

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
28 March 2024

SUBJECT: **Productivity and Efficiency Plan - 2024-2025**

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Background Papers: None

| Appendix | Title | Protective Marking |
|----------|---|--------------------|
| 1 | Productivity and Efficiency Plan - 2024-2025 | n/a |
| 2 | Letter from Sarah Gawley, Director - Fire, Events and Central Management Directorate. Public Safety Group, Home Office. | n/a |

Implications:

| Implications | Yes/No | Impact/Reference |
|-----------------|--------|---|
| Financial | Yes | As part of the Spending Review 2021, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Local Government Association (LGA) agreed that between 2022/23-2024/25, fire and rescue services in England would increase wholetime firefighter productivity by 3% and create 2% of non-pay efficiency savings. |
| Risk Management | No | |
| Legal | Yes | The National Framework has introduced a long-standing requirement for FRAs to publish |

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| | | efficiency plans. |
| Privacy and Security | No | |
| Duty to collaborate | Yes | The Policing and Crime Act 2017 requires the Authority to consider opportunities for collaboration with the police and ambulance services. The Home Office “Guidance on Fire Productivity and Efficiency Plans” required plans to identify collaboration with other organisations. |
| Health and Safety | No | |
| Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | No | |
| Environmental Sustainability | No | |
| Consultation & Communication | No | |

PURPOSE

To present Members with Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service’s Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024-2025 which has been produced for submission to the Home Office.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. It is recommended that Members review and comment on the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024-2025.
2. That the Authority approve the setting up of a time limited Task and Finish group, to be chaired by the Finance Portfolio Member, to oversee the progress of the Transformation work over 2024/25; and to appoint three members to that Task and Finish group (one from each political party).

1 Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the Spending Review 2021, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Local Government Association (LGA) agreed that between 2022/23-2024/25, fire and rescue services in England would increase wholetime firefighter productivity by 3% and create 2% of non-pay efficiency savings.
- 1.2 Linked to the targets above, the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire has requested that all standalone Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) draft and publish Productivity and Efficiency (P & E) Plans for 2023/24. There are also annual returns that are sent into the Home Office.
- 1.3 To support transparency and ease of accessibility, the 2024/25 Fire P&E Plans should be published as separate documents rather than as part of a Fire and Rescue Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 1.4 The Fire P&E Plans will be used by the Home Office, NFCC and LGA to build a more comprehensive picture on the sector's progress against the agreed targets and provide updates on forecasts and savings achieved.
- 1.5 On the 12th February 2024 the Director of the Fire, Events and Central Management Directorate at the Home Office wrote to the Service requesting that Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024-2025 and efficiency savings spreadsheet is submitted to the Home Office before 31st March 2024.
- 1.6 Accompanying their letter the Home Office issued revised guidance the fire and rescue services on the production of their P&E plans with the intention to pursuit of greater consistency between returns from different services.

2 Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024-2025

- 2.1 The Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024-2025 for Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has been drafted to meet the requirements of the Home Office guidance document.

2.2 The Plan reviews productivity and efficiency activity relating to the spending review period 2022/23-2024/25, and captures actions for the year ahead 2024/25.

3 Links to Service Transformation work

- 3.1 The attached Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024-2025 has been developed to fulfil the request from the Home Office and cover the P&E plan for the forthcoming financial year.
- 3.2 The service has an existing P&E strategy for the period 2023-2027 which allows for planning of activities in the longer term.
- 3.3 It is the intention of the Service to update our P&E strategy 2023-2027 in light of the updated guidance from the Home Office. Additionally, the service had committed to further transformational activities commencing in 2024/25.
- 3.4 It is proposed for Members to consider, that a Portfolio Member led group be established to oversee the planning and progress of Transformational work over 2024/25. This is with a focus on productivity and efficiency, with savings/efficiencies and income to generate over the medium term to close the forecast budget gaps. These identified gaps are as per the 2024/25 budget setting process.
- 3.5 It is proposed that it is chaired by the Finance Portfolio Holder with 3 further members. The Finance Portfolio Holder suggests that informally it would be beneficial for the 3 other members to be appointed with one from each other political party/independents. This will be a time limited working group to have closer oversight of the Transformation work during 2024/25 meeting at approximately 2 monthly intervals to match the pattern of the officer working arrangements.

4 Summary

- 4.1 This Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024-2025 plan in Appendix 1 is presented to Members to inform them of the submission by the Service to the Home office.

JOHN-JOE PEKSZYC
HEAD OF STRATEGIC SUPPORT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT