Essex County Council

Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel

14:00	**Monday, 13 January 2020**	**Committee Room 1**, **County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH**

For information about the meeting please ask for:
Victoria Freeman, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Telephone: 033301 34583 or 03330 321512
Email: democratic.services@essex.gov.uk

7   **The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to update the Panel on any ongoing issues**
The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to give a verbal update.

8   **Forward Look**   **81 - 82**
Report EPFCP/04/20

9   **Dates of Future Meetings**   **83 - 83**
Report EPFCP/05/20

Exempt Items
(During consideration of these items the meeting is not likely to be open to the press and public)

The following items of business have not been published on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Members are asked to consider whether or not the press and public should be excluded during the consideration of these items.   If so it will be necessary for the meeting to pass a formal resolution:

That the press and public are excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the specific paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A engaged being set out in the report or appendix relating to that item of business.

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Committee: Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Enquiries to: Victoria Freeman, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

Recommendations:

To note

1. Membership as shown below
2. Apologies and substitutions
3. Declarations of interest to be made by Members in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct

Membership (Quorum: 5)	**Representing**
Councillor A McGurran	Basildon Borough Council
Councillor W Schmitt	Braintree District Council (Chairman)
Councillor C Hossack	Brentwood Borough Council
Councillor G Isaacs	Castle Point Borough Council
Councillor J Lager	Chelmsford City Council
Councillor M Lilley	Colchester Borough Council
Councillor N Bedford	Epping Forest District Council
Councillor M Maddocks	Essex County Council (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor F Mason	Harlow District Council
Councillor M Helm	Maldon District Council
Councillor M Webb	Rochford District Council
Councillor I Shead	Southend Borough Council
Councillor L McWilliams	Tendring District Council
Councillor J Redsell	Thurrock Council
Councillor C Day	Uttlesford District Council
John Gili-Ross	Independent Member
Kay Odysseos	Independent Member

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Minutes of the meeting of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel, held in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH on Thursday, 5 December 2019

Present:

Councillor	Representing
Aidan McGurran	Basildon Borough Council
Wendy Schmitt	Braintree District Council (Chairman)
Maria Pearson	Brentwood Borough Council
Godfrey Isaacs	Castle Point Borough Council
Jeremy Lager	Chelmsford City Council
Malcolm Maddocks	Essex County Council (Vice Chairman)
Frances Mason	Harlow District Council
Michael Helm	Maldon District Council
Ian Shead	Southend Borough Council
Lynda McWilliams	Tendring District Council
Joycelyn Redsell	Thurrock Council
Colin Day	Uttlesford District Council

Co-opted Independent Member
John Gili-Ross
Kay Odysseos

Also in attendance
Pippa Brent-Isherwood	Chief Executive, Office of the Essex PFCC
Neil Cross	Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer, Essex CFRS
Karl Edwards	Director of Corporate Services, Essex CFRS
Roger Hirst	Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Paul Turner	Director, Legal and Assurance
Victoria Freeman	Secretary to the Panel

1 Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

The report of the Membership, Apologies and Declarations was received.

1.   The following apologies were noted:
Councillor Nigel Bedford, Epping Forest District Council
Councillor Michael Lilley, Colchester Borough Council
Councillor Chris Hossack, Brentwood Borough Council (substituted by Councillor Pearson)

2.   Councillors asked for it to be noted, as follows, and all members participated fully in the meeting:

Name	Nature of Interest
Colin Day	In receipt of a Metropolitan Police Pension and Chairman of the Uttlesford Community Safety Partnership

Godfrey Isaacs	Chairman of the Castle Point and Rochford Community Safety Partnership
Malcolm Maddocks	In receipt of an Essex Police Pension
Frances Mason	Member of the Harlow Community Safety Partnership and in receipt of a National Probation Service Pension
Lynda McWilliams	Chairman of the Tendring District Council Community Safety Partnership and her son is a police officer
Joycelyn Redsell	Member of Thurrock Community Safety Partnership
Wendy Schmitt	Chairman of the Braintree Community Safety Partnership
Ian Shead	In receipt of an Essex Police Pension

2   Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3   Questions from members of the public

There were none.

4   Confirmation Hearing: ECFRS Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer

The Committee considered report EPFCP/33/19 which set out the arrangements for the review of the proposed appointment of Neil Cross as the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer before he could be confirmed in his post.

The Commissioner provided a brief outline of how the selection process had been carried out and reassured the Panel that the selection process had been rigorous throughout and he was happy to put forward Neil Cross to the Panel for confirmation to the post of ECFRS Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer.

During questioning, the Panel were advised that the salary band advertised during the recruitment process was a guideline, however in order to secure the best candidate with the required knowledge and experience in the particular field, it was felt that a higher salary within the salary band structure was justifiable.

The hearing then focused on the issues of professional competence and personal independence of the candidate. Neil Cross briefly addressed the meeting summarising his career in private sector finance and his leadership style and responded to a series of questions by the Panel which related to his professional judgement.

It was proposed and **RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the deliberation stage, on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A

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of the Local Government Act 1972 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person).

Following deliberations, the meeting returned to public session, upon which the Panel **RESOLVED** to report to the Commissioner that they endorsed the selection of Neil Cross as ECFRS Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer. The Chairman congratulated Neil Cross and on behalf of the Panel wished him well in his appointment.

The Panel also took the opportunity to thank Glenn McGuinness for his service and wished him well in his retirement.

5   PFCC Decisions Report

The Panel received report EPFCP/34/19 providing information on financial and strategic decisions made by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner since the last PFCC Panel meeting submission deadline.

The Panel reviewed the information provided and raised a number of points for clarification or comment in respect of a number of the decisions taken. These included the Community Safety Development Fund, Health Watch evaluation on Sexual Abuse, the sale of Police Estates and its impact on an increasing number of officers, the Taser STO uplift, the PFCCFRA Fleet Workshop Outline Business Case and the Virement Section 31 Pensions Grant. The Panel posed questions relating to the Essex Centre for Data Analytics and suggested that they receive a briefing on the subject.

The Panel noted the report.

6   The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to update the Panel on any ongoing issues

The Commissioner gave a brief verbal update on some ongoing issues.

Budget setting: The proposed precept was due to be presented to the Panel at its meeting on the 22 January 2020, however due to the forthcoming Election, the process may be delayed, in which case the proposed precept may be presented on the 6 February 2020.

Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VVU): The VVU was set up across Southend, Essex and Thurrock to deliver on the objectives set out in the Safer Essex, 'Violence and Vulnerability Framework' which was put together after multi-agency consultation by the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner. 3,000 individuals had been part of active interventions since inception, 200 of whom were considered high risk. The Violence and Vulnerability Conference would be held on the 13 March 2020.

Integrated Risk Management Plan: 800 responses to the consultation had been received. The consultation period would close on the 13 December 2019.

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Essex Independent Custody Visiting Scheme 2018/19 Annual Report: Members were recommended to view the annual report that had recently been published.

Essex Fire and Rescue Service Inspection: An inspection was carried out in July 2019, which focused on fire safety. The publication of the report of the inspectors findings had been delayed due to the Election.

7   National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels (NAPFCP) update

Mr Gili-Ross provided an update on the activities of the NAPFCP.

The Association met on the 19 November 2019 and unanimously agreed to move to a subscription free membership for Panels. The Panel received feedback from the National Police, Crime and Fire Panel Annual Conference.

The Panel congratulated John Gili-Ross on his reappointment as Chair of the NAPFCP.

8   Forward Look

The Panel considered report EPFCP/35/19 by the Secretary to the Panel, setting out the business proposed to be taken to meetings up to December 2020. It was suggested that consideration be given to deferring the IT Implementation Projects and the Home Office Complaints Procedures to a future meeting.

The Panel noted the report.

9   Future Meeting Dates

The Panel received report EPFCP/36/19, setting out the Panel meeting dates for 2020.

The Panel noted the report.

10 Date of Next Meeting

The Panel noted that the next meeting would take place at 2.00pm on Monday, 13 January 2019 in Committee Room 1, County Hall, and that this would be preceded by a private pre-meeting for Panel Members only, commencing at 1.00pm.

With no urgent business, the meeting closed at 4.23 pm.

Chairman
5 December 2019

Report title: HMICFRS REPORT - ESSEX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE	
Report to: Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	
Report author: Police Fire and Crime Commissioner Roger Hirst	
Date: 13th January 2020	**For:** Noting and comment
Enquiries to: Rick Hylton, Deputy Chief Fire Officer Rick.Hylton@essex-fire.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. **Purpose of Report**

   To share with the Panel the publicised report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) on Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) as a part of the independent inspection of Fire and Rescue Services.

2. **Recommendations**

   The report is provided by HMICFRS for the attention and action of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Chief Fire Officer. Whilst there is no action needed or required of the Panel, in the interests of openness and transparency, the Panel is invited to note and comment on the contents of the report.

3. **Context / Summary**

   Following its inspection in July 2019, HMICFRS published its report into ECFRS's effectiveness, efficiency and how well it looks after its people in December 2019 (see appendix 1).

   ECFRS was inspected by HMICFRS as part of an inspection programme for all UK Fire and Rescue Services. It assesses how effective each Service is at preventing, protecting against and responding to fire and other risks, how efficiently the Service provides value for money and how well the Service looks after its people and ensures fairness and diversity.

   ECFRS was graded as requiring improvements across the three main pillars of the inspection – Effectiveness, Efficiency and People. The Inspectorate found evidence that some staff had been the subject of bullying behaviour and there was a lack of understanding by some of the value of diversity in the workplace. This has led the Inspectorate to grade the Service as inadequate with regards

to values and culture. Within the report, it has also recognised that ECFRS is good at responding to emergencies when called.

It concluded that the Service is particularly good at:

- Responding to fires and other emergencies
- Responding to national risks
- Making the Fire and Rescue Service affordable now and in the future
- Managing performance and developing leaders

The report has highlighted that ECFRS requires improvement in preventing fires and other risks, protecting the public through fire regulation, promoting the right values and culture and ensuring fairness and promoting diversity. These are areas the Service is already taking actions to address.

The Inspectorate found two 'causes for concern'. These were in the areas of protecting the public through fire regulation and promoting values and culture.

With regards to protecting the public through fire regulation, the inspection team revisited the Service in November and was encouraged by progress to address many of its concerns, specifically the recruitment of additional fire safety officers to enable the Service to build capacity to inspect more high risk premises and enable the Service to be in a better position to respond to additional pressures that may result from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. Revised Prevention and Protection Strategies are well developed and the rollout of operational crews delivering home safety work will commence in January, further improving reach to those most vulnerable (see appendix 2).

The Inspectorate recognised the legacy issues that the new Chief Fire Officer has inherited with regards to culture and reported that improvements were being made but that equally there was much work to be done and it would take time to achieve the cultural change that was needed. The Inspectorate further noted that there was a clear commitment from the PFCC and CFO to bring about this change and welcomed the investment and work that had begun and was planned to be delivered in this area. These include the investment in a dedicated strategic role for People, Values and Culture; Dignity in the Workplace sessions for staff, and the investment in a listening exercise with staff through a programme titled 'Everyone Matters'.

A full action plan will be developed in response to the report and the areas where improvements can be made and placed on the Service website.

4.   Appendices

4.1   Full Inspection Report

4.2   Copy of follow up visit letter from HMI Billingham to CFO Turton

HMICFRS

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
and Fire & Rescue Services

Fire & Rescue Service
Effectiveness, efficiency and people
2018/19

An inspection of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

Contents

About this inspection

This is the first time that HMICFRS has inspected fire and rescue services across England. Our focus is on the service they provide to the public, and the way they use the resources available. The inspection assesses how effectively and efficiently Essex County Fire and Rescue Service prevents, protects the public against and responds to fires and other emergencies. We also assess how well it looks after the people who work for the service.

In carrying out our inspections of all 45 fire and rescue services in England, we answer three main questions:

1. How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
2. How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
3. How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?

This report sets out our inspection findings. After taking all the evidence into account, we apply a graded judgment for each of the three questions.

What inspection judgments mean

Our categories of graded judgment are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.

Good is our 'expected' graded judgment for all fire and rescue services. It is based on policy, practice or performance that meet pre-defined grading criteria, which are informed by any relevant national operational guidance or standards.

If the service exceeds what we expect for good, we will judge it as **outstanding**.

If we find shortcomings in the service, we will judge it as **requires improvement**.

If we find serious critical failings of policy, practice or performance of the fire and rescue service, we will judge it as **inadequate**.

Service in numbers

💬 **Public perceptions**	Essex	England
Perceived effectiveness of service Public perceptions survey (June/July 2018)	86%	86%

| 🚒 **Response**	Essex	England
Incidents attended per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 December 2018	8.7	10.4
Home fire risk checks carried out by FRS per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2018	4.7	10.4
Fire safety audits per 100 known premises 12 months to 31 March 2018	3.1	3.0

Incidents attended in the 12 months to 31 December 2018

Total Non-fire incidents 31%

Total Fires 31%

Total

15,798

Total False Alarms 38%
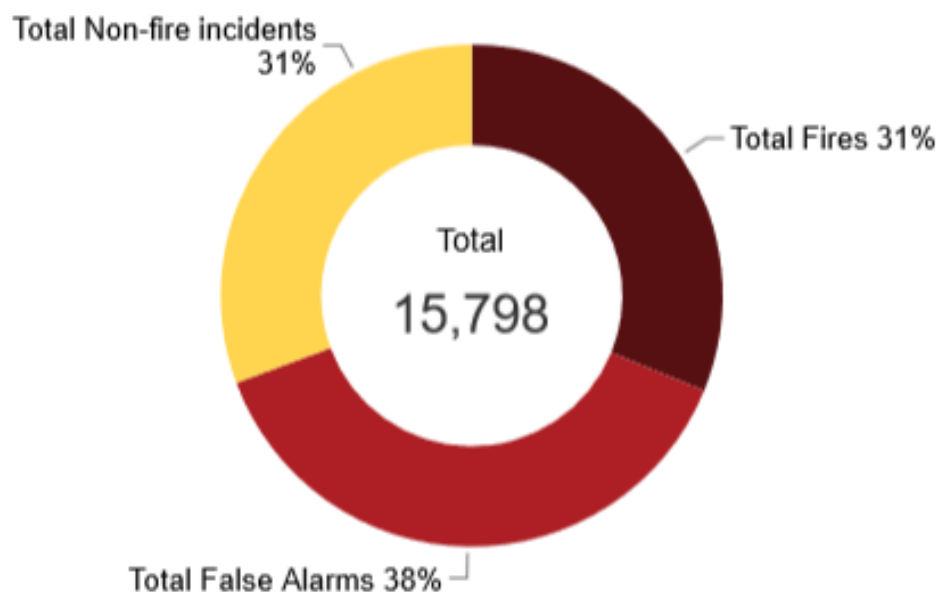
£ Cost

	Essex	England
Firefighter cost per person per year 12 months to 31 March 2018	£19.63	£22.38

Workforce

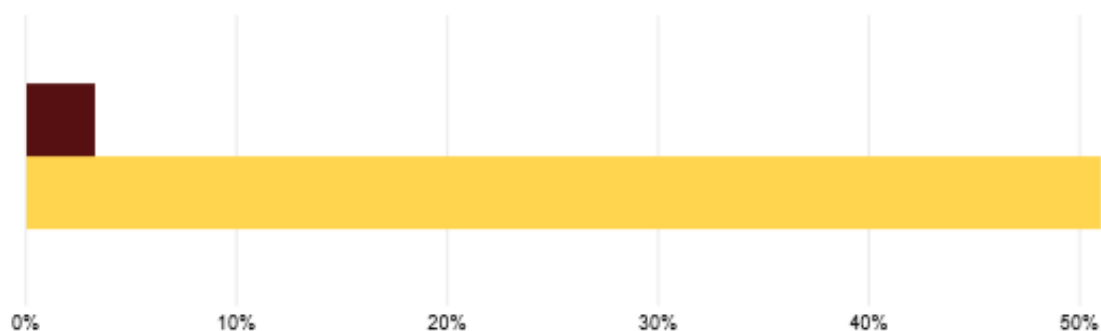|	Essex	England
Number of firefighters per 1,000 population As at 31 March 2018	0.6	0.6
Five-year change in workforce As at 31 March 2013 compared with 31 March 2018	-11%	-14%
Percentage of wholetime firefighters As at 31 March 2018	60%	70%

Percentage of female firefighters as at 31 March 2018

● Female firefighters ● Female residential population

Percentage of black, Asian and minority ethnic firefighters as at 31 March 2018

● BAME Firefighters ● BAME residential population
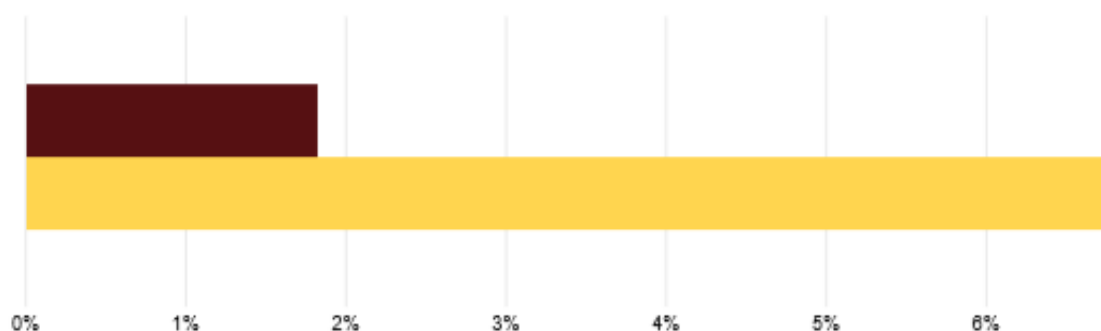
Please refer to annex A for full details on data used.

Overview

⚙️ **Effectiveness**	●●○○	**Requires improvement**
Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies	●●○○	Requires improvement
Preventing fires and other risks	●●○○	Requires improvement
Protecting the public through fire regulation	●●○○	Requires improvement
Responding to fires and other emergencies	●●●○	Good
Responding to national risks	●●●○	Good

£ **Efficiency**	●●○○	**Requires improvement**
Making best use of resources	●●○○	Requires improvement
Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future	●●●○	Good

👥 People

● ● ○ ○

Requires improvement

Promoting the right values and culture	● ○ ○ ○ Inadequate
Getting the right people with the right skills	● ● ○ ○ Requires improvement
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	● ● ○ ○ Requires improvement
Managing performance and developing leaders	● ● ● ○ Good
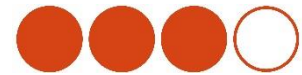
Overall summary of inspection findings

We are satisfied with some aspects of the performance of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (FRS). But there are several areas where the service needs to make improvements.

We judged Essex County FRS to require improvement to the effectiveness of its service. It requires improvement to how it:

- understands the risk of fire and other emergencies;
- prevents fires and other risks; and
- protects the public through fire regulation.

But it is good at responding to fires and other emergencies. And its response to national risks is good.

The service's efficiency requires improvement, in particular to how it uses resources. But it is good at making its services affordable.

The way Essex County FRS looks after its people requires improvement. We judged the way it promotes the right values and culture to be inadequate. It requires improvement to how it:

- gets the right people with the right skills; and
- ensures fairness and promoting diversity.

But it is good at managing performance and developing leaders.

Overall, we would like to see improvements in the year ahead.

Effectiveness

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How effective is the service at keeping people safe and secure?

Requires improvement

Summary

An effective fire and rescue service will identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue risks its community faces. It will target its fire prevention and protection activities to those who are at greatest risk from fire. It will make sure businesses comply with fire safety legislation. When the public calls for help, the fire and rescue service should respond promptly with the right skills and equipment to deal with the incident effectively. Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's overall effectiveness requires improvement.

The service needs to better understand the risk of fire and other emergencies. Its integrated risk management plan (IRMP) sets out its priorities. But there is no effective mechanism to translate this into operational activity.

The service needs to improve the way it prevents fires and other risks. There were some good examples of prevention work, such as road safety and in schools. But the service isn't doing enough home fire safety checks. Other organisations pass on referrals for some of these checks to the service.

Staff understand how to safeguard vulnerable people.

The service needs to better protect the public through fire regulation. The service is aware that it hasn't met the requirements of its risk-based inspection programme. It is failing to meet its targets for the number of audits it plans to carry out. And it isn't effectively targeting high-risk premises.

We have concerns about the service using operational staff to carry out fire protection visits to high-risk premises. They don't have enough training to make judgments about fire protection issues.

The service is good at responding to fires and other emergencies. Incident commanders have good access to risk information to help them manage incidents. But the service should make sure that it is meeting its response standards. It needs to learn more from operational incidents.

The service is good at responding to national risks. And it has provided staff and equipment to support services in other parts of the UK and abroad.

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies

●●○○○

Requires improvement

> **Areas for improvement**
> - The service should produce guidance that translates its risk management plan into operational activity.
> - The service should ensure it gathers and records relevant and up-to-date risk information.

All fire and rescue services should identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks. They should also prevent and mitigate these risks.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Understanding local and community risk

The service understands its local communities and identifies risks to them. When it developed its IRMP (2016–20), it analysed data, reviewed options and used a company to help it consult with the public.

Before the current IRMP, the service consulted on a range of fire cover options. These included changing how it crews some fire stations, from day-crewed to on-call staffing. The service uses a broad range of information to develop its strategic assessment of risk. This document is reviewed each year. It underpins the IRMP. The service could keep the public more informed on the plan's progress. This should include updates about potential delays to station crewing changes. The changes were due to be complete by 2020. But this is now likely to be 2021.

The consultation was extensive and run by an independent organisation. It included exhibitions in libraries and shopping centres, as well as via local and social media. There were also forums for staff, the public and organisations the service works with. A total of 17,630 people responded. The fire authority chose the most popular option.

The service could use its data more to better understand risk – especially what it has learned from its prevention and protection work. To help the service better understand risk, community safety officers meet with members of the community and other organisations. These include hearing-impaired people and groups for people with dementia. But these discussions aren't recorded, which limits the service's understanding of wider community risk.

In 2017, the service asked a research company to review its stations. The review used incident and response data from a five-year period. This helped the service identify key stations where operational cover needed to be prioritised. The review also helped the service better plan for the future.

Having an effective risk management plan

While the strategic intentions of the service are clear, there is no plan to translate expectations of the IRMP into operational activity. A draft document, attempting to address this, is due to be published later in the year after our inspection. This will be used to bridge the gap until the new IRMP is finalised.

The current IRMP explains how the service identifies fire and rescue risks, both by itself and working with other organisations. It broadly sets out how its prevention, protection and response work meet its strategic aims. The plan is in line with the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

As an active member of the Essex resilience forum (ERF), the service has a clear process to use information from the local resilience risk register to help it plan. It also adds risks to the service's register to inform its strategy. Its work with the ERF helps keep other agencies informed.

The service uses its business intelligence reporting tool to learn from activities such as station audits and thematic reviews. These feed into the IRMP's objectives.

Maintaining risk information

The service needs to improve how it gathers and holds risk information. Its strategy showing how it prioritises its visits to higher-risk sites isn't clear. Firefighters visit these sites regularly to gather risk information and update plans. As at 31 December 2018, the service had 1,025 risk sites. When asked, it was unable to provide us the number of these sites which it had inspected, although it could when we subsequently asked in May. Some plans for these sites are out of date; 14 percent of plans for high-risk sites (called 'level 3 plans' locally) had passed their review date when we inspected.

The service presents its information in many ways. This makes it difficult for incident commanders to use it. Its approaches to quality assuring plans are inconsistent. While some managers have a good process to quality assure plans, many don't. And information from prevention and protection work isn't shared with the response team.

The service is good at gathering and communicating risk information for major music and sporting events. But, for smaller events, attendance at safety advisory groups to help make plans was inconsistent.

Firefighters access risk information using computers on fire engines called mobile data terminals (MDTs). Staff are confident in using these. New handheld tablet computers have good vehicle crash data and can be taken to incidents to help keep firefighters safe. Officers carry tablet computers containing risk information and operational procedures. These are kept up to date and can help decision making.

The service communicates general risk information well through alerts and email 'flashes'. These appear in individual training records and are tracked. Information is passed on effectively during briefings at the start of shifts at fire stations. The service produces a weekly briefing note called '60 seconds'. These are read out at on-call drill nights. They brief staff with limited time on critical issues. Most on-call stations use these. However, many leave staff to read the notes themselves because they often relate to longer documents.

Preventing fires and other risks

Requires improvement

> **Areas for improvement**
>
> - The service should develop a clear prevention strategy to guide its work and ensure it makes best use of resources to achieve its targets.
> - The service should evaluate its prevention work, so it understands the benefits better.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Prevention strategy

The service doesn't have a clear prevention strategy to guide its work. And it doesn't fulfil the prevention activity promised in its IRMP. Wholetime firefighters don't carry out home safety visits other than in one area where these are being trialled.

The service uses data to assess community risk. And it uses volunteers and specialist officers to carry out visits. These visits include identifying potential fire risks; taking action to reduce fire risks; ensuring working smoke alarms are fitted; advice on social welfare; advice on slips, trips and falls; health prevention and crime prevention. In the year to 31 March 2018, the service did 8,513 home fire safety checks. But the service is doing less than half the national average of checks per 1,000 population (4.7 compared with 10.4). The service completed 58.8 percent of these checks at homes of older people and 28.6 percent to homes of people who had a disability. These are similar to the England rates. The service recently decentralised management of its prevention activity. This should improve its work within communities.

During our inspection, there were good examples of referrals from other organisations (for example, from care workers) for safe and well checks for people at more risk of fire. But 'after-incident response' visits are inconsistent. These are when crews visit nearby premises to give fire safety advice after fires in residential properties.

The service recently worked with Essex University to review accidental residential fires to understand where risk was high and how best to target those at most risk. But it hasn't yet used this information to target its work.

It is evaluating its 'Surround a Town' events. These involve a multi-agency approach to prevention and community engagement in Essex. The service doesn't assess its wider prevention work.

We reviewed many prevention case files during our inspection. Some files had data missing. And the electronic system managing this information was slow and difficult to use. The service is aware of this and has plans to address it.

Promoting community safety

Essex County FRS carries out wide-ranging prevention work. Central teams offer school education, arson awareness and programmes to deter fire-setting. It aims to provide prevention packages to all schoolchildren in Essex. Its work in schools involves the police and includes messages from both services.

The service's community safety officers carry out 'crucial crew' events. These focus on talking to schoolchildren about subjects such as firework safety and knife crime.

The service also runs a community inclusion programme called 'Firebreak'. This helps build skills and confidence in referred students who come from schools, prisons and other organisations. This is getting good results, with noticeable changes in behaviour in many who take part. The service runs a programme for juvenile fire setters as part of its work with Essex Police to reduce arson. The service works with the police to support prosecutions.

Staff understand how to identify vulnerable people. They are confident in making safeguarding referrals, despite some having no recent training. The service's fire safety officers then work with other organisations to deal with these.

The service has taken positive steps to reduce the risk of fire for those at most risk. For example, its 'Think sprinkler' initiative offers to fund up to 50 percent of domestic installation costs. It will do this with the support of partners such as councils and charities. It has pledged £250,000 to support this campaign.

The service's volunteers also help with clearing hoarding. And the service works with the local authority handyperson scheme to help make people safer by fitting equipment to help prevent fire in vulnerable people's homes.

The service's prevention and communication teams could work better together. And the service relies too heavily on digital media to communicate with vulnerable people because many of them can't access information in this way.

Although the service follows national campaigns, we found station plans were generic. This means that activity doesn't necessarily best address local risk. But there were some good examples of local initiatives. These include multi-agency approaches to tackling community safety issues, such as the risk of fire in high-rise buildings.

Road safety

Essex County FRS leads on improving safety on the county's roads. It is part of the Safer Essex Road Partnership, which involves councils, Highways England, the police and the ambulance service. The service is considered to be an active and valued member.

Essex County FRS has a full-time road safety team. This carries out a range of initiatives, including free better biking courses and advanced skills courses. It also works with high-risk groups, such as modified car enthusiasts. The service uses loaned high-performance vehicles to encourage interaction and education through safety messages. It also offers road safety courses to schools and military, commercial, older and newly qualified drivers.

Protecting the public through fire regulation

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Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it works with local businesses and large organisations to share information and expectations on compliance with fire safety regulations.
- The service should ensure it has effective arrangements for providing specialist protection advice out of hours.

Causes of concern

The service has insufficient resources to meet its risk-based inspection programme. It is currently not meeting its targets. As a result, partially skilled operational staff are carrying out high-risk visits, although the service acknowledges that these are not audits. There is an absence of quality assurance of audits and visits. There is a low amount of enforcement activity. There is limited proactive engagement with businesses to promote fire safety.

Recommendations

- By 31 March 2020, the service should develop and implement a clear strategy for how it will effectively meet its obligations in relation to ensuring compliance with fire safety. This should include ensuring it has appropriately trained resources, a consistent use of enforcement powers and a mechanism to assure itself on the quality of its inspections.

All fire and rescue services should assess fire risks in buildings and, when necessary, require building owners to comply with fire safety legislation. Each service decides how many assessments it does each year. But it must have a locally determined, risk-based inspection programme for enforcing the legislation.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Risk-based approach

The service isn't meeting the requirements of its risk-based inspection programme. Fire safety managers weren't clear about the service's definition of high-risk premises. And the service can't show that these premises get priority.

As at 31 December 2018, the service had identified 4,691 high-risk premises. It aims to inspect these every year. But in the year to 31 December 2018, it had only done 686 inspections.

The service's information technology (IT) systems don't support effective working. For example, inspections stopped for several weeks in 2018. This was because the management system wasn't working. It is slow and has caused a backlog of paperwork that needs processing.

The service uses a range of data to calculate risk. This includes:

- FSEC codes;
- historic incident data;
- enforcement activity history; and
- Home Office data.

The service isn't meeting its targets for responding to building regulation consultations. It aims to respond to all of them within 15 working days. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 December 2018, the service received 601 building regulation consultations. Of these, 87.2 percent were completed within the required time frame.

Essex County FRS's inspectors are trained to the national standard (Level 4 Fire Safety). But during our inspection, the team had nine vacancies within its 34-strong team.

Wholetime firefighters need to make judgments about issues during fire protection visits. But they don't have enough inspection training to do this. And their work isn't quality assured unless they raise an issue with the inspection team. Firefighters have been visiting high-risk premises. This is because there aren't enough inspectors.

The service can't make sure inspectors are available outside working hours. During these times, it isn't always able to respond to fire protection concerns, complaints or dangerous conditions, where it may be necessary to issue prohibition notices.

The service is working with other FRSs to review its inspection programme.

Enforcement

The service works with businesses to promote compliance rather than taking enforcement action. While we recognise the desire to support compliance, there are times when prosecution is needed. We were disappointed to find a reluctance to act when premises repeatedly breach fire safety.

Protection files we reviewed were missing detail. And some were overdue for inspections. Some fire safety inspectors couldn't explain how actions to address issues from inspections are followed up.

The number of audits carried out has fallen from 3,634 in the year to March 2014 to 1,290 in the year to March 2018. Despite this, it equates to 3.1 audits per 100 known premises. This is similar to the England rate (3.0).

Some 97 percent of premises inspected by the service in the year to 31 March 2018 were satisfactory. This is much higher than the England rate of 68 percent. It indicates that the service isn't inspecting the highest-risk premises. During that same period, it issued 112 formal notifications, three alteration notices, five enforcement notices and no prohibitions. It has recently carried out a prosecution and has access to legal advice.

Working with others

Due to the lack of capacity, the service doesn't currently work proactively with businesses to promote legislative compliance. It relies solely on its website's business safety section, which signposts people to national advice and guidance.

Some inspection staff work with organisations to share information and carry out joint visits. During our inspection, there were examples of joint visits. These included with the local authority to a mobile home park. But this isn't consistent across the service. Staff told us that capacity constraint was the main reason.

Responding to fires and other emergencies

Good

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service is good at responding to fires and other emergencies. But we found the following areas in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it has effective systems in place to reliably understand the operational capabilities of resources available to respond to incidents.
- The service should ensure it has an effective system for staff to use debriefs and improve operational learning.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Managing assets and resources

As at 1 April 2019, the service had:
- 12 wholetime fire stations, two of which had an on-call fire engine;
- 4 day-crewed fire stations; and
- 34 on-call fire stations.

It had specialist vehicles and equipment to deal with a range of incidents. These included heavy rescue vehicles so it could respond to road traffic collisions.

The service uses three staffing models. These are:
- wholetime shift – these stations are staffed 24/7;
- day-crewed – full-time staff during working hours;
- on-call – staff who respond to incidents.

The service is changing its four day-crewed stations to on-call. This should be complete by 2021.

The service is failing to meet its targets for the number of available fire engines. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 December 2018, the monthly availability ranged from 80.7 percent to 87.1 percent. The service's plan is for this figure to be 90 percent. It prioritises key stations when possible. Its optimum number of pumps is 66 but, on a monthly average between 5.00pm and 8.00pm, it didn't achieve this between April 2018 and December 2018.

Wholetime fire engine availability is managed centrally. But the service can't guarantee cover because staff are able to book annual leave at short notice. The service pays off-duty staff to cover when there are shortages.

The service doesn't have effective systems to manage on-call availability. It uses an electronic rota book. How this is used varies across stations. There were examples of people using it to book time off when there weren't enough firefighters available. This meant their fire engine couldn't be used. The system doesn't link with fire control's mobilising system, so it relies on operator input for updates when there are changes. This delay risks trying to mobilise crews that aren't available.

The number and availability of on-call staff is both a service and a national problem. The service doesn't have enough on-call staff in some stations. And these are regularly unavailable to respond. The service is aware of this problem. It is promoting the role and recruiting in the area.

Response

The service is working with neighbouring fire services to put national operational guidance in place. This is expected to be done by 2020. There are good systems in place to be able to respond to incidents. These is based on national information about types of incident.

In the year to 31 December 2018, the service went to 8.7 incidents per 1,000 population. This compares with the England rate of 10.4 over the same period.

The Home Office collects and publishes data on response times by measuring the time between the call being made and the first fire engine arriving at the scene. This gives consistent data across all 45 services. But services measure their own response times in different ways.

The service's response standard is to respond to potentially life-threatening incidents within an average of 10 minutes, calculated from time of call to the arrival of the first pump. The service's response standard is also to arrive at 90 percent of emergency incidents within 15 minutes from the time the call was first received. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 December 2018, the service did not meet these standards. The average time from call to the first pump attending was 10 minutes 48 seconds for life-threatening incidents, and for all emergency incidents within 15 minutes on 86 percent of occasions.

According to Home Office data collected from all services, in the year to 31 March 2018, the service's average response time to primary fires was 10 minutes and 5 seconds. This is from the time of call to the first vehicle arriving at the incident. This was an increase from 9 minutes 12 seconds in the year ending 31 March 2011. The service's average response time is similar to the average for other significantly rural services of 10 minutes 6 seconds.

The service has a good range of systems for recording and reporting incident information. These include standard messaging, incident risk assessments and decision logs. Fire control staff can add limited incident information to turnout instructions and MDTs.

Command

During our inspection, fire control staff were confident to change the number of fire engines sent to incidents depending on information from callers. They also move fire engines to cover gaps in station availability.

Incident command courses are taught centrally, and training records showed that staff were up to date with these. Generally, commanders had good knowledge of incident command and were confident in applying it at incidents. They were well trained and up to date for annual assessment. But we found a small number weren't sure of how to apply new command processes – for example, applying operational discretion.

We asked staff what they thought of the service (see Annex A for more details). Of the 64 crew managers or above who responded to our survey, 42.2 percent agreed the service would support them if they used operational discretion at an incident rather than simply following standard procedures.

Keeping the public informed

The service has a communications team. This offers 24/7 support and talks to the media on behalf of staff. Its website gives updates about incidents. Some of these include fire safety messages. And there are good examples of the service using reports from larger incidents to recruit on-call firefighters.

There is a clear social media policy, which staff understand. The service also uses YouTube although, over the past year, this has been limited to recruitment.

Crews can identify vulnerable people and make safeguarding referrals when needed. Fire control staff are confident in advising the public about fire survival. This is despite a lack of refresher training.

Evaluating operational performance

The service needs to improve how it evaluates operational performance. It has a range of documents as part of a command and control system. These include risk assessments, and message and decision logs completed at incidents. But the service is poor at managing this information after an incident. Documents weren't always returned. And few reviews had been done that might help improve performance and staff competence.

Crews told us they routinely have hot debriefs at incidents. This is where learning is shared before leaving the scene. For larger incidents, all commanders must complete a debrief form. This will include any learning or feedback they want to share.

There were examples of improvements to procedures following incidents – for example, a change to radio procedures. Significant incidents trigger a structured debrief. Important information learned is recorded on individual training records (known as the 'TASK' system).

But some commanders aren't aware of how to raise issues about operational learning. Staff told us they would like to have a central location to review and learn from debriefs for incidents they hadn't been to. Thirty-seven percent of the 135 firefighters and specialist support staff who responded to our survey weren't confident the service takes action as a result of learning from operational incidents. A further 10.4 percent did not know.

Commanders are monitored by a more senior officer at incidents. Station managers are routinely assessed. But crew and watch managers are only monitored for a limited number of incident types. This is even when the manager is new in post or temporarily promoted.

When appropriate, the service shares its development plans via national operational learning. It described to us three occasions when it had done so. One was an incident where firefighters were injured when using a ladder. The service also monitors external learning and shares this with the ERF.

Responding to national risks

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Good

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service is good at responding to national risks. But we found the following areas in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure that its procedures for responding to terrorist-related incidents are understood by all staff and are well tested.
- The service should make sure it participates in a programme of cross-border exercises, sharing the learning from these exercises.

All fire and rescue services must be able to respond effectively to multi-agency and cross-border incidents. This means working with other fire and rescue services (known as intraoperability) and emergency services (known as interoperability).

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Preparedness

The service gave examples of when it had supported national incidents. These include helping other services during wildfires in 2017. Senior commanders and control operators confidently described the arrangements to request and manage national assets. These included high-volume pumps and urban search and rescue units.

The service works closely with the ERF to make sure that Essex is prepared for major incidents. ERF members consider the service to be a proactive and valued part of the forum.

The service has good plans for high-risk sites. It shares these with ERF partners and via Resilience Direct, a national information-sharing platform used by emergency responders. High-risk sites include oil refineries. The service carries out exercises at high-risk sites regularly to prepare its response to incidents. These often involve other emergency services.

Working with other services

The service is among the FRSs working with the East Coast Flood Group, which covers the east coast of England. There were examples of high-level planning and exercises for large sites, such as the Lakeside Shopping Centre and airports. But there were few examples of stations training with neighbouring services. Operational staff told us they would like to train more with their neighbours, especially using equipment such as breathing apparatus. Of the 135 firefighters and specialist support staff who responded to our survey, only 20.7 percent said the service trains regularly with other FRSs, but 30.4 percent did not know.

Crews can access risk information from some neighbouring FRSs – but not all – on their MDTs. Risk information for other FRSs is only available on Resilience Direct. This is something the service should address because it is important that crews have this information when responding to incidents.

Operational commanders showed a mixed level of understanding of national models such as the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles and the incident command decision control process.

Working with other agencies

The ERF arranges multi-agency training, exercises, debriefs and seminars. These include exercises at airports and the Dartford Crossing, as well as Brexit planning. The service takes part in all these. It works with others at sites under the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1999. These include local site management, the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency. This is to make sure that plans are in place and tested.

Senior incident commanders understood how to take part in a multi-agency response. The service has funding to provide specialist teams to respond to terrorist incidents. It has well-trained specialist teams and equipment to respond to large-scale national incidents. But we found most operational crews are less confident. They would benefit from training in dealing with terrorist attacks.

Fire control aren't involved in training with other services although inter-agency liaison officers are involved in monthly tests that make sure they can talk to other emergency services using their radios.

Efficiency

How efficient is the service at keeping people safe and secure?

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Requires improvement

Summary

An efficient fire and rescue service will manage its budget and spend money properly and appropriately. It will align its resources to its risk. It should try to keep costs down without compromising public safety. Future budgets should be based on robust and realistic assumptions. Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency requires improvement.

The service has clear financial plans that balance its budget to 2024 and include making savings. An example is cutting costs by changing the crewing system at four of its fire stations. This is due to be in place by 2020 but is likely to take longer than expected.

The service invests in technology that will improve its service to the public. But we saw some computer systems that may increase staff workload.

There is a lack of planning for allocating resources to prevention, protection and response activities. For example, there is a shortage of fire protection inspectors. The service isn't using its firefighters to carry out home safety visits. But it states in its IRMP that this is a big part of its day-to-day work.

The lack of annual leave policy potentially enables staff to affect fire engine availability by taking leave at short notice. The service addresses this by using overtime payment for other staff. But this is expensive.

The service has a range of business continuity plans to deal with potential impacts on its ability to provide a service. But most of these haven't been tested or exercised.

The service has done some good work with other FRSs around joint procurement of uniforms and equipment. This has helped improve efficiency. It plans to work more with other services.

Making best use of resources

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Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service needs to show a clear rationale for the resources allocated between prevention, protection and response activities. This should be linked to risks and priorities set out in its integrated risk management plan.
- The service should assure itself that its workforce is productive.
- The service should ensure that its business continuity plans are tested and reviewed.
- The service should assure itself that it makes the most of collaboration opportunities and that they are value for money.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

How plans support objectives

The service's medium-term financial plan is based on good planning assumptions and is subject to robust scrutiny and challenge.

As the risk had reduced in some areas, the service cut the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff by 11.2 percent between 31 March 2013 and 31 March 2018. This followed review of its fire cover provision. Its IRMP states that prevention is a big part of the day-to-day work of wholetime firefighters. This isn't currently the case. There also aren't enough protection staff to complete the planned number of audits.

The service recently identified that its operational training programme isn't good enough. This has resulted in an unexpected £1.4m to pay for additional training. This will be funded from reserves.

The service doesn't have an effective annual leave policy. This means that staff can book leave at short notice. As a result, some engines may not be available because there aren't enough trained staff to crew them. As mentioned earlier, this can increase the amount of time it takes to attend incidents because other engines would need to be deployed. These could potentially be further away. Staffing gaps are covered by overtime payments, which isn't efficient. In the nine months to 31 December 2018, the service spent just over £0.7m on pre-arranged overtime and £0.6m on casual overtime.

Productivity and ways of working

The service is changing four stations from day-crewed to on-call. This will improve efficiency. The aim was to have done this by April 2020, but it is now expected to take until 2021. Posts have been found at wholetime stations for the staff who will no longer be needed at these four stations. As a result, while the changes are being made, some watches on these stations are short-staffed. These gaps are filled by firefighters being paid overtime.

The service uses pre-arranged and casual overtime payments to keep its wholetime stations available. We were told that uniformed staff from support teams are used to maintain cover at stations. But we found that this rarely happens. Staff told us that on-call contracts lack flexibility. This makes it more difficult to recruit new staff and keep them if their circumstances change, and this affects the cover the service can offer.

The service now does more safe and well visits. In the year to 31 March 2013, it carried out 1.1 visits per 1,000 population. This increased to 4.7 in the year to 31 March 2018. This is still below the England rate of 10.4.

As mentioned before, the service isn't using its wholetime staff to help meet its targets. A pilot scheme of firefighters doing home fire safety checks in a small number of stations started in spring 2019. It shows that full-time staff have capacity to carry out prevention work. This is under-used.

It is good that operational staff are visiting risk premises to familiarise themselves. But approaches can be inconsistent and inefficient.

The service produces performance reports to help performance management. Staff told us they felt station plans are too generic, and that managers create their own spreadsheets to help them manage performance.

The service could use technology better, particularly the customer relationship management (CRM) software that is slow and unreliable. The service has set money aside to improve its IT. But at the time of our inspection, a solution hadn't been agreed.

In the year to 31 March 2018, the firefighter cost per head of population was £19.63. This compares with the England rate over the same timescale of £22.38. But many factors influence this cost – for example, the ratio of wholetime to on-call staff. This is partly influenced by how rural the area is.

Collaboration

The service led a programme to develop a common standard for fire engines in the region. By working with Bedfordshire FRS on fire control procurement, it saved £84,300 between 2014/15 and 2018/19. It also works with the Essex Emergency Services Collaboration Programme. This involves ambulance crews and Essex Police using certain fire stations and their facilities as strategic bases.

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The service works with Essex Police to improve community safety work in schools. It is also developing plans to work together in areas such as fleet, estates, control rooms and training facilities. The service is aware that it needs to work with others more, and with a wider range of organisations – for example, around business safety.

A good example of collaborative working is the service's role in the Safer Essex Roads Partnership. Data from the partnership suggests that Essex's roads have become safer. The number of people killed or seriously injured in Essex almost halved between 2005 and 2017. This was from 350 to around 200 per million vehicle miles.

But the service doesn't routinely review and monitor opportunities to work with others.

Continuity arrangements

The service has business continuity plans to make sure that it can provide critical services during times of disruption. But, other than fire control evacuation, these haven't been tested or exercised. At the time of inspection, some plans were out of date and some key staff couldn't find relevant plans for their area of work.

Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future

Good

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service is good at making its services affordable now and in the future. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service needs to assure itself that it is maximising opportunities to improve effectiveness and efficiency through the better use of technology.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Improving value for money

The service understands its finances and financial pressures. Its annual budget for 2019/20 is £73.8m. This is down from £79.5m in 2014/15. It is using £2.4m from reserves to address a gap left by higher than expected costs from pay settlements and delays in converting four stations to on-call.

In the year to March 2018, the service had around £5.5m in earmarked reserves, around £6.8m in general reserves and £848,000 in provisions.

The service's financial plans balance the budget until 2020/21. Although it has explored a wide range of potential options, it isn't clear how it will make savings after this. However, it is confident that it will achieve the savings needed to 2024.

The service reduced its workforce (FTE) by 11.2 percent between 31 March 2013 and 31 March 2018. And consultancy costs dropped from £1.1m in the year to 31 March 2016 to £0.7m in the year to 31 March 2018. It is also reducing casual and temporary staff costs.

The service works with others to procure uniforms. This is expected to save around £215,000 a year until 2027. Similar joint procurement projects are making more savings. These include personal protective equipment. The service also led on the procurement of 'working at height' equipment on behalf of the national procurement board.

The service has a good fleet strategy. The aim is to ensure best value by using national, regional or collaborative frameworks when procuring new vehicles.

The service doesn't have an overall estates strategy, but it uses premises scorecards which show the efficiency and effectiveness ratings for its properties to help the service make improvements.

Innovation

Essex County FRS has invested in technology to help staff deal with incidents better. The demountable MDTs give staff information about vehicle safety systems at road traffic collisions.

Operational officers use tablets to get information while at incidents or in meetings. They can also use them to see multi-agency plans for dealing with major incidents.

The service has been slow to use other technology to help it work better. Many of the systems it relies on, such as the CRM software, are slow and not interoperable. The service is aware of this. It has identified the issue on its risk register and has around £1m set aside for improving IT.

Future investment and working with others

The service reviews its reserves each year. This is to make sure that there is flexibility in how they are allocated.

The service is working with both Devon and Somerset FRS and Kent FRS to set up a procurement hub and build national procurement capability. The service secured £220,000 of fire transformation funding in 2015. This helped it establish the Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company Ltd. This is an innovative and collaborative approach to risk protection and insurance. It involves eight other FRSs. The project is expected to have saved over £2.8m across the nine FRSs by 2025.

The service's subsidiary company, EFA (Trading) Limited, carry out its trading. The company sells training and engineering services. It also sells off end-of-life vehicles and equipment.

The company doesn't employ people directly. Instead, it uses off-duty staff on secondary contracts. It made a small profit of around £25,000 for the year to 31 March 2018. Profits go into a community foundation, with grants that can come back into the service. The service is reviewing its trading arm and looking at how other services operate theirs. The aim is to make it more profitable.

The service will generate more capital when it sells the 25 houses adjacent to its day-crewed stations. This will be once they have been converted to on-call.

People
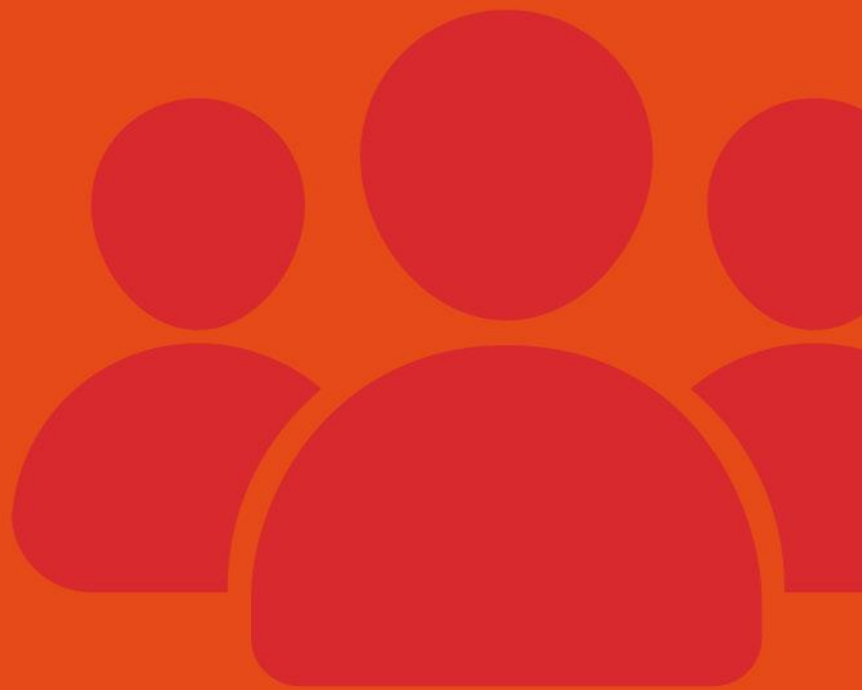
How well does the service look after its people?

Requires improvement

Summary

A fire and rescue service that looks after its people should be able to provide an effective service to its community. It should offer a range of services to make its communities safer. This will include developing and maintaining a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse. The service's leaders should be positive role models, and this should be reflected in the behaviour of the workforce. Overall, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at looking after its people.

There is a need for significant improvement in the organisational culture of Essex County FRS. The service has a legacy issue of failings at all levels, including inappropriate behaviour and bullying. These failings were highlighted in an independent review in 2015. The service has since moved under the governance of a police, fire and crime commissioner and has appointed a new chief fire officer, who in turn has appointed a new service leadership team.

The police, fire and crime commissioner is clear about the need to continue to improve culture. There is a strong commitment from the chief fire officer and her team to address these issues, and recently introduced initiatives are designed to help with this.

A good start has been made, with positive feedback from staff on visible improvements. However, the scale of the challenge is significant. Embedding strong positive values through every level of the organisation will take time, and there is a lot of work to do. Poor data around workforce diversity makes effective analysis difficult. It is also clear that some staff don't fully understand the benefits of, and need for, diversity. We were disappointed to find examples of behaviour that don't reflect the service's values, and concerned to find reports of bullying and harassment made by staff not being addressed by some managers.

Some firefighters have secondary contracts of employment outside the service. The service only has records of very few of these, although there is a robust policy in place. It should make sure that these staff are well rested and safe to work.

There isn't enough assurance to make sure that competence levels among staff are being maintained through training. The service is taking this seriously and is investing £1.4m in improving operational training.

Significant work has been done to improve the appraisal process and completion rates have dramatically improved. Staff told us that they welcomed the new approach of senior managers, but they said middle managers needed to be braver in tackling poor performance.

The service has good processes for looking after staff wellbeing. This includes supporting personal issues outside work. Staff who have used these services have praised them. However, others don't know this support exists. The service is good at looking after its staff's health and safety, and it learns from accidents and dangerous occurrences.

Promoting the right values and culture

Inadequate

Causes of concern

There is a clear intent from senior officers to improve the culture of the service, and many staff reported improvements under the new chief fire officer. However, more needs to be done. We are concerned to have found evidence of behaviours that are not in line with service values, such as sexism and bullying. Despite being reported, at times these behaviours have not been challenged by managers.

Recommendations

By 31 March 2020, the service should produce an action plan that ensures:

- it communicates service values to staff effectively, ensuring that they understand and can demonstrate acceptable behaviours at all times; and

- managers at all levels demonstrate service values through their positive workplace behaviours and are capable of challenging inappropriate language and behaviour when identified.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Workforce wellbeing

Staff told us that Essex County FRS's wellbeing processes have improved in recent years. They have access to physiotherapy services and an employee assistance programme. Those who have used these praised them, but not all staff are aware of them.

Some staff didn't feel supported in managing large workloads. Views about the service's occupational health service were mixed. Some managers would like more training in how to identify signs and symptoms of stress in their colleagues.

The service offers support after traumatic incidents although some staff don't understand the process.

Health and safety

The service has an established health and safety culture. It learns from accidents – for example, it updated its driver training in response to a rise in near misses. This followed new fire engines being introduced.

Staff get health and safety messages via email bulletins. These are followed up by questionnaires to confirm that everyone understands them. The health and safety team has visited fire stations to raise awareness of issues. It also updates staff each month.

Of the 258 staff who responded to our survey, 94.2 percent knew how to report all accidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences.

We found a lack of oversight of staff working hours and a lack of reliable information about secondary employment. This is despite a robust policy being in place. The service needs to make sure that staff are well rested and safe to work, and that the working time regulations are followed.

Culture and values

Following an independent cultural review in 2015, the service's senior leaders are clear about their intention to improve its culture. Staff have seen noticeable improvements. An example is the new chief officer, who many staff described as positive and approachable.

Staff created service values. While there has been a growing commitment to them, some staff don't yet understand them.

Senior managers visiting workplaces have received mixed feedback from staff. Some told us that they rarely see, or have never met, their senior leaders. This is despite some working in the same building.

The service has commissioned an external company to carry out engagement with every member of staff so their views can be heard. This will inform a 'cultural improvement plan'. And the chief fire officer has introduced a monthly recognition award and annual staff awards.

Despite these measures, we were concerned to find evidence that inappropriate behaviours remain. A number of staff told us they had been victims of unacceptable language and behaviour. This included sexism. And staff gave examples of being bullied and ostracised by some managers and peers.

Some support staff reported poor treatment at the hands of operational staff. This included harassment. And we found significant divisions between wholetime staff and on-call staff. Some on-call staff told us they felt that wholetime colleagues looked down on them. Of the 258 responses to the staff survey, 26.0 percent said they had felt harassed or bullied at work in the past 12 months.

We were most concerned at the lack of action from a range of managers to address these issues when concerns were raised. The service has a lot of work to do to challenge these behaviours, to create an inclusive culture.

Getting the right people with the right skills

Requires improvement

> **Areas for improvement**
> - The service needs to assure itself that all staff are appropriately trained for their role. It needs to ensure all staff keep their skills up to date and have a consistent method of recording when they have received training.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Workforce planning

The service predicts retirements and movement of operational staff quarterly. This helps predict shortages in operational cover.

Detailed six-monthly workforce planning reports are given to the service leadership team. This helps it plan recruitment, training and promotions. But there is a lack of effective workforce planning in some critical areas. For example, there are vacancies in the technical fire safety department. This means that the service is failing to meet its targets.

A central staffing team assesses the skills at stations – for example, the number of fire engine drivers. This helps to plan who should attend which courses, and from which stations. The service offers enough courses to meet predicted demand. This means that staff can maintain their core skills, and progress, to help meet the service's needs.

The service offers good staff training from its training centre and focuses on risk-critical skills. It carries out theoretical testing and practical assessment. And it gives initial and refresher courses for wearing breathing apparatus and for commanding incidents. There are clear assessment criteria linked to national

standards. If risk-critical skills expire, staff don't take part in operational duties until their training is up to date.

As mentioned earlier, the service has prioritised cultural change. But many managers are aware that they need training in essential 'softer skills'. These include performance management, industrial relations, and handling discipline and grievances. The service should consider making this training compulsory. This would make sure that managers at all levels are able to lead staff through this time of change.

Until recently, the service had a high number of staff in temporary posts. As at 31 December 2018, there were 123 staff on temporary promotion compared with 196 as at 31 March 2017. This has recently been addressed with the 'talent pool' promotion process. Data provided by the service shows it appointed 52 staff into substantive roles. Data from the service shows 46 more staff have entered the 'pool' and are being trained for future roles.

Learning and improvement

The service has a good central recording system for training, such as breathing apparatus and incident command. This highlights when staff need to complete refresher courses. These centrally taught core skills are well maintained and supported by the training team. Operational staff told us that centrally delivered training was of a high standard.

But we found a different picture of locally provided training at stations. This is supported by e-learning packages and is led by the service's TASK system. This records that staff have attended a training session. But the service is aware that the system doesn't offer good evidence of competence.

There were many inefficiencies with the system, including when trying to audit skills and competencies. Some e-learning packages were described by staff as being of poor quality. The service is aware of the problems with TASK and is making improvements.

As well as issues with recording training, staff told us they were unhappy with the standard of training at stations. This training is mostly provided by line managers who aren't qualified to train or assess. There is no co-ordinated training programme for fire control staff. And flexible-duty officers were concerned that there is no oversight of their TASK records.

Only 61 percent of the 258 staff who responded to our survey said they felt they had enough training to enable them to do their job. The service is aware that it needs to do more to make sure that the workforce has the right skills and capabilities. It is investing in new training staff. These staff will work a rota pattern. This will include evenings and weekends to help them better support on-call training.

The service has training schedules for stations to follow, which include arranging training exercises with neighbouring stations. It completes many training exercises with other agencies and FRSs. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 December 2018, the service undertook 10 joint exercises/training with other FRSs, 49 multi-agency exercises/training and one national resilience exercise/training. These help the service work better with others.

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Operational crews haven't had enough training to enable them to carry out protection activities. And there aren't records of the limited training done so far.

But officers who carry out safe and well checks have an annual training plan and monthly updates. They are trained to a high standard.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity

●●○○

Requires improvement

> **Areas for improvement**
> - The service should assure itself that it has effective grievance procedures which include clearly documented actions and outcomes.
> - The service should make sure issues identified though its staff survey are appropriately addressed and that actions taken are communicated to staff in a timely way.
> - To identify and tackle barriers to equality of opportunity, and make its workforce more representative, the service should ensure diversity and inclusion are well-understood and become important values of the whole of the service.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Seeking and acting on staff feedback

The service has a range of employee engagement and feedback tools. It has made changes as a result of this feedback. But it isn't always good at telling staff about these changes. The senior leadership team told us of its continued commitment to visiting all staff and locations. But we found mixed opinions about whether the senior leaders are visible to staff.

The service has manager briefings and had a recent exercise called 'Everyone Matters'. As part of this, so far over 200 employees have talked to independent reviewers about how they feel the service could improve.

There is an annual staff survey. This is managed by a third-party company that generates an action plan for addressing staff concerns. But many staff are reluctant to take part because they don't trust its anonymity. This is a result of a culture of mistrust. The results weren't communicated well to staff either.

The service meets regularly with unions. Not all of them are willing to attend together. So, managers have to hold two meetings each time. Union representatives gave us examples of times when their feedback had been listened to and changes made. But there were also examples of delays to putting policies in place due to a failure to reach agreement with unions.

The service is asking for feedback from its on-call staff. This is being done through focus groups. It will help it to work out how to improve the on-call experience, recruitment and availability.

There were examples of poor communication around structural changes within teams. Staff told us they heard about changes to their working conditions unofficially. They felt this was disappointing.

During our review of grievances, record keeping was poor, the management system was hard to audit and some files were missing or incomplete. There was little evidence of learning from grievances. Managerial staff would benefit from training in resolving disputes and grievance. And the service needs to assure itself that actions and outcomes are dealt with effectively.

Diversity

The workforce doesn't reflect its wider community. As at 31 March 2018, 1.8 percent of its firefighters were from a black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) background. This compares with a BAME residential population of 6.7 percent. A total of 53.4 percent of the workforce ethnicity is not stated. This makes analysis difficult. This is by far the highest percentage of any English FRS. The England rate is 9.6 percent.

As at 31 March 2018, only 3.3 percent of Essex's firefighters were female. The service has tried to address this by targeting its recruitment at women and people from BAME communities. It uses targeted social media and advertising campaigns. The aim is to increase applications from under-represented groups.

As a result, the service states that 10 percent of its recent wholetime recruits were female. The service has also recently established a women's forum. This is sponsored and supported by the chief officer.

Despite this work, some staff don't fully understand the benefits of, and need for, diversity. They were negative about initiatives to address this. There was evidence of poor behaviour towards people who had raised concerns about inequality. There were several examples of managers failing to tackle inappropriate behaviour such as gender discrimination. Some managers have failed to support staff with learning difficulties, such as dyslexia. Of the 258 responses to the staff survey, 24.4 percent said they had felt discriminated against at work in the past 12 months.

The service has recently appointed 50 volunteer 'dignity at work' champions to help support staff in the workplace. This has been well received by staff. But there is a lot of work to do.

Managing performance and developing leaders

Good

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service is good at managing performance and developing leaders. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Managing performance

The service has an appraisal process for all members of staff. It has clear reporting and monitoring lines, and is supportive of staff and management. After a recent review, the service has improved the process. Completion rates have dramatically increased as a result.

In March 2018, 2.3 percent of wholetime firefighters had completed appraisals. By March 2019, this had risen to 75 percent. The process includes having effective conversations with line managers at least twice each year.

Despite completion rates improving, staff have mixed views about the effectiveness of the appraisal process. Some welcome it and feel that it is easier to complete appraisals than before. Others feel it is only relevant to those seeking promotion and see it as a 'tick box' exercise.

Some staff weren't clear whether there is a link to service objectives. They said that they would benefit from training in how to complete appraisals effectively. The service should make sure that its new process is giving all staff the opportunity to have genuine and meaningful conversations about performance.

Some staff told us they felt there is a lack of effective performance management. They told us leaders, particularly middle managers, need to be braver in tackling poor performance of staff. They welcomed the new style of leadership from the senior leadership team but were keen to see significant organisational change and improvements.

Of the 258 staff who took part in our survey, only 52.7 percent felt satisfied with their current level of learning and development.

Developing leaders

The service's annual review policy doesn't have a defined process for identifying high achievers. Its promotion process establishes when people are ready for promotion. But there isn't a clear process for finding potential senior leaders early on.

The people strategy shows an intention to create a development programme. This would offer fast-track development for suitable candidates, but it isn't mentioned in the promotions or appraisal guidance.

Access to the promotion process was fair and transparent. Those who are successful enter the service's development pool. They are offered development and temporary promotion opportunities. But there were mixed views on how fair the process was for securing a permanent or temporary role. There were examples of managers interfering with the process. These included some people being selected over others, despite being less qualified for the role. Of the 258 staff who responded to our survey, 51.6 percent felt they are not given the same opportunities to develop as others.

Annex A – About the data

Data in this report is from a range of sources, including:

- Home Office;
- Office for National Statistics (ONS);
- Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA);
- our public perception survey;
- our inspection fieldwork; and
- data we collected directly from all 45 fire and rescue services (FRSs) in England.

Where we collected data directly from FRSs, we took reasonable steps to agree the design of the data collection with services and with other interested parties, such as the Home Office. This was primarily through our Technical Advisory Group, which brings together representatives from the fire sector and the Home Office to support the inspection's design and development, including data collection.

We give services several opportunities to validate the data we collect to make sure the evidence presented is accurate. For instance, we asked all services to:

- check the data they submitted to us via an online application;
- check the final data used in each service report; and
- correct any errors they identified.

We set out the source of Service in Numbers data below.

Methodology

Use of data in the reports and to form judgments

The data we cite in this report and use to form our judgments is the information that was available at the time of inspection. Due to the nature of data collection, there are often gaps between the timeframe the data covers, when it was collected, and when it becomes available to use.

If more recent data became available after inspection, showing a different trend or context, we have referred to this in the report. However, it was not used to form our judgments.

In a small number of cases, data available at the time of the inspection was later found to be incorrect. For example, a service might have identified an error in its original data return. When this is the case, we have corrected the data and used the more reliable data in the report.

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator in our calculations, unless otherwise noted, we use ONS mid-2017 population estimates. At the time of inspection this was the most recent data available.

2018 survey of public perception of the fire and rescue service

We commissioned BMG to survey attitudes towards FRSs in June and July 2018. This consisted of 17,976 surveys across 44 local FRS areas. This survey didn't include the Isles of Scilly, due to its small population. Most interviews were conducted online, with online research panels.

However, a minority of the interviews (757) were conducted face-to-face with trained interviewers in respondents' homes. A small number of respondents were also interviewed online via postal invitations to the survey. These face-to-face interviews were specifically targeted at groups traditionally under-represented on online panels, and so ensure that survey respondents are as representative as possible of the total adult population of England. The sampling method used isn't a statistical random sample. The sample size in each service area was small, varying between 400 and 446 individuals. So any results provided are only an indication of satisfaction rather than an absolute.

Survey findings are available on BMG's website.

Staff survey

We conducted a staff survey open to all members of FRS workforces across England. We received 3,083 responses between 8 March and 9 August 2019 from across the 15 Tranche 3 services.

We view the staff survey as an important tool in understanding the views of staff who we may not have spoken to, for a variety of reasons, during fieldwork.

However, you should consider several points when interpreting the findings from the staff survey.

The results are not representative of the opinions and attitudes of a service's whole workforce. The survey was self-selecting, and the response rate ranged from 7 percent to 40 percent of a service's workforce. So any findings should be considered alongside the service's overall response rate, which is cited in the report.

To protect respondents' anonymity and allow completion on shared devices, it was not possible to limit responses to one per person. So it is possible that a single person could have completed the survey more than once.

Each service was provided with a unique access code to try to make sure that only those currently working in a service could complete the survey. However, it is possible that the survey and access code could have been shared and completed by people other than its intended respondents.

We have provided percentages when presenting the staff survey findings throughout the report. When a service has a low number of responses (less than 100), these figures should be treated with additional caution. Percentages may sum to more than 100 percent due to rounding.

Due to the limitations set out above, the results from the staff survey should only be used to provide an indicative measure of service performance.

Service in numbers

A dash in this graphic indicates that a service couldn't give data to us or the Home Office.

Perceived effectiveness of service

We took this data from the following question of the 2018 survey of public perceptions of the FRS:

> How confident are you, if at all, that the fire and rescue service in your local area provides an effective service overall?

The figure provided is a sum of respondents who stated they were either 'very confident' or 'fairly confident'. Respondents could have also stated 'not very confident', 'not at all confident' or 'don't know'. The percentage of 'don't know' responses varied between services (ranging from 5 percent to 14 percent).

Due to its small residential population, we didn't include the Isles of Scilly in the survey.

Incidents attended per 1,000 population

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, 'Incidents attended by fire and rescue services in England, by incident type and fire and rescue authority' for the period from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2019.

Please consider the following points when interpreting outcomes from this data.

- There are seven worksheets in this file. The 'FIRE0102' worksheet shows the number of incidents attended by type of incident and fire and rescue authority (FRA) for each financial year. The 'FIRE0102 Quarterly' worksheet shows the number of incidents attended by type of incident and FRA for each quarter. The worksheet 'Data' provides the raw data for the two main data tables (from 2009/10). The 'Incidents chart - front page', 'Chart 1' and 'Chart 2' worksheets provide the data for the corresponding charts in the statistical commentary. The 'FRS geographical categories' worksheet shows how FRAs are categorised.

- Fire data, covering all incidents that FRSs attend, is collected by the Incident Recording System (IRS). For several reasons some records take longer than others for services to upload to the IRS. Totals are constantly being amended (by relatively small numbers).

- We took data for Service in Numbers from the August 2019 incident publication. So, figures may not directly match more recent publications due to data updates.

Home fire safety checks per 1,000 population

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, 'Home Fire Safety Checks carried out by fire and rescue services and partners, by fire and rescue authority' for the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Each FRS figure is based on the number of checks it carried out. It doesn't include checks carried out by partners.

Please consider the following points when interpreting outcomes from this data.

- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset and Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire FRSs before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.

- Figures for 'Fire Risk Checks carried out by Elderly (65+)', 'Fire Risk Checks carried out by Disabled' and 'Number of Fire Risk Checks carried out by Partners' don't include imputed figures because a lot of services can't supply these figures.

- The checks included in a home fire safety check can vary between services. You should consider this when making direct comparisons between services.

- Home fire safety checks may also be referred to as home fire risk checks or safe and well visits by services.

- After inspection, East Sussex FRS resubmitted data on its total number of home fire safety checks and the number of checks targeted at the elderly and disabled in the year to 31 March 2018. The latest data changes the percentage of checks that were targeted at the elderly (from 54.1 percent to 54.9 percent) and disabled (from 24.7 percent to 25.4 percent) in England. However, as noted above, in all reports we have used the original figures that were available at the time of inspection.

Fire safety audits per 100 known premises

Fire protection refers to FRSs' statutory role in ensuring public safety in the wider built environment. It involves auditing and, where necessary, enforcing regulatory compliance, primarily but not exclusively in respect of the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO). The number of safety audits in Service in Numbers refers to the number of audits services carried out in known premises. According to the Home Office's definition, "premises known to FRAs are the FRA's knowledge, as far as possible, of all relevant premises; for the enforcing authority to establish a risk profile for premises in its area. These refer to all premises except single private dwellings".

We took this from the Home Office fire statistics, 'Fire safety audits carried out by fire and rescue services, by fire and rescue authority' for the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Please consider the following points when interpreting outcomes from this data.

- Berkshire FRS didn't provide figures for premises known between 2014/15 and 2017/18.

- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset and Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire FRSs before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.

- Several FRAs report 'Premises known to FRAs' as estimates based on historical data.

Firefighter cost per person per year

We took the data used to calculate firefighter cost per person per year from the annual financial data returns that individual FRSs complete and submit to CIPFA, and ONS mid-2017 population estimates.

You should consider this data alongside the proportion of firefighters who are wholetime and on-call.

Number of firefighters per 1,000 population, five-year change in workforce and percentage of wholetime firefighters

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, 'Total staff numbers (full-time equivalent) by role and by fire and rescue authority' as at 31 March 2018.

Table 1102a: Total staff numbers (FTE) by role and fire authority – Wholetime Firefighters and table 1102b: Total staff numbers (FTE) by role and fire authority – Retained Duty System are used to produce the total number of firefighters.

Please consider the following points when interpreting outcomes from this data.

- We calculate these figures using full-time equivalent (FTE) numbers. FTE is a metric that describes a workload unit. One FTE is equivalent to one full-time worker. But one FTE may also be made up of two or more part-time workers whose calculated hours equal that of a full-time worker. This differs from headcount, which is the actual number of the working population regardless if employees work full or part-time.
- Some totals may not aggregate due to rounding.
- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset and Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire FRSs before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.

Percentage of female firefighters and black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) firefighters

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, 'Staff headcount by gender, fire and rescue authority and role' and 'Staff headcount by ethnicity, fire and rescue authority and role' as at 31 March 2018.

Please consider the following points when interpreting outcomes from this data.

- We calculate BAME residential population data from ONS 2011 census data. This figure is calculated by dividing the BAME residential population by the total population.
- We calculate female residential population data from ONS mid-2017 population estimates.
- The percentage of BAME firefighters does not include those who opted not to disclose their ethnic origin. There are large variations between services in the number of firefighters who did not state their ethnic origin.

- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset and Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire FRSs before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.

Annex B – Fire and rescue authority governance

These are the different models of fire and rescue authority (FRA) governance in England. Essex County Fire and Rescue Service is a police, fire and crime commissioner FRA.

Metropolitan FRA

The FRA covers a metropolitan (large urban) area. Each is governed by locally elected councillors appointed from the consitutent councils in that area.

Combined FRA

The FRA covers more than one local authority area. Each is governed by locally elected councillors appointed from the constituent councils in that area.

County FRA

Some county councils are defined as FRAs, with responsibility for fire and rescue service provision in their area.

Unitary authorities

These combine the usually separate council powers and functions for non-metropolitan counties and non-metropolitan districts. In such counties, a separate fire authority runs the fire services. This is made up of councillors from the county council and unitary councils.

London

Day-to-day control of London's fire and rescue service is the responsibility of the London fire commissioner, accountable to the Mayor. A Greater London Authority committee and the Deputy Mayor for Fire scrutinise the commissioner's work. The Mayor may arrange for the Deputy Mayor to exercise his fire and rescue functions.

Mayoral Combined Authority

Only in Greater Manchester. The Combined Authority is responsible for fire and rescue functions but with those functions exercised by the elected Mayor. A fire and rescue committee supports the Mayor in exercising non-strategic fire and rescue functions. This committee is made up of members from the constituent councils.

Police, fire and crime commissioner FRA

The police, fire and rescue commissioner is solely responsible for the service provision of fire & rescue and police functions.

Isles of Scilly

The Council of the Isles of Scilly is the FRA for the Isles of Scilly.

HMICFRS

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
and Fire & Rescue Services

Promoting improvements
in policing and fire & rescue
services to make everyone safer

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Zoë Billingham BA Hons (Oxon)
Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary
Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

Jo Turton
Chief Fire Officer
Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

13 December 2019

Dear Jo,

ESSEX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE REVISIT

We inspected Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) the week of 1 July 2019. During the inspection, we identified a cause of concern in how Essex County FRS keeps the public safe through the regulation of fire safety.

2.   We found that Essex County FRS did not have a clear strategy for guaranteeing compliance with fire safety regulations. Audits of high-risk premises were not taking place as planned in your risk-based inspection programme, and quality assurance processes were not in place to check that they were effective. There was no clear programme for making sure operational staff are competent at inspections.

3.   You submitted an action plan setting out how you plan to address our concern about fire safety. We revisited the service between 11 and 13 November 2019 to review progress against this plan.

4.   During the revisit we interviewed staff responsible for implementing the action plan. This included you as the chief fire officer. We also spoke to Roger Hirst, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC). At the end of the revisit we gave feedback on our findings to you both.

5.   We identified a separate cause of concern in the culture of the service and the behaviour of some staff. You have submitted a separate action plan to address this. We will monitor progress against this plan as part of our inspection programme. It wasn't considered as part of this revisit.

Monitoring progress

6.   We found suitable governance arrangements in place for monitoring progress against your action plan. Improving fire safety in Essex is a priority for the leadership of the service. Staff involved in making improvements were clear on this and felt supported by the leadership of the service.

7.   Your senior leadership team monitors progress at fortnightly meetings, which you chair. The deputy chief fire officer chairs a monthly Continual Improvement Board that reviews progress and risks associated with the actions. An assistant chief fire officer is the senior responsible owner and they holds fortnightly meetings with action owners.

8.   The cause of concern is recorded on a risk register, which is reviewed by senior leaders and the PFCC.

Action plan

9.   You have created an action plan to address our cause of concern about fire safety regulation. The action plan has a senior responsible owner and specific action owners. The actions are broadly described but would benefit from being set out in more detail to make each activity clear.

10.   Although the action plan includes time ranges for completion (e.g. 0–6 months), dated deadlines would help to monitor progress and identify the risk of slippage. You should consider using programme management disciplines in the improvement process, to help identify critical pathways and any interdependencies between actions.

11.   The service has made good progress in several actions. These are outlined below.

12.   You have created extra senior leader capacity to oversee improvements by appointing an Area Manager for the prevention and protection functions.

13.   Service managers have been briefed by chief officers on the initial findings from our inspection and causes of concern. Fire safety team staff met to discuss the findings and their views on next steps. The wider workforce will be told about the findings after our report is published.

14.   A draft protection strategy has been developed and was recently considered by your senior leadership team. This draft strategy includes a definition of high-risk premises and says who should be responsible for short and full audits, and fire safety checks. The PFCC is expected to look at the strategy in December 2019.

15.   A new risk-based inspection programme is being developed. But fire safety audit activity is continuing as we reported at our inspection. You should consider adopting a more targeted approach to audit activity by fire safety inspectors.

16.   A number of your staff are involved in the National Fire Chiefs Council's work on the definition of risk.

17.   During our inspection we identified that the your fire safety team is under-resourced. There were nine vacancies, including seven business fire safety inspectors. It is pleasing to see that you have acted swiftly to address this under-resourcing, have completed a recruitment process, and are likely to fill all the inspector vacancies by January 2020.

18.   Most new staff will need to undergo development to become competent and qualified, which you recognise will take time. You should consider what short-term measures could be taken to increase audit activity, for example using overtime.

19.   Work on succession planning has started to build further resilience in the fire safety team over the next few years. Eleven inspectors will be appointed from the recent recruitment process should they reach the selection standard.

20.   Operational staff are to be used to make revised fire safety checks. To support this change, a structured training programme comprising of six e-learning courses and a face-to-face briefing by fire safety staff has been developed. The training material is being quality assured by fire safety staff. It is proposed that the training will start from January 2020.

21.   The need to improve the quality and availability of data on fire safety activity is recognised. However your computer database makes it difficult to extract management information for effective monitoring, reporting and decision making. Interim measures have been put in place to provide managers with better information.

22.   Longer term, you are investing in digital transformation, and funding has been approved by the PFCC. Replacing the fire safety database is part of a wider programme. You may wish to consider how you can make quicker progress, recognising that any provision for fire safety should be aligned to the wider programme of digital transformation.

Conclusion

23.   Overall, we are encouraged by what we found on our revisit. It is clear that improving fire safety in Essex is a priority for the leadership of the service and the PFCC. We found suitable governance arrangements in place to monitor progress against your action plan. Funding is available to support the improvements you outline.
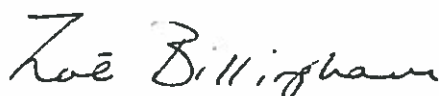
24.   You should consider developing the action plan further with more detail and deadlines. Using programme management disciplines will help the improvement process.

25.   You have acted quickly to address vacancies in the fire safety team. It will take time for these staff to become fully competent and qualified. You should consider what short-term measures would increase audit activities targeted at premises most at risk.

26.   We will revisit Essex County Fire and Rescue Service in the summer of 2020 to make sure you have made satisfactory progress with your action plan, and that the service you gives to the public of Essex continues to improve.

27.   This letter will be published on our website alongside your service report when it is published next month.

Yours sincerely,

Zoë Billingham
Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary
Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

Report title: Police IT Implementation Projects - Athena Programme and Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP)	
Report to: Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	
Date: 13 January 2020	**For:** Noting
Enquiries to: Anna Hook, Head of Performance and Scrutiny (Policing and Crime) PFCC's Office, anna.hook@essex.police.uk	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Purpose of Report

This report provides an update on major IT implementation projects for Essex Police with a focus on the Athena Programme and the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP).

This cover paper outlines updates on the Athena Programme presented to the Commissioner's Joint Audit Committee on 13 December 2019, and the attached Appendix A has been prepared by Essex Police for the Commissioner to answer the following questions:

1.1   (Athena Programme)

- How are partner agencies benefitting from the implementation of Athena?
- Which other police areas are using Athena and which are planning to use the programme going forward? Plans for collaboration with other policing bodies going forwards
- Update on key issues that the consortium is actively addressing
- Impact of the project on overall budgets

1.2   (ESMCP)

- Is the Emergency Services Network (ESN) fit for purpose and meeting its strategic aims?
- Project risks and associated impact on the budget if the risks are not mitigated
- Areas of the system that require improvement and any planned enhancements

2. Recommendations

This information is for the Panel to note.

3. Context / Summary

A strategic update on the Athena Programme was presented to the Commissioner's Joint Audit Committee on 13 December 2019. The highlights from that paper that are not covered in more detail in Appendix A are represented below.

Athena - Current Position and Achievements

3.1 We are now 11 months on from achieving the consortium ambition of nine forces live. All nine forces share the same instance of a common Records Management System (RMS) providing Intelligence, Crime, Custody and Case functionality. The system is predicated on a shared police database, addressing the key recommendation from the Bichard Inquiry following the tragic murders in Soham.

3.1.1 In October 2019, of all new intelligence reports entered onto Athena, 8.9% linked to a person record, 4.7% linked to a location record and 4.3% linked to a vehicle record that had already been linked to intelligence within another force. These figures demonstrate some of the benefits of the common RMS that Athena provides.

3.1.2 In addition to cross border intelligence sharing, in the same month, of all the new investigation records that were entered onto Athena, 3.5% (1,077) that were linked to the record as a suspect were also identified as having previously been linked as a suspect to an investigation by another force.

3.2 The consortium has found an innovative means of addressing complex Data Protection and GDPR legal requirements by sourcing specialist expertise (TLT Solicitors) to provide Data Protection as a Service (DPaaS). TLT has drafted a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for consideration by the forces. TLT is also working on the draft Code of Connection (CoCo) that will be presented shortly after the DPIA. Once the DPIA and CoCo have been agreed and signed off, TLT will commence work on the information sharing agreements (ISAs). This information sharing work is intrinsic to the progress of the Partnership Problem Solving Solution and how Essex Police manages data sharing.

3.3 The Home Office hosts and manages the Police National Database (PND). All forces that provide data for publication on the PND are required to meet a number of Home Office standards prior to connectivity being enabled. This is called Gateway 4. The Athena consortium achieved Gateway 4 on 3rd September 2019, enabling data from all Athena forces to be sent to the Home Office automatically. This data is then made available on the Police National Database.

3.4   A previous briefing was delivered to the Commissioner's Joint Audit Committee in March 2019 with regards to the stability and performance of Athena. This followed the scheduled release of version 5.3.5.4 and the significant issues experienced with the availability of the system.   A further software release, version 5.3.6.2 (Quarterly Service Pack (QSP) #1), was deployed on 16 July 2019 and has seen a dramatic improvement in system stability and consistency of performance.

3.5   In October 2019, two unplanned outages were experienced. Both of the outages were caused by a third party undertaking work at the data centre. Prior to the first outage, the landlord did not seek Northgate Public Services' (NPS's) approval for these works as they were not isolated to NPS or Athena, but related to the entire data centre. No downtime was expected as similar power work had been undertaken on a number of previous occasions without impact, most recently in December 2018. However all consortium forces experienced an outage of just over 6 hours.

3.5.1   The second occurrence was notified to NPS, however again no downtime was expected. Given the previous outage and prior to the planned work, NPS undertook a visual check of all data centre equipment, issued important system information communications to forces (enabling forces to forward plan), agreed a communications plan with the Athena Management Organisation (AMO), deployed engineers to the data centre and assembled an incident team. This limited the outage and the service was restored in 3 hours.

3.5.2   Northgate Public Services (NPS) reports back to the AMO and forces on Athena performance and stability through the fortnightly Service Management Board, where service credits can be claimed in accordance with the Service Level Agreements of the commercial contract. In the event of unplanned outages or severely affected performance the AMO initiates a consortium Gold Group to ensure an early restoration of service and instigation of a formal debrief.

3.5.3   Following the unplanned outages and the subsequent strategic Gold Group, the Essex Athena team held an Essex specific debrief. The findings from the debrief indicated that departmental business continuity plans were well embedded and utilised during the outage, however it was found that plans did not include sufficient detail on operational recovery. Local remedial work is underway and the learning from the outages has been provided to the Contingency Planning Team. A table top exercise is planned in the first quarter of 2020 to test business continuity plans more comprehensively.

4.   **Appendices**

   Appendix A: IT Implementation Projects - Athena Programme (Annex 1) and Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (Annex 2).

IT Implementation Projects

Athena Programme and Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme

Report by: Supt Josie Hayes/ T.Chief Supt Tom Simons – Strategic Change Directorate
                 Supt Simon Morris – ESMCP & Mobile First Manager

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1. **Purpose of Report:**

    The purpose of the report is to present an update on the Athena Programme and Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme.

    The Annex 1 report provides a strategic update on the Athena programme.

    The Annex 2 report provides a strategic update on the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP).

2. **Recommendation:**

    This report is for the PFCC to note.

Annex 1: Athena

Topic: Strategic Update on Athena

Author: Superintendent Josie Hayes / T.Chief Superintendent Tom Simons – Strategic Change Directorate

1.0   Introduction

1.1   This report is written in response to a request from the PFCC for an update on the Athena Programme to be presented to the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel meeting.

1.2   Essex Police was asked to provide an update on the areas shown below:

- *How are partner agencies benefitting from the implementation of Athena?*
- *Which other police areas are using Athena and which are planning to use the programme going forward? Plans for collaboration with other policing bodies going forwards*
- *Update on key issues that the consortium is actively addressing*
- *Impact of the project on overall budgets*

1.3   Each area is discussed under the relevant section heading below.

2.0   How are partner agencies benefitting from the implementation of Athena?

2.1   Whilst there are no partner agencies directly benefiting from access to the Athena system at this juncture, it is worth reflecting on consortium progress to date. Not only are nine forces now successfully integrated on a common Records Management System (RMS), we also now have a financially sustainable single client function, the Athena Management Organisation (AMO) which is set up to manage complex budget pressures and development requirements.

2.2   The Athena Innovation Project - Partner Problem Solving Solution (PPSS) - is our primary initiative in this area and is jointly funded by the Home Office Innovation and Transformation Grant and seven Athena consortium forces (Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk, Kent, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire).

2.3   The initial PPSS project, as previously reported to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in October 2017, consists of two key elements:

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- A data and case sharing platform that enables police forces and partner agencies to work as a collective unit (where appropriate) using the same case management processes and system.
- A problem solving capability within Athena that services the requirements of relevant forces. This will allow partners to proactively agree priorities and create a Problem Management Plan (PMP) for either crime or non-crime issues (in relation to persons, objects, locations or events). Relevant events will be linked to the PMP and alert partners when new information becomes available within the Person Object Location Event (POLE) database. The platform will allow the problem to be categorised with a case management team and for objectives and an action plan to be set to deal with the problem.

2.4   The first stated aim (enabling police forces and partners agencies to work as a collective unit) will not be achieved within the current financial year. The project has uncovered a key risk in relation to partner participation concerning data protection and GDPR which must be resolved before data can be shared. The Data Protection Officer within Essex Police has stipulated that this risk should be reduced through the wider Athena system initially, and therefore the consortium has employed legal firm TLT to undertake the work required as regards both core Athena and PPSS documents[1]. This process is being managed through the AMO.

2.5   Based on the progress towards the pilot from a technical perspective and to provide further mitigation of the above risk, the Innovation Project Board (chaired by the AMO) has decided to commence the pilot without partners at this time. The pilot will be carried out by the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Units and two Community Policing Teams (CPTs). Although partners will not be able to access and exploit the system themselves, the police officers and staff that work within these teams will be able to upload third party information that they receive relating to candidate cases they are managing.

2.6   The pilot commencing in November 2019 will realise the benefits of the problem solving solution in terms of functionality being leveraged against complex challenges such as OCG management. Problem Management Plans will enable improved case management within Integrated Offender Management and enhanced problem profiling for Community Policing Teams.

3.0   Which other police areas are using Athena and which are planning to use the programme going forward? Plans for collaboration with other policing bodies going forwards

3.1   Currently there are nine forces that make up the Athena consortium (Essex, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Norfolk, Suffolk, Warwickshire and

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[1] In order to make them both GDPR and Data Protection Act compliant

West Mercia). There are no other forces planning to join the Athena consortium at this stage.

3.2 Northgate Public Services (NPS) has now contracted with another seven UK police forces to supply Connect, the platform upon which Athena operates. Connect forces have the same functionality but do not yet share data outside of force borders. Two of the future Connect forces are the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) (which shares borders with both Essex and Kent) and West Midlands Police. Athena-MPS-WMP integration would align the two largest police forces in England and Wales with the largest shared policing platform.

3.3 There is currently technology available that would make it possible to interface the Connect forces with the Connect Athena forces. This technology could also work to interface with the 22 Niche forces. The future strategic intent is to collaborate amongst Athena enabled, Connect enabled and Niche enabled forces to deliver a nationally integrated solution.

3.4 A Contract Change Notice (CCN) has been raised by the Alliance for Connect to Connect functionality. This underlines both the commitment to achieving the integrated solution and fact that commissioning work has begun.

4.0   Update on key issues that the consortium is actively addressing

4.1 The key developments that the consortium is actively working towards include, but are not limited to:

4.2 The contract for the provision of the CDG allows for 15 months' dual running of the legacy MI system alongside the new CDG system. After 15 months, any force(s) still using the legacy (MI) system will be liable for the full costs of maintaining it. If a force remained as the only party using the MI system following the transition period then they would be liable for significant costs (though clearly these would be split proportionately if more than one force failed to transition within the described timeframe). Essex and Kent are the only two of the nine consortium forces that have not indicated their readiness to accept CDG. The other seven forces are intending to extract data from the CDG and use their own hardware environment to produce their reports. Essex and Kent are intending to utilise the full functionality of the CDG by extracting their reports directly from it.

4.3 *Delivery of Contract Change Notices (CCNs):* The Athena consortium, via the governance processes, have agreed a set of CCNs with Northgate Public Services (NPS) to address legislative changes and statistical requirements within the system as well as to improve functionality and end user experience. The CCNs are all within the development plan and funding included within the programme.

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4.4 CCNs are prioritised through the Business Design Authority (BDA) (chaired by ACC Mike Colbourne) which comprises representatives from all consortium forces.

4.5 One of the most notable successes delivered in recent months is the availability of the Athena Record Management System (RMS) on operational officers' mobile devices. This has increased both the utilisation of the application and the immediacy and availability of shared data and intelligence. Utilising an investment in Athena Mobile Business Services, it is intended to ensure that the (third party) mobile versions of Athena are seamlessly integrated with the application as well as any subsequent upgrades or development. It should however be noted that the Police Intelligence Report (PIR) submission function of the mobile app has been unavailable for a considerable period (since February).

4.6 *Delivery of version 6 (v6, known as Express) and Digital Case File (DCF):* The Athena Management Organisation (AMO) has, on behalf of the consortium, extended the development plan through to the delivery of v6 and DCF. Express is a fundamentally different interface and is expected to improve the end user experience significantly, whilst DCF development, financed centrally from transformation / innovation funds, will address the most complex part of the application – based on feedback from our end users. The interface (v6) and DCF are scheduled for delivery in March 2021.

4.7 Version 6 (Express) will deliver a more intuitive app-style interface for the user, changing the appearance of the system by displaying Person Object Location Event (POLE) data as individual sets of information rather than as a whole set of data. This will reduce the demand on the system as the user will be able to edit each element of POLE data separately. The currently functionality of Athena will remain, but will be accessible in a more user-friendly format. Digital Case File will remove the need for Magistrates Guidance (MG) case files making file submission fully digital, with one data entry point, reducing rejections and remedial action required by the CPS.

4.8 The upgrade to v6 (encompassing DCF) will be the single biggest change to Athena since its launch. The delivery of this project across the consortium is managed by the AMO and there will be a requirement for in-force project management support to ensure its successful delivery. The training requirements are being developed by the Learning & Development (L&D) User Group, which feeds into the Business Design Authority (BDA) and the v6 Project Board.

4.9 In addition to these important pending initiatives, the Consortium has also made significant progress in recent months by agreeing the Deed of Variation (closing a number of commercial risks) and introducing v3.6.2 (resolving a number of stability and performance issues).

4.10 Risks in relation to the Athena Programme are managed through the force Strategic Risk Register and are reviewed quarterly at the Risk Star Chamber with full oversight and

scrutiny from the DCC as Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO). Risks and progress to mitigate these are reported to the Joint Audit Committee each quarter.

4.11 The table below provides a summary of the current Strategic Risks being managed in this way.

Risk Title	Risk Description	Current Risk Score
Athena Sub Optimisation	Sub-Optimisation - Inability to utilise the system to maximum effect (Upgrades and fixes for known problems, Internal culture and processes not aligned). Compromises return on investment and benefits realisation, Inefficiencies hamper wider service / productivity improvement initiatives, Potential for disenchantment with the system	40 (Likely x Moderate)
Athena Business Continuity	Business Continuity – stability and performance issues within the system may lead to intermittent or loss of service. Adverse impact on service to public, Reversion to paper records, Requirement to input and clear accumulated backlogs	30 (Possible x Moderate)
Inability to exploit Athena - enabled collaborative opportunities	In addition to enhanced information and intelligence sharing, the Athena concept is also predicated on potentially converging functions (CJ/VJ, IMU, Intel) that are Athena-enabled and, ideally, have common business processes. Failure to deliver on this represents a loss of benefit and/or savings and compromises any return on investment.	30 (Possible x Moderate)
Athena Reputational	Reputational - Compromised delivery of major public sector IT programmes subject to adverse commentary and coverage. Declining confidence in consortium forces, declining confidence in efficiency of collaborative initiatives.	20 (Unlikely x Moderate)

4.12 The strategic intention of consortium forces at this time is to deliver agreed system updates as planned, in line with the Forward Schedule of Change into 2021 - with a real focus on exploiting current functionality and information sharing.

4.13 Northgate Public Services (NPS) reports back to the AMO and forces on Athena performance and stability through the fortnightly Service Management Board, where service credits can be claimed in accordance with the Service Level Agreements of the commercial contract. In the event of unplanned outages or severely affected performance the AMO initiate a consortium Gold Group to ensure an early restoration of service and instigation of a formal debrief process.

5.0 Impact of the project on overall budgets

5.1 The budget for 2019/20 was set at £1.267m. At budget setting, the below costs were agreed with the Athena Management Organisation.

5.2 In month 6 the Athena forecast was £1.396m, against the full year budget of £1.267m, an overspend of £0.130m

5.3 The Technical Refresh was rolled forward from 2018/19. Costs of £0.123m were approved for 2019/20 at SAMB in July 2019 creating an in-year pressure as shown in the table below.

5.4 The MI solutions programme has slipped further into 2020/21 from 2018/19 producing a saving in year of (£0.039m)

5.5 The ISP Innovation Project has been re-forecast post budget setting. This was not known at budget setting and will result in a direct budget pressure for 2019/20 of approximately £0.045m.

5.6 An in depth breakdown can be seen below:

	Budget 19/20	Actuals/ Forecast 19/20	Variance 19/20
	£		
Contract Costs	267,666	267,666	0
Module Maintenance	11,753	11,753	0
Software	201,269	201,269	0
Implementation (BCH)	0	0	0
Recharge from AMO incl resources	289,904	289,904	0
Contribution to Regional Pot	14,766	14,766	0
CCNs	62,268	62,268	0
Express	63,697	63,697	0
Mobile business Services	52,116	52,116	0
MI	112,993	74,236	(38,757)
ISP - Innovation Project	94,016	139,164	45,148
BAIL 213b	43,973	43,974	1

Technical refresh		123,183	123,183
Development Fund	52,116	52,116	0
Digital Case File			0
Total Cost	**1,266,537**	**1,396,112**	**129,575**

5.7   The Athena development team in Essex had a budget set at approximately half the estimated requirement for 2019/20. The Athena development team in Essex requested additional budget at Chief Officer Group (COG) in May 2019 for the remaining 6 months of 2019/20. This was approved. The budget has been increased and funded from budget not required for the costs fully recharged to the Athena Management Organisation.

5.8   At month 6, an underspend in officer salaries is forecast which may in part be used to offset overtime. All posts remain non-established.

	Budget 19/20	Actuals/ Forecast 19/20	Variance 19/20
Essex Development Team & Expenses			
Police officers - Non Established	**188,552**	147,997	(40,555)
Staff - Non Established	**113,340**	113,340	0
	301,892	**261,337**	**(40,555)**

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Annex 2: Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme

Topic: Strategic Update on ESMCP – PUBLIC REPORT

Author: Superintendent Simon Morris

1.0   Introduction

1.1   This report is written in response to a request from the PFCC for an update on the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) to be presented to the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel.

2.0   Background

2.1   Radio communications between police officers and control rooms currently take place on Airwave, the commercial name for a Terrestrial Trunked Radio (TETRA) network set up in the early 2000s. It is a private network with a dedicated frequency spectrum providing national coverage.

2.2   Airwave is more expensive and functionally limited compared with newer communications solutions, but works well and has a high level of user satisfaction. Whilst changing data requirements of the public and emergency services have meant that the gap has been filled by forces with devices such as our Mobile First equipment, there is the potential for this requirement and that of critical voice transmissions to be met by one system. Whilst the maintenance and compatibility of the ageing Airwave hardware adds increasing cost and complexity to managing the Airwave network, there is no reason in principle why it could not be retained and improved.

2.3   The view of the then Government was that Airwave was outdated and needed wholesale replacement. The Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme was therefore instigated by Government to deliver operational communications via the 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE) commercial mobile telephony network. This new system, known as the Emergency Services Network (ESN), is designed to operate within the commercial 4G environment, delivering critical voice and data transmissions, but with additional geographical coverage and prioritised transmissions over and above the standard commercial network.

2.4   At the point of programme instigation, the UK was the first country in the world intending to migrate emergency service communications entirely to 4G LTE. As such, the development of ESN has been, and is, challenging and complex. The rationale for

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change was primarily financial, but as the programme has progressed, and both costs and timelines have increased, this rationale for change looks less convincing.

2.5   Whilst the business case for ESN was made effectively at the outset, the attempt to deliver such an ambitious programme of technical change, unproved and genuinely ground breaking in the emergency service, 24/7 context, may not have been the best solution for the emergency services with the benefit of hindsight. It may have been preferable for the Home Office to first deliver operational LTE in an environment other than emergency service critical voice transmissions, which by their nature are high risk and need a reliable, consistent service.

2.6   The National Audit Office and Committee of Public Accounts have conducted several critical reviews of the programme, finding that it seems likely ESN will be delivered up to 5 years late and more than £3bn over budget.

3.0   The Emergency Services Network

3.1   ESN is designed to offer a service with integrated broadband data that has national coverage, contains high availability and has end-to-end security. The contractor for the network is contractually committed to delivering a service at least the equal of Airwave in terms of coverage for critical voice communications, and significantly better in terms of data capability.

3.2   Since the award of the national ESN contracts in late 2015, the programme has been subject to delays. This was not unexpected given the ambitious timescale set by the Home Office, together with the inevitable technical challenges brought about by the UK's position as the first to develop 4G LTE emergency services communications.

3.3   ESN will require the procurement of new handset and vehicle devices to work on the network. There are a number of significant technical and operational challenges that will drive both the specification of the device and how it is deployed. In addition, ESN devices are expected to be more expensive that the current Airwave equipment.

3.4   The transition period will present technical and operational challenges. The technical capability to transition effectively is dependent on a product which will allow Airwave and ESN to be used simultaneously. The force ESMCP team is working with the Home Office technical team and local stakeholders to ensure the transition process is designed to minimise the impact of changes as far as possible.

3.5   A fundamental area of work is to ensure ESN network coverage at least matches that of Airwave, particularly in key strategic locations. Our force coverage lead has been working closely with the coverage contractor to ensure these areas are identified and

mapped so they can be held to account if coverage is not as promised when testing of the network formally begins.

4.0   Potential Benefits of ESN

4.1   When ESN does deliver, it should bring significant business benefits. These are summarised in the following table:

Category	Feature	Benefit
Data Provision	ESN handsets will allow use of broadband data.	Data provision to frontline officers will eventually be integrated so they should not need separate tablet and radio devices in future, as features will be incorporated in the one ESN device with a single contract.
Body Worn Video	ESN handsets can have integrated body worn video (BWV) capability.	This will ensure the current multiple devices officers carry could be reduced to as few as one, minimising the need for multiple device replacement cost and keeping data provision to one single contract as opposed to numerous providers.
Device Support Costs	Overall costs of communications support will be lower with less devices.	Integration of devices and contracts will mean up-front and support costs should reduce, as supporting multiple devices financially, operationally and technically is expensive and contains unnecessary duplication.
Cost of Calls	The call costs for ESN are significantly lower than Airwave.	Less will be spent on voice communications, albeit we do not expect an overall reduction in costs due to the significant predicted increase in data usage, a consequence of the improved and enhanced data capability.
Data Capability	Images can be shared, and crime reports can be created and updated remotely	The enhanced data capability of ESN and the additional functionality over Airwave should ensure officers remain out of the police station, interacting with the public, for longer periods of time than at present.

5.0   Local Preparations

5.1   Essex Police began its preparation for the ESMCP in 2015 with the appointment, in partnership with Kent Police, of a programme lead. Since then, the team has grown to the point where there is now a small transition team.

5.2 The main strand of work for the in-force team at present is the replacement of the Integrated Communications Control System (ICCS) in the Force Control Room. The ICCS needed to be replaced with a new system as the legacy platform would not have worked with ESN. The ICCS is an IT system that allows Control Room operators to speak via radio with officers and via telephony and other means to the public, integrating all methods of communication to ensure that an effective response is provided to public and police communications. The ICCS in Essex Police has now been replaced with a new system that is compatible with ESN.

5.3 Other current local work streams include:

- o Project modules such as governance, risk and issue management, benefits management and finance management are in place to support ongoing internal control of the project
- o ESN enrolment process complete
- o Five of six Direct Network Service Provision (DNSP) control room to ESN connections for Essex and Kent are complete. The last is a Kent satellite site that is in progress and expected to complete in the next month
- o Coverage reviewed and Critical Operational Locations recently reviewed and collated to provide a 3ES submission
- o Airwave sustainability programme underway in connection with the in-force Airwave team
- o Airwave menu services (additional provision of coverage in hard to reach areas) to be extended to end of regional transition

5.4 There are a number of risks associated with ESN, most of which focus on its capability to deliver the service and the escalating financial costs. The longer the development of ESN continues, the greater the financial cost becomes, although this has the potential side benefit of improving commercial coverage which may benefit ESN coverage in non-contracted areas of coverage. These risks are managed by the Deputy Chief Constable via regular Risk Star Chamber updates.

6.0 Costs

6.1 A significant amount has already been spent by the force preparing for ESN. Costs incurred by the force include:

- o The project team working on ESN
- o The new Force Control Room Integrated Communications Control System (ICCS) which was required for ESN capability
- o Unplanned refresh of Airwave devices as ESN has been delayed so long

o   Direct Network Service Provision (DNSP) connections from the Force Control Room to ESN

6.2   Costs so far are summarised as follows by costs incurred and monies set aside. The amounts are the totals for the financial years 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20:

Costs Incurred	£
ESMCP Project team	£1,116,000
ICCS Software	£328,000
ICCS Hardware	£553,000
Delivery Partner	£522,000
DNSP connection	£48,000
New Airwave devices[2]	£1,700,000
Total spent so far on ESN 2016-2020	**£4,267,000**

Monies set aside	£
ESN handsets	£5,300,000
Provision for dual running of ESN and Airwave	£800,000
Total Monies set aside	**£6,100,000**

7.0   Programme Assurance

7.1   The ESMCP Full Business Case (FBC) has been delayed a number of times due to its need to be assured by the Government's Major Projects Review Group (MPRG) and the fact that the emergency services have required additional assurances on a number of key operational areas, in particular coverage. As such, the MPRG has required the programme to continue to develop the FBC, aiming for agreement by end of this financial year.

7.2   All police forces are currently working through a Gold Silver Bronze structure with the programme to help develop a draft FBC for circulation during January 2020.

7.3   The Government expects that, once the FBC is approved, the programme should move swiftly, with the expectation that forces will support the implementation of ESN. However, forces have asked for greater understanding of costs, technical issues and capability/capacity gaps before proceeding to any phase of implementation.

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[2] Required due to the length of time ESN has been delayed.

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7.4   Whilst the mantra of ESN has always been that ESN coverage will be at least as good as Airwave, that cannot just be considered as geographic coverage; it also relates to capacity, connectivity and resilience. How that will be funded beyond the core coverage contract is still unclear, and policing will not adopt ESN without an operationally viable network, which allows us to operate wherever is reasonably foreseeable, in all reasonably foreseeable circumstances.

7.4   The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on 22nd May 2019 focused on the National Audit Office (NAO) report into ESMCP, which found:

- o   The programme is £3.1bn (49%) over budget
- o   Home Office mismanagement has contributed to delay and increased cost
- o   A further reset might be necessary
- o   The Home Office ambition to switch off Airwave in December 2022 is unrealistic and December 2026 is more realistic
- o   Contingency funding is inadequate
- o   Elements of the technology remain unproven

7.5   The national contingency budget of £714m (9%) is insufficient to cater for ESN contingency plus the cost of funding Airwave for extra years; it is sufficient only to fund Airwave for a further 2 years, allowing for nothing else. The current funding model for Airwave provision is to reallocate police grant. If this continues past 2022 the financial implications are significant.

8.0   Conclusions

8.1   Whilst principles for national coordination have been agreed, and pressure from Government to transition will be high once the FBC is finalised, Chief Constables – including Essex Chief Constable BJ Harrington – will not accept ESN until critical voice is absolutely proven to be consistently good enough. The police service national leads continue to work to minimise financial and other implications for the Service caused by delays in the implementation of the ESN.

8.2   Essex Police welcomes technological change and the enhancements it has the potential to deliver to our service. Our leading position in respect of Mobile First and the real enhancements to policing in Essex are clear evidence of this. However, it is vital for us and the public of Essex that our technology must work, work consistently and must be delivered within reasonable and affordable cost parameters.

8.3   Whilst ESN has the potential to be of benefit to the policing of Essex, there are hurdles to overcome and challenges ahead before the network will be fit for purpose and able to deliver the mission of 'the same or better than Airwave'.

Report title: Essex PFCP Budget Half Year Outturn Report 2019/20	
Report to: Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	
Report author: Victoria Freeman, Secretary to the Panel	
Date: 13 January 2020	**For:** Noting
Enquiries to: Emma Tombs, Democratic Services Manager emma.tombs@essex.gov.uk / 03330 322709	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1.   Introduction

1.1   This report updates the Panel on the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel's outturn position for the period 1 April 2019 to 30 September 2019 as filed with the Home Office prior to the deadline of 31 October 2019. As Essex County Council is the lead authority for the Panel the return needs to be signed off by ECC's finance team and the ECC budget holder (the interim Head of Democracy and Transparency). This is with respect to a grant claim to the Home Office who will only pay for reimbursement of actual expenditure incurred in year.

1.2

Expenditure Category:	**Actual Resource Expenditure (£)**	**Actual Capital Expenditure (£)**
Administration Costs		
- Staff Salary re-charges	12,298.63	Nil
- Eastern Region PCP network (annual subscription)	500.00	Nil
- Training costs	720.00	Nil
Member Expenses		
- Allowances	4,906.88	Nil
- Travel Costs	149.05	Nil
TOTAL EXPENDITURE:	18,574.56	Nil
TOTAL GRANT PROVIDED:	18,574.56	Nil
VARIANCE: total grant provided **minus** total resource expenditure	0	Nil

2. **Recommendations**

2.1   The Panel is invited to note the content of the report, identifying any areas that require further clarification or comment.

Report title: Forward Look	
Report to: Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	
Report author: Victoria Freeman, Senior Democratic Services Officer	
Date: 13 January 2020	**For:** Consideration
Enquiries to: Victoria Freeman, Senior Democratic Services Officer victoria.freeman3@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. **Purpose of report and background**

1.1   To plan the business of the Panel.

1.2   The next Meeting of the Panel is scheduled for **Wednesday 22 January 2020.**

1.3   Business proposed to be taken to the meetings is as follows:

Date	Business
22 January 2020	• Police and Crime Plan Performance Measures • Fire Service Performance Measures • Proposed Police Precept for 2020/21 • Proposed Fire and Rescue Authority Precept for 2020/21
6 February 2020	• Proposed Police Precept for 2020/21 (if needed) • Proposed Fire and Rescue Authority Precept for 2020/21 (if needed) • Complaints Procedure • PFCCFRA Constitution • Confirmation Hearing (TBC)
4 June 2020	• Police and Crime Plan Performance Measures • Fire Service Performance Measures • Essex PFCP Budget Outturn Report 2019/20 • Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee Update
23 July 2020	• Police and Crime Plan Performance Measures • Fire Service Performance Measures • Overview of Integrated Risk Management Plan

	• Budget Setting Process
22 October 2020	• Police and Crime Plan Performance Measures • Fire Service Performance Measures • Police and Crime Budget Scene Setting • Fire and Rescue Service Budget Scene Setting • PFCC Decisions Report • Annual Report and the Fire and Rescue Statement • Report on Annual Complaints
December 2020	• Essex PFCP 2020/21 Budget (Half-year Outturn)

2.   Recommendation

The Panel is asked to identify any other business it would like to consider.

Report title: Dates of Future Meetings

Report to: Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Report author: Victoria Freeman, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Date: 13 January 2020	**For:** Noting

Enquiries to: Victoria Freeman, Senior Democratic Services Officer victoria.freeman3@essex.gov.uk

County Divisions affected: All Essex

1.   PURPOSE OF THE ITEM

To inform Members of the meeting dates for 2020.

2.   MEETING DATES

Wednesday 22 January
Thursday 6 February
Thursday 4 June
Thursday 23 July
Thursday 22 October
Thursday 10 December

All meetings scheduled for 2:00pm with a pre-meeting for Committee Members beforehand, commencing at 1.00pm, with the exception of the 22 January 2020 which will commence at 2.30pm, with a pre-meet for Committee Members commencing at 1.30pm.