



Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

Decision Report

Please ensure all sections below are completed

Report reference number: 023-21 Government security classification Official
Title of report: Recognition Payment
Area of county / stakeholders affected: Countywide
Report by: Neil Cross – Chief Financial Officer (S151) Date of report: 25 February 2021 Enquiries to: Neil Cross – Chief Financial Officer (S151)

1. Purpose of the report

To seek agreement from the Commissioner to provide a one-off financial recognition payment to officers and staff. This is in recognition of the valuable contribution that everyone has made during a time of national crisis, allowing Essex County Fire and Rescue Service to continue delivering essential support to the communities of Essex whilst also supporting partners during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our people have shown amazing resilience, commitment and dedication during difficult times and we thank them for showing their true support and professionalism in all that they do.

2. Recommendations

That the Commissioner supports the decision to provide a payment of £100 to all Essex County Fire and Rescue Service staff and officers (Not including members of the Service Leadership Team) employed at 26th February 2021 as a reward for outstanding work for the public during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

3. Benefits of the proposal

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 officers and staff across Essex County Fire and Rescue Service have continued to provide a fire and rescue service during unprecedented times. Our people have gone above and beyond whilst also having to adjust within their personal circumstances and despite all these challenges have continued to deliver an outstanding service. This proposal recognises that contribution and considerable additional effort over the year and directly support the continued delivery of our service.

4. Background and proposal

The Service Leadership Team has supported a recommendation from the Chief Fire Officer that a payment should be made to all Officers and Staff (Not including members of the Service Leadership Team) as recognition for their outstanding work during this pandemic and has commented:

The 19th March 2021 marks the anniversary of the first national lockdown in response to the coronavirus pandemic – a truly unprecedented moment that none of us will forget.

When I cast my mind back to that time, I remember just how uncertain everything felt. I think about how suddenly, the world felt more dangerous and everything we had taken for granted could no longer be relied upon.

But more than anything, I remember how you - our colleagues – stepped up to doing what you do best: keeping people safe. I cannot tell you just how proud I am of each and every one of you for what you've achieved in the 12 months since then.

In the face of incredible challenges and what often felt like an ever-changing situation, you adapted. You stood strong. You were there for each other – and the people of the County of Essex, keeping them safe throughout the Pandemic.

So, as we look back on this past year and remember the sacrifices made, I wanted to make a small gesture to you all to show my appreciation.

You will receive an additional £100 payment (gross / before tax) in your March payslip. That payment has been made to every single colleague at our Service, with the exception of our Service Leadership Team.

I hope, as things begin to return to what we think of as normality, you and those you are close to can find something to enjoy it with. You deserve it.

Of course, this pandemic is not over and there is still work to do – but, slowly but surely, I've no doubt we will overcome this for good.

If approved then:

- a) the payment for £100 to all officers and staff (excluding the Service Leadership team) serving at 26th February 2021 will be:
- Paid in the March 2021 Payroll Run.
 - Subject to Tax and National Insurance
 - Non-Pensionable (unless required under Specific Pension Scheme Rules)

Legal Basis for Decision:

Under clause 4D(7)(b) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017), a fire and rescue authority created by an order under section 4A of that Act (i.e. a PFCCFRA) may pay “remuneration, allowances and gratuities to members of the authority’s staff.”

Costings

The total costs of the decision are set out below.

£100 Gross Payment to Staff		
Total Staff Employed (Exc Service Leadership Team)		1407
Gross Payment	£	100
Employers NI	£	13.80
Apprenticeship Levy	£	0.50
Total Gross Cost	£	114.30
Total Gross Cost	£	160,820
Pension Cost (LGPS Pension Scheme)	£	7,144
Total Cost in 2020/21	£	167,964

5. Alternative options considered and rejected

Other payment options were considered. The option within this paper are deemed to be the most appropriate for the outcome required.

It is also important to recognise the valuable contribution that Volunteers have made during the Pandemic. Volunteers are not on the Payroll of Essex County and Fire Service and the issue of a gift voucher was ruled out due to the potential tax implications that may have arisen on the Volunteers. The service would like to recognise the work of the Volunteers and are considering how this is best done.

6. Strategic priorities

Valuing our people and supporting one another in all that we do.

7. Operational implications

This decision recognises the outstanding operational work during the pandemic but does not have any specific operational implications.

8. Financial implications

The estimated cost of £167,964 will be funded from in year budget under spends.

9. Legal implications

The legal basis for the decision is set out above.

10. Staffing implications

The recognition payment is to all staff employed by Essex County Fire and Rescue Service on 26th February 2021 as mentioned above.

11. Equality and Diversity implications

There are no direct equality and diversity implications applicable.

12. Risks

The legal basis for the decision has been considered carefully and used for the desired outcome.

13. Governance Boards

The proposal was agreed by the Service Leadership Team Meeting on 9th February 2021.

14. Background papers

N/A

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 this recommendation.



Sign: Jo Turton

Date: 5 March 2021

Step 1B – Consultation with representative bodies

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

No consultation with the rep bodies is required as this is a business decision.

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: Darren Horsman

Date: 8 March 2021

Chief Finance Officer

Sign: 

Neil Cross

Date: 5 March 2021

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)

.

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

