Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

Decision Report

Report reference number: 012-26 **Government security classification:** Official
Title of report: Service Delivery Plan 2026-27 (Year 2)
Area of county / stakeholders affected: Service wide
Report by: Jon Wilson (Head of Collaboration) **Executive Team Member:** Neil Cross (Director of Finance, Procurement and Improvement) **Date of report:** 26th March 2026 **Enquiries to:** Neil Cross (Director of Finance, Procurement and Improvement)

1. Executive Summary

This report seeks approval of the Service Delivery Plan 2026–27 (Year 2).

The Service Delivery Plan sets out the annual activity required to deliver the commitments within the Community Risk Management Plan 2025–2030. It translates the CRMP's five strategic goals into measurable, risk-aligned action for 2026–27.

Year 2 builds on the foundations established in Year 1 and reflects:

- Evolving community risk across Essex
- Learning from Year 1 CRMP delivery
- Emerging themes from HMICFRS inspection activity
- Alignment to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
- Continued commitment to the Core Code of Ethics Fire Standard

The plan contains 49 defined activities structured around the CRMP's five strategic goals. It provides clear governance, performance measures, and annual assurance mechanisms.

Approval of this report enables publication of the public-facing Service Delivery Plan.

2. Recommendations

That the Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioner approves the Service Delivery Plan (Year 2) 2026-27 (appended to this decision report) for publication.

3. Background and proposal

The Service Delivery Plan is the mechanism through which Essex County Fire and Rescue Service delivers the CRMP 2025–2030.

The CRMP defines:

- The risks facing Essex
- The outcomes required to mitigate those risks
- The strategic direction of the Service

The Service Delivery Plan provides the annual delivery framework that ensures those commitments are translated into operational, cultural, financial, and organisational actions.

The Service Delivery Plan Year 2 has been designed in conjunction with:

- The Fire and Rescue Plan 2024-2028
- The Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-2030
- The Safeguarding, Prevention, Protection and Response Strategy 2025-2030
- The People and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2030
- The Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2025-2030
- The Year 1 Service Delivery Plan and activities that will continue to be monitored

The Service Delivery Plan includes a larger number of activities within Service Delivery Group 5 (Resilient and Sustainable Future). However, the activities within here contain significant enabling work for future delivery within other service delivery groups.

Of the 53 activities in Year 1:

- 44 have been completed or substantially progressed
- 9 require continued monitoring and have been incorporated into Year 2

The rationale for rollover activity is detailed in Appendix B.

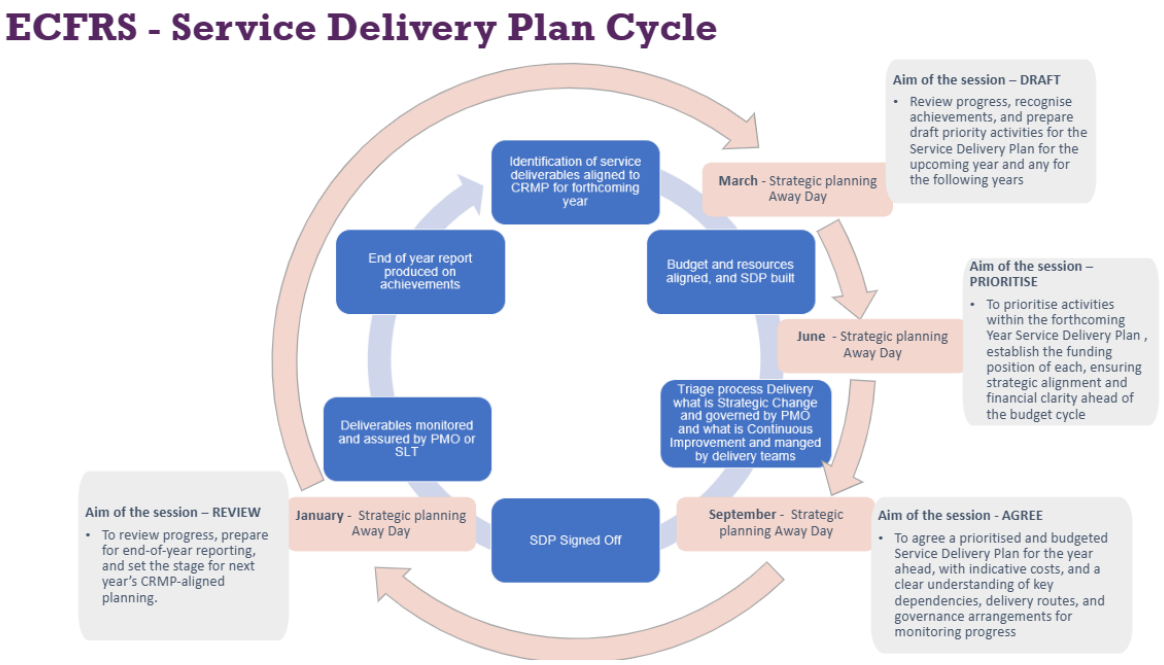
The CRMP has been developed to deliver against the Fire and Rescue Plan 2024-2028. The Service Delivery Plan is developed to deliver against the commitments in the CRMP, and is structured to align to the CRMP's five strategic goals:

- Preventing fires and other emergencies
- Reducing the impact of fire in the built environment
- Responding effectively to emergencies
- Inclusive and high performing culture
- A resilient and sustainable future

This will be the second year of our developed Service Delivery Plan, designed to complement our Community Risk Management Plan (2025–2030). It outlines how we will work towards delivering the activities required to achieve the five strategic goals set out in the CRMP. The plan provides an annual process through which detailed activity descriptors, evidence and governance arrangements will assure our continued delivery against the overarching five-year CRMP.

To support the focus of our activities, we have considered the draft feedback from our HMICFRS inspection in shaping the Year 2 plan, although this has not yet been formally released at the time of this decision report. As the HMICFRS inspection was not planned within the last year and we were notified after the preparation and publication of our Year 1 plan, we have also taken into account the current status of the Year 1 Service Delivery Plan, which runs until the end of March 2026 and will be formally closed through a report to the Strategic Board. Of the 53 activities scheduled for Year 1, 44 have been completed or partially completed, with nine requiring continued monitoring beyond March 2026 which will therefore continue to be monitored into Year 2. The Year 2 plan has been developed in light of these carried forward activities, and the rationale for these rollovers can be found in Appendix B.

For each year of the CRMP, we will publish a new Service Delivery Plan, detailing the next stage of our activity delivery. To support this, we have developed a planning cycle that continually monitors, assesses, and evaluates the delivery of the activities set out in our Service Delivery Plan. Engagement in this process has been evidenced through active participation at Strategic Planning Sessions by Directors, Assistant Directors, and their direct reports. This planning cycle also informs the development of the budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), ensuring that the Service Delivery Plan remains aligned and directly linked to the 2026/27 financial strategies, including the budget, MTFS, Reserves and Capital Strategies.



Our annual Fire and Rescue Statement will provide a full report on our performance and progress against the Service Delivery Plan.

Year 2 of the Service Delivery Plan includes 49 activities aligned to the five priorities and linked to the outcomes set out in the CRMP. Appendix C provides the full breakdown.

4. Proposal and associated benefits

The Service Delivery Plan is the vehicle through which the service will demonstrate its activity and delivery against the Community Risk Management Plan. The public facing document appended to this paper provides clear, reportable expectations for the communities of Essex to help them understand the role that the fire and rescue service plays in making Essex safer.

5. Options Analysis

An alternative option considered was to continue with our Continuous Improvement Plan for detailing our annual activity - This was discounted to enable us to align with the Community Risk Management Plan Fire Standard and to include large activities deemed to be business as usual and large activities within our project portfolio as well as activities meeting the criteria of continuous improvement, which can be governed through a single structure.

6. Consultation and engagement

The Service Delivery Plan 2026–27 has been developed through internal engagement with senior leaders, functional leads and activity owners, with representative bodies consulted where workforce implications arise. The Plan aligns with partner and stakeholder priorities, with ongoing engagement through existing collaboration and governance arrangements.

7. Strategic Links

The Service Delivery Plan is aligned to the CRMP's five strategic goals:

- Preventing fires and other emergencies
- Reducing the impact of fire in the built environment
- Responding effectively to emergencies
- Inclusive and high performing culture
- A resilient and sustainable future

These have in turn been created to respond to and align with the priorities of the Fire and Rescue Plan 2024-2028:

- Protect vulnerable people
- Improve road safety and reduce road deaths 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

8. Operational implications

Within the Service Delivery Plan, there are activities which will have an impact on operational personnel as they aim to improve efficiency and increase the amount of community contact. Where necessary, each of these activities will be brought through the appropriate governance route, which will include relevant levels of consultation and engagement.

9. Financial implications

There are several activities which will have financial implications associated with them, both as financial spend and financial gain through efficiency savings. Each of these will be supported by appropriate business cases and / or project documentation and taken through the governance route required for the spend identified.

10. Commercial / contractual considerations

Not applicable for this decision.

11. Legal implications

The Service Delivery Plan has been designed to meet the requirements set out in the National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC's) Fire Standard for Community Risk Management Planning, in consideration of the three pillars of inspection within the HMICFRS framework, and the requirements of a fire and rescue service set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

12. Staffing implications

Staffing structures, roles and areas of responsibility that may be affected by the activities identified in the Service Delivery Plan will be subject to future business cases and decision reports at the appropriate governance level.

13. Equality and Diversity implications

The actions being taken will not have a disproportionate impact on individuals with protected characteristics (as defined within the Equality Act 2010), when compared to all other individuals, and will not disadvantage people with protected characteristics. However, some positive impacts are anticipated, as summarised below:

Race	Y	Religion or belief	Y
Sex	Y	Gender reassignment	N
Age	Y	Pregnancy & maternity	N
Disability	Y	Marriage and Civil Partnership	N
Sexual orientation	N		

A full People Impact Assessment, as part of the wider CRMP project, has been undertaken and updated to consider the details identified in this paper. This can be found in Appendix D.

The Core Code of Ethics Fire Standard has been fully considered and incorporated into the proposals outlined in this paper. The activities identified have been considered as continuations of the five strategic goals and how they enable the service to meet and maintain the Core Code of Ethics.

Core Code of Ethics Principle	How the Report Addresses It
Putting our communities first	This plan provides the annual detail of activity determined sufficient to meet the expectations of the Community Risk Management Plan (2025–2030). The annual Fire and Rescue Statement will provide a full report on our performance and progress.
Integrity	Governance routing named (Executive Board 27th Feb 2026; Strategic Board 19 March 2026); legal basis referenced (Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004; HMICFRS pillars considered); commitment to business cases and project documentation.
Dignity and respect	Equality and Diversity section confirms no disproportionate impact and lists positive impacts (on Race, Religion or belief, Sex, Age, and Disability); reference to full People Impact Assessment (Appendix D).
Leadership	The planning cycle will continually monitor, assess and evaluate delivery; explicit governance boards and escalation through the appropriate governance route, and consultation and engagement where appropriate.

Core Code of Ethics Principle	How the Report Addresses It
Equality, diversity & inclusion	Equality and Diversity section and People Impact Assessment (Appendix D); alignment to People and Inclusion Strategy 2025–2030.

14. Risks and mitigation

The Service Delivery Plan has been designed to detail how the service will work to mitigate the risks identified in the Community Risk Management Plan.

There is a risk that, without appropriate planning and detailed structures for delivery and governance, the service will be unable to meet the expectations of the Community Risk Management Plan. This risk is mitigated through the Service Delivery Plan, which provides appropriate oversight and governance of these activities, as well as providing clear, reportable expectations to our communities.

15. Governance Boards

Executive Board – 27th Feb 2026
Strategic Board – 19th March 2026

16. Links to future plans

This proposal forms part of the delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan 2025–2030, with Service Delivery Plans updated and published annually to reflect progress and emerging priorities.

17. Background papers

Appendix A - ECFRS-CRMP-2025_online.pdf
Appendix B - Service Delivery Plan Year 1 roll over activities and rationale link
Appendix C - ECFRS – Service Delivery Plan 2026-27 link
Appendix D - CRMP – People impact assessment link

Decision process

Step 1A - Chief Fire Officer Comments
(The Chief Fire Officer is asked in their capacity as the Head of Paid Service to comment on the proposal.)

……

……



Sign: … …. Date:…04/03/2026……

Step 1B – Consultation with representative bodies
(The Chief Fire Officer is to set out the consultation that has been undertaken with the representative bodies)

……

Step 2 - Statutory Officer Review

The report will be reviewed by the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority's ("the Commissioner's") Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer prior to review and sign off by the Commissioner or their Deputy.



Monitoring Officer Sign:

Print: P. Brent-Isherwood

Date: 27 March 2026



Chief Finance Officer Sign: … …

Print: ……Neil Cross……

Date: . . .04/03/2026. . . . . .

Step 3 - Publication

Is the report for publication? YES

If 'NO', please give reasons for non-publication (Where relevant, cite the security classification of the document(s). State 'none' if applicable)

None

If the report is not for publication, the Monitoring Officer will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

Step 4 - Redaction

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

1	**Of Decision Sheet**	**NO**
2	**Of Appendix**	**NO**

If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:
N/A

Date redaction carried out: ……

If redaction is required, the Chief Finance Officer or the Monitoring Officer are to sign off that redaction has been completed.

Sign: …….. Print: ……..

Date signed: ……

Step 5 - Decision by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner or Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: ……..... (PFCC)

Print: Roger Hirst …… Date signed: ….10th April 2026 ……

I do not agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: ……..... (PFCC)

Print: …… Date signed: ……