



Essex County  
Fire & Rescue Service

# **Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Efficiency & Productivity Plan 2023/24**

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## 1. Introduction and Background

The purpose of this document is Essex County Fire and Rescue (ECFRS) to set our plans for efficiency and productivity for 2023/24.

During the 2021/22 Spending Review, The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) made a proposal that across Fire and Rescue Services (FRS's) 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 wholtime 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.

On 19 December 2022, the provisional local government finance settlement was published by the Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for 2023/24 and 2024/25. The statement confirmed that for 2023/24:

- The Council Tax Referendum Principle for standalone Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) will be £5.
- The Revenue Support Grant will increase by the September 2022 CPI measure of inflation, which is an increase of 10.1%. This resulted in a £0.98m increase for the Service.
- The Services Grant that was created in 2022/23 would continue into 2023/24, however this will be reduced from £1.1m to £0.6m. Part of the Services Grant was to originally compensate Authorities for a proposed increase in National Insurance Contributions in 2022/23 and the as this is no longer going ahead, the level of the Service Grant has been reduced.

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 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 the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023, the Home Office issued some further guidance in regard to the productivity and efficiency plans. This document has been prepared in line with the guidance.

Our plan explains how the Service aims to deliver efficiencies and increased productivity against the NFCC Sector commitments.

A key objective of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC), as stated in the 2019 to 2024 Fire and Rescue Plan, is to improve the safety of the people of Essex by making the best use of resources and ensuring value for money. As part of achieving this the PFCC has challenged the service to deliver annual efficiency and productivity savings of between 1.5% to 3% of the Net Budget Requirement each year. This challenge has been pivotal in ensuring our investment in prevention work has measurable targets and achieves agreed outcomes, that we use new technology and business processes to improve service efficiency, that we make more effective use of our

estate including sharing and rationalising with our partners and that we explore and develop further opportunities to collaborate.

The Service intends to update and report on the progress of the Efficiency and Productivity Plan on a regular basis.

## 2. Budget

The budget has been set during a challenging economic landscape, where the current rate of inflation in the UK reached 10.5%. The latest quarterly Bank of England Monetary Policy Report was published on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023. ([Monetary Policy Report - February 2023 | Bank of England](#)).

It is anticipated that UK inflation will fall sharply in the year. However, the labour market remains tight and domestic price and wage pressures have been stronger than expected, suggesting risks of greater persistence in underlying inflation. The UK inflation target remains at 2%.

The Service is making good progress on delivering against the Fire and Rescue Plan priorities and, in acknowledgement of the work still to do, there are a number of important investments that the Service have identified for 2023/24.

These investments total £1.3m which include:

- £0.5m On Call Firefighters - The Service has been successful in recruiting over 170 on call fire fighters since 2019. However, it can take up to three years to fully train a firefighter, investment in additional training is critical. This creates a cost implication to increase time and training available to these staff or face the risk of fire appliances not being available.
- £0.3m Training Roles - To assist in the support of staff to obtain and maintain operational competence, additional resources are being secured in the form of Breathing apparatus and Driving instructors.
- £0.3m On Call Liaison Officers (OCLO's) - The Service has piloted the use of OCLO's to assist in supporting the recruitment and retention of on call colleagues. Due to the success of this pilot, it is the Service's intention to substantiate the posts.
- £0.1m Resource Management Unit (RMU) – This is an investment in resources which will improve the planning of operational availability, which in turn will enable more efficient and proactive planning and decision making.

In addition to these important investments, the current cost of living pressures has had a significant impact on the Service's budget and has created further budget pressures for 2023/24 in excess of £6m.

Employment Costs equate to approximately 75% of the Service's total budget, with the numbers of firefighters employed being the most significant element.

Pay pressures in Essex for 2023/24 are estimated to be £5.0m, which primarily relate to:

- £1.9m of pay pressure from 2022/23 from unbudgeted pay awards. This includes an assumption of a 5% pay award for Operational Staff.
- £2.7m of pay pressure in 2023/24 based on a 4% pay award. This also includes £0,4m for the creation of a local cost of living allowance for all staff (subject to affordability following the announcements of national pay settlements).
- £0.4m relating to additional pension charges as a result of the deficit in the LGPS pension scheme.

Non-Pay Pressures for 2023/24 total £1.1m, which is primarily driven by the increasing cost of Utilities (£0.8m) along with an increase in ICT costs (£0.3m).

A Summary of the key movements in the 2023/24 Core Budget are shown in the table below.

|  | £m           |
|--|--------------|
| <b>Opening Budget (carried forward from 2022/23)</b> | <b>82.16</b> |
| <b>2023/24 Base Budget</b>                           | <b>82.16</b> |
| Pay Inflation and Cost Pressures                     | 4.96         |
| Non Pay Inflation and Cost Pressures                 | 1.10         |
| New Investment and Service Demands                   | 1.30         |
| <b>2023/24 Base Budget plus Growth</b>               | <b>89.52</b> |
| Cashable Efficiencies (Savings)                      | (1.10)       |
| <b>2023/24 Net Budget Requirement</b>                | <b>88.42</b> |

In order to ensure that the Service creates a balanced budget, the Service continues to work hard to drive better service efficiencies.

The budget for 2023/24 includes £1.1m of cost savings, which is in addition to £3.9m of cost saving that have been driven out since 2020.

The £1.1m of cashable savings within the 2023/24 includes £0.5m of Pay savings and £0.6m in Non-Pay. The key items relate to:

- £0.5m reduction to Pay Costs due to:
  - £0.2m reduction in secondary contracts
  - £0.15m On Call Conversion
  - £0.1m due to a reduction in Pension Costs.
- £0.6m Non-Pay Costs - due to a reduction of £0.4m in the minimum revenue provision and a further £0.2m, a result of an increase in Interest Receivable due to more effective Treasury Management and an improvement in market rates.

Council Tax Collections equates to approximately 60% of the Service's core funding.

The 2023/24 precept proposal was presented to the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023, where a below inflation increase in the precept of £4.95 (6.57%) was approved. Total council tax receipts will increase by £4m in 2023/24, of which £3.2m relates directly to the change in the precept. The remaining amount of £0.8m is due to an increase in the Council Tax base.

The local government finance settlement provided the Service with a further £1.5m of funding which consisted of:

- £0.9m increase in the Revenue Support Grant, as a result of an inflationary increase being applied.
- £0.6m increase in the Baseline Level of National Non-Domestic Rates.

The level of Specific Government Grants has also increased by £0.8m which was due to:

- £1.4m increase in the Business Rate Relief Support grant as a result of the government compensating the Service for freezing the business rate multiplier.
- (£0.5m) reduction in the Services Grant, due to this part of the Services Grant being that originally created to compensate Authorities for an increase in National Insurance Contributions in 2022-23. As there is no longer an increase in National Insurance Contributions, the level of the Service Grant has been reduced. The total amount of Services Grant being included is £0.6m.
- (£0.1m) reduction in the Firelink Grant which is being phased out over 5 years,

A Summary of the Core Funding in the budget is shown in the table below:

|                                     | 2021/22       | 2022/23       | 2023/24       | 2023/24<br>Increase/ (decrease) |            |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------------------|------------|
|                                     | £m            | £m            | £m            | £m                              | %          |
| Revenue Support Grants              | 8.520         | 8.780         | 9.671         | 0.891                           | 10.1       |
| National Non Domestic Rates         | 16.510        | 16.510        | 17.130        | 0.620                           | 3.8        |
| Local Government Funding Settlement | 25.030        | 25.290        | 26.801        | 1.511                           | 6.0        |
| Council Tax Precept                 | 47.850        | 49.310        | 53.260        | 3.950                           | 8.0        |
| <b>Total General Funding</b>        | <b>72.880</b> | <b>74.600</b> | <b>80.061</b> | <b>5.461</b>                    | <b>7.3</b> |
| Government Grants                   | 6.387         | 7.500         | 8.340         | 0.840                           | 11.2       |
| <b>Total Funding</b>                | <b>79.267</b> | <b>82.100</b> | <b>88.401</b> | <b>6.301</b>                    | <b>7.7</b> |

### Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

The Service's latest MTFS shows a balanced position with no use of General Reserves.

The MTFS is continually reviewed and updated throughout the year. Each quarter it is reported to the PFCC through the Strategic Board.

A copy of the full budget paper (including the MTFS) can be found at [ECFRS Budget 2023-24- Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel 07.02.23.pdf \(essex-fire.gov.uk\)](#).

There are £1.1m of cashable savings included within the 2023/24 budget and are included within 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 efficiencies that may result from the Transformational Plans outlined in this Plan, have not yet been included within the MTFS.

Since agreeing the 2023/24 budget and MTFS, a grey book pay award was agreed on 6 March 2023. This was for a 7% pay award for 2022/23 (backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> July 22) 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.

The Service will be profiling our expected mid term savings from our transformational plans alongside identifying additional in year savings via our Productivity and Efficiency Board.



### 3. Reserves

Reserves that are held by the Service are categorised into two separate categories as follows:

- **Useable Reserves** – These reserves are those that the Service may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use (for example the Capital Receipts Reserve that may only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt).
- **Unusable Reserves** – These reserves are those that the Service cannot use to provide services. These arise from accounting adjustments and change annually as part of the year end process.

The table below shows a summary of the Services Useable Reserves as per the 2023/24 Reserves Strategy.

#### Summary Table of Reserves

| Summary Table of Reserves    | Published Balance on 31 March 2022<br>£000's | Projected Balance on 31 March 2023<br>£000's | Projected Balance on 31 March 2024<br>£000's | Projected Balance on 31 March 2025<br>£000's | Projected Balance on 31 March 2026<br>£000's |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Usable Reserves</b>       |  |  |  |  |  |
| General Reserves             | 4,341  | 3,056  | 3,056  | 3,056  | 3,056  |
| Earmarked Reserves           | 11,035                                       | 6,902  | 5,292  | 4,322  | 3,972  |
| Capital Receipt Reserves     | 13,152                                       | 13,254                                       | 11,415                                       | 6,665  | 1,915  |
| <b>Total Usable Reserves</b> | <b>28,528</b>                                | <b>23,212</b>                                | <b>19,763</b>                                | <b>14,043</b>                                | <b>8,943</b>                                 |

The 2023/24 Reserves Strategy can be found at [Reserves Strategy 2023-24.pdf \(essex-fire.gov.uk\)](#).

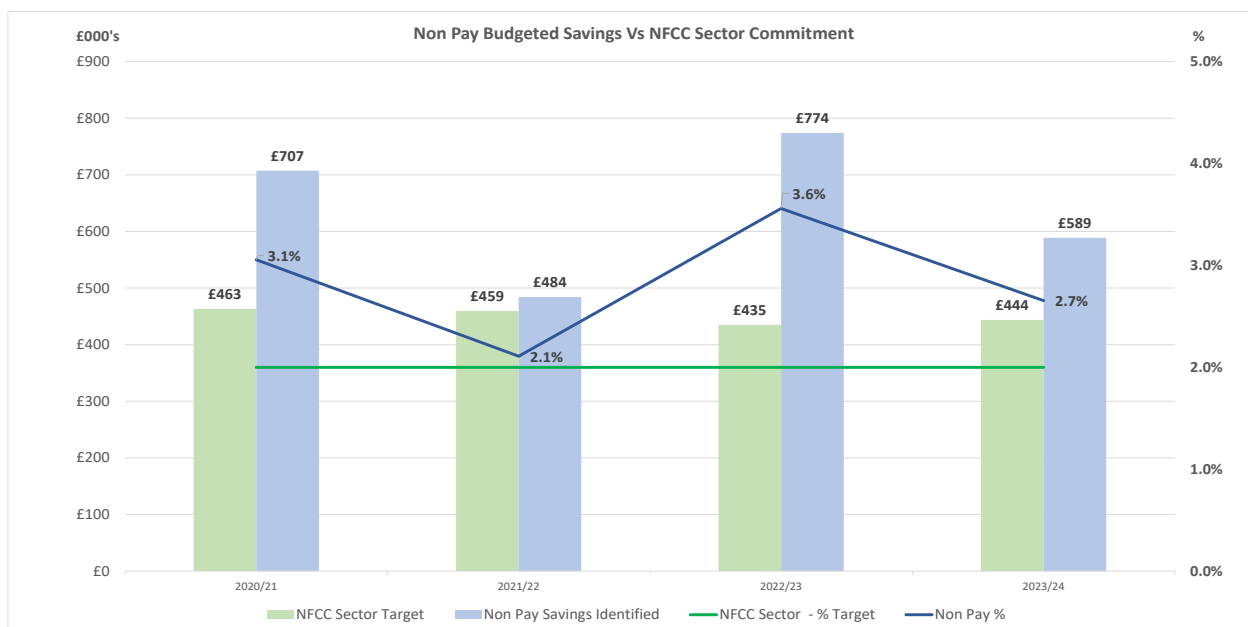
## 4. Efficiency

Efficiency is the relationship between the output from goods or services and the resources to produce them. Efficiency requires reducing the number of unnecessary resources used to produce a given output, including personal time and energy. For Fire and Rescue Authorities this involves removing unnecessary activities and delivering the same outcomes at a reduced cost.

The service has created a benefits management framework which details the necessary processes, controls and responsibilities required to ensure that the benefits of improvement initiatives are understood and delivered. Within this framework, the Service has created standard categories for any efficiencies which are: Cashable, Cost Avoidance, Non-Cashable – Quantifiable and Qualitative. Further definitions of these can be found in the Appendix.

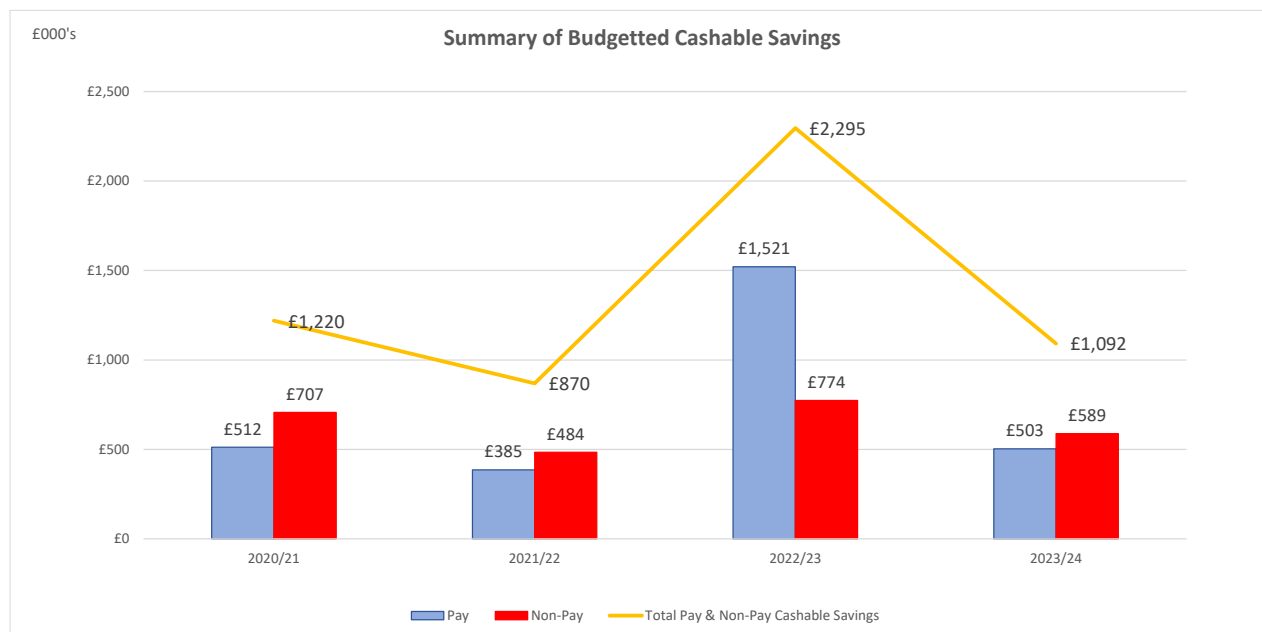
The Service has created a Productivity and Efficiency board in 2022/23. Within this board, a central register has been created to track efficiencies. The initial focus has been on ensuring that this central register has captured the Cashable Efficiencies made in the Service since 2020/21.

The service is tracking its performance against the NFCC Sector Commitment of 2% Non-Pay Efficiencies per annum. The service has made £2.4m of Non-Pay cashable efficiencies since 2020/21, with is shown the table below.



An example of the Non Pay Cashable savings made by the Service, is the £0.9m reduction in its minimum revenue provision since 2020/21. In order to achieve this, the Service has reviewed its lifing of fire appliances, produced its first capital strategy which has taken a much more progressive stance to utilising its capital receipts reserve and by tightening the capital programme.

In addition to the NFCC Sector Commitment, the Service is tracking all budgeted cashable efficiencies that have been made since 2020/21, which also includes Pay Savings. These are shown in the table below.



Pay Savings include a reduction of £1.7m to the ECFRS Core Budget resulting from the conversion of 4-day crew stations to On Call and £0.7m as a result of the restructuring of departments.

The service has also generated additional cashable efficiencies relating to the sale of surplus assets. This includes £7.4m for the sale of surplus day crew housing, which is being reinvested back into the service to fund other capital projects.

### **Transformation Plans**

During the last 12 months, the service has reviewed its governance arrangements around its' change and transformation programme.

The services now governs its transformation programme through the Portfolio Management Board (PMB).

The PMB is responsible for approving both the inclusion & prioritisation of projects and programmes into the portfolio of change. This board will monitor the delivery of the change activity along with prioritising resources required across the projects and programmes.

Once the change and transformation has been delivered, the tracking of the realisation of benefits will transfer to the Productivity and Efficiency board.

The portfolio of change is split into the following 4 programmes, which are key strategic areas for the Service:

- Digital and Data
- People
- Prevention, Protection and Response
- Estates

Within each programme are a number of transformational projects. Some of the key transformational projects within each programme for the coming year are highlighted below:

### **Digital & Data**

**Control Mobilising System** – The service is investing £1.9m into a new Control Mobilising System at its headquarters at Kelvedon Park. This will see the replacement of the existing ageing and technically obsolete system, with a digitally advanced system that is fit for the future. This will enable the Service to:

- Partner with one of more other Fire and Rescue Authorities to provide reciprocal business continuity, resilience and fall-back capabilities.
- Improved interoperability with partner agencies, including the opportunity to share risk information and incident data
- Improve the management of operational availability.
- Provides for future exploitation of digital platforms.

The capital investment is being funded via the Capital Receipts that have been generated from the previous disposal of surplus assets. The annual running costs of the new system, are in line with the current costs of the existing system. The implementation is expected to be completed by 31 July 2023.

**Finance System** – The service is required to replace its existing finance system, following the existing supplier withdrawing support for the product. The Service will be implementing a new system in the latter stages of 2023/24. There will be significant productivity and efficiency saving in moving to a more modern SaaS based application. This will be particularly around transactional processing, including Procure to Pay (“P2P”) process such as time to process invoices, payment runs, Bank reconciliations and stock management. It is also expected that there will be efficiencies around the budget monitoring and reporting processes.

**Frontline Technology** – The service will invest in Tablets for frontline crews which will enable improved real time communication between firefighters, command centres, and other emergency response units. The Service will also look to invest in digital asset recording technology which will reduce time spent on manual inventory procedures.

## People

**Applicant Tracking System** – A new Applicant Tracking System will be implemented by the end of 2023, for all employee groups within the Service. This will improve the user experience and will bring more automated / streamlined processes (e.g. On Boarding). This will eliminate a large amount of manual intervention. This will also result in a move from using 2 platforms at present, to one single solution. The project is expected to generate total efficiencies (cashable and non-cashable) of £0.1m per annum.

## Prevention, Protection and Response

**Workforce Management System** – The Service has procured a new workforce management solution. This system will enable the Service to improve their ability to understand current and future operational availability and enable proactive planning and decision making as a result. Being able to forecast and assess future risk will allow us to improve our operational response support and user experience at the same time. It will also result in some productivity improvements, as resources will be more effectively managed. It is anticipated that the service will reduce its overtime and additional shift working costs by £0.15m per annum, as result of this new system. The implementation is expected to be completed by November 2023.

**Review of Flexi Officer Rota** - We are reviewing our Flexi Officer Rota to ensure it is fit for purpose. The review will consider how best to provide robust and resilient Flexi Officer cover in the most efficient and effective way. We currently utilise a 'recall to duty process' especially when we are in spate weather conditions and to compensate for Officers taking annual leave. This is costly to the Service and the review will ensure that this is used only in exceptional circumstances. This review will consider our current establishment numbers on the flexi rota. It will consider out of county officers and if a delayed turnout is working – as there is a milage cost for this. The flexi rota is currently in a and-alone excel format – but will be moving into the Workforce Management System which will eliminate the need to have 2 people manually updating on a dynamic basis.. This review will be completed by end June 2023.

**Resource Management Unit** -Currently our operational (response) availability is managed through four different departments, using different people and systems to manage and operate operational resources. One source of truth is currently not available and we are relying on time consuming, dynamic manual intervention We will amalgamate all this activity into one Resource Management Unit. Using the Workforce Management System to proactively forecast and pre-plan in response to anticipated demand (for example anticipated spate weather conditions and leave periods). By amalgamating all activity, removing manual processes and proactively forecasting and deploying we will reduce shortfalls and use our resources in the most efficient, effective and productive way to provide the best Service possible to our communities. This project will be in two phases. We anticipate the first phase to be in place ahead of the summer period, by end of May 2023, with the second phase delivered in line with the Workforce Management System, by end November 2023.

## **Estates**

**Live Fire Training Relocation** - The Service is looking to invest in a modern and innovative central training centre to be located at the existing Headquarters Site, with £10m currently being earmarked as part of the Capital Program. There is a requirement to relocate from the existing Wethersfield Ministry of Defence site by the end of 2025. The full business case is expected to be completed by October 2023.

**Wholetime Station Modernisation** – The service is looking to invest in the modernisation of its wholetime fire stations. This will see the creation of individual private spaces, modern training room facilities, modern rest/wellbeing areas and the overall decor/air conditioning of buildings. The funding to complete the Wholetime station modernisation work spans over a six-year period, starting in 2023/24. Funding has been allocated to each year's asset protection capital funding across the six years. This timeline may be able to be reduced subject to further funding stream initiatives to provide the required capital investment.

**Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP)** – This is a planning tool to clarify intentions, priorities, and practices to be adopted in the management of property assets.

It takes a long-term view and considers the combination of organisational needs, community and stakeholder expectations and the realities of existing assets and asset management capabilities.

Asset management is a systematic process of acquiring, developing, operating, maintaining, and upgrading, of assets in the most cost-effective manner. The broad objective of asset management is to maximise property usage, value, and investment returns. This means reducing expenditure when possible, finding the most consistent and highest sources of revenue, and mitigating liability and risk, among other aspects.

- Supporting the delivery of strategic goals and objectives through the use of property assets.
- Setting a vision of where you want to be and mapping out the journey to that place.
- Identifying where value can be added and where investment is needed to achieve objectives.

The Service have currently commissioned a consultant to undertake a proof-of-concept SAMP which looks to review a key location and establish a range of potential opportunities.

It is anticipated that taking a more strategic approach to the management of its assets will enable future revenue savings to be identified and made. This may also lead to the identification of opportunities to raise capital receipts which would be used to invest directly back into the Services future capital programme which may accelerate some of the strategic estate's projects.

## 5. Productivity

Productivity can be defined as a ratio between the output volume and the volume of inputs. In other words, it measures how efficiently production inputs, such as workforce and resources, are being used in a service to produce a given level of output.

Productivity expectations for fulltime firefighter activities are aligned to the delivery of the current Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), and dynamically monitored through Performance Dashboards, accessible by senior and middle management teams and at a tactical fire station level. Performance is also monitored through the Continuous Improvement Board, providing strategic oversight of progress against targets .

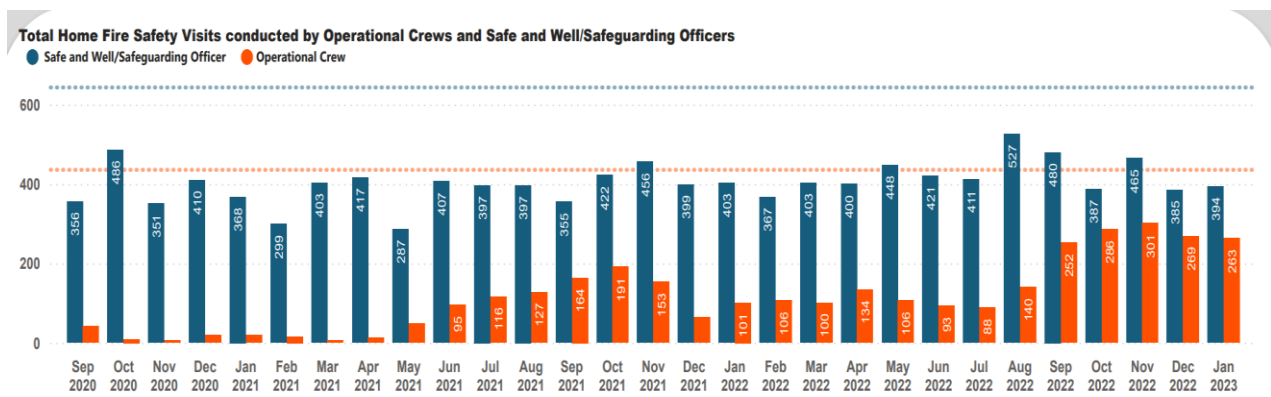
Wholetime Firefighter productivity is measured against:

- Prevention activity including physical risk-based domestic Home Fire Safety Visits
- Protection activity including risk-based engagements and audits.
- Local risk identification, management and recording activity including Operational Risk visits aligned to the FRS Act 2004 s7(ii)d.
- Learning and Development activities to maintain firefighter role competence.

### Home Fire Safety Checks and Fire Safety Audits

Improving productivity in fire and rescue service is demonstrated in a number of ways, for example what outputs staff provide (for example Home Fire Safety Checks and Fire Safety Audits), the impact of different shift patterns and whether they enable services to have the right number of people available at the right times, and whether systems and processes to support staff to provide greater outputs.

The Service currently captures some productivity metrics through its monthly performance dashboard reporting. This includes a summary of the total home fire safety visits that are being conducted, which is shown in the Graphs below.



|  | 2021  | 2022  | 2023  |
|--|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Home Fire Safety Visits</b>                       | 2,274 | 5,737 | 7,226 |
| <b>Home Fire Safety Visits - Operational Crew</b>    | 101   | 1,095 | 1,963 |
| <b>Home Fire Safety Visits - Inspection Officers</b> | 2,172 | 4,642 | 5,088 |
| <b>RBIP V High\High Audits</b>                       | 117   | 339   | 733   |

The number of Home Fire Safety Visits carried out by Operational Crews for the 10 months to January 23 is 1,963. This is expected to reach 2,500 for the full 12 months, which is an increase of 128% as compared to the prior year.

For 2023/24 the target for the number of Home Fire Safety Visits is 12,888 of which 5,200 will be carried out by Operational Crews.

### **Fire Protection**

The Protection Department is currently reviewing all areas of operation to identify areas in which we can increase productivity through adapting the way we work and embracing new technology, examples include:

- Streamlining data management by investing in our Community Fire Risk Management and Information System (CFRMIS). This will allow us to capture and record floor plans, external wall systems and manage reported faults, as per the new legislation, far more effectively and efficiently and capturing information from operational crews when they carry out their SSRP visits. This will result in staff spending less time on administrative duties and will create capacity to increase the number of fire safety audits and visits undertaken in line with our risk-based inspection programme (RBIP).
- We have broken high level targets under the RBIP down into Command Groups to improve performance monitoring. A monthly review of these targets allows the management team to direct resources appropriately to ensure we continue to meet our targets and get the highest levels of productivity.

Properties within the RBIP are classified into four categories:

- Very High Risk – (1,868 premises)
- High Risk – (7,886 premises)
- Medium Risk – (22,570 premises)
- Low Risk – (55,895 premises)

The commitment we have made within Protection:

- Very High Risk – pre-planned audits – committed to visiting all premises over a 3-year period.
- High Risk – pre-planned audits – committed to visiting all premises over a 5-year period.
- Medium Risk – operational crews to carry out audit visits over an 8-year cycle, with any premises that are non-compliant triggering a follow up audit.
- Low Risk – education from our Business Engagement Team. Any non-compliances will trigger a follow up audit.



Following the data refresh from July to December 2022 the Service has a monthly target of 148 audits (varying as premises information updates reviewed 6 weekly) at our Very High and High premises.

- To support delivery of the RBIP we have also invested in upskilling inspecting officers, ensuring we have the capability to deliver against set targets. A formal succession plan within the protection team now gives us the ability to plan for the future and reduce the overall impact on productivity within the department.
- We are working to reduce the number of Unwanted Fire Signals in the County. In 2023/24 a proposal will be prepared which will seek to reduce appliance attendance at Unwanted Fire Signals. These proposals will free up capacity of operational crews allowing them to focus more time in supporting other areas of Community Safety.


### On Call

We are developing the ability to utilise On Call staff to support crewing on our strategic stations, resulting in less standby moves for wholetime appliances which will reduce the impact on local productivity targets.

### Operational Training and Learning and Development

Investment in training has enabled greater levels of training delivery which supports acquisition, development and maintenance of competence. In key areas, we have been able to increase training delivery including, for 2021 and 2022, 104-124 call new recruit training places. Additionally, a focus on core skills has meant significant compliance with training.

Additionally, a focus on core skills has meant significant compliance with training meaning that we have fully trained crews trained and available to be fully productive across prevention, protection and response activities.

|  Name | Qualified operational personnel with exclusions | Compliance percentage |
|--|---|-----------------------|
| Breathing Apparatus  | 670   | 97%                   |
| ERD Driving  | 432   | 96%                   |
| Officer ERD Driving  | 52  | 100%                  |
| CSAP Lvl 2   | 587   | 100%                  |
| CSAP Lvl 3a  | 571   | 100%                  |
| Incident Command Lvl 1   | 292   | 98%                   |
| Incident Command Lvl 2   | 44  | 100%                  |
| Incident Command Lvl 3   | 12  | 100%                  |
| Incident Command Lvl 4   | 7   | 100%                  |

Greater use of on-line modules has enabled efficient roll out of key mandatory training including:

- Code of Ethics (released 21/02/22) – 89.5% completion
- Dignity at Work (released 21/03/23) – 88.1% completion
- Safeguarding (released 05/04/23) – 90.1% completion.

Use of on-line training reduces travel time and maximizes use of productive training time.

Use of a hybrid development methodology has enabled leadership development programs to reach 120 colleagues from 2020-22. This investment supports new and existing leaders to lead their teams effectively and in line with the priorities of the Service.

**Asset Management** – In 2023/24 the Service will look to introduce fully kitted spare appliances, which will reduce the down time associated with changing over appliances when an appliance is required to be serviced or repaired. This will increase the availability of crews.

**Business process mapping** - In 2023/24 the Service will also start some work to map out and understand key processes. The intention is to identify areas of inefficiency and to target such areas for future improvement. It will also be the intention to remove non value activity and reduce duplication. This will look to free up time to be deployed elsewhere in the organization.

## 6. Procurement

The Service has embarked on a procurement department transformation, which has resulted in the Service adopting a category management approach. This will also result in having a centralised procurement function within the Service.

A structured Category Management approach will enable the procurement team to carry out proactive planned commercial activities and help to generate savings, improve supplier performance, reduce supply risks and drive innovation and continuous improvement.

Prior to the transformation the Procurement team was very reactive and seen as a transactional function. Since adopting a category management approach, the procurement team have moved to become a more strategic function and are working more closely with each department to build a pipeline of upcoming tenders and areas of significant spend. This has allowed the procurement team to plan workload and support departments fully, from initial scoping of requirements through to contract management.

Previously the Service did not have a formal Procurement Strategy and in September 2022 a Procurement Strategy was approved by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. The purpose of the Procurement Strategy is to inform suppliers and interested parties of the key principles that drive our procurements and to provide a governance framework for procurement activity throughout the Service whilst adhering to procurement regulations.

Procurement will actively look for efficiencies in all procurement activity and any that arise are tracked.

The procurement team will always look for opportunities to collaborate with other public sector authorities wherever it is feasible and deemed value for money to do so. Collaboration will be explored for all tender opportunities where we can share learning, achieve greater value for money and/or efficiency savings.

The procurement dashboard report was implemented in 2022/23 to which includes an overview of the key procurements activity, monthly spend information and contract data. This continues to be developed as required and in 2023/24 the report will start to track all collaboration spend.

Successful collaborative procurement has been achieved with 7 Forces by the joining of the waste and grounds maintenance contract, which have a total contract value of £0.5m. Procurement have started to build relationships with the 7 Forces procurement team resulting in knowledge sharing and proactively identifying areas for joint procurement activity. Procurement also work closely with other Fire and Rescue Services to share best practice, lessons learnt, documentation and where it provides best value to do so utilise fire sector specific frameworks.

## 7. Collaboration

Essex Fire & Rescue Service has a mature Emergency Service Collaboration programme with Essex Police & the East of England Ambulance Service (EEAST). The programme was established in 2017 when the PCC took-on responsibility for the governance of the Fire & Rescue Service. The PFCC's 2017 Local Business Case for Change identified up to £30.8m of benefits that could be attained through Collaboration over a 10-year programme, with an expectation that at least 50% of those benefits could realistically be achieved.

In January 2023, the PFCC's Strategic Collaboration Board was informed that programme is currently profiled to achieve £14.7m benefits by 2027.

The PFCC tracks benefits from individual projects within the wider programme via project closure reports and annual reviews, reported to a bi-monthly Strategic Governance Board chaired by the PFCC. The PFCC receives a benefits tracker report at each meeting.

Some of the key Collaboration projects for 2023/24 are listed below:

**Dovercourt** - The re-location of Essex Police's Harwich Police Station to one of our Services sites in Dovercourt. This allows Essex Police to dispose of a costly capital asset that has high maintenance costs and relocate to a new, dedicated facility that will enable closer working between emergency services. This project will result in a Capital Receipt to the Service in 2023/24, with the project expecting completion in 2024/25.

**Fleet Workshop** - Essex Police & Essex Fire & Rescue Service are exploring the creation of a joint fleet workshop with the potential to improve efficiencies. It could also generate a capital receipt for the Service for the sale of its existing site, which would be reinvested into the Services capital programme.

The project has proceeded to full business case stage, with different operating models explored and presented to Chief Officers. The full business case is due to be presented to the Commissioner in November 23.

**Tri-Service Rural Prevention Officer** - Essex is piloting a Tri-Service Rural Prevention Officer to provide visibility and reassurance to communities; providing fire safety, community safety, and public health advice to prevent harm and improve outcomes for residents. After a successful initial pilot, the project is being expanded to cover another area to explore whether the benefits can be replicated.

The initial phase of the pilot is profiled to deliver cost-avoidance benefits to the Service of £85,175 per annum when compared to an On Call crew of four\* firefighters on an appliance, or £27,528 per annum against 2 on call firefighters.

**Education Officers** – The Service receive funding from Essex Police as a contribution towards the delivery of a joint education programme. This sees education officers from the Service deliver community safety as well as fire safety messages to young people.

The joint education programme is able to deliver a more efficient and effective service to schools and young people. Prior to the Joint Education Team, Essex Police had six designated officers completing education in school's activity and reached, on average, 20,000 children per year.

Essex Police now fully fund two Education Officers within the Service providing a cashable efficiency of £189,000 per annum annually and are now able to have interactions with around 100,000 children per year. A target has been set at 200,000 children per year.

**Fire Investigation Dog** –The use of the Service’s Fire Investigation Dog, which benefits from accreditation by Essex Police, can realise considerable savings by locating accelerants and supporting the forensic investigation of suspected arson incidents.

The benefits of the Fire Investigation Dog are being reviewed, but initial profiling suggests the gain could be substantial.

**East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST)** - The service is working closely with EEAST to utilise fire stations for parking, comfort breaks and re-charging of vehicles.

This will allow EEAST to rationalise its estate move to their new strategic estates Hub and Spoke model. The Service has agreed to meet the needs of EEAST through establishing which Fire Stations would offer the right strategic ambulance response posts. This agreement will be formalised at the start of for 2023/24 which an appropriate cost recharge agreement being put in place.

**Fleet Maintenance and Servicing** - The Service continues to provide maintenance and servicing of frontline ambulances on a cost recovery model to EEAST. The cost recovery model is reviewed on an annual basis. The volume of work is expected to increase over the forthcoming year. The current value of work is approximately £170,000.

The Service has also developed a collaboration with Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service and is undertaking maintenance and repairs of appliances. This will look to develop further in 2023/24 where future opportunities are being explored with neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services.

## 8. Other Local Initiatives

The Service is also involved with a few other Local Initiatives which are detailed below.

### Restorative Justice FireBreak

The Service delivers Restorative Justice Firebreak courses which are designed to engage young people and adults in Restorative Justice practices and referral processes. These usually take the form of an intensive 5-day intervention programme that provides a positive alternative learning environment. The programme is carried out at an operational fire station and combines classroom-based learning with practical activity. The courses offers a unique opportunity for participants to engage with operational firefighters who have been given additional training to become Fire Break Instructors.

The Service sets out to deliver at least 11 Restorative Justice Firebreak courses in 2023/24, each comprising of 10 to 12 students.

Statistics suggest that individuals involved in the Restorative Justice process are 14% less likely to reoffend. The financial benefits of not reoffended on the Judicial System and Greater Essex is estimated to be £48,000 per annum.

### Community Speed Watch

The Service runs the Community Speed Watch Scheme on behalf of the Strategic Essex Roads Partnership. The scheme is delivered by Volunteers across Essex to deter speeding and ultimately prevent road deaths.

Each fatal road death across the UK is calculated as an economic cost of £1.5m, with serious injury equating to £269,000.

It is very difficult to quantify the exact benefits of the Community Speed Watch Scheme. However, by raising awareness of road safety and educating motorists to reduce their speed, we aim to help reduce road deaths and serious injury.

### Safe & Well Visits

Safe and Well Visits are visits that can include a fire prevention, burglary prevention and connected/relevant health and wellbeing input. Sometimes, Safe and Well Visits result in referrals being made for the recipient for additional help and support from partner agencies.

In addition to our staff providing such visits, there is a bank of volunteers who have received appropriate training by the service to carry out Safe & Well Visits in their communities.

The planned delivery for 2023/24 is 2,000 visits by volunteers, which equates to approximately a non cashable benefit of £0.136m to the Service and Essex Police.

## 9. Appendix

The Service's standard categories for any efficiencies are defined below.

- **Cashable Efficiency**
  - This is where there is a direct reduction in the costs incurred e.g.: cancelation of an existing service contract resulting in future cash savings.
  - Changes that result in the Service having more money to spend and/or greater income/revenue.
  - These can be re-occurring or one off.
  - Capital savings.
  - An example of a cashable benefit is where a change initiative results in a service/goods no longer being required, e.g.: disposing of a printer (and not replacing this) resulting in the money no longer being spent.
  
- **Cost Avoidance**
  - Is a type of cost reduction but refers to eliminating or preventing future costs arising.
  - Cost avoidance may involve some initial expenditure but at a lower level than the expected future cost increase.
  - An example of this where an additional service is required to future proof a system or mitigate higher potential costs e.g a warranty on treadmills to mitigate the future repair costs.
  
- **Non-Cashable – Quantifiable**
  - This is where there is a saving in time spent achieving the same output (where you are able to do the same work in less time e.g.: system/process improvement where documents are automatically scanned rather than manually scanning them).).
  - A change which can demonstrate a measurable/observable improvement between the existing activity and the anticipated post change implementation activity.
  - The current activity will need to have a baseline measure / KPI / metrics (preferably one already being used by the business unit and/or one used by the Business Area Manager) to be established prior to any Improvement Initiative being implemented. This baseline measure will provide the value(s) to be used to show the benefits realisation/evaluation
  - For Improvement Initiatives resulting in: -
    - Productivity improvement/benefit - an increase in output from the same activity input should be shown.
    - Efficiency improvement/saving - a decrease in the input required to achieve the same output should be shown.
  - An example of a non-cashable quantifiable benefit is where a new PowerBI Dashboard was introduced, resulting in the streamlining of reporting processes. This resulted in a saving of 6 days of an employee's time each month, which was previously spent preparing the reports. This time can be quantified, using this time saving and staff pay rates.

- **Non-Cashable – Qualitative Benefits**
  - Cannot be quantified and assigned a monetary value but may still be meaningfully measured.
  - Identifying an appropriate measure that can be applied for the benefit
  - Examples of qualitative benefits would be: -
    - results of the staff survey
    - feedback from candidates on the recruitment process
  - Staff Survey – Annual update on feedback from the staff providing an indication of the engagement from all staff (via the numbers of survey returns/submissions) and the change in responses from the previous year(s) of how the staff feel about the organisation, management, etc

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| LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 |  |
| List of background documents – none.              |  |
| Proper Officer:                                   | Chief Financial Officer (S151)   |
| Contact Officer:                                  | Neil Cross<br>Essex County Fire & Rescue Service, Kelvedon Park, London Road, Rivenhall, Witham CM8 3HB<br>Tel: 01376 576100 |