



Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23

Last updated on 04 March 2022

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1. Background

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) has an ambitious and exciting improvement programme with the aim of ensuring that it provides the most efficient and effective service to the people of Essex. The improvement priorities are detailed in the Fire and Rescue Plan 2019-2024 under the vision of: “safe and secure communities are the bedrock on which we build success and well-being for all.” The improvement priorities are turned into operational reality in the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2024 and the investment articulated in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2020-2024.

ECFRS is making good progress on delivering against the Fire and Rescue Plan priorities and, in acknowledgement of the considerable work still to do, has set the following as the improvement and investment priorities for 2022-2023:

- Fire protection – embedding the outcomes of the Building Risk Review into the Risk Based Inspection Programme. Ensuring the Service has the necessary resources to deliver the role it will have as part of the revised Building Safety Regulations.
- Increasing investment in Prevention based activities to protect those most vulnerable from fire and contribute towards the Safer Essex Road Partnership vision zero.
- Investing in Operational training – ensuring that our fire fighters have access to quality training and facilities enabling them to be properly prepared to respond to the risks faced.
- Supporting On call firefighters – increasing our recruitment and improving our retention of on call firefighters, in addition to exploring flexible crewing models to improve response times.
- Transforming the way we work through investment in ICT – updating our systems and hardware to improve productivity and connectivity, including a new Mobilising and Command system at our Fire Control function at Kelvedon Park.
- Supporting the leaders of today and developing the leaders of tomorrow by investing in a Learning and Development service-wide programme to support staff in their current and any future roles as part of our workforce planning.
- Implementation of national fire standards to ensure the adoption and delivery of good practice and supporting national interoperability and greater efficiencies.
- To ensure the property portfolio is appropriate and fit for purpose and able to meet the support and wellbeing needs of our workforce.

2. Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Medium Term Finance Strategy (MTFS) that was presented at the 13 December 2021 Strategic Board, was before the publication of the draft Local Government Finance Settlement which was on 16 December 2021.

The draft Local Government Finance Settlement included the creation of a one of Services Grants for 2022/23. The total grant was for £1.1m but part of the grant is to fund the 1.25% increase in Employers National Insurance costs. The Authority had already included £0.4m of funding within the December MTFS, to compensate to the increase in Employers National Insurance costs.

The latest Medium Term Finance Strategy (MTFS) was included as part of the 2022-23 Budget Paper, that was approved by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on 3 February 2022. This reflected the information announced in the draft Local Government Finance Settlement.

The latest MTFS is shown in the table below and is compared to the MTFS presented at the 13 December 21 Strategic Board.

MTFS as Per December 21 Strategic Board

Actuals		Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22-2024/25				
2019/20 £m	2020/21 £m	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	Total £m
		80.9	83.1	83.9	87.1	335.0
		(0.6)	(1.8)	0.0	0.0	(2.4)
				(1.1)	(2.6)	(3.7)
		(0.6)	(1.8)	(1.1)	(2.6)	(6.1)
78.0	80.9	80.3	81.3	82.8	84.5	328.9
0.0	0.1	2.7	2.4	0.4	0.0	5.5
(77.9)	(81.7)	(80.1)	(81.2)	(82.8)	(84.5)	(328.6)
0.1	(0.7)	2.9	2.5	0.4	0.0	5.8
0.0	(0.1)	(2.7)	(2.4)	(0.4)	0.0	(5.5)
0.1	0.8	(0.2)	(0.1)	(0.0)	0.0	(0.3)

MTFS as Per 3 Feb 22 Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Actuals		Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22-2024/25				
2019/20 £m	2020/21 £m	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	Total £m
		80.9	84.0	84.1	87.1	336.1
		(0.6)	(1.8)	0.0	0.0	(2.4)
				(1.0)	(2.3)	(3.3)
		(0.6)	(1.8)	(1.0)	(2.3)	(5.7)
78.0	80.9	80.3	82.2	83.1	84.8	330.4
0.0	0.1	2.7	1.9	0.4	0.0	5.0
(77.9)	(81.7)	(80.1)	(82.2)	(83.1)	(84.8)	(330.2)
0.1	(0.7)	2.9	1.9	0.4	0.0	5.2
0.0	(0.1)	(2.7)	(1.9)	(0.4)	0.0	(5.0)
0.1	0.8	(0.2)	0.0	0.0	0.0	(0.2)

MTFS Movement since December 21

	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	Total £m
General Fund (shortfall)/ Surplus in December 21 MTFS	(0.2)	(0.1)	0.0	0.0	(0.3)
Favourable / (Adverse) movement in General Fund Balance	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
General Fund (shortfall)/ Surplus in March 22 MTFS	(0.2)	0.0	0.0	0.0	(0.2)

The key movements in the MTFS are:

- £1m increase in Core Funding in 2022/23 which is a result of the local government finance settlement and includes:
 - £0.7m incremental income resulting from the creation of the One-Off Services Grant.
 - £0.3m resulting from an inflationary increase in the revenue support grant

- 0.9m increase in Core Budget Costs which relates to additional investments as a result of the funding increase and comprises of:
 - £0.3m investment in 4 Fire Protection Posts
 - £0.3m in One-Off Consultancy Costs relating to Business Cases for Fleet Workshops and Fire Training Facilities.
 - £0.3m One-Off investment in On Call Liaison Officers within 2022/23.

The Local Government Finance Settlement was finalised on 7 February 2022. There were no deviations from the draft proposals.