



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

**Decision Report**

**Report reference number:** 020-23

**Government security classification:** Not protectively marked

**Title of report:** Efficiency and Productivity Plan 2023/24

**Area of county / stakeholders affected:** Service-wide

**Report by:** Neil Cross, Chief Finance Officer

**Date of report:** 29/03/2023

**Enquiries to:** Neil Cross, Chief Finance Officer

**1. Purpose of the report**

This purpose of this report is to approve the Authority's 2023/24 Efficiency and Productivity Plan. This is to be submitted to the Home Office by 31 March 2023 and is also to be published on the Authority's website.

**2. Recommendations**

The Commissioner is asked to approve the Authority's 2023/24 Efficiency and Productivity 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 Guidance that has been issued.

**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 also 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.

Following the announcement of the provisional local government finance settlement, the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire wrote to all Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 requesting that all standalone fire and rescue authorities publish an efficiency and productivity plan for the financial year 2023/24, in relation to the NFCC targets.

On 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023, the Home Office issued further guidance in regard to the efficiency and productivity plans which includes:

- Budget: Table with 2023/24 budget that breaks down sources of income and planned spending
- Reserves: Summary of reserves available as at 31 March 2023 and planned use of reserves
- Precept: FRA to outline their decision on the use of the £5 precept flexibility and what has led them to this decision
- Efficiency: Table of efficiency savings (in £ / % terms) that the FRA is looking to achieve in 2023/24 (and future years if plans are available) and in what areas of spend.
- Productivity: How the FRA is looking to drive productivity in 2023/24, and what means they have for measuring productivity

It is also recommended that the Efficiency and Productivity Plan covers additional areas such as collaboration, transformation plans, asset management and investment in technology, procurement and any other local initiatives that are considered applicable.

The Authority's Efficiency and Productivity Plan has been prepared in line with the guidance.

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

No alternative options considered.

## **6. Strategic priorities**

The 2023/24 Efficiency and Productivity Plan is fundamentally linked to the Authority's 2023/24 budget, financial strategies (which include the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 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 2023/24 Efficiency and Productivity Plan explains how the Service aims to deliver efficiencies and increased productivity against the NFCC Sector commitments.

The Service's latest MTFs shows a balanced position with no use of General Reserves. The £1.1m of cashable efficiencies included within the 2023/24 budget have been included with the MTFs.

Within the MTFs there is £0.6m of unidentified savings required in 2024/25 which is 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 this 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 2023/24 Efficiency and Productivity 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<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

## 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 being part of 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 from the paper. However, given the current economic situation, there are risks that in-year cost pressures may arise. The grey book pay award agreed on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023 was for a 7% pay award for 2022/23 (backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022) and 5% for 2023/24. This is in excess of the amounts budgeted for 2023/24 and the service will need to identify plans for further efficiencies to ensure that there is no budget gap.

## 13. Governance Boards

Strategic Board on 16<sup>h</sup> March 2023

Service Leadership Team on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023

## 14. Background papers


Appendix 2 - Home Office Spreadsheet (Annex B)  
Appendix 3 - 2023/24 Efficiency and Productivity Plan

**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:.....30/03/2023.....

**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: 30 March 2023

Chief Finance Officer

Sign: .....  .....

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

Date: .. 30/03/2023 .....

**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 | <b>NO</b>  |
| 2 | Of Appendix       | <b>YES</b> |

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

The Home Office letter is not to be published

Date redaction carried out: 03/04/2023...

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

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

Date signed: 17/05/2023 .....

**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: 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

I do not agree the recommendations to this report:

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

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