's facilities.
Co-responding - Currently nine stations delivering co-responding working with East of England Ambulance Service	2008	Cost recovery for co-responding activities, allowing the EEAST to use capacity and at no extra cost to CFRS.
Internal Audit - Joint contracting of internal audit programme with Bedfordshire and Essex fire and rescue services	2016	Knowledge shared, endorsing best practices. Procurement cost savings for other services.
Shared network contract for internal network provision with Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service	2019	£500K over the 5-year contract period for CFRS.

Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC) - Insurance consortium-- mutual management of risk, provide discretionary cover and purchase external insurances. This is operated with 12 other fire and rescue services	2019	Savings on insurance premium tax (5-7%), enhanced management support and risk management. Aims to optimise each member's risk transfer programme and reduce costs. Reserve pool surpluses are distributed back to members.
Incident command and cross-border working - Common basis for the actions of FRSs undertaking their responsibilities as a result of agreements made under S.13 and 16 of the Fire Rescue Services Act 2004. Working with Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk Fire and Rescue Services.	2021	No cost saving but increased resilience
Specialist operational equipment sharing across all three emergency services working with Cambridgeshire Constabulary and East Ambulance Service		Allows greater access to resources if the service requesting does not have the resources available. Cost saving of recalls to duty and increased asset availability.
Supporting the most vulnerable. Working with Adult Social Care teams to support services through Safe and Well visits. Identify data that will assist our vulnerable risk profiling. Working with Peterborough Plus, Solutions for Health, Everyone Health, Insight, Leap (local energy assist programme), Health and Wellbeing network, Peterborough County Council, Camquit.	2015	Improved targeting of activities
Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), working together on safeguarding concerns in the following key areas: Child Protection, Vulnerable Adults and Domestic Abuse. Working with Cambridgeshire constabulary, Probation Service.	2010	Improved safeguarding
Share information from Anglian Water on vulnerable individuals in order to provide support.	2021	Improved success rate for Home Fire Safety Checks.
Shared rota for area commanders and principal officers, providing officer cover across Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire.	2015	Allows for services to manage the rota with one less resource.
Shared use of HVO fuel between Huntingdon District Council and CFRS for operational vehicles	2024	Trial for 3 months during 2024/25 allowed for CFRS to understand the impacts of

		<p>use of HVO and HDC to learn of the impacts to different vehicle types.</p> <p>Permanent arrangement being set up with an MOU for Q1 2025/26.</p>
<p>United States Air Force (USAF)</p> <p>MoU with USAF Alconbury</p>	2014	<p>Provides access to 2 x water carriers for operational response, joint training opportunities and sharing of sites for exercising.</p> <p>Shared resource for driver training which provides CFRS with additional capacity to deliver driver training courses and refreshers</p>
<p>Community Wellbeing Officer x2 originally on 12 month trial, extended for further 18 months</p>	Apr 2024	In place – shared costs with East of England Ambulance Trust (EEAST)
<p>Ely and March station parking 5-year agreement signed with EMED to facilitate patient transport parking 3 vehicles at the station</p>	<p>New</p> <p>Oct 2024</p>	£8k per annum income
<p>Soham EV charger - the Town Council are utilising the station pod point for 1 vehicle during the day.</p>	<p>New</p> <p>Oct 2024</p>	In place
<p>Use of CFRS premises by EEAST for community first responder training EEAST had previously hired venues for training. The EEAST training team now have access to CFRS premises to enable training across the county.</p>	2024	Cost savings for EEAST
<p>Tall building remediation. Collaboration between CFRS, County Authorities and Local Authorities to develop and complete the Local Remediation Action Plan</p>	2024	Ensures a joined approach to building inspection

Multi-agency training with other services, shared JESIP/MAGIC and Tactical command training with other services.	New	In place
Building Safety Regulator - Regional multi-disciplinary team 2 x fire protection officers supporting the regional multi-disciplinary team	New Apr-2025	
MAGPAS meeting room - Use of meeting room free of charge	2025	Circa £200-£400 per meeting
CIA (Finance System) System Customer Community Sharing knowledge on how to resolve system issues and/or configure elements with other CIA finance system customers (all public sector).	2024	Knowledge sharing and not needing to pay for consultancy resource
CIA Advocacy Programme CFRS are flagged as being an advocate customer where other potential or existing customers can reach out to for advice (typically other UK fire services)	2025	Benefit to CFRS - any CFRS cases logged are given priority. Benefit to other fire services is they get the benefit of our knowledge of the system and tips on a successful implementation (Contacts to date with three other Fire and Rescue Services)
Magpas training - event hosting the Magpas National training event, use of Huntingdon training facilities and engagement in training activities	New	In discussion
Police rope rescue. Police use of CFRS accredited trainers, assessments and assessors. Looking to expand to share resources to support rope rescue work	New	In discussion
Cambridgeshire's development of integrations on behalf of Suffolk. Development of integrations to take data directly from the ICT systems in Suffolk to the mobilising the system saving resource time manually entering data.	In place	Best practice and data sharing
Feasibility study for combined Fleet planned (shared premises)	Pending	Shared facility for fleet and maintenance workshop hub with another organisation, study being carried out early 2025 for conclusion by end of Q1 2025/26.

Potential collaboration with another service to improve response and resilience	Pending	
Strategic Interoperability Board (SIB) – Facilitate the sharing of best practices and innovative ideas among the emergency services within Cambridgeshire, specifically Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue and East of England Ambulance Service.	2024	Best practice and data sharing
Access provided for touch down point for roaming appliances at East of England Ambulance Melbourn site.	2022	Enhanced operational cover and reduced property estate cost through sharing.
Collaboration as members of eastern region Hazardous Detection Identification and Monitoring (HDIM) team	Ongoing	Enhanced skills within county
Cambridgeshire County Council – Alconbury Weald – use of meeting rooms	2023	Allows greater flexibility and reduces room and venue hire costs through allowing use and access to other service’s facilities.
Blood donating sessions – Blood UK use Wisbech Fire Station to hold blood donating sessions.	In place	Station given for free to save Blood UK money on venue costs. CFRS employees attend to give home safety advice to donors while they wait.

5.10 Assessment of Efficiencies

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service is already a lean and efficient Service. We have frontloaded our efficiencies making reductions to our resources, reducing spend and collaborating effectively.

As a service we have operated a zero-based budgeting process for the last three consecutive years, this means that efficiencies are planned in during budget preparation and monies reallocated to more appropriate budgets where necessary. Our people costs are increasing for 2025/26 to allow us to meet the demands of our communities and mitigate the risks. We have also seen increases to

our national insurance costs as a result of government increasing the employers' national insurance rate for 2025/26, although this is partially off-set by a government grant.

We have planned for some increases in professional support staff, to help manage the increased pressures felt across the Service. Half are temporary fixed-term contracts to allow for evaluation of the impacts and improvements; for example, a Growth post to work with local government to gain a holistic understanding of planned growth in our community, informing resource disposition and requirements. This will enable the Service to make appropriate funding bids to support the required growth of the Service to match that of our county. Other examples are increases in digital teams to enable more development activities to streamline processes and improve data quality and usage. We are also investing in cyber security roles, as the threats increase we need to look to specialist skill sets to ensure we are protected as much as possible and mitigate against cyber-attacks.

The increases to the on-call firefighter scale rates driven by the NJC negotiations have increased our on-call firefighter costs by approximately £400k, although this could potentially reduce on-call availability depending on the reactions of the on-call teams.

CFRS is also increasing wholetime operational resourcing by 8 posts at a cost of £420k as we look to adapt our response models to meet our changing environment.

In 2024/25 our focus as an organisation was implementing our new mobilising System, this was a significant endeavor and as a small service consumed a considerable proportion of our resources. Our priority remains to embed this system and leverage the new capabilities that this delivers to us. Effective prioritisation and organisation focus meant that we have successfully delivered the new system into operation. Since the go-live of this project we have re-focused the Service and launched our new projects and initiatives now that we have the capacity to do so. We have several new and exciting projects and initiatives that we are embarking on end of 2024/25 and continuing into 2025/26 as detailed in section 5.8.

We have mentioned previously that Suffolk have taken the decision to depart from the highly efficient and cost effective Combined Fire Control. This is a challenging situation that ends the extremely successful collaboration, increasing costs across both Services with no pretensions of improving efficiency or productivity for either Service. For Cambridgeshire alone this will leave circa £1M funding gap that significantly reduces our ability to invest in the future improvement and growth of the Service.

6. PRODUCTIVITY

6.1 Collaboration

All collaborations are listed in section 5.9 and our potential new collaborations are detailed in section 5.8.

6.2 Asset Management and IT investment

During 2024/25 the Service commenced the move two systems to the cloud environment – CFRMIS and Resourcelink, our community Risk Management system and our People system. Efficiencies have been gained in system maintenance and upgrades as well as access to increased functionality that will be implemented in 25/26, such as the talent and performance management module.

We launched our Community and Operational Intelligence project in 2024/25, to look at how we streamline processes and provide data to operational personnel and those working remotely in the community. The focus is to improve efficiency and effectiveness of capturing and the provision of data to remove paper-based working removing duplication of activities and reducing risks.

During 2024/25 we built an estates utilisation and estates overhead costs dashboard to focus on driving costs down, to better understand the utilisation of our sites and, thus, to make best use of available working spaces. The plan is to roll out these dashboards to fire stations for greater visibility and understanding Service-wide. Already these are helping us to identify low usage facilities and where costs could be reduced.

Our operational on-line training system has been reviewed (TRACs). The system and the training covered within this was reviewed and resulted in training modules being improved and hours required to complete reduced as detailed in section 5.8.

GDPR mandatory on-line training was reviewed during 2024/25 and resulted in being streamlined, reducing the time required to carry out the course - a reduction in hours across the Service amounting to approximately 400 hours per annum.

For 2025/26 an Amazon on-line business account is being set up – reducing costs by centralising the invoicing to one monthly invoice, reducing the amount of non-claimable VAT due to missing invoices and reducing the expense processing time; increasing controls by restricting supplier types and making purchases go through an approval stage prior to purchase, and greater transparency for the finance department.

CFRS has commenced the asset management review project – understanding our asset management processes and recognising any improvements that can be made, before seeking a replacement system which offers best value for money, this project will continue into 25/26.

With the introduction of the new mobilising system, we have created automatic data feeds to provide efficient and effective mobilisations. A number of integrations were built to send firefighter availability and skills at regular intervals. This required huge amounts of testing and work to ensure the data was sent in the correct formats, and required large amounts of data cleansing and

management of processes for our firefighters crew bookings, to ensure a consistent service. We provided self service capabilities to our Control function in order for them to manage out of business hours, if data anomalies are spotted. In 25/26 we are looking to introduce integrations to our mobilising system from our risk management systems, reducing manual data entry and improving data quality.

In addition to this we also built the Operational Viewing Platform (OVP) as this was no longer able to be provided by our partner service. This is real-time data used on a Self-Service basis by operational staff, promoting efficient working practices and less reliance on Control Room and Business Intelligence departments for mobilising data. The OVP also provides continuous resource level awareness which feeds into operational degradation procedures supporting appliance redistribution where required.

We have built integrations between our mobilising system and IRS. This takes fields from the mobilising system and pre-populates the forms within IRS so that the officer in charge can complete information required, rather than entering call handling data and other information recorded in the source system. This improves efficiency and reduces data entry errors.

Our digital developers have implemented a Bank holiday API, this automation of data entry removes the need for manual data entry for our Business Intelligence team to add bank holiday days to their reference data.

A project ran throughout 2024/25 to review how we provided Trauma Welfare support to our colleagues. This proactively engaged with colleagues to identify requirements and successfully delivered a new process of support into Service in January 2025. This has seen positive engagement from our operational colleagues and in the longer term is anticipated to reduce sickness levels. We have also developed a digital application to manage the requests for support and the coordination of delivery. This has taken away the need for manual processes and phone calls. This application has been received well and ensures staff receive support in a more timely manner.

A foam application app has also been developed and released in 2024. Previously operational colleagues manually calculated foam usage required at an incident or training exercise, this calculation is now performed automatically using an app, improving accuracy and saving time.

The new Occupational Health system was introduced in 2024. Integration with a new Occupational Health system has been created using our people database as the primary data source, to integrate up-to-date employee data rather than this requiring manual upkeep. The new Occupational Health system has made processes more efficient by digitising forms, referrals, communications and bookings. Managers are able to submit referrals online and track progress themselves. Data collection and presentation has also been improved to assist with trend monitoring.

We have developed a Wholetime productivity exceptions app. We collect records of where the productivity of operational staff has been impacted due to issues with equipment, technology, etc. This was previously collated within a spreadsheet which required manual upkeep however we have developed an app which provides a simple means of adding records.

To avoid unnecessary journeys and fuel usage, we developed an app for staff to request a courier visit rather than couriers visiting stations based on a rota, where this may be unnecessary. This was implemented in 2024.

An Integration was developed to draw data from the Ordinance Survey API, to remove 3 hours of manual intervention per update, updates are conducted every 6 weeks.

The Procurement card expenses processing system was launched in 2024/25. This system is now integrated into our existing finance system, whereas previously this was a separate stand-alone system. This means there has been a reduction in data processing, improved controls and management information and greater visibility and accessibility for the finance team.

We launched our new inventory control system in 2024/25. This system is now integrated into our existing finance system, whereas previously this was a separate stand-alone system. This means there has been a reduction in data processing, improved controls and management information and greater visibility and accessibility for the finance team.

We have rebuilt the Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP), adding in further refinements which has allowed us to more efficiently target the premises with greater risk.

Within CFRS we have utilised our internal digital development team to develop a digital evacuation board. Utilising our internal resources to build this has saved significant costs of purchasing, implementing and maintaining an externally provided system.

Our digital development team have also commenced work to build a dynamic cover tool allowing the Service to use historic and real-time data to provide a detailed picture of operational cover and allow predictive modelling of impacts of moving resources.

6.3 Resourcing

Since reducing the minimum number of on-call firefighters from 4 to 3 in order for an appliance to be made active in 2023/24 we have seen a further improvement to our on-call retention, with on-call pumps now being mobilised to a wider range and greater number of operational incidents. On-call retention and maintenance of skills has also improved during 2024/25 following our on-call roaming appliance trial, when an on-call Pump is Wholetime status they can be targeted to provide cover at the high-risk areas of the county

and therefore the Operational response area increases along with opportunity to respond to an increased number of operational calls.

A further improvement seen during 2024/25 is with our Station Commander (SC) Flexi Rota. In principle the rota is now self-sustaining under the management of the Resource Management Unit (RMU). Should it fall short due to sickness, leave, courses etc., RMU work with the remaining SC's to identify and arrange appropriate cover for the duty shortfall at a previously agreed rate rather than paying overtime which provides financial savings to the service. This is managed by the RMU who work closely with the Flexi Duty System (FDS) SC's resulting in achieving our target of ensuring that CFRS does not drop below the minimum of 5 x FDS SC's on 24 duty every day. This ensures appropriate officer cover across the county 365 days a year. This has been achieved through the introduction of the new FDS agreement which has increased both the engagement of the FDS SC's and provided the RMU with the tools to arrange operational cover and subsequently meeting the targets above at no additional cost to the service.

A recent introduction of the Text Local facility, a low-cost automated text facility, has resulted in a massive efficiency in administrative time and phone call cost savings for both RMU (during office hours) and the Duty Officer (out of Hours) and has helped to maintain operational cover across the county.

Over the past 12 months, there have been 8,095 home fire safety visits, which is an increase of 26% on the previous 12-month period (6,434). Of the visits delivered by CFRS staff, 90.3% of households contained at least one person with at least one vulnerability or risk factor. Over the past 12-months, 82.8% of all visits were carried out where any person in the household was 65-years+ or disabled (age and disability are specific Home Office stated vulnerabilities). The increase in visits has been delivered through the two additional Community Wellbeing Officers (via collaboration) and an addition of two Community Safety Officers (CSOs). There has also been more focus on Community Fire Safety work for the Roaming pumps.

The Service has supported private medical funding for operations for colleagues who have been on long term sick for prolonged periods. The Service considers the current length of absence and recovery to wait for NHS treatment including the cost of sickness absence during this period, in comparison to the cost of private treatment and the cost of sickness absence. For one colleague the NHS cost including sickness totaled £33,712, and private funding including sickness totaled £26,412. With a Service saving of £7,300.

6.4 Income generation

Our charging policies are listed below

Activity	Description	Charging Basis
Special Service Charges	Attending special service operational incidents e.g. lift release, locked out of properties, where a charge is due (charges do not apply to vulnerable persons).	Set fee based on costs to provide the service
Hire of equipment	The loan of salvage sheets at incidents such as roof fires or house fires where the equipment needs to be left in situ	Set fee based on costs to provide the service
Hydrant testing	The testing, examination and repair of private fire hydrants	Set fee based on costs to provide the service
Photocopying	A charge set for printing in both black & white and colour at CFRS site for non authority use	Set fee based on costs to provide the service
Fire Reports & Fire investigation reports	To provide Insurance companies and private clients with a fire report when requested.	Set fee based on costs to provide the service
Cylinder recharge	The costs to private companies and other Fire & Rescue Services to recharge a cylinder of air	Set fee based on costs to provide the service
Automatic Fire Alarms charges for collecting Stations	An annual charge for access to dedicated telephone lines to our combined control for automatic fire alarms	Set fee based on costs to provide the service
Interviews with fire investigation officers and incident commanders	Charges for interviews between fire investigation officers and incidents commanders for the purpose of insurance and loss adjusters	Set fee based on costs to provide the service
Cross border charges	Charges for providing assistance to and from other Fire & Rescue for the provision of fire and rescue activities	MOU agreements - charging based on previous LGA charging Mechanism (Average of 3 years incidents - set rate per incident) unless agreed differently otherwise
Charging to other Local Authorities	Charges to other local Authorities for shared services and collaboration activates	MOU's with specific agreements. Charging based on actual costs incurred
Firebreak Course	Charging to provide 1 day or 1 week fire cadet courses to schools	1 day - £45 per student 1 week - £4,500 per course

		based on costs incurred to deliver courses
Primary Authority Scheme	Charging to local organisations for primary authority activities	Costs based on actual activity delivered
Portable Misting Systems	Charges for the installation and maintenance of portable misting systems installed into properties	Installation costs shared with house owner for the installation of the unit. Maintenance and call charges based on actual costs.
Co- Responding	Charges due to East of England Ambulance Service for attendance to co-responding incidents	Charges based on actual costs incurred by authority to attend the incident
Staff costs	Charging for costs incurred by the authority for an employee. E.g. private mileage	Charged based on expenditure incurred
Rents	Charging for rents for use of Authority properties	Charges based either on market value of property or nominal amount agreed
Cycle scheme	Charges to Employees for the provision of a salary sacrifice cycle to work scheme	Charges based on cycle scheme agreement
Awards sponsorship	sponsorship packages available for specific supplier to contribute and attend the annual Authority Awards evening	Gold Package - £2,500 Silver Package - £1000 Bronzer Package - £500 Only provide packages up to the cost incurred for holding the event.
Community Wellbeing Officer	Collaboration between EEAST and CFRS with 60/40 split.	Invoice monthly for EEAST contribution to salary and vehicle costs over 18 months @ £5432.99 per month
Building Safety Regulator	2 x members of staff trained with BSR to assist with work as required	Recharge cost of £99.35 per hour when used

New income generated and other income:

During 2024/25 cash generated from short-term cash investments far outweighed that budgeted. The Service benefitted from higher interest rates than originally budgeted but also sought out to maximise on those by close scrutiny of short-term cash flows and investment opportunities.

In 2024/25 Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue entered into an agreement with EMED for parking facilities, enabling CFRS to charge for some site running costs.

During 2024/25 CFRS increased the number of Fire Break courses made available to the community, resulting in an increase in income of £20k and this is being further promoted in 2025/26.

We are in the process of setting up our operational training centre to be an accredited apprenticeship centre for firefighters, which will provide income through the apprenticeship levy.

Our recent investment in a consultant with knowledge of grant applications has rewarded us with a Huntingdon District Council Community Infrastructure Levy grant of £700k for 2025/26 meaning there is less burden on our revenue capital contribution and borrowing requirements. We plan to utilise this expertise to seek further grant opportunities.

6.5 Outcome based activities

Outcome-based activities are CRMP-aligned non-incident activities, which include home fire safety visits, business fire safety audits & other business safety engagements, site specific risk information reports, community initiatives (such as care home visits, fire cadets and youth engagement), and non-incident blue-light collaboration.

The crews have measures for training, prevention, protection, operational risk and community engagement activities. The activities undertaken are aligned to our CRMP and are based upon our highest risks within our county. We also adapt these targets if required to allow for a flexible approach to emerging risks or requirements.

The service records activities in electronic systems of record such as CFRMIS, Community Fire safety (CFS), Technical Fire Safety (TFS) and Operational risk, and Systel for mobilisation data. The data is analysed through local tactical and strategic overview by using various digital reports.

WHOLETIME WATCH TARGETS	Achieved 22/23	23/24	24/25	comments
TRAINING - 8 hours per tour				No data held to confirm this time assigned to watches to maintain operational competence and to support Phase 2 Firefighters.

OPS JOBS - 20-30 per year dependent on station (target for 2024 320-480)	206	297	351	Total CFRMIS Ops jobs for 16 watches per year
TFS JOBS - 33 per watch per year (Target for 2024 528)	545	459	525	Total CFRMIS TFS jobs for 16 watches per year
CFS JOBS (HFSV) - 96 per Watch and B01 = 144 (target for 2024 1728)	1801	1773	1717	Total CFRMIS CFS HFSV visits for 16 watches per year
DAY CREWED STATION TARGETS				
TRAINING - 8 hours per week				No data held to confirm this time assigned to watches to maintain operational competence and to support Phase 2 Firefighters.
OPS JOBS - 20 per year (target for 2024 60)	28	55	58	Total CFRMIS Ops jobs for 3 stations per year
TFS JOBS - 66 per year (target for 2024 198)	189	182	193	Total CFRMIS TFS jobs for 3 stations per year
CFS JOBS (HFSV) - 180 = B05/B13 and 200 = A20 (target for 2024 560)	618	573	573	Total CFRMIS CFS HFSV visits for 3 stations per year
ROAMING PUMP TARGETS				
TRAINING - 14 hours per week				No data held to confirm this time assigned to watches to maintain operational competence and to support Phase 2 Firefighters.
OPS JOBS - 20 per appliance per year (target for 2024 40)	0	13	42	Total CFRMIS Ops jobs for 2 Roaming Pumps per year
CFS JOBS (HFSV) - 730 per Pump (2 per day) (target for 2024 1460)	958	1519	1505	Total CFRMIS CFS HFSV visits for 3 stations per year
ANTICIPATED TIME ALLOCATION				
WT STATIONS (hours per tour)				

Training: 8hrs minimum				No data held to confirm this time assigned to watches to maintain operational competence and to support Phase 2 Firefighters.
CFS: 3hrs minimum Community Engagement: 2hrs minimum	355.8	268.5	289.5	Total Community Engagement (excl HFSV) for 16 watches per year (Hours)
TFS: 3hrs minimum	627.7	881.5	959.8	Total hours per year
OPS: 4hrs minimum	407.9	682.5	775	Total hours per year
Ops Calls: 5hrs (10% of all time)	4324	3691	3972	Total hours per year (incidents attended)
Available: 4hrs (to include routines, emails, admin, bookings, personal study and additional hours for any of the above)				
7 DAY CREWING (Hours per week) (2 Watches)				
Training: 8hrs minimum				No data held to confirm this time assigned to watches to maintain operational competence and to support Phase 2 Firefighters.
CFS: 4hrs minimum Community Engagement: 2hrs minimum	65.4	98.1	155.8	Total Community Engagement (excl HFSV) for A20 per year (Hours)
TFS: 3hrs minimum	99.3	111.5	108.3	Total hours per year
OPS: 4hrs minimum	31.2	78.2	93.3	Total hours per year
Ops Calls: 5hrs (10% of all time)	401	283	326	Total hours per year (incidents attended)
Available: 7.5hrs (to include routines, emails, admin, bookings, personal study and additional hours for any of the above)				
5 DAY CREWING (Hours per week)				
Training: Minimum 8hrs minimum				

CFS: Minimum 8hrs minimum Community Engagement: 3hrs minimum	72.1	88.3	47.8	Total Community Engagement (excl HFSV) for B13 and B05 combined per year (Hours)
TFS: 6hrs minimum	180.3	241.4	259.1	Total hours per year
OPS: 4hrs minimum	57.3	77.7	69.1	Total hours per year
Ops Calls: 5hrs (10% of all time)	634	471	567	Total hours per year (incidents attended)
Available: 8hrs (to include routines, emails, admin, bookings, personal study and additional hours for any of the above)				

We record the outcome of the activity along with time spent and then have various levels of assurance in place for the work to be completed. As an example, we have period assurance in Technical Fire Safety activity, local assurance of quality in Operational risk and central oversight by our Operational Support Group, assurance of operational activity through Ops excellence meetings, centrally lead deep diving station assurance inspection programme. And local assurance for the completion of Community Fire Safety activity, soon to be enhanced by a central resource.

We continually look to improve efficiency in our activities. Most recently we have reintroduced ward-based work for watches which will focus attention and times; our Community and Operational Intelligence project is exploring enhanced connectivity in the field to reduce admin burden time. We have reintroduced a 2-visit per month measure for community engagement activity following the recent efficiencies in training requirements.

6.6 Workforce Capacity

We undertook a productivity capacity review in 2023/24. This provided some thoughts on maximum theoretical output. This led to an increase in activity. We review work activity monthly through 121's and quarterly through excellence meetings. This allows us to identify capacity issues and where there is opportunity to increase capacity. We are now looking to implement an app to track work activities on watches to account for other types of work activity. Our productivity measures are set by us, understanding how much time we allocate to each type of activity and is cross-checked against actual time for completion.

We have robust data through our various reports which are managed centrally through our Business Intelligence and Performance team.

The ability for us to understand how much time and how many activities people are completing has allowed us to scrutinise productivity. We revise our performance standards annually, which demonstrates how this process has increased measures each year.

At the end of 2024 we revised our training requirements (detailed in 5.8) which has released more time for crews to undertake Community engagement activities (detailed in 6.3). In 2023 we revised measures in Safe and Well visits for our roaming appliances and increased Technical Fire Safety output. In 2022/23 following a review and change to our AFA attendance policy we increased our Ops risk visit measures.

6.7 Meeting the 3% productivity Target.

Using the recent productivity review new minimum standards have been set and are reviewed on a quarterly basis. Review dates have been changed to ensure watches are maintaining progression towards requirements. Our baseline for activities is based upon useable time available once admin time and rest time has been incorporated.

We continue to review our activities as outlined in 6.5, looking at where and how productivity can be improved. In addition to these activities we have also had an increase in phase two firefighters in the county. Our crews have been able to spend more time supporting specific training requirements for probationary firefighters alongside supporting on-call stations with increased skill sets notably in water.

With reference to the table in 6.5, we have seen an increase in job completion output of 32% from 23/24 - 24/25 and an 8% in time spent on CFS, TFS, OPS work and OPs calls. This follows an increase in job completion of 25% from 22/23 - 23/24 and a 26% increase in time spent on the activities listed above. These increases in work delivery are in addition to increased demand for training delivery due to additional phase two FF's moving into the service. Our activities are targeted to our risk groups.

Additional community engagement activity has been added to each Whole-time crew. This additional community engagement work is listed for 2 hours per month per crew and is focused at school engagement reacting to growing prevention trends.