



**Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority**

**Decision Report**

<b>Report reference number:</b> 016-24
<b>Government security classification:</b> Not protectively marked
<b>Title of report:</b> <b>ECFRS (Essex Country Fire and Rescue Service) – Business Case for Use of reserves - People Services Directorate</b>
<b>Area of county / stakeholders affected:</b> Service wide
<b>Report by:</b> Colette Black, Director of People Services <b>Date of report:</b> 21 April 2024 <b>Enquiries to:</b> Colette Black, Director of People Services

**1. Purpose of the report**

To seek approval for the use of £54,383 from the Learning and Development Earmarked Reserve to fund roles within the People Services Directorate which will deliver efficiencies in financial years 2024/2025 and 2025/2026.

**2. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Commissioner approves the use of £54,383 from the Learning and Development Earmarked Reserve in order to:

- Re-evaluate an existing Learning and Development role to include the ability to run in-house courses,
- Re-evaluate and extend an existing temporary Apprenticeship and LRS role,
- Recruit two additional Recruitment Advisors (one permanent 0.6 FTE and one fixed term 0.6 FTE),
- Recruit an additional Assistant People Partner role for 12 months.

**3. Benefits of the proposal**

This recommendation enables:

- Delivery of in-house courses which will deliver a recurring year on year cashable saving
- Reduced recruitment agency spend which delivers a cashable saving

- Optimised use of our new applicant tracking system which delivers a non-cashable but measurable saving
- Improved attendance case management with shorter duration and case closure times which delivers a non-cashable but measurable saving.

In 2024/25, this recommendation costs £54,383 (including on costs) and delivers a cashable saving of £31,480 in 2024/25 and non-cashable but measurable savings of 200 hours per year.

In 2025/26, this recommendation costs £9,095 and delivers ongoing cashable savings of £31,480 and non-cashable but measurable savings of 200 hours per year.

More details are shown in figure 1 below:

<b>Description</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Benefit</b>	<b>Cashable / non-cashable</b>	<b>Measurable</b>
Re-evaluate Learning and Development role to include the ability to run in-house courses.	£7,772 (salary uplift including on-costs). Cost is recurring from 2024/25 onwards.	Delivery of in-house courses (minimum of 2 per month).	Cashable Average course cost is £895 x 24 sessions = £21,480	Yes Reduction of £21,480 for cost centre 9304 0710
Re-evaluate Apprenticeship and LRS role and extend temporary role.	£11,341 (salary uplift including on-costs). Revaluation part of cost is recurring from 2024/25 onwards - £1,323. Temporary extension not recurring.	Delivery of hydra / people management courses in-house	Cashable £5,000 saving from 9304 0710 budget	Yes Reduction of £5,000 for cost centre 9304 0710
Contracts for Recruitment Advisors (1 permanent 0.6 FTE and 1 fixed term 0.6 FTE)	£27,537 (salary including on-costs after netting off from existing budget) Cost for 2024/25 only, not recurring.	Reduction of agency spend	Cashable £5,000 saving from recruitment budget.	Yes Reduction of £5,000 for cost centre 9304 4016.
		Optimisation of new applicant tracking system	Non-cashable time savings	Yes Time saving per vacancy of 2 hours x 100 vacancies per year.
Temporary contract (12 months) for an Assistant People Partner role	Cost - £7,733 (salary including on-costs after netting off from existing budget)	Improved attendance case management with shorter duration and case closure times	Non cashable	Yes If every case was 2 days shorter, estimate a non-cashable nominal saving of £50 per case.

N.B. 'On costs' are estimated at 30%. All savings and efficiencies are to be tracked through Productivity and Efficiency Board.

#### **4. Background and proposal**

This business case follows on from setting the 2024/25 budget. This budget removed proposed HR posts. Removal of the HR posts impacts on our ability to deliver services and so this business case proposes use of £54,383 of ear marked reserves to mitigate this.

This proposal follows the agreed principles for the use of reserves, i.e.:

- Alternative options have been considered,
- A business case has been produced in a decision report format to access ear marked reserves,
- A plan has been included to show how the funding will be paid back and over what period (measurable not necessarily cashable), and
- The detail has been captured in our Productivity and Efficiency Plan.

This proposal recommends the use of reserves to invest in four People Services areas to deliver the longer-term savings and benefits described above. The four areas of investment are:

- Re-evaluate an existing Learning and Development role to include the ability to run in house courses,
- Re-evaluate an existing Apprenticeship and LRS role and extend this temporary role,
- Contracts for two additional Recruitment Advisors (one permanent 0.6 FTE and one fixed term 0.6 FTE), and
- A temporary 12-month contract for an Assistant People Partner role.

#### **5. Alternative options considered and rejected**

- Option1 – As detailed above - Delivers savings and efficiencies.
- Option 2 – Do not seek use of reserves to fund roles - This option has the benefit of not using reserves. However, it also means that we cannot deliver the benefits detailed and so this option has been rejected.
- Option 3 - Reduce use of reserves by selecting those roles which deliver the most benefit - This option delivers some benefits but these are limited and so this option has been rejected.

#### **6. Strategic priorities**

This recommendation links to the following Fire and Rescue Plan priorities:

- Promoting a positive culture in the workplace
- Be transparent, open, and accessible
- Make best use of our resources

#### **7. Operational implications**

Continued improvements in learning and development, resourcing and attendance management have the potential to benefit all. Operational implications include continued professional development, delivering the right people with the right skills at the right time, and positively impacting availability.

## 8. Financial implications

The initial financial impact is the use of £54,383 from the Learning and Development Earmarked Reserve. There will be a recurring cost of £19,113 which relates to the re-evaluation of the Learning and Development and the Apprenticeship and LRS roles.

Recurring annual cashable cost savings of £20,470 are expected to result from this decision as outlined in Section 3.

## 9. Legal implications

There are no legal implications associated with this decision report.

## 10. Staffing implications

The Service has a duty to its employees to ensure they are given the necessary resources to enable them to carry out their duties.

## 11. Equality and Diversity implications

The actions being taken will not have a disproportionate impact on individuals with protected characteristics (as defined within the Equality Act 2010), when compared to all other individuals and will not disadvantage people with protected characteristics.

<i>Race</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Religion or belief</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>Sex</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Gender reassignment</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>Age</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Pregnancy &amp; maternity</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>Disability</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Marriage and Civil Partnership</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>Sexual orientation</i>	<i>n</i>		

## 12. Risks

This policy supports the risk profile for two risks:

- SRR150005 - Due to a lack of investment and planning there is a risk that the Service does not develop and manage its people effectively resulting in a failure to deliver against the Service's People Strategy (Having the right people, in the right place, with the right skills, at the right time).
- SRR150019 - There is a risk that, due to the absence of a positive and supportive culture, the Service fails to provide a safe and inclusive culture which ensures the well-being of staff and contributes to attracting a diverse workforce.

## 13. Governance Boards

The Service Leadership Team has been updated by the Director of People Services through the decision-making process.

## 14. Background papers

N/A.

**Decision Process (016-24)**

**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 this recommendation .....

Sign:  .....

Date:.....24/4/24.....

**Step 1B – Consultation with representative bodies**

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

...NA

**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 April 2024

Chief Finance Officer

Sign: .....



Print: .....Neil Cross.....

Date: .. 23/4/24 .....

**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:**

- |          |                          |           |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Of Decision Sheet</b> | <b>NO</b> |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Of Appendix</b>       | <b>NO</b> |

**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: 08/05/2024 .....

**I do not agree the recommendations to this report:**

Sign: ..... (PFCC / DPFCC)

Print: ..... Date signed: .....