

Report of the Treasurer

Efficiency and Productivity Plan 2023/24

Purpose of report

1. To bring Members attention to the Efficiency and Productivity Plan submitted by the Treasurer on behalf of the Authority.
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Recommendation

The Treasurer recommends that the Committee notes that the Efficiency and Productivity Plan was published on the Authority we-site on 31st March 2023.

Introduction and Background

2. As part of the joint Home Office/Local Government Association (LGA)/National fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) submission to the last Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), the sector committed to providing 2% efficiencies in non-pay budgets and a 3% increase in Wholetime Firefighter productivity.
3. Under the National Framework each standalone Fire Authority was required to publish and submit to the Home Office, an Efficiency and Productivity Plan by 31st March 2023. This is part of the evidence gathering exercise for the home Office to demonstrate to HN Treasury that the sector has delivered on commitments and it is important that it is supported.
4. This plan is different to the report on closing the budget gap, which the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive will be bringing to the Fire Authority later in the year.

Home Office Guidance

5. The Home Office issued some broad and some detailed guidance, and the plan is required to provide details of:
 - a. The budget and the rationale for the £5 precept increase (if taken)
 - b. Reserves and how they are planned to be used
 - c. Collaboration and procurement plans
 - d. Whether the authority will be contributing to the productivity target
 - e. Any investment in technology to improve productivity
6. As with many “efficiency” regimes the focus tends to be on what has changed in the period being measured, rather than how intrinsically efficient an

organisation is. Whilst it can never be said that there is no scope for further efficiencies the Plan does set out in some detail what has already been achieved and which is therefore not available to claim as an Efficiency going forward.

7. These can be seen in the Plan which is attached as Appendix 1.
8. Broadly the Plan requires the identification of around £0.5m of which £0.3m have been identified so far.
9. In respect of productivity, the Authority has been ahead of the pack and in 2021/22 carried out a time and motion exercise to allow the identification of time to support additional Prevention and Protection activity, which was targeted from 2022/23.
10. In the last week the Home Office has instigated a national data gathering exercise on Whole-time Firefighter activity.
11. The Home Office guidance included a template, which the Treasurer did not use in the Plan. This was because it was felt to be confusing, complicated and didn't align with the format of information that Members are used to receiving (this view was shared with other Fire Treasurers in the region). Following submission of the Plan, the Home Office requested that the template be completed (and made the same request of other Treasurers as well).
12. To complete this template some grossing up of efficiencies was required and some of the numbers may not be immediately familiar to Members. This template was submitted, but has not been published and is included at Appendix 2 for information.

Conclusion

13. The Authority has met the obligation to produce, publish and submit an Efficiency and Productivity Plan by 31st March 2023.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	No immediate direct implications not already included in original budget approval
Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)	N/A
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify	N/A

any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	N/A
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	N/A
Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)	N/A.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Efficiency and Productivity Plan – 2023/24

Appendix 2 – Home Office Efficiency and Productivity Plan Template