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**Fire & Rescue Plan**

**2024-2028**



# PFCC

## POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX

[www.essex.pfcc.police.uk](http://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk)

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## Introduction from your Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

**Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) has made significant progress in keeping communities safe and preventing harm since coming under joint governance in 2017.**

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service has been changed. It has addressed concerns around its culture and is now a better place to work and is providing a better service to the public, with more house fires prevented and businesses and vulnerable people protected. Recently, the service won the *iese* Public Sector Transformation Gold Award for Fire and Rescue Service of the Year 2024. This is all making a difference, but we are not complacent and there is still more to do.

We need to continue to invest in our workforce by extending programmes of training and development, helping them to take on more activities around prevention and protection. The on-call duty system needs modernisation, allowing more flexibility so hours available match the times of greater risk, and we need to invest in recruiting and supporting our on-call crews. We need to increase further the number of home safety visits carried out by fire crews and do more joint Safe and Well visits with other agencies.

We also need to do more to educate drivers and improve driver behaviour across the county to reduce harm on our roads. We must also enhance our multi-agency approach to responding to incidents of flooding and preventing it from happening in the first place.

We will continue to work closely with Essex Police, local authorities, our partners and, importantly, with our communities, and we will drive greater productivity to help modernise the service to further reduce risk and keep more people safe across Essex.

Safe, secure communities remain the bedrock on which we build prosperity and wellbeing for everyone. This Fire and Rescue Plan (2024-2028) builds upon our achievements and the significant progress that we have made, but it is ambitious for our future. Together, we can build a safer, more secure Essex for everyone.

**Roger Hirst**  
Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Fire and Rescue Authority



## A message from the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

Our people share a common goal in that we want to be one of the best fire and rescue services in the country. By continually raising our standards and improving what we do, we are providing our residents, businesses and visitors with a service they deserve.

We have overcome financial challenges, demonstrated to our residents and partners how we continue to drive change, reduce risk, invest in prevention and protection, and continue to be there for our communities in the event of an emergency.

This year, our Service became the first fire and rescue service in the country to achieve the Silver Inclusive Employers Standard accreditation. This highlights our commitment to providing the right environment for our people to flourish, essential for the attraction and retention of a diverse and high performing workforce. I remain committed to ensuring that we diversify our recruitment to ensure we attract the very best to serve our communities.

Our operational crews continue to provide highly skilled interventions to a range of different incident types; their roles require them to understand the risks associated with a changing environment and ensure they are prepared to respond alongside partners to major incidents in a co-ordinated and complimentary manner. They, alongside our professional Fire Control team, ensure that when needed, our communities can rely on a professional and competent response and resolution.

Our focus on investing in the recruitment and training of our Fire Protection teams alongside our work to prevent incidents from happening in the first place has resulted in a reduction in the number of fires in the home, deliberate fires and commercial fires over the last four years.

These achievements are made possible by the support and expertise provided by professional support services, who work across a range of disciplines to ensure those delivering services to our communities have the resources and skills needed.

We continue to invest in technology to support us in keeping our county safe and preventing incidents from happening. In the last four years, this has resulted in the replacement of our Fire Control mobilisation system and the introduction of drones to our operational fleet, alongside a central premises database and improvements in the production of site-specific risk information.

This year, we were extremely proud to accept the Public Sector Transformation Gold Award for UK Fire and Rescue Services. This award is a testament to the work we are doing, our professionalism and our commitment to making Essex safer.

There remains more to do and we are committed to an ambitious programme of improvement that will ensure our fire and rescue service continues to evolve and adapt to best serve the needs of our local communities.

Gaps in the regulation of the built environment exposed by the Grenfell Tower inquiry need concerted efforts to address alongside a range of stakeholders and we need to ensure those risks are resourced appropriately. Risk of fire deaths in the home increase in older age, with an ageing population, our work to keep people safe in their homes continues alongside work to educate our communities about the hazards of incorrectly charging e-bikes and e-scooters and the dangers of being distracted while cooking.

The climate emergency will continue to affect our communities; we have a responsibility to reduce our own impact and respond to wide-area flooding and wildfires.

The single biggest cause of death and injury in our county continues to be from road traffic collisions and we remain committed, alongside our partners, to Vision Zero through education and efficient and effective response and rescue techniques.

The Fire and Rescue Plan is an important document. It provides the focus and direction required for the next five years. Delivery against these priorities will ensure that we can continue to support our people to make the improvements in our services which will make our communities safer still.

Thank you to all our communities and partners for the continued support you offer to our Service.

**Rick Hylton**  
Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive



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# Our achievements



## The work of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service is changing, and will continue to change over the coming years.

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service continues to evolve. The priorities in the previous Fire and Rescue Plan 2019/24 directed the work and activities undertaken by the service, as they continued to respond effectively to incidents and focussed on prevention, protection and forward planning.

While the COVID 19 Pandemic of 2020/21 saw a reduction of road traffic collisions (RTC) and incidents, the heatwave of 2022/23 saw more fires, an increase in false alarms and an increase in accidental fires compared with previous years. Although the service responded well, the increased demand highlighted the Service's need to continuously adapt to our changing environment and shows why prevention activity is so important in keeping communities safe.



### Total Incidents attended in last 5 years

↑ **9** per cent  
 2019/20: 15,244  
 2023/24: 16,645



### Home Fire Safety visits

↑ **182** per cent  
 2019/20: 3,593  
 2023/24: 10,120



### People in Essex injured by fire

↓ **17** per cent  
 2019/20: 66  
 2023/24: 56



### Total Special Services (excluding road traffic collisions)

↑ **27** per cent  
 2019/20: 3,362  
 2023/24: 4,279



### Fires reported and attended

↓ **17** per cent  
 2019/20: 4,581  
 2023/24: 3,785



### Accidental fires

↓ **13** per cent  
 2019/20: 780  
 2023/24: 679



### Total road traffic collisions (responded to by ECFRS)

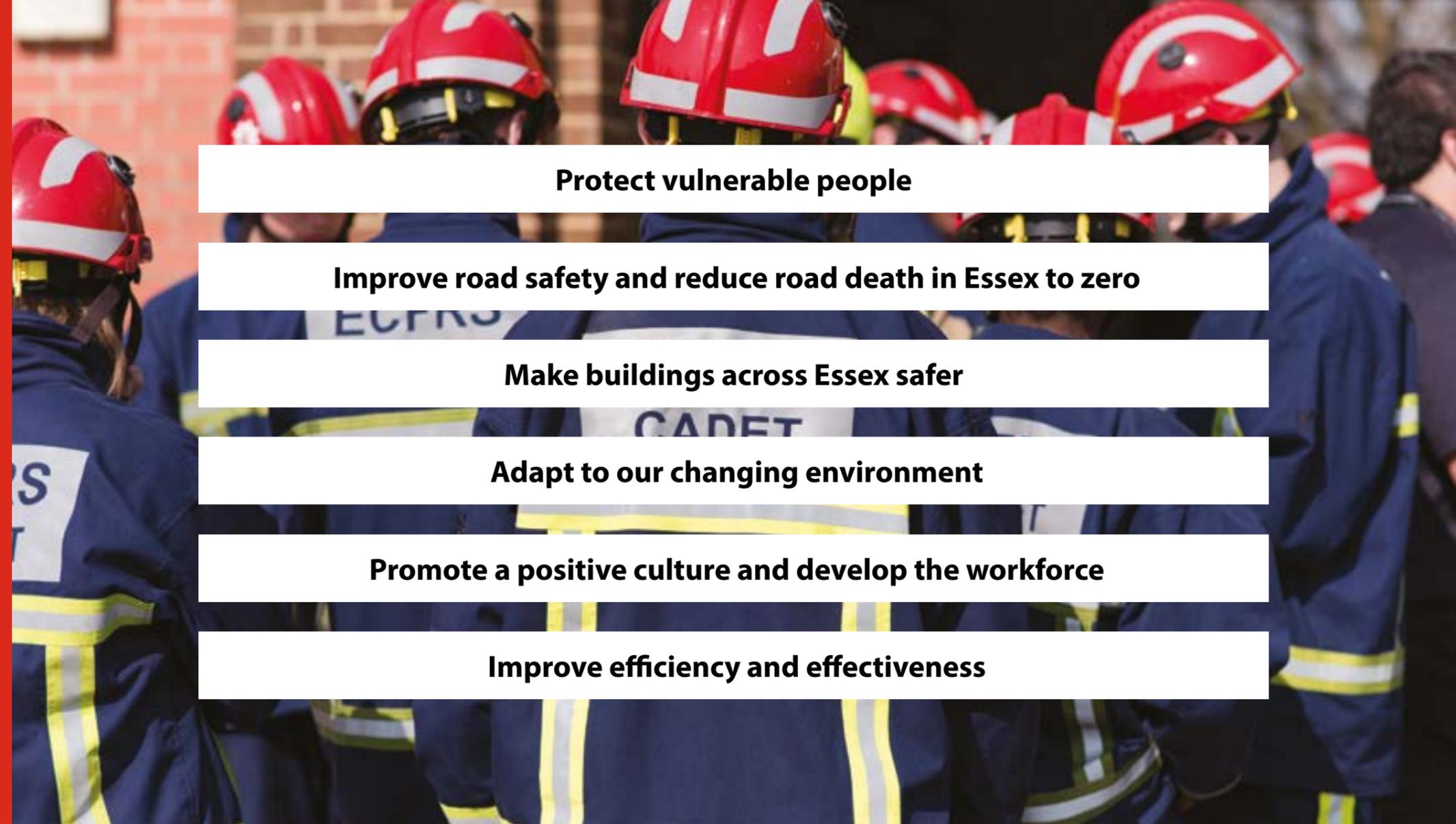
↑ **9** per cent  
 2019/20: 1,187  
 2023/24: 1,295





## Community Risk Management Plan

- As our current Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) runs from 2020-24, it will be replaced with a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) from January 2025.
- Our current IRMP for 2020–24 will remain in place until our new CRMP is developed and adopted.
- We have a statutory duty to produce a CRMP which sets out the challenges and risks facing our communities and how we intend to meet and reduce them. It will demonstrate how our protection, prevention and response activities will be used collectively to prevent and/or mitigate fires and other incidents.
- As an over-arching plan, the CRMP will cover all parts of our Service, referencing key documents such as our Service Strategies, Annual Service Plan and team plans. This will help everyone in our organisation to understand risks and how we plan to reduce the impact and respond effectively.
- The vision is to produce a CRMP that enables us to become one of the best fire and rescue services nationally and drive what we do.
- The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Fire Standard desired outcome for the CRMP is:
- “A fire and rescue service that assesses foreseeable community-related risks and uses this knowledge to decide how those risks will be mitigated.”
- Work has already started on our CRMP, with a public consultation taking place later this year. The document will be published in January 2025.



**Protect vulnerable people**

**Improve road safety and reduce road death in Essex to zero**

**Make buildings across Essex safer**

**Adapt to our changing environment**

**Promote a positive culture and develop the workforce**

**Improve efficiency and effectiveness**

## Protect vulnerable people

How we plan to do this: be out in our communities, engaging with the public, identifying those at risk and working with partners to keep people safe.



### What good looks like:

- The Service is a leader in data sharing across the county and actively seeks out new data and partnerships to build their understanding of the community they serve and the risks they face.
- The Service has a strong community engagement capability and works with partners, through Community Safety Partnerships and other mechanisms, to understand vulnerability and collectively mitigate risk.
- A service that can reach and engage with people from different communities and backgrounds, that identifies the risks they face and provides relevant support.
- The Service has strong relationships with health partners, delivering effective joined-up interventions at scale.
- Reduce fire injuries and deaths in the home, for instance through more home safety work.
- Reduce risks and incidents in rural areas through prevention activity, including more rural community officers.
- Risk and vulnerability is understood and mapped so every interaction by the Service has maximum impact from response, to prevention and protection.

## Improve road safety and reduce road death in Essex to zero

How we plan to do this: work as part of the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) to prevent harm on our roads through education, engagement and identifying and dealing with emerging risks.



### What good looks like:

- A service which is active and valued by partners within the Safer Essex Roads Partnership and plays a central part in reducing road deaths across Essex to zero.
- A service where information and insight about high-risk groups, new risk factors and effective interventions are shared and acted upon.
- A service that uses targeted, effective interventions to prevent deaths and serious injuries on our roads by changing the behaviour of road users, especially those most at risk.
- A service that works with Highways and other partners to encourage safety conscious planning and proactive safe engineering design. That can positively shape new developments and projects and guides Essex to becoming safer by design.
- Where the impact of new technology is understood and used effectively to promote road safety, but also where new risks, such as the charging of electric vehicles, are effectively mitigated.
- A service which works with local communities, including those in rural Essex to understand and mitigate risks where possible.
- A service trusted by communities and welcomed by those most at risk.
- A service that provides an efficient and effective post-crash response, with partners, to ensure that road collisions are effectively responded to, investigated and embraces continuous improvement through training and development.

## Make buildings across Essex safer

How we plan to do this: extend fire protection and enforcement, improve targeted protection and help shape safer new housing and industrial developments.



### What good looks like:

- A county where every household has a smoke alarm.
- Where new residential and commercial developments are safe and action is taken to keep them safe.
- Where we work together with developers, councils and government to create a planning and development environment which recognises and promotes safety.
- A county where high-risk buildings are identified and inspected according to a risk-based programme.
- Where we take a proactive approach to working with building owners to improve building safety and use our enforcement powers effectively to drive change.
- Where tenants understand and have confidence in the role ECFRS has in keeping them safe and work together with councils, management companies and the wider system to keep buildings safe.
- Where we understand how building safety is impacted by new technology and changes to how we live, such as the increased use of electric vehicles (cars, bikes and scooters). This insight is used to undertake effective preventative work.

## Adapt to our changing environment

How we plan to do this: work together to reduce our environmental impact and address the consequences of extreme weather.



### What good looks like:

- A service that understands the risks presented by climate change, such as dry hot summers, flooding and water safety, and works with people to reduce the risk these present.
- A service that works with developers, councils and planners to shape a built environment that is more resilient and adaptable to the increased risk of extreme weather.
- A service that works with partners to prevent flooding or manage flooding when it occurs by taking a collaborative approach to managing this risk with partners, sharing specialist equipment and providing expert advice.
- That delivers effective education to reduce the risk of deliberate fires and designs out risk wherever possible.
- A greener, more sustainable and more efficient service that invests in environmental technology and electric vehicles.
- That works with partners across Essex, including the climate commission, to share learning and development, and procurement to make environmental improvements cost effective and deliverable.
- A service ready to tackle new risks posed by new technology such as lithium-ion batteries and new solar farms.

## Promote a positive culture and develop the workforce

How we plan to do this: continue to build a positive culture within the fire and rescue service, attract talent from across our communities, and invest in our workforce through more training and development opportunities.



### What good looks like:

- A service where its pay and progression makes it an employer of choice to people of all characteristics and backgrounds and that reflects the communities it serves. Where all communities have confidence in the Service and how it operates.
- A service with a positive culture focused on delivering excellent results for the public and that takes responsibility for the service they provide.
- Where issues and grievances are dealt with quickly, fairly and transparently, so teams have confidence in how these are handled.
- A service where staff and firefighters have the right training and development to help them to take on activities around prevention and protection.
- A service that invests in recruiting and supporting on-call and whole time crews and delivering value for money.
- Where skills-based pay progression recognises those taking on additional responsibilities.

## Improve efficiency and effectiveness

How we plan to do this: invest, modernise and reform the fire and rescue service, including its approach to operational resourcing, to make it more efficient, effective and fit for purpose.



### What good looks like:

- A modern, efficient and effective service that maximises the impact with the public resources it deploys and maintain the confidence of the public.
- A service with a resilient and flexible workforce which can support the public through times of disruption.
- A service with more flexibility, through a modernised on-call duty system, so it can match times of greater risk.
- A service that understands and can evaluate the productivity and efficiency of its current operating model.
- That uses this evidence base to inform a clear plan to continually improve its ongoing productivity through improvements in operational deployments, resource allocation, processes and workflows, technology and automation and effective communication.
- That uses the resources it has to better protect people and prevent harm.
- Provides an efficient and effective response to incidents when they do happen, and is there when people need them.

## National Fire and Rescue Priorities - Home Office



### The priorities for fire and rescue authorities set out in the National Fire and Rescue Framework for England July 2018 are to:

- Make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents;
- Identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face;
- Collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide;
- Be accountable to communities for the service they provide; and
- Develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

### The Framework builds upon the Government's programme for reform to:

- Transform local governance of fire and rescue by enabling mayors and police and crime commissioners to take on responsibility for their fire and rescue service where a local case is made;
- Establish His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) as an independent inspection regime for fire and rescue services;
- Develop a comprehensive set of professional standards to drive sector improvement;
- Support services to transform commercially with more efficient procurement and collaboration;
- Increase the transparency of services with the publication of greater performance data and the creation of a new national fire website; and
- Drive forward an ambitious programme for workforce reform including through enhancing: professionalism; management and leadership; training and development; equality and diversity; culture; and options for flexible working.

## Fire Vision 2024 - Fit for the Future



We have brought together evidence from past experience, information about future global issues and trends and the views of strategic leaders at both political and officer levels to set out the future role of the fire and rescue service in England.

We recognise that, although we have come a long way over the last 20 years, there are still areas where we can and must do more. The recent pandemic as well as other key issues, such as the impact of climate change leading to extreme weather events, and the emergence of new technological innovations, all demonstrate a need for us to adapt for the future. We must make better use of data and research to drive forward our work, ensuring we are data driven and evidence led.

We also need to ensure positive culture change across UK fire and rescue Services so that all services are inclusive, open and safe places to work. The public must have trust and confidence in fire and rescue services, and the themes of positive culture, equality, diversity and inclusion must be central to all our work.

It is also important that the fire sector has robust national arrangements in place to deal with large-scale national events on behalf of the public, particularly those related to emergent risk including wildfire and flooding. Funding to maintain, enhance and develop these national capabilities must be a priority for government.

We believe that local leadership at both the political and operational level will be key to meeting changes and driving improvement in the sector, but we will also need support from national government. We believe this should include:

- The role of the Fire Minister being a senior, ministerial appointment with sufficient seniority and influence both to champion the future of the sector and drive forward further reform and investment.
- The establishment of a ministerially chaired National Fire Board, bringing strategic partners together alongside ministers, to help shape and drive forward reform and improvements across fire and rescue services.

Reviewed Summer 2024

*National Fire Chiefs Council, Local Government Association,  
Fire & Rescue Services National Employers*

## Performance outcomes and indicators

### Top line performance indicators: Total incidents, total fires, total 'other' incidents, fire cover

The public have confidence in the effectiveness of work undertaken by Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and are confident the Service understands risks in their community.

	HOW WE PLAN TO DO THIS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<b>Protect vulnerable people</b>	Be out in our communities, engaging with the public, identifying those at risk and working with partners to keep people safe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of home visits with the public</li> <li>• Effectiveness of Home Fire Safety Visits (using scoring from NFCC evaluation methodology)</li> <li>• Reduction in injuries and fatalities</li> <li>• Percentage of people with enough information about what risks there may be in their community</li> </ul>
<b>Improve road safety and reduce road death in Essex to zero</b>	Work as part of the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) to prevent harm on our roads through education, engagement and identifying and dealing with emerging risks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of RTCs attended</li> <li>• Number of RTC serious injuries</li> <li>• Number of RTC fatalities</li> </ul>
<b>Promote a positive culture and develop the workforce</b>	Continue to build a positive culture within the fire and rescue service, attract talent from across our communities, and invest in our workforce through more training and development opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are workforces representative of the communities they serve</li> <li>• Sickness rates</li> <li>• Staff turnover</li> </ul>

## Performance outcomes and indicators

### Top line performance indicators: Total incidents, total fires, total 'other' incidents, fire cover

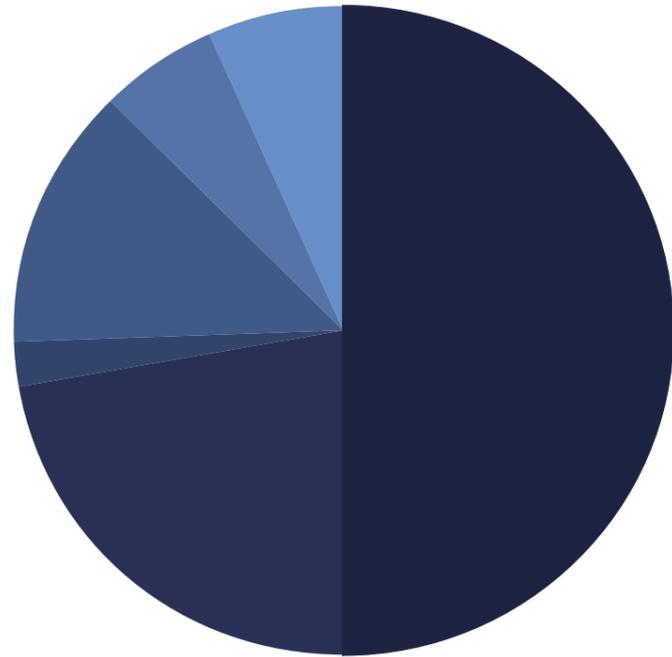
The public have confidence in the effectiveness of work undertaken by Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and are confident the Service understands risks in their community.

	HOW WE PLAN TO DO THIS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<b>Make buildings across Essex safer</b>	Extend fire protection and enforcement, improve targeted protection and help shape safer new housing and industrial developments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of interactions carried out at commercial premises</li> <li>• Number of fires in non-residential premises</li> <li>• Appropriate action is taken when non-compliance is found</li> </ul>
<b>Improve efficiency and effectiveness</b>	Invest, modernise and reform the fire and rescue service, including its approach to operational resourcing, to make it more efficient, effective and fit for purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased time spent on community engagement activity</li> <li>• Annual 1.5%-3% increase in productivity and efficiency gains</li> </ul>
<b>Adapt to our changing environment</b>	Work together to reduce our environmental impact and address the consequences of extreme weather.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced fleet carbon footprint</li> <li>• Engagement with future developments</li> <li>• Working towards Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050</li> <li>• Essex County Fire and Rescue Service learns the lessons from spate conditions and can adapt to emerging risks with technologies</li> </ul>

## Finance and resources

The total overall budget to fund fire and rescue in Essex amounts to £96.9 million. Fifty-eight per cent comes from the local Fire and Rescue Precept with the balance provided by central government, through a share of non-domestic rates, revenue support grant and other specific grants. The PFCC is committed to ensuring that budgeted resources are closely aligned with the fire and rescue priorities in order to maximise their impact

Fire & Rescue Budget 2024/25  
(£000)



	2023/24	2024/25
Firefighter pay	46,570	48,678
Control & support staff	20,227	21,728
Enabling resources	1,924	2,134
Premises & equipment	11,834	12,352
Capital financing charges	5,597	5,609
Other costs	5,478	6,474
Gross Fire & Rescue Expenditure	91,630	96,975
Income	(1,602)	(2,059)
Net Budget Requirement	90,028	94,916

## Supporting documents

### The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

[www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1541/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1541/contents)

### The Policing and Crime Act 2017

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/3/section/2/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/3/section/2/enacted)

### Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england)

### Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Performance

[www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/performance-resources-board-essex-fire-rescue-authority/](http://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/performance-resources-board-essex-fire-rescue-authority/)

### Fire Vision Fit for the Future (Local Government Association)

[www.local.gov.uk/fire-vision-2024](http://www.local.gov.uk/fire-vision-2024)

### Police and Crime Plan

[www.essex.pfcc.police.uk](http://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk)

### The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

[www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1541/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1541/contents)

## Links

### Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

[www.essex.pfcc.police.uk](http://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk)

### Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

[www.essex-fire.gov.uk](http://www.essex-fire.gov.uk)

### Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel

<https://cmis.essex.gov.uk/essexcmis5/EssexPolice,FireandCrimePanel.aspx>

### Essex County Fire and Rescue Service incident statistics

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-statistics-monitor](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-statistics-monitor)

