



Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

Decision Report

Report reference number: 009-24

Government security classification: Not protectively marked

Title of report: Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024/25

Area of county / stakeholders affected: Service-wide

Report by: Neil Cross, Chief Finance Officer

Date of report: 26/03/2024

Enquiries to: Neil Cross, Chief Finance Officer

1. Purpose of the report

This purpose of this report is to approve the Authority's 2024/25 Productivity and Efficiency Plan. This is to be submitted to the Home Office by 31 March 2024 and is also to be published on the Authority's website.

2. Recommendations

The Commissioner is asked to approve the Authority's 2024/25 Productivity and Efficiency Plan for submission to the Home Office and publication on its website.

3. Benefits of the proposal

The plan explains how the service aims to deliver efficiencies and increase productivity against the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) sector commitments. This has been prepared in line with the Home Office guidance.

4. Background and proposal

During the 2021/22 Spending Review, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) made a proposal that, across Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) in England, the sector could:

- Create 2% non-pay efficiencies per annum in the period 2021/22 to 2024/25.
- Increase productivity by 3% in the period 2021/22 to 2024/25. The NFCC quantified this metric as using 3% of wholetime firefighter hours available to deliver an additional 65,000 home fire safety checks and 18,000 fire safety audits per annum by the end of 2024/25.

The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire requested that all Fire and Rescue Authorities publish an annual productivity and efficiency plan. These plans will help the NFCC and Home Office to collate evidence and assess progress against the agreed targets at a national level.

The Home Office has issued guidance with regard to the production of productivity and efficiency plans, which need to be published and submitted to the Home Office by 31 March 2024. The Authority's Productivity and Efficiency Plan has been prepared in line with the guidance.

5. Alternative options considered and rejected

No alternative options have been considered.

6. Strategic priorities

The 2024/25 Productivity and Efficiency Plan is fundamentally linked to the Authority's 2024/25 budget, financial strategies (which include the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Reserves Strategy) and the current Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). These have all been set in line with the objectives included within the Fire and Rescue Plan 2019-2024.

7. Operational implications

There are no direct operational implications resulting from this decision. Any operational implications will be considered as part of any workstream considered within the plan.

8. Financial implications

The 2024/25 Productivity and Efficiency Plan explains how the service aims to deliver efficiencies and increased productivity against the NFCC sector commitments.

There are £0.8m of cashable efficiencies included within the 2024/25 budget, which have been included within the MTFS. Within the MTFS, there are also £2.2m of unidentified savings required in 2024/25 resulting from the uncertainty of future government grants, most notably the Services Grant.

Any cashable benefits that may result from the transformational plans outlined in the Productivity and Efficiency Plan have not yet been included within the MTFS. We will be profiling our expected long-term savings from our transformational plans alongside identifying additional in year savings via our Productivity and Efficiency Board.

9. Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications resulting from this paper. The 2024/25 Productivity and Efficiency Plan has been requested by the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire and is to be submitted to the Home Office by 31 March 2024.

10. Staffing implications

There are no direct staffing implications resulting from this paper. Staffing implications will be considered as part of any workstream considered within the plan.

11. Equality and Diversity implications

We have considered whether individuals with protected characteristics will be disadvantaged as a consequence of the actions being taken. Due regard has also been given to whether there is impact on people who identify as having any of the following characteristics as defined within the Equality Act 2010:

Race	N	Religion or belief	N
Sex	N	Gender reassignment	N
Age	N	Pregnancy & maternity	N
Disability	N	Marriage and Civil Partnership	N
Sexual orientation	N		

The Core Code of Ethics Fire Standard has been fully considered and incorporated into the proposals outlined in this paper.

12. Risks

There are no direct risks resulting directly from this paper. However, given the current economic situation, there are risks that the service could face further unbudgeted financial pressures for 2024/25. In particular, the pay awards for both Green and Grey book staff have not yet been agreed for 2024/25 and, should any final agreements be in excess of the amounts budgeted, the service will need to identify plans for further efficiencies to ensure that there is no budget gap.

13. Governance Boards

The Productivity and Efficiency Plan was approved in principle at the Strategic Board meeting on 6 March 2024.

14. Background Papers and Appendices

Background papers

Letter from the Home Office's Interim Director (Fire, Events and Central Management Directorate) to Chief Fire Officers and Fire Finance Directors (12 February 2024)

Annex A: Guidance on Fire Productivity and Efficiency Plans

Annex B: Government Commercial Function Savings Methodology (July 2022)

Annex C: 2024-25 Fire Efficiency Template

Appendices


Appendix 1 – Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024/25

Decision Process

Step 1A - Chief Fire Officer Comments

(The Chief Fire Officer is asked in their capacity as the Head of Paid Service to comment on the proposal.)

.....I support the recommendation

Sign:  Date:.....26/03/2024


Step 1B – Consultation with representative bodies


(The Chief Fire Officer is to set out the consultation that has been undertaken with the representative bodies)

.....N/A – Official requirement.....

Step 2 - Statutory Officer Review

The report will be reviewed by the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority’s (“the Commissioner’s”) Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer prior to review and sign off by the Commissioner or their Deputy.

Monitoring Officer Sign: 
Print: P. Brent-Isherwood
Date: 26 March 2024

Chief Finance Officer Sign: 
Print: Neil Cross
Date: ... 26/03/2024

Step 3 - Publication

Is the report for publication? **YES**

If 'NO', please give reasons for non-publication (Where relevant, cite the security classification of the document(s). State 'none' if applicable)

None

If the report is not for publication, the Monitoring Officer will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

Step 4 - Redaction

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

- 1 Of Decision Sheet **NO**
- 2 Of Appendix **NO**

If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

N/A

Date redaction carried out:

If redaction is required, the Chief Finance Officer or the Monitoring Officer are to sign off that redaction has been completed.

Sign: Print:

Date signed:

Step 5 - Decision by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner or Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign:  PFCC

Print: **Roger Hirst** Date signed: **03/04/2024**