

# Community Support, Fire and Rescue Portfolio - Summary

## Performance Summary

1. The Portfolio has a number of performance highlights to report this quarter:

### Fire and Rescue Service

- The tri-service Joint Fire Control project with Surrey and East Sussex Fire and Rescue went live on the 17th November. The new arrangement provides a shared control centre based in Surrey where teams align mobilising services to enhance capability, efficiency and resilience for the Service. This new arrangement will assist with performance by focussing on movement of resources and call handling times which will improve our appliance attendance times for critical fires and special services.
- We are refocussing on close call activity after every fire to ensure that the immediate neighbourhood receives fire safety advice. This has resulted in a notable increase in Safe and Well Visit referrals and visits completed. Work is also underway to create partnerships with GP surgeries in locations where these fires occur to further increase local referrals of the most vulnerable.
- Accidental and deliberate fires remain very low, demonstrating the continued benefit of our fire prevention activity to ensure that the most vulnerable are kept safe from fire.
- We have adapted our protection ways of working to focus on desktop and remote fire safety audits to overcome the remaining challenges of access due to Covid. This is proving beneficial for the premises who receive the same advice and guidance but have less disruption to their business. We are also seeing a notable increase in the number of audits that we can deliver using this approach.

### Communities

- Following wide ranging consultation, and in partnership with East Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council, West Sussex has published its Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy setting it out its commitments to provide further support for our communities.
- The backlog of births needing to be registered continues to reduce with approximately 120 babies over six weeks (down from 180 end of Q2). We have re-opened further outstations with Shoreham, Midhurst, Bognor and Storrington all now open (by appointment as resource allows).
- Libraries have been acting as collection points for lateral flow device kits for residents, as part of a pan-Sussex operation to utilise library front doors as easy access points for residents. This last quarter has seen demand for kits grow significantly, with weekly numbers of kits handed out by library staff increasing over 350%. A total of almost 21,000 kits were distributed by our libraries this quarter; by December we were exhausting each delivery on a daily basis.

- The Refugee Resettlement Team has continued to work towards accommodating families under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy Scheme (ARAP) and Afghan Citizens Relocation Scheme (ACRS). During the quarter the Team has been successful in securing more suitable properties from both the private and social sectors, which far exceeds the original plan of 8-10 properties for the financial year 2021/22. Work has also commenced on supporting the Hong Kong British Nationals Overseas (HKBNO) that have started to arrive in West Sussex.
- The Community Hub works closely with Public Health and provides the Local Tracing Partnership service (LTP) for East and West Sussex, for residents that have tested positive for Covid-19. 26,580 cases were passed to the LTP team in the three months of October to December 2021.
- 1,204,692 people visited our corporate website where they gained information or transacted with the Council. Customer Experience, Capita OSD Team have been working with all services to make all documents and web content accessible and SOCITM Silktime UK Councils index now rates the West Sussex County Council website as 'Great' for accessibility.
- More than 200 packets of illegal cigarettes were recently seized from a shop in Worthing. The illicit haul was part of an operation led by West Sussex Trading Standards officers targeting rogue retailers. Trading Standards Officers visited three shops in Worthing supported by Sussex Police following a tip-off claiming they were selling illegal tobacco. A total of 205 packets of illegal cigarettes and 63 packets of tobacco were found at one of the shops. Work to protect the vulnerable also led to a [rogue trader receiving a three-year prison sentence](#).

## Our Council Performance Measures

Community Support, Fire and Rescue		2021/22 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods			DoT	Performance Analysis	Actions	Year End Forecast
			Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21				
3	Fire Safety Order regulated buildings in West Sussex having received an audit under the Risk Based Inspection Programme. Measured cumulatively in each financial year, from 1st April.  Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Reported a quarter in arrears.	1,750	208	468	623	↗	The target of 1750 visits per year is based on a full department staffing model at which we continue to operate approximately 30% below. This is recognised as a sector wide issue. Reduced staffing levels and the pandemic have continued to impact the type of work that is possible, with inspecting officers carrying out remote and tabletop audits where premises remain inaccessible. Reviews are being undertaken to maximise desktop audits to ensure that the highest levels of risk continue to receive a comprehensive audit visit, which includes notifying the Responsible Person of any deficiencies and remedial actions required to make the building safe. Covid restrictions continue to be an influencing factor due to increases in the recent variant, particularly with premises occupied by vulnerable occupants. Responsible Persons have expressed anxiety in this area, which we recognise and acknowledge on a case-by-case basis. Officers have continued to support other Protection core functions including completing the Building Risk Review, which account for over 50% of departmental activity. This includes building regulation consultations, licensing applications and other forms of inspections and prosecutions.	Our approach will increase audit file review activity, whilst still targeting face to face inspections at premises of highest risk within our RBIP, ensuring we are still picking up key areas of non-compliance with the Fire Safety Order. We have a clear way forward focusing on risk and maximising the number of audits completed. We are increasing our desktop reviews completed by qualified Inspecting Officers and Low Risk Fire Safety Checks conducted by our station personnel, both of which will see performance in this area improve. We have also seen good engagement with licensed premises in Chichester, which is part of a joint fire safety project between our protection and response teams focusing on takeaways with sleeping risks above. This in turn will lead to more audits being completed.	R
10	Number of Safe and Well Visits delivered to households with at least one vulnerability or risk factor. Measured cumulatively in each financial year, from 1st April.  Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Accumulative. Reported a quarter in arrears.	4,000	781	1,561	2,468	↗	SWV delivery in Q3 was 9% short of the quarter target but a 16% increase on the previous quarter. We attribute this to the remedial actions taken, including the further development of referral pathways. Staff based at fire stations have undertaken reactive post-incident activity as well as proactive referral generation activity. The pandemic continues to cause a reduction in referrals and requests for visits with vulnerable people less willing to have services in their homes. Neighbouring FRSs have seen similarly low numbers of visits. It is likely we will fall short of this year's target, however we anticipate a 13% increase on last year. In addition to the 2468 full visits completed we have visited 552 homes to repair, replace, or install smoke detection equipment, with advice being provided where relevant. In previous years these visits were reported as Safe and Well Visits, whereas our new Farynor system enables us to more accurately reflect the risk reduction activity that was undertaken. We have made a combined total of 3020 homes safer due to our visits.	We continue to work with our partners, particularly in health and social care, along with telecare providers to increase referrals of Safe and Well Visits through introduction from a trusted partner. We are also offering revisits to some members of the public due to the time since we last visited them. We have changed the way our stations are supporting and completing Safe and Well Visits through new guidance and we are reviewing risk reduction activity to ensure that every contact can result in a Safe and Well Visit where possible. In many cases the resident has declined a full Safe and Well Visit, this may in part be due to Covid which we hope will change as we move forward. We continue to use data to target our activity to areas in which our most vulnerable residents live and we are making the most of every opportunity to deliver focused community safety activities following incidents at residential properties. This will lead to more prevention activity being delivered to those at risk or those affected by an incident.	A

Community Support, Fire and Rescue		2021/22 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods			DoT	Performance Analysis	Actions	Year End Forecast
			Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21				
42	Percentage of 'critical fires' where the first appliance in attendance meets our emergency response standard  Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Reported a quarter in arrears.	89.0%	93.1%	82.1%	86.7%	↗	Following six quarters of strong performance in meeting first fire engine attendance standards we had a significant drop in Q2 and an increase in Q3. This increase means that our last three months performance have been 3.33% below target. For the last 6 months we have been trialling the Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT) in Fire control. This tool allows the control operators to assess the impact of any standby moves on response times before implementing them. During this trial we have been reviewing the impact this has had on our response times and the impact it's had on our staff. While we have seen how valuable the DCT is, we recognise that improvements can be made that will maximise the performance of our existing resources.	We are working very closely with Joint Fire Control (JFC) and following a revision to the governance arrangements we now have engagement and additional scrutiny at both operational and strategic levels. This work and the inclusion of our colleagues from East Sussex FRS is already seeing improvement in areas of performance that contribute to responding quickly to incidents. One of the main changes is the development to the way we use the Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT) in JFC across the County. This is intended to improve our response times by focusing cover at a district or local level. Additionally, we are reviewing all elements that contribute to meeting our response standards. This has seen work done at our fire stations to ensure we are consistently doing everything we can to respond to all incidents as quickly as possible.	G
43	Percentage of 'critical special service incidents' where the first appliance in attendance meets our emergency response standard  Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Reported a quarter in arrears.	80.0%	79.9%	77.1%	77.9%	↗	We have seen a small increase in retained availability and a corresponding increase in the overall countywide attendance time to critical special service incidents. At the start of Q2 the Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT) trial was implemented. This is designed to assist control room operators in ensuring that the resources that are currently available are always in the best place to maximise overall response times. The use of the DCT has been effective in maximising the use of available resource with respect to critical special service calls.	In addition to the actions relating to JFC, we are reviewing the management of our Service Delivery Centre (SDC) and have introduced a new permanent Crewing Support Officer. Our Crewing Optimisation Group (COG) within the SDC aims to maximise crewing levels across the service. Our Assistant Chief Fire Officer will be working strategically with the Head of Response and the SDC to continue to improve our crewing availability and continue to focus on those marginal gains.	A
4	Percentage of suspected scam victims, identified to WSCC by the National Trading Standards Scams Team, receiving a proactive intervention from the Trading Standards Service  Reporting Frequency: Quarterly	100.0%	82.0%	82.0%	100.0%	↗	The appointment of the second Protecting The Vulnerable Officer, in conjunction with a low number of referrals received from the National Scams Team over the last quarter, has meant that we have been able to have a big impact on this measure over the last quarter and achieved 100% for the first time.	No further actions currently required.	G
33	Use of virtual/digital library services by residents  Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Accumulative	5.45m	1.48m	2.93m	4.31m	↗	We are continuing to see higher than normal levels of demand for eBooks and virtual library services, evidence of some customers making greater use of online services which they found through lockdowns.	No further actions currently required.	G
34	Number of people reached and supported via the West Sussex Community Hub during the Covid-19 pandemic  Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Accumulative	35,000	58,230	59,097	62,270	↗	59k residents supported to September 2021 as part of the Central Government Covid-19 Shielding Programme, which ended on the 15/9/2021. From October 2021 the Community Hub is supporting residents with Covid-19 related needs and households with wider essential needs such as food, energy and water bills via the Household Support Fund. Please note this measure does not include the volumes for the Local Tracing Partnership.	No further actions currently required.	G

[Website link to Our Council Performance Measures here.](#)

## Finance Summary

### Portfolio In Year Pressures and Mitigations

Pressures	(£m)	Mitigations and Underspending	(£m)	Year end budget variation (£m)
Covid-19 pandemic forecast expenditure/ allocations to third parties	£11.666m	Assumed funding from Covid-19 grant	(£11.666m)	
Fire – Additional costs within the Electronic Services Group and other related pressures including the Dynamic Cover Tool	£0.350m	Communities – Increased demand for registrar's services	(£0.200m)	
Fire - Increased pressure from supply of enhanced tactical PPE firefighter uniforms	£0.100m	Communities - Staffing vacancies within Trading Standards and Communities teams	(£0.259m)	
Fire - Increase in overtime within the Fire Response Service	£0.150m	Communities - In year underspending from homeworking/ change in service delivery due to pandemic restrictions	(£0.065m)	
Communities – Additional cost following work undertaken on long inquests	£0.152m			
Communities – Increase in mortuary contract	£0.075m			
<b>Community Support, Fire &amp; Rescue Portfolio - Total</b>	<b>£12.493m</b>		<b>(£12.190m)</b>	<b>£0.303m</b>

## Significant Financial Issues and Risks Arising

- There are no significant issues to raise within this section.

## Financial Narrative on the Portfolio's Position

- The Community Support, Fire and Rescue Portfolio is currently projecting a £0.303m overspend, a reduction of £0.159m when compared to September.
- Within the Fire and Rescue Service, there has been a £0.1m increase in overspend projected relating to an increase in overtime costs in response to emergencies and other one-off minor variations.
- Within Communities, the Registrars Service have experienced an increase in the number of ceremonies they have delivered following the easing of Covid-19 restrictions. This rise in volume has increased the expected income by a further £0.1m when compared to the September projection.
- Underspending on staffing and vacancy management has led to a further £0.094m reduction in the projection this month. In addition, savings from homeworking and changes in service delivery due to pandemic restrictions has also generated an estimated £0.065m following a reduction in staff mileage, home working and changes to working arrangements.

## Savings Delivery Update

- The portfolio has a number of 2021/22 savings included within the budget and one saving outstanding from the 2020/21 financial year. Details of these savings are included in the table below:

Saving Activity	2020/21 Savings £000	December 2021		Narrative	2022/23
Communities - Increased income from Registrars Services	150	150	G	Although achieving income assumption currently, post-pandemic sustainability of saving still to be determined.	G

Saving Activity	2021/22 Savings £000	December 2021		Narrative	2022/23
Development of adapted Library Service offer in conjunction with Parish Councils	70	70	G	Discussions with Parish Councils are continuing to deliver this saving on a long-term basis; however, in year mitigations have been found.	A
Increased income from copy certificates for Registrars' Services	150	150	G		G
Removal of Community Initiative Fund (CIF)	140	140	B		B
Review of Partnerships & Communities Team	70	70	B		B
Review of agency staff	8	8	B		B

### Savings Key:

R Significant Risk
 A At Risk
 G On Track
 B Delivered

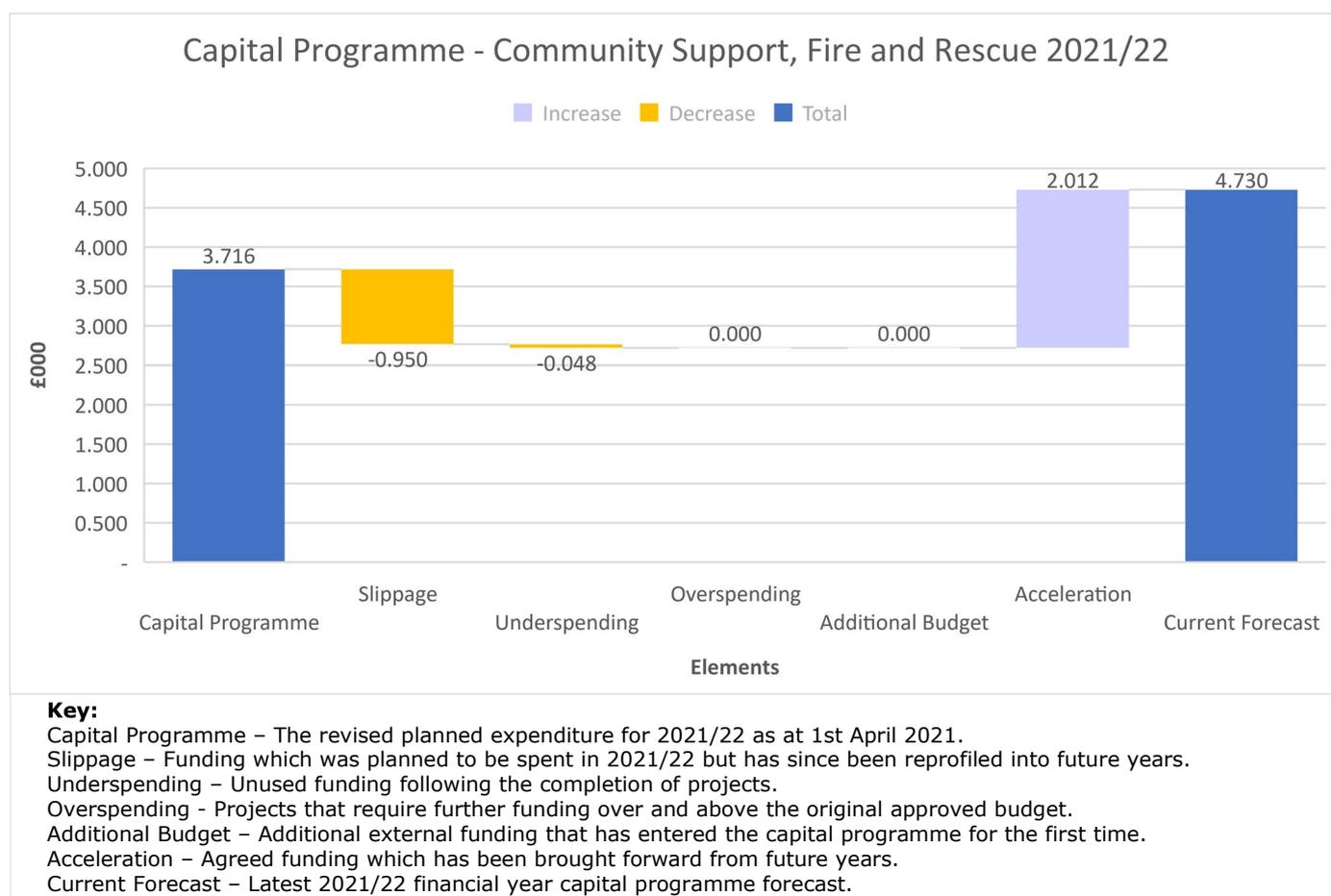
## Capital Programme

### Performance Summary - Capital

8. There are five schemes within the portfolio and all five schemes in delivery are rated green, indicating that the schemes are reporting to plan.

### Finance Summary - Capital

9. The capital programme; as approved by County Council in February 2021, agreed a programme totalling £3.645m for 2021/22. £0.071m of expenditure, originally profiled to spend in 2020/21, was slipped into 2021/22, revising the capital programme to £3.716m.
10. Since this time, profiled spend has increased overall by £1.014m, to give a current year end projection for 2021/22 of £4.730m. Of this decrease -£0.950m relates to slippage, -£0.048m relates to underspending within current projects and £2.012m relates to projects where funding has been accelerated from future years.



11. Details of movements of the financial profiling within the capital programme between October and December are as follows:

- **Acceleration: £2.012m. Movement since Q2 report: £1.645m**
  - **Live Training Centre and Horsham Fire Station: £1.645m.**  
Works on the new fire station are progressing at pace therefore funding has been accelerated to meet the new profiled expenditure in 2021/22.

## Risk

12. The following table summarises the risks on the corporate risk register that would have a direct impact on the portfolio. Risks to other portfolios are specified within the respective appendices to this report.

Risk No.	Risk Description	Previous Quarter Score	Current Score
CR60	There is a risk of failing to deliver the <b>HMICFRS improvement plan</b> , leading to an adverse effect on service delivery; which may result in failing any subsequent inspection.	15	15

13. Further details on all risks can be found in **Appendix 5** - Corporate Risk Register Summary.