

Public Document Pack

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18 March 2021

Fire & Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee

A virtual meeting of the Committee will be held at **10.30 am** on **Friday, 26 March 2021**.

Note: In accordance with regulations in response to the current public health emergency, this meeting will be held virtually with members in remote attendance. Public access is via webcasting.

The meeting will be available to watch live via the Internet at this address:

<http://www.westsussex.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

Tony Kershaw

Director of Law and Assurance

Agenda

- | | | |
|----------|----|--|
| 10.30 am | 1. | <p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Committee members and officers must declare any pecuniary or personal interest in any business on the agenda. They should also make declarations at any stage such an interest becomes apparent during the meeting. Consideration should be given to leaving the meeting if the nature of the interest warrants it. If in doubt please contact Democratic Services before the meeting.</p> |
| 10.32 am | 2. | <p>Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee (Pages 5 - 10)</p> <p>The Committee is asked to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2021 (cream paper).</p> |
| 10.34 am | 3. | <p>Urgent Matters</p> <p>Items not on the agenda which the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency by reason of special circumstances, including cases where the Committee needs to be informed of budgetary or performance issues affecting matters within its terms of reference, which have emerged since the publication of the agenda.</p> |

- 10.35 am 4. **Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Performance Report Quarter 3 2020/21** (Pages 11 - 36)
- Report by the Chief Fire Officer.
- The report provides a context to the Performance and Assurance Framework for the purpose of future scrutiny of the Executive's approach to performance.
- 11.20 am 5. **Priority Programme Update** (Pages 37 - 44)
- Report by the Chief Fire Officer.
- The report provides an overview of the priority programmes of work during Quarter 3 of 2020/2021 including progress against the People Action Plan, the Improvement Plan and the Integrated Risk Management Plan Action Plan.
- 12.05 pm 6. **Report of the Task and Finish Group - Joint Fire Control Centre** (Pages 45 - 50)
- The Committee to consider the report of the Joint Control Room Task & Finish Group.
- 12.30 pm 7. **Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services Covid Inspection letter** (Pages 51 - 62)
- The Committee to consider the results of the recent Covid Inspection.
- 12.40 pm 8. **Work Programme Planning and Possible Items for Future Scrutiny**
- The Committee is asked to review its current draft work programme for the remainder of the County Council term taking into account the Forward Plan of Key Decisions and any suggestions from its members for possible items for future scrutiny.
- (a) **Forward Plan of Key Decisions**
- There are currently no entries in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions within the Committee's portfolio.
- If any relevant entries are added between the date of despatch of the agenda and the date of the meeting they will be tabled at the meeting.
- (b) **Work Programme** (Pages 63 - 66)
- The Committee to review its draft work programme for the year ahead taking into consideration the checklist at Appendix A.

- 12.55 pm 9. **Requests for Call-in**
- There have been no requests for call-in to the Scrutiny Committee and within its constitutional remit since the date of the last meeting. The Director of Law and Assurance will report any requests since the publication of the agenda papers.
- 12.58 pm 10. **Date of Next Meeting**
- The next meeting of the Committee will be held virtually on 18 June 2021 at 10.30 am. Probable agenda items include:
- Performance & Assurance Framework Core Indicators
 - Priority programmes: IRMP update, Improvement update
- Any member wishing to place an item on the agenda for the meeting must notify the Director of Law and Assurance by 3 June 2021.

To all members of the Fire & Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee

Fire & Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee

8 January 2021 – At a virtual meeting of the Fire & Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee held at 10.30 am with restricted public access.

Present: Cllr Waight (Chairman)

Cllr Barnard, Cllr Edwards, Cllr M Jones, Cllr Pendleton and Cllr Smytherman

Apologies were received from Cllr Barling

Also in attendance: Cllr Crow

17. Declarations of Interest

17.1 In accordance with the code of conduct the following interests were declared: -

- Cllr Smytherman in respect of item 5 (Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Performance Report Q2 2020/21) as president of Sight Support Worthing and as the manager of a block of flats in Worthing

18. Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

18.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2020 are approved as a correct record and are signed by the Chairman.

19. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

19.1 Resolved – that the Committee notes the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

20. Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Performance Report Q2 2020/21

20.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Fire Officer (copy appended to the signed minutes) which was introduced by Sabrina Cohen-Hatton, Chief Fire Officer and Mark Andrews, Deputy Chief Fire Officer who told the Committee: -

- The Service had been operating in unprecedented circumstances and although some areas still needed improvement the direction of travel was good
- Core Measure 1 (Total number of Fire Deaths) – the Service had set-up a Panel to review every fatal fire to inform future strategy
- Core Measure 6 (Number of Safe and Well Visits Delivered) – significant progress had been made against this target which should be green by the end of the year
- Core Measure 18 (Critical Fires – 2nd Appliance (Fire Engine) attendance), Core Measure 19 (Critical Special Service - 1st Appliance (Fire Engine) attendance), Core Measure 21 (Adequate Crewing on all retained Fire Engines) - crewing optimisation

allows the Service to make sure it has the right resources in the right places. The county crewing pilot allows the Service to make the best use of its on call or retained duty staff to ensure they are in the right places - this continues to improve cover and whilst it is disappointing to see that these measures are red the Service is focussing on them to ensure they improve over the coming quarters. The Service has employed additional retained liaison officers.

- Core Measure 10 (Proportion of Unsatisfactory Fire Safety Inspections) – the Service had prioritised quality over quantity
- Core Measure 12 (Building Regulation Consultations) – target achieved
- Core Measure 17 (Critical Fires – 1st Appliance (Fire Engine) Attendance) – there had been slight improvement

20.2 Summary of responses to committee members' questions and comments: -

- Officers will review all fatal fires through a Panel of fire officers
- Physical Safe and Well visits had been hampered by the pandemic, but some had been done by phone – the target for these visits would not be met this year due to a lack of referrals rather than a backlog
- Although the target for Core Measure 18 had not been met, compliance was 4% up on the same quarter last year and there were no areas of very high risk in the county
- Key to improving performance against Core Measure 18 was availability of appliances and retained fire fighters
- Retained Liaison Officers were helping with the recruitment of retained fire fighters and were able to act as incident commanders as they were based in stations staffed with retained fire fighters
- Appliance driving instructors were being recruited to increase the number of drivers
- Between last January and November, appliance availability increased by 21,000 hours enabling 1,498 occasions where retained appliances were first on the scene at 878 incidents
- There was a concern raised over Core Measure 19, but the Committee was assured that there were no very high-risk areas in the county and that the latest performance figures were 4% up and the same time last year
- The number of people furloughed and working from home during lockdown 1 had a positive effect on Core Measure 21 as had other measures such as increased availability of appliances
- Under the new Building Safety Act, management companies will be required to take additional responsibility to ensure the safety of the residents of the flats they manage

20.3 Resolved – that the Committee: -

- i. notes the actions taken by the Fire and Rescue Service and welcomes the progress made, but notes that there are still significant challenges to be met

- ii. notes that the Safe and Well visit deficit is due to lack of referrals rather than a backlog of visits
- iii. notes the work that is continuing on improving second appliance attendance
- iv. notes the improved availability of retained firefighters, but recognises that further improvement is needed
- v. congratulates the Fire and Rescue Service on the improvement of the first appliance attendance record

21. West Sussex Reset Plan and Key Performance Indicators

- 21.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive (copy appended to the signed minutes) which was introduced by Sabrina Cohen-Hatton, Chief Fire Officer who told the Committee that the Service's responsibilities included working with communities and partners to prevent emergencies as well as dealing with fires.
- 21.2 Summary of responses to committee members' questions and comments: -
- The four key performance indicators (KPIs) in the reset plan relating to the Fire & Rescue Service covered all main areas of its work – response, prevention and protection
 - These KPIs used raw data so were more easily measured and demonstrated how the Services was performing more clearly as opposed to others such as Core Measure 10 (Proportion of Unsatisfactory Fire Safety Inspections) which were more complex
- 21.3 Resolved – that the Committee supports the proposed reset plan and key performance indicators for the Fire & Rescue Service

22. Priority Programme Update

- 22.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Fire Officer (copy appended to the signed minutes) which was introduced by Sabrina Cohen-Hatton, Chief Fire Officer who told the Committee that the Service had focussed first on protection and prevention as these areas had the biggest impact on public safety. The emphasis was now moving to staff culture via the three-year People Action Plan.
- 22.2 Summary of responses to committee members' questions and comments: -
- Local risk management plans were about how to implement the Integrated Risk Management Plan at a local level involving local councillors
 - The Fire & Rescue Service Resilience and Emergencies Team was part of the Council's Resilience and Emergencies Team
- 22.3 Resolved – that the Committee notes the progress made and looks forward to further developments in the next municipal year

23. Fire and Rescue Service Independent Advisory Panel Closure

- 23.1 The Committee learned that the Independent Advisory Panel was pleased with the significant amount of progress made by West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service against recommendations made by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services and therefore it decided on 11 November 2020 that it no longer needed to monitor the Service.
- 23.2 Resolved – that the Committee notes the closure of the Independent Advisory Panel.

24. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services Covid Inspection letter

- 24.1 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services Covid Inspection letter had not yet arrived, but the Committee learned that the Service: -
- Had been involved in meetings with Public Health, the NHS and other key partners to put in place plans for dealing with the pandemic from February 2020 - these proved to be very effective
 - Had been able to carry out its core duties of protecting people and responding to emergencies, it had also found new ways to carry out preventative work
 - Is able to support the wider public effort whilst fulfilling its own role
 - Is involved in weekly Resilience Forum meetings and reviews its own performance continually
 - Has supported its staff
 - Has a good degradation plan and is confident it can cope if the pandemic worsens
- 24.2 Resolved – that as Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services Covid Inspection letter had not yet arrived, this item would be discussed at the next meeting.

25. Work Programme

- 25.1 The Committee discussed its work programme and agreed the following: -
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services Covid Inspection letter would be placed on the agenda for the 26 March 2021 meeting
 - Further details on retained fire fighters as reported in the Performance Assurance Framework would be discussed by the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Chief Fire Officer and fed back to the Committee
 - Membership of the Joint Control Centre Task & Finish Group – a request was made for a Labour representative to be appointed to the Task & Finish Group, but this was rejected as the proposed

membership already complied with the constitution by having one non-majority group member – membership was therefore agreed as Cllr Barnard, Cllr Barling, Cllr Edwards and Cllr Smytherman – it was also agreed that the Task & Finish Group would also look at the Electronic Services Group

26. Date of Next Meeting

- 26.1 The next meeting of the Committee will take place on 26 March 2021.

The meeting ended at 1.19 pm

Chairman

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Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee

26 March 2021

Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Performance Report Quarter 3 2020/21

Report by Chief Fire Officer

Summary

In March 2020, West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (WSFRS) formally adopted a new Performance and Assurance Framework (PAF) which was supported by the Cabinet Member for Fire & Rescue and Communities and the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee (FRSSC).

The PAF includes monitoring of service performance against 31 core measures that provide strong indication of organisational performance directly aligned to the delivery of the strategic commitments i.e. Integrated Risk Management Plan. This ensures the service is intelligence and evidence led and enables the service to react early when performance is not to the required level.

Appendix A of the report is the Quarter three Strategic Performance Report for the purpose of scrutiny of the Executive's approach to performance. This report covers data from the period of 1st October 2020 – 31st December 2020.

Focus for Scrutiny

Members of the Committee are invited to consider and comment on the Core Measures/Indicators detailed in Appendix A, designed to provide assurance concerning the delivery of the statutory functions of the Fire Authority.

Proposal

1 Background and context

- 1.1 West Sussex County Council is the Fire Authority and is responsible for making sure West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (WSFRS) performs efficiently and in the best interest of the public and communities it serves.
- 1.2 WSFRS was inspected in November 2018 by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The full Inspection Report for the service was published on 20 June 2019. The report found that effectiveness of WSFRS "requires improvement", efficiency "requires improvement" and the way it looks after its people is "inadequate".
- 1.3 New scrutiny governance arrangements are now in place through the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee.

Agenda Item 4

- 1.4 On behalf of residents, Members are responsible for ensuring that WSFRS delivers excellent services and achieves outcomes as efficiently and effectively as possible. This involves the West Sussex County Council Fire Authority (WSCCFA):
- setting a high-level policy agenda (Strategic Objectives) for what the WSFRS should do and the outcomes it should achieve
 - setting a budget to fund delivery of the policy agenda
 - securing assurance that the budget is being spent wisely on delivering the policy agenda set by the authority
- 1.5 In order to secure assurance, it is necessary for effective scrutiny to be an integral component of WSCCFA governance arrangements. Scrutiny is there to hold the Cabinet to account concerning the decisions taken relating to WSFRS.
- 1.6 The role of scrutiny is also to contribute to the development of solutions and ideas to support continuous service improvement. The Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee may need to be flexible in the way it scrutinises the service and the Executive's decisions. On occasions, Members may wish to 'drill down' on certain specific issues but still at a strategic level with the focus being the interests of all West Sussex residents and businesses.

2 Proposal details

- 2.1 The proposal information for this item for scrutiny is set out in the attached appendix (listed below). As it is a report dealing with performance management the assessments and implications are not required.

Sabrina Cohen-Hatton
Chief Fire Officer

Contact Officer: Sabrina Cohen-Hatton, Chief Fire Officer

Appendices

Appendix A – FRS Scrutiny PAF Core Measures Report

Background papers

None

West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Performance Report Quarter 3

Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Mark Andrews

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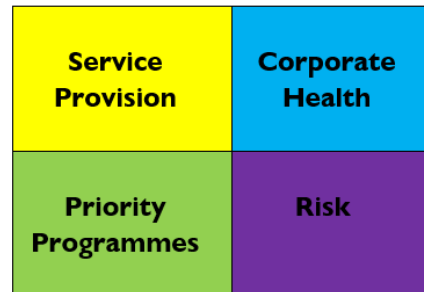
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Strategic Performance Board Quarterly Report

Quarter 3 2020-2021

- The aim of this Quarterly Performance Report is to summarise how West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service/Directorate has performed over the previous three months, and to capture how performance contributes cumulatively to the year-end performance outcomes.
- The report retrospectively presents information from the Performance and Assurance Framework (PAF) including the core measures and targets for the year which are current at the time of publishing. The report contains performance across the four elements of the PAF Quadrant namely:



- The explanations, mitigations and actions contained within this report are those endorsed by the Service Executive Board (SEB).
- This report covers data from the period of 1st October 2020 – 31st December 2020.

Cabinet Member Summary

The performance information contained within this report for WSFRS is for the third quarter of 2020, a period which has continued to see the effects and impacts of COVID 19 on service delivery of WSFRS and wider county council services. Therefore, it is with great credit to all the teams that make up WSFRS that the impact of COVID 19 has not significantly affected the Service's performance in the delivery of its critical services to our residents.

During this quarter the organisation welcomed a themed inspection from HMICFRS on the service response to COVID 19 which highlighted the resilience, agility and ingenuity that has been used to ensure the most vulnerable in our communities have been kept safe during this very testing period.

Officers continue to focus on the areas in this report where improvement still needs to be made and as the pandemic continues we will again be focussed on the well-being and support to all our staff.

Chief Fire Officer Summary



The pandemic continues to affect everyone and every organisation yet in these exceptional circumstances WSFRS continue to maintain the critical regulatory duties of prevention, protection and response whilst adapting to this new way of working to support the efforts of the Sussex Resilience Forum in the wider business continuity and resilience effort for West Sussex.

The resilience of the fire and rescue service has been underlined with the very positive news from the HMICFRS themed inspection who stated how impressed they were by how the service has continued to provide its statutory functions and support the wellbeing of staff throughout the pandemic.

Against the backdrop of COVID 19 this a particularly pleasing quarter with all 31 core measures now being reported against with continued improvement for measures in joint fire control, first appliance attendance and low levels of sickness. Having said that, there is still much to do, and I am confident that officers will continue to focus on all of the areas of improvement alongside the continued response and recovery arrangements from the pandemic.

Performance Summary

Scrutiny Committee Members to note that with the exception of Core Measures CM22, 23, 24, 25 and 31, all of the remaining Measures are directly associated with the statutory functions and requirements of West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.

At the end of Quarter 3 2020-21 the following performance against 31 Core Measures was recorded:

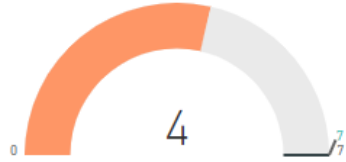
15 measures had a green status, 6 were amber and 10 were red. Of those 12 red and amber measures with comparable percentages, 6 showed improvements since last quarter.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee have selected the following measures to be examined by the Scrutiny Committee:

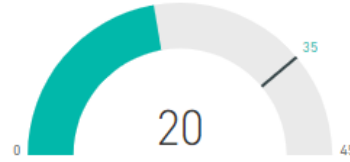
- CM1: Total number of Fire Deaths
- CM14: Time Taken to Answer the 999 call
- CM15: Time to Alert Nearest Station/Engine to Attend
- CM16: Time to Mobilise a Level 2 Officer to a Level 1 Incident
- CM18: Critical Fires - 2nd Appliance (Fire Engine) attendance
- CM19: Critical Special Service - 1st Appliance (Fire Engine) attendance
- CM21: Adequate Crewing on all retained Fire Engines

Performance Summary for all core measures at the end of Quarter 3:

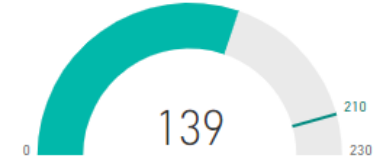
CM1: Fatalities in Fires



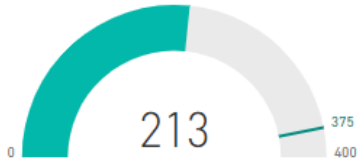
CM2: Injuries in Fires



CM3: Deliberate Primary Fires this FY



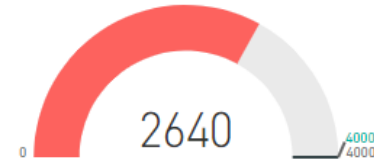
CM4: Deliberate Secondary Fires this FY



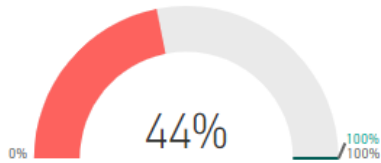
CM5: Safeguarding Created within 24 Hours of Concern Last Quarter



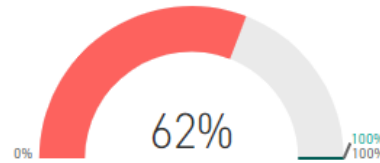
CM6: Safe and Well Visits



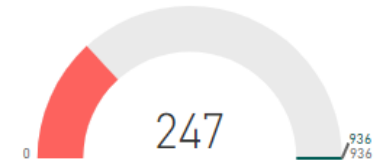
CM7: V High Risk Safe & Well on Time Last Quarter



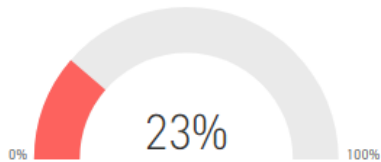
CM8: High Risk Safe & Well on Time Last Quarter



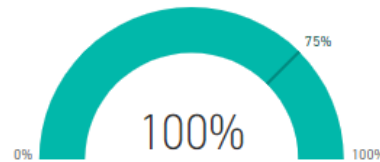
CM9: Fire Safety Audits - Year to Date



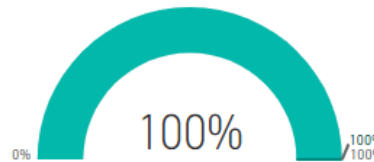
CM10: Unsatisfactory Inspections Last Quarter



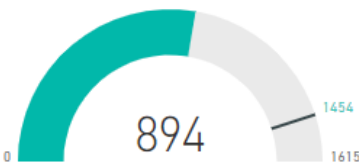
CM11: Prosecutions



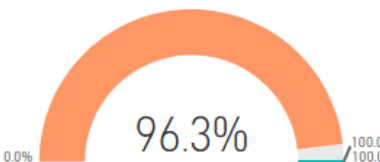
CM12: Consultations on time Last Quarter



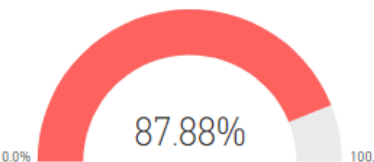
CM13: Unwanted Fire Signals YTD



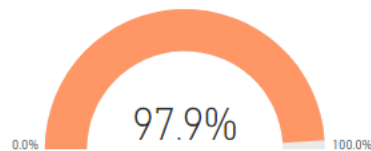
CM14: % Calls answered in 7 seconds last quarter



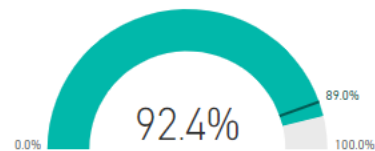
CM15: % 2 minute Send last quarter



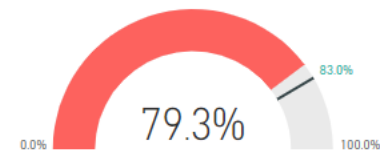
CM16: % Level 2 Officer Mobilised Last Quarter



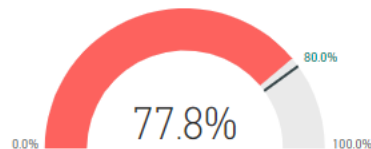
CM17: Pass Rate 1st Appliance Last Quarter



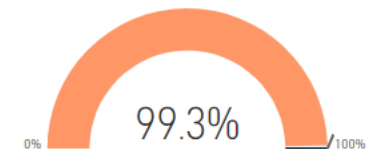
CM18: Second Appliance Attendance Time Last Quarter



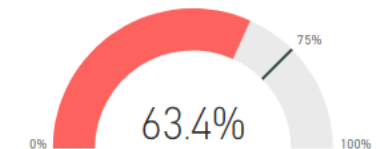
CM19: Special Service Performance Last Quarter



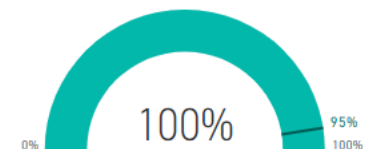
CM20: % Wholetime Fire Engines On the Run



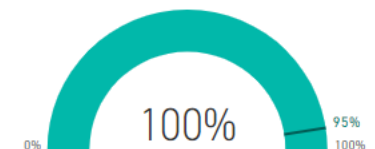
CM21: % RDS Fire Engines On the Run



CM22: Customers Satisfied Last Quarter



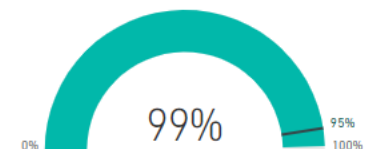
CM23: Customers Satisfied Last Quarter



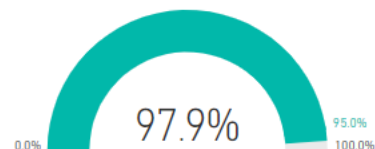
CM:24 Customer Satisfied last quarter



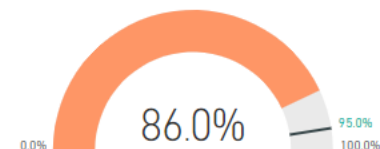
CM25: Safe and Well Feedback Last Quarter



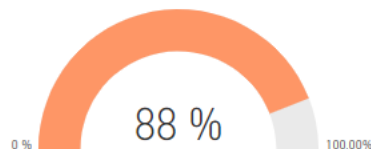
CM26: % Staff Sickness



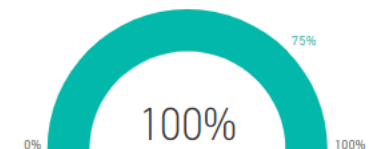
CM27: Percentage of Fitness Tests in Time



CM:28 % of operational staff in qualification



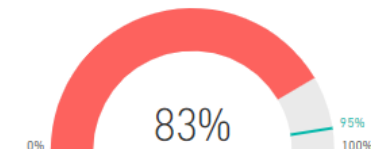
CM29: % of Fire Safety Staff Qualified or Working towards Level 4 D...



CM30: RIDDOR



CM31: % of Projects Currently On Target



Selected Measures – Amber Status

Quarter 3

(1st October 2020 – 31st December 2020)

CM1: Total number of Fire Deaths in West Sussex over a year period starting from April

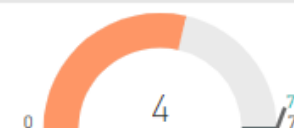
Nicki Peddle

Fires and Fatalities

The total number of deaths that occur as a result of a fire. This includes a person whose death is attributed to a fire, even when the death occurs weeks or months later.
This includes injuries/fatalities resulting from all types of fires including dwelling fires, non domestic fires and vehicle fires, whether deliberate or accidental.

Annual Target: 0 Green,
<7 Amber,
7+ Red.

CM1: Fatalities in Fires

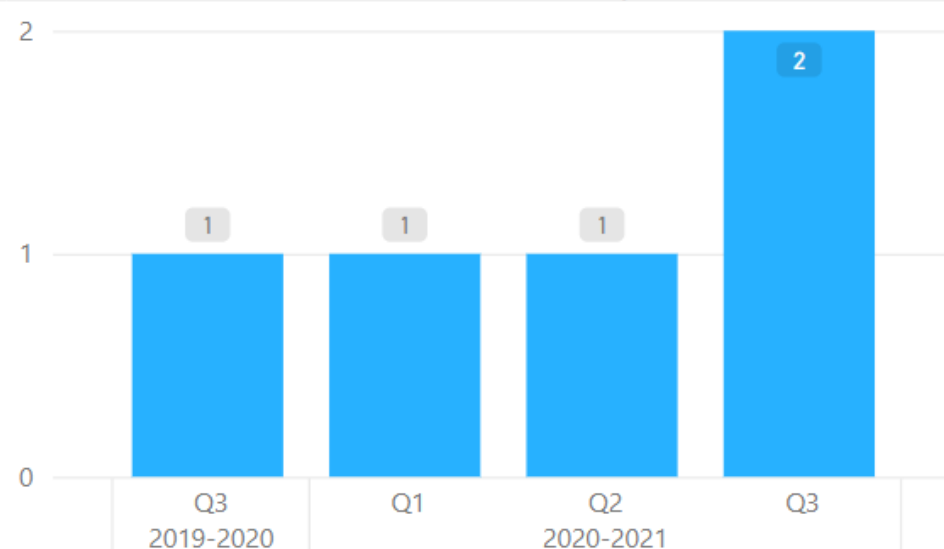


Agenda Item 4
Appendix A

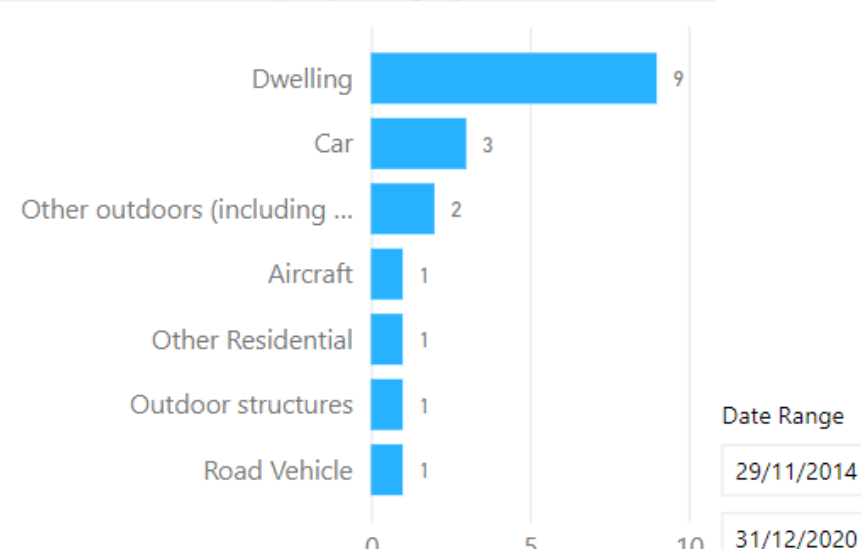
Fire Deaths by Financial Year

Year	Count	Rate
2015-2016	4	0.47
2016-2017	4	0.47
2017-2018	0	0.00
2018-2019	1	0.12
2019-2020	1	0.12
2020-2021	4	0.46

Fire Deaths - Quarterly



Property Category



Date Range

29/11/2014

31/12/2020

More Information

Commentary

Two fatalities occurred during this Quarter as a result of an accidental dwelling fire in West Chiltington.

Actions

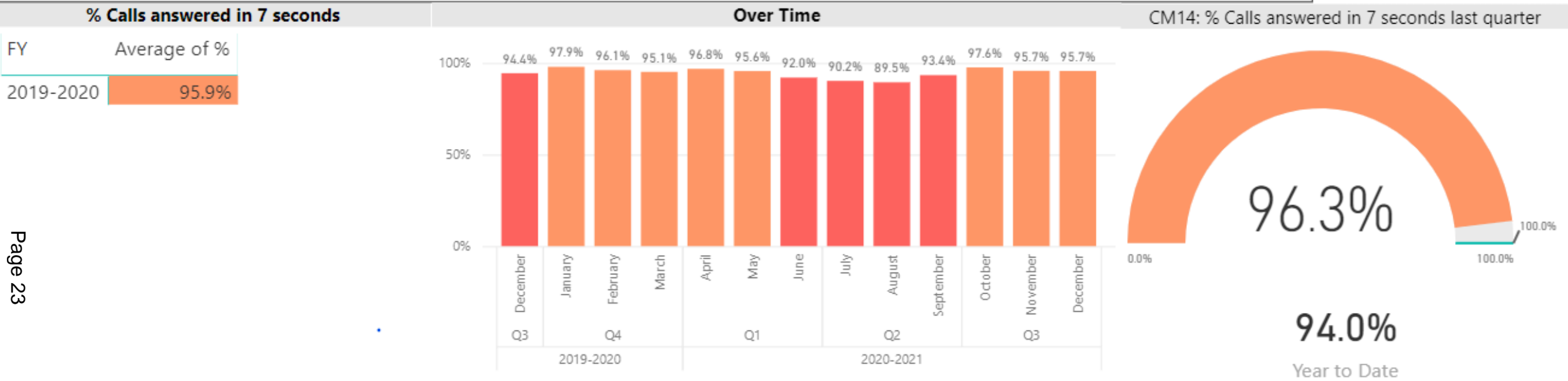
Treat: This incident has been subject to an operational performance and a fire fatality case review. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) chaired a panel which carried out an intensive review of the incident and its background. The review considered both the background and the follow up fire prevention activity which took place immediately afterwards as well longer-term prevention activity which will be influenced from the findings of this process. There will now be a number of joint working activities with partners and further work focussed specifically on our rural communities. All outcomes and recommendations from this review will be catalogued and be subject to monitoring by the DCFO along with learning from all incidents where there has been an injury due to fire to create a database of information that will form part of the wider assessment of risk that informs future integrated and local risk management plans.

CM14: Time taken to answer the 999 call by Surrey/West Sussex Joint Fire Control Room

Jon Simpson
Response Quarterly

This measure looks at the time taken from when the Fire Control Room Operator answers the phone when a 999 call is received by the Fire Control Room. The target is 100% of calls answered within 7 seconds. Data reflects the combined performance of West Sussex and Surrey Fire and Rescue Services as individual service data is not obtainable.

Target
100% Green, >95% Amber, <95% Red



Commentary and Mitigating Actions

Q3 performance offers a 5.3% improvement when compared to Q2 which make this the strongest performance quarter within the current financial year. The data for this core measure reflects the combined performance for both West Sussex and Surrey Fire and Rescue Services. Improvements in performance are partly attributable to a reduction in significant incidents that can generate high volumes of calls to the same address. West Sussex Fire and Rescue (WSFRS) have also been working closely with Surrey Fire and Rescue (SFRS) to improve shared understanding and to identify improvements to ways of working. This quarter marks a year of our collaborative partnership and we continue to work with Surrey Fire and Rescue to improve and refine processes.

Recommendation to SPB: (Tolerate or Treat)

Treat: Continue to work with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service to refine data collection methods and to identify further opportunities to improve performance.

CM16: Time taken by Surrey/West Sussex Joint Fire Control Room to inform or mobilise a Level Two Incident Command Officer to a Level One Incident with a life risk.

Jon Simpson
Response
Quarterly

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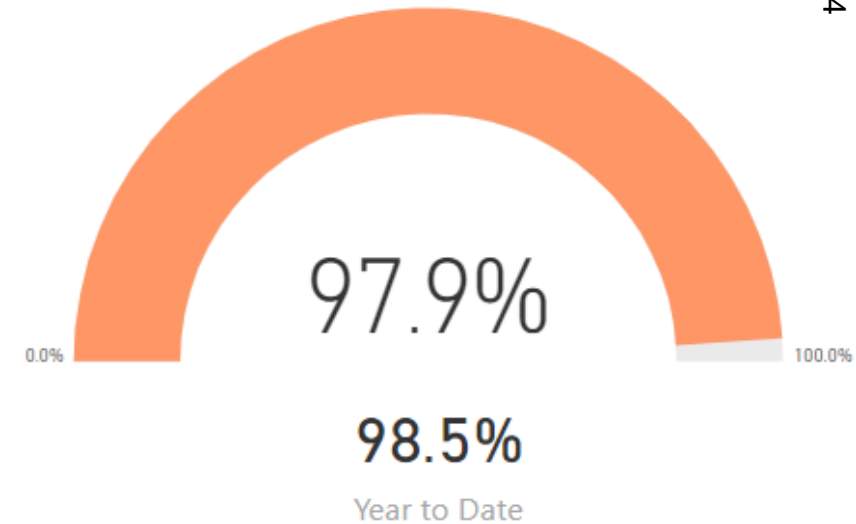
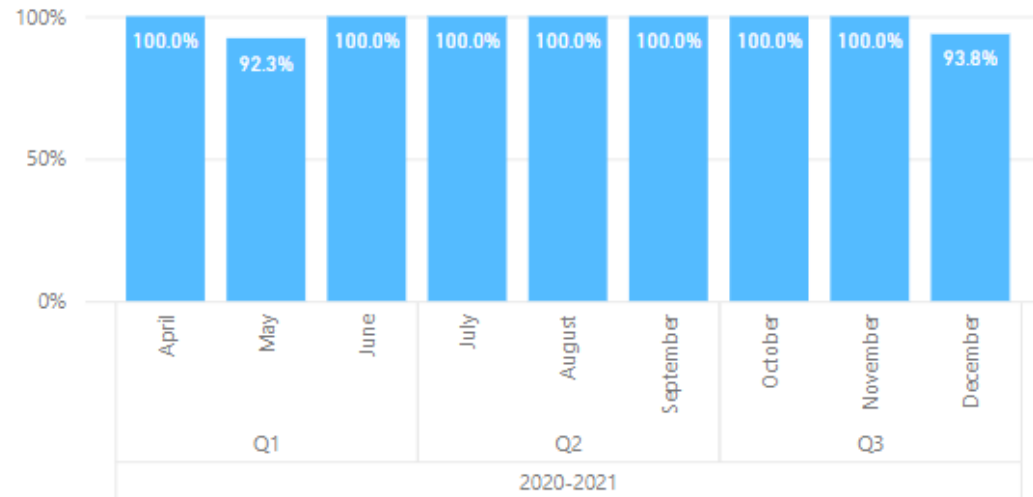
WSFRS has adopted an Incident Command System which is taken from the National Model to effectively and safely manage incidents. This measure looks at how quickly the Surrey/West Sussex Joint Fire Control Room notify the right commander/officer to advise and/or take command of the incident.

% Level 2 Officer Mobilised

Quarterly

CM16: % Level 2 Officer Mobilised Last Quarter

FY % for Financial Year



Commentary and Mitigating Actions

Q3 performance continues to be strong at 97.9% but this does offer a small reduction when compared to the previous quarter. This small decrease in performance equates to 1 individual incident where the 5 minute inform or mobilise standard was not achieved. On each occasion where this measure is not achieved further investigations are undertaken.

Recommendation to SPB: (Tolerate or Treat)

Tolerate: Performance is monitored within the formal governance structure that both Surrey and West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services attend. The Tactical Governance Board directly addresses any performance concerns with a clear focus on improvements.

Selected Measures – Red Status

Quarter 3

(1st October 2020 – 31st December 2020)

CM15: Time between Surrey/West Sussex Joint Fire Control Room receiving the emergency call and the correct fire station being alerted

Jon Simpson

Response Quarterly

Target

100% Green, >95% Amber, <95% Red

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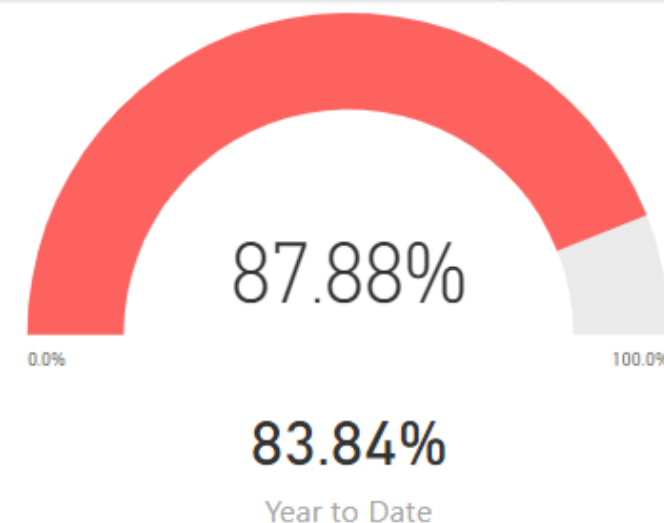
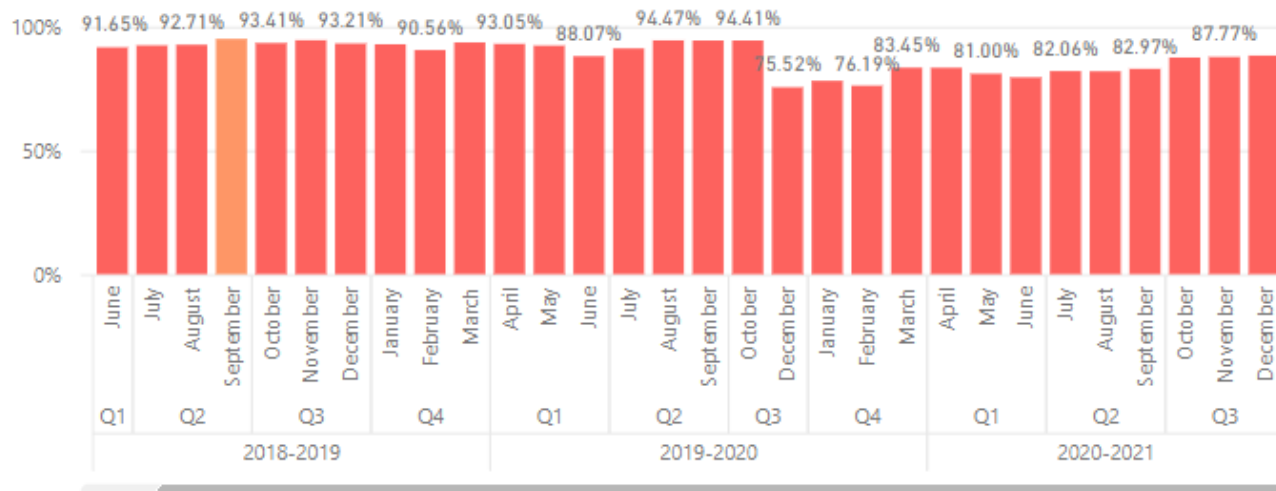
This measure looks at the time taken from when the Surrey/West Sussex Joint Fire Control Room Operator answers a 999 call to when the nearest fire station/engine is alerted to the incident. 100% emergency incidents are alerted within 2 minutes of the Surrey/West Sussex Joint Fire Control Room receiving the call.

% 2 minute Send

Over Time

CM15: % 2 minute Send last quarter

FY	Average of %
2017-2018	92.44%
2018-2019	93.20%
2019-2020	87.39%



Commentary and Mitigating Actions

Q3 performance offers a 6.1% improvement on Q2 and as per CM14 is the strongest performing quarter within the current financial year. Whilst performance has improved it is still short of our 100% target. Officers from West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service have delivered a number of staff engagement sessions to the Joint Fire Control which has further improved shared understanding and awareness, leading to improved performance for Q3. It is important to note that whilst we work towards improving performance in this measure, our first appliance to critical fires performance for Q3 has again improved as demonstrated in CM17.

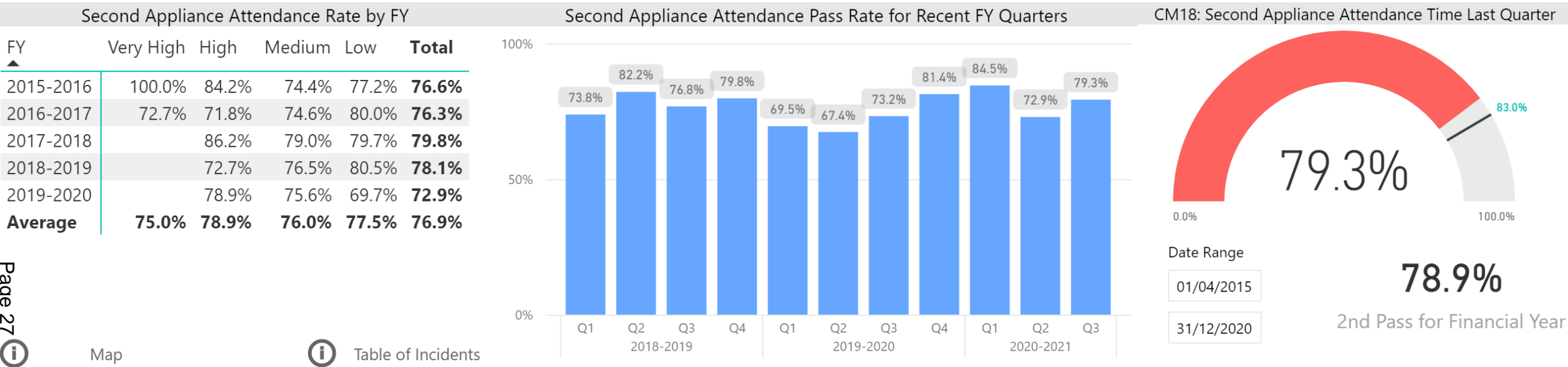
Recommendation to SPB: (Tolerate or Treat)

Treat: Officers continue to work on a pre alert system as part of our station end project. Initial testing at West Sussex Fire Stations has provided positive early results. Further development is now being undertaken in collaboration with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). We continue to work with SFRS in the operational and tactical governance boards to monitor and improve this core measure through new technology and ways of working.

CM18: Critical Fires - 2nd Appliance Attendance

CM18 : West Sussex FRS categorises risk into four types being Very High, High, Medium and Low. It has also set a different attendance time target against each risk type. Occasions where the first fire engine arrives at an emergency incident within the target number of minutes from time the emergency call was answered.

CM18 Targets:
11 minutes to a very high risk, 13 to a High, 15 to a Medium and 17 to a Low.
83% Target for green.



Commentary and Mitigating Actions

Performance against this measure is currently below target at 79.3%. However, this does represent a 6.4% improvement from the previous quarter and is a 6.1% improvement on Q3 2019/20. This has been achieved by increasing the availability of our retained fire engines through previously identified projects, all of which are having a positive impact on performance. Whilst this performance represents a significant improvement on the previous quarter we recognise that there is still more to do, the learning and improvements will be taken forward into our next IRMP to ensure continuous improvement.

Recommendation to SPB: (Tolerate or Treat)

Treat: The Retained Marginal Gains project continues to make incremental improvements to the availability of our retained fire engines. This is being further supported by a station by station review to identify the specific availability needs of each station, this review will result in a workforce action plan for each of our 23 retained sections.

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CM19: Critical Special Service - 1st Appliance Attendance

Response
Quarterly

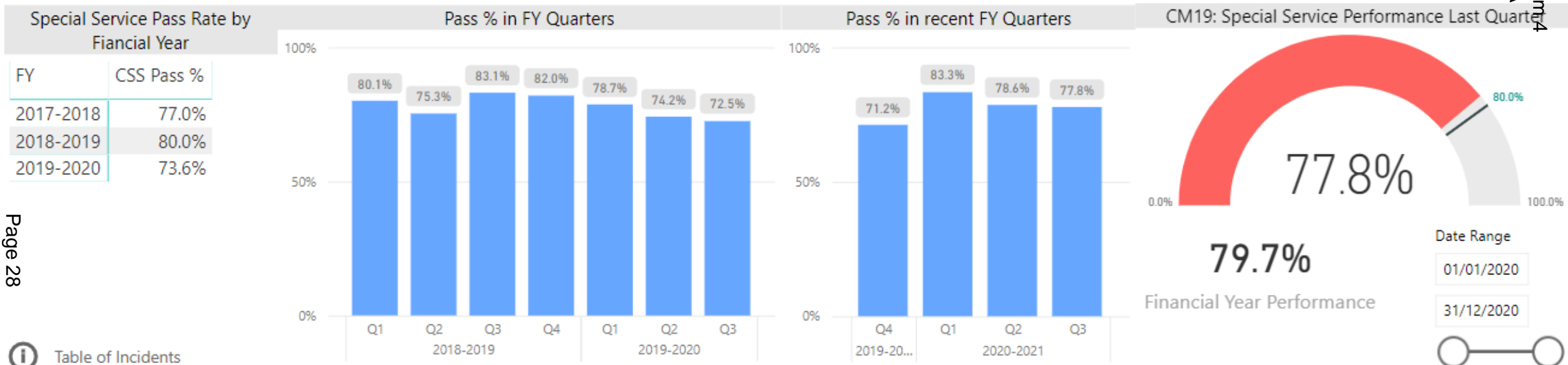
Jon Simpson

Last Updated
06/01/2021

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CM19 : West Sussex FRS categorises risk into four types being Very High, High, Medium and Low. It has also set a different attendance time target against each risk type. Occasions where the first fire engine arrives at an emergency incident within the target number of minutes from time the emergency call was answered.

CM19 Targets: First Fire Appliance is in attendance at critical special service within 13 minutes. Target: 80% Green.



Commentary and Mitigating Actions

Q3 performance is 77.8% which is a reduction from Quarter 2 of 0.8%. When compared to Q3 of 2019/20 a performance improvement of 5.3% has been achieved. A significant number of these incident types involve Road Traffic Collisions and assisting other emergency services, due to the nature of these incidents information passed between emergency services can sometimes be delayed, such as time taken to identify incomplete address information, this can lead to longer call handling and mobilisation times.

Recommendation to SPB: (Tolerate or Treat)

Treat: The Retained Marginal Gains project continues to make incremental improvements to the availability of our retained fire engines. This is being further supported by a station by station review to identify the specific availability needs of each station, this review will result in a workforce action plan for each of our 23 retained sections. Officers are planning a multi-agency emergency control room meeting to address some of the protocols and ensure call information is passed in a timely and accurate manner.

CM21: Adequate crewing on all retained frontline fire engines (based on 24/7 crewing)

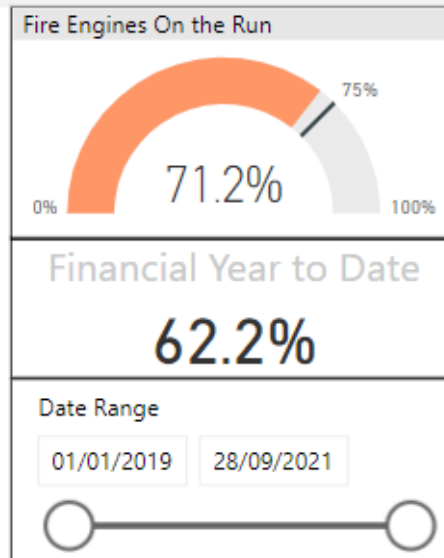
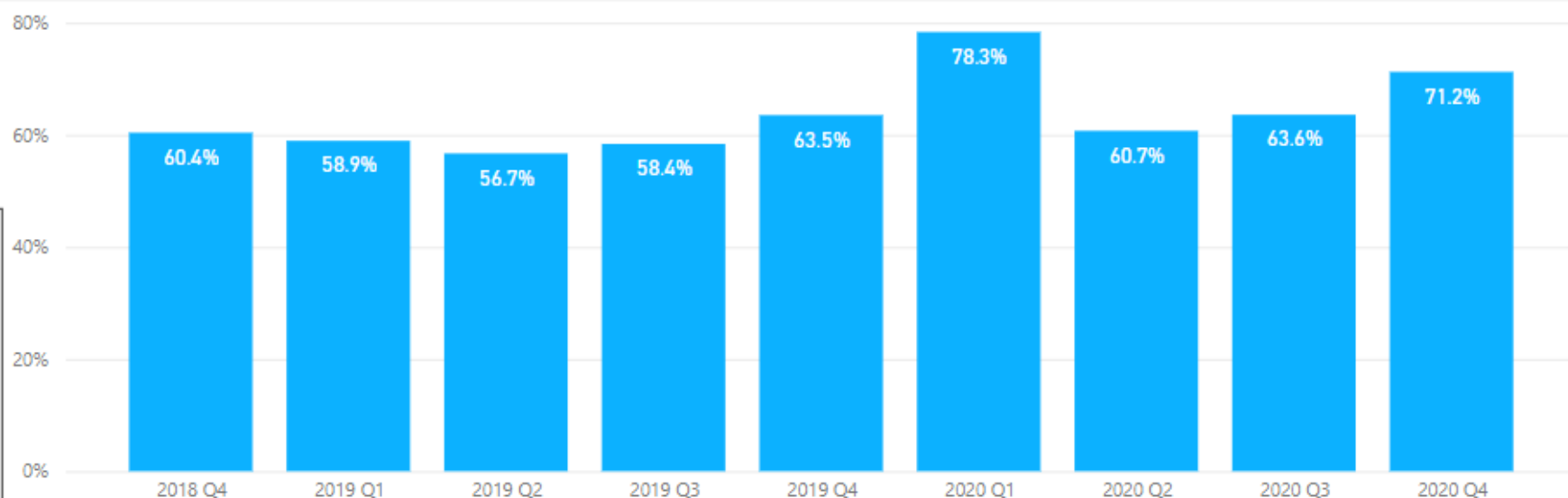
Jon Simpson
Response
Quarterly

Retained frontline fire engines are crewed mainly by on-call fire fighters who are based at stations in more rural locations and, when they receive the call via their pagers, leave their place of work or home and attend emergencies from the local retained station. Four qualified people are required on a frontline fire engine to ensure safety. This measure examines the percentage of hours where there are sufficient minimum qualified fire fighters (4 personnel) on retained fire engines.

Target: Green: 75% - 100%
Amber: 65% - 74%
Red: <65%

Retained Fire Engines On The Run by Quarter (including current quarter to date)

Financial Year	Total
2018	60.4 %
2019	59.4 %
2020	70.0 %



Click Here
for Detailed
Station View

Commentary

Retained Duty System (RDS) availability has improved in Q3 by 2.7% when compared to Q2. The improvements are in part linked to a reduction in annual leave which reaches its peak for RDS staff in Q2 as it often has to be aligned to primary employment requirements. RDS availability has improved by 5% compared to the same period in 2019/20. The Service Delivery Centre (SDC), Retained Liaison Officers (RLO), Crewing Optimisation Group (COG) and the County Crewing pilot continue to support and maximise RDS fire engine availability. In Q3 the COG have made RDS fire engines available on 145 occasions. County Crewing has supported RDS fire engine availability on a further 143 occasions during weekday and weekend periods. The County Crewing system utilises spare RDS staff to cover crewing deficiencies at other RDS fire stations for a specific period of time.

Actions

Tolerate - The RDS Marginal Gains project is aimed at making incremental improvements to our RDS availability, this is being expanded to include a station by station review of what is required at each fire station. WSFRS is further exploring ways to maintain RDS availability post lockdown through options such as expanding the County Crewing pilot to include the use of off duty wholetime staff and expanding the number of stations that we employ County Crewing staff to.

Areas of Significant Improvement and Success

Quarter 3

(1st October 2020 – 31st December 2020)

Areas of Significant Improvement and Success

The Performance and Assurance Framework of which this report is a part of has continued to evolve over quarter 3 demonstrating fire and rescue service performance and providing assurance to members and the public.

Enormous credit to all our staff in successfully improving our performance during this quarter despite of the impacts of COVID 19.

The following corporate measures showed notable success in Quarter 3:

- **CM17: Critical Fires - 1st Appliance (Fire Engine) Attendance** time pass rate has exceeded the target for the fourth consecutive quarter and is the highest in recent years. This indicates that the investment into the Service Delivery Centre, the additional 3 Retained Liaison Officers (RLO's), the County Crewing pilot and maximising the Crewing Optimisation Group (COG) establishment is having a positive effect on crewing of fire engines, leading to improving attendance standards in a particularly challenging period with COVID 19
- **CM26: Sickness levels** have remained consistently low despite additional factors that have been in force throughout the COVID 19 pandemic.
- **CM5: Safeguarding referrals** were again completed within 24 hours of discovery in every instance. The new process has resulted in the safeguarding referrals all being made in a timely and direct way addressing one of the concerns identified by the 2018 HMICFRS Inspection.

The following corporate measures showed notable improvement in Quarter 3:

- **CM14: Time to Answer 999 calls** The percentage answered within 7 seconds by the Surrey/West Sussex Joint Fire Control room has increased by 5.3% since quarter 2
- **CM15: Time to Alert the nearest Station/Engine** The percentage of 999 calls where the station is alerted within 2 minutes by the Surrey/West Sussex Joint Fire Control room has increased by 5.6%

CM5: Safeguarding referrals made to Social Care colleagues in West Sussex County Council within 24 hours of discovery

Quarterly

Safeguarding referrals made to Social Care colleagues in West Sussex County Council within 24 hours of discovery over a year period starting from April.

To ensure that safeguarding referrals are made in a timely manner for the protection of individuals considered at risk in West Sussex.

This is the time taken from the Duty Officer or Safeguarding Coordinator being made aware of a safeguarding case, to the referral being made to the local authority

Targets:
Green -- >100%
Red -- <100%

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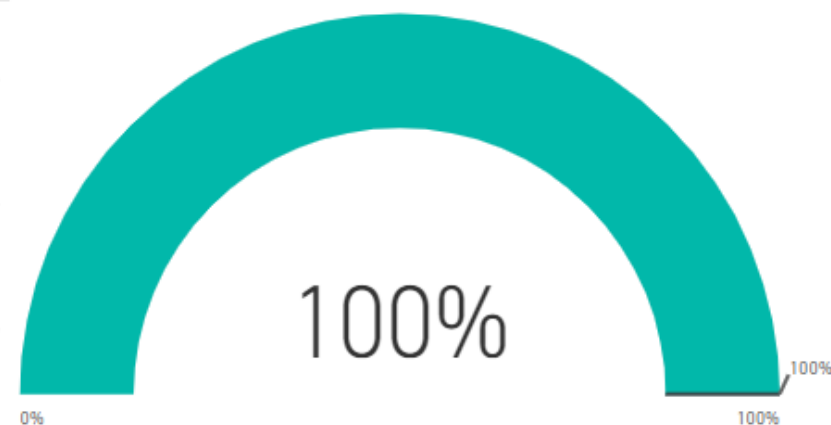
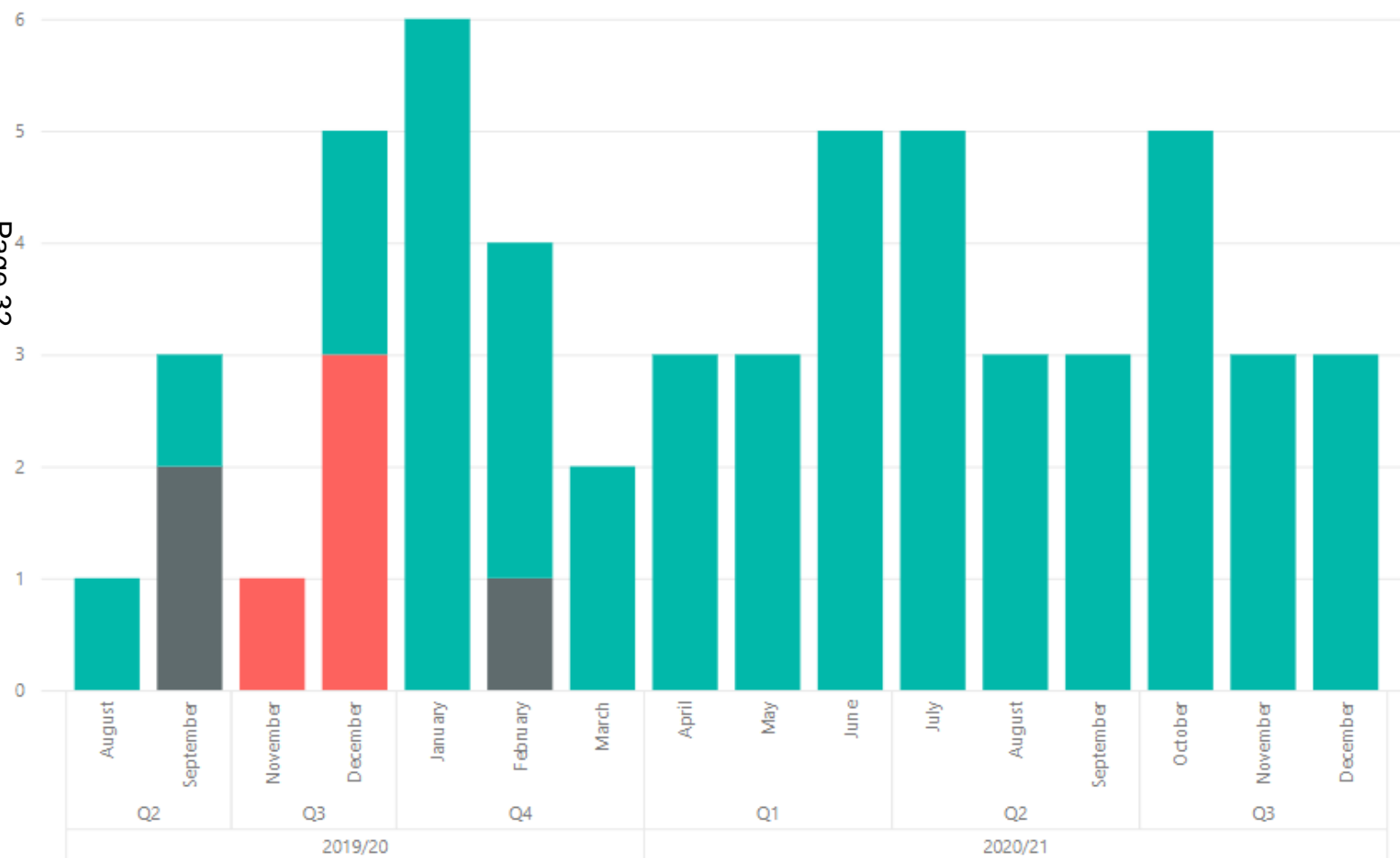


[View Records](#)

Safeguarding Process by Date Created

CM5: Safeguarding Created within 24 Hours of Concern Last Quarter

Process Created within 24 Hours ● No ● No Date Provided ● Yes



Note: % measures where both a concern and created date and time are both available.

96%

Year to Date Pass Rate

Date Range

01/01/2019 31/12/2020



CM5: Safeguarding referrals made to Social Care colleagues in West Sussex County Council within 24 hours of discovery

Nicki Peddle
Service Owner

Prevention
Area

Safeguarding referrals made to Social Care colleagues in West Sussex County Council within 24 hours of discovery over a year period starting from April.
To ensure that safeguarding referrals are made in a timely manner for the protection of individuals considered at risk in West Sussex.
This is the time taken from the Duty Officer or Safeguarding Coordinator being made aware of a safeguarding case, to the referral being made to the local authority

Targets:
Green -- > 100%
Red -- < 100%

Commentary and Mitigating Actions

11 safeguarding referrals were made in Q3 and 100% were completed on time with status of green. This has been achieved as a result of staff being able to identify vulnerability and take the appropriate action by making a referral using our new electronic form. The new process has resulted in the safeguarding referrals all being made in a timely and direct way addressing one of the concerns identified by the 2018 HMICFRS Inspection report.

Recommendation to SPB: (Tolerate or Treat)

Monitor: The new process that has been implemented by officers will continue to be followed and periodic reviews to ensure continuous improvements made as required.

CM15: Time between Surrey/West Sussex Joint Fire Control Room receiving the emergency call and the correct fire station being alerted

Jon Simpson

Response Quarterly

Target

100% Green, >95% Amber, <95% Red

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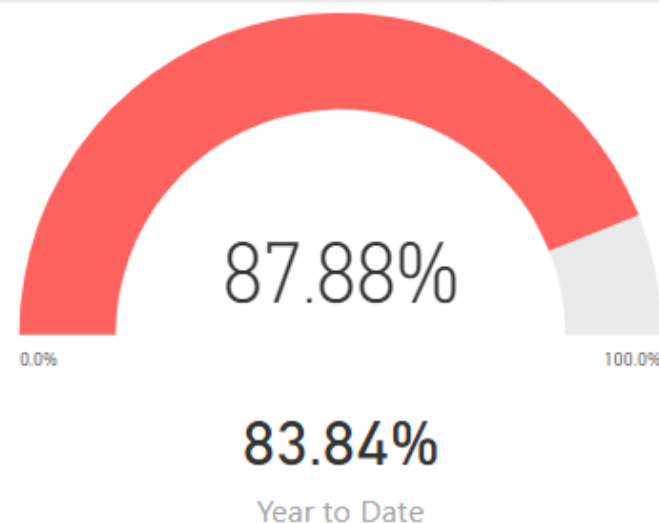
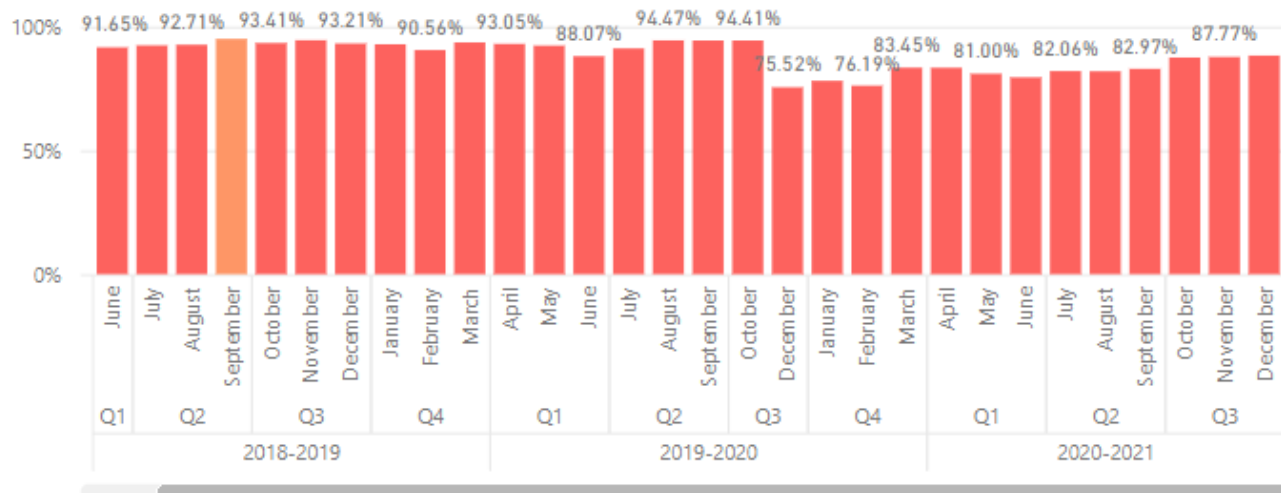
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% 2 minute Send

Over Time

CM15: % 2 minute Send last quarter

FY	Average of %
2017-2018	92.44%
2018-2019	93.20%
2019-2020	87.39%



Commentary and Mitigating Actions

Q3 performance offers a 6.1% improvement on Q2 and as per CM14 is the strongest performing quarter within the current financial year. Whilst performance has improved it is still short of our 100% target. Officers from West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service have delivered a number of staff engagement sessions to the Joint Fire Control which has further improved shared understanding and awareness, leading to improved performance for Q3. It is important to note that whilst we work towards improving performance in this measure, our first appliance to critical fires performance for Q3 has again improved as demonstrated in CM17.

Recommendation to SPB: (Tolerate or Treat)

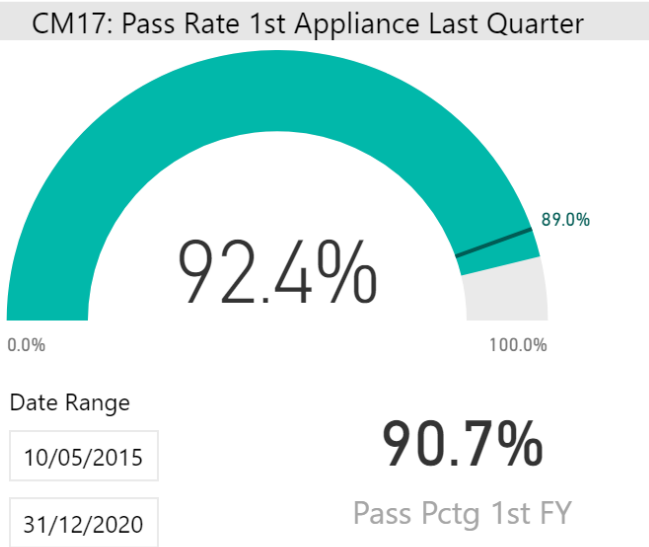
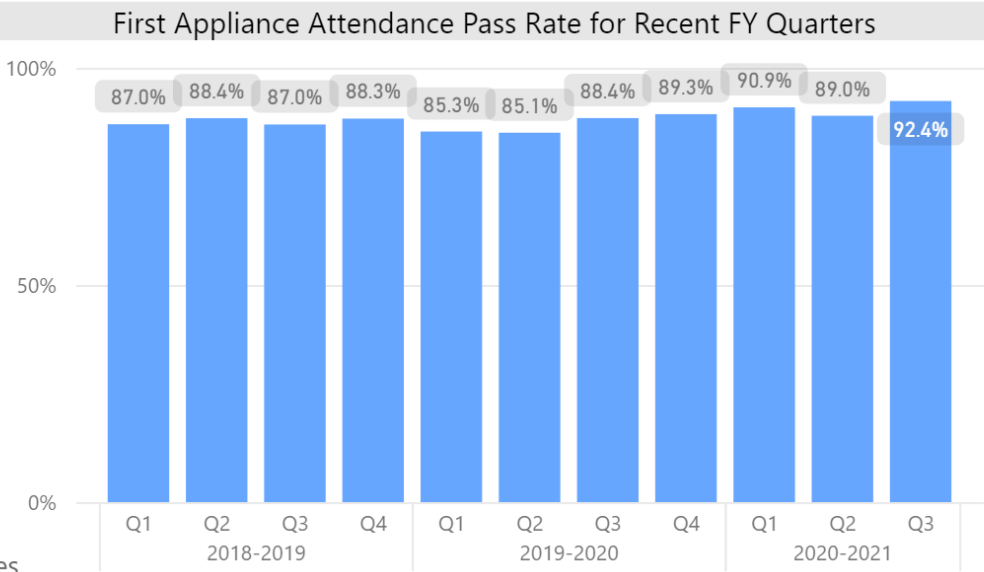
Treat: Officers continue to work on a pre alert system as part of our station end project. Initial testing at West Sussex Fire Stations has provided positive early results. Further development is now being undertaken in collaboration with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). We continue to work with SFRS in the operational and tactical governance boards to monitor and improve this core measure through new technology and ways of working.

CM17: Critical Fires - 1st Appliance Attendance

CM17 : West Sussex FRS categorises risk into four types being Very High, High, Medium and Low. It has also set a different attendance time target against each risk type. Occasions where the first fire engine arrives at an emergency incident within the target number of minutes from time the emergency call was answered.

CM17 Targets:
8 minutes to a very high risk, 10 to a High, 12 to a Medium and 14 to a Low.
89% Target for green.
Last Updated
15/02/2021

First Appliance Attendance Rate by FY					
FY	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Total
2015-2016	100.0%	84.5%	86.8%	89.2%	87.7%
2016-2017	75.0%	88.6%	83.7%	89.9%	86.5%
2017-2018		100.0%	89.0%	90.0%	90.3%
2018-2019		93.9%	88.4%	86.3%	87.7%
2019-2020		96.2%	87.2%	85.8%	87.0%
Average	78.6%	91.6%	86.9%	88.3%	87.9%



Commentary and Mitigating Actions

Performance is strong with attendance standards met on 92.4% of occasions in Q3, this is a 3.4% improvement on Q2 and represents the strongest performance to date within the current financial year, it is also the fourth consecutive quarter that the core measure target has been achieved. We are maintaining a strong focus on sustained improvements in our retained fire engine availability and our associated projects have led to a 4% improvement when compared to Q3 of 2019/20.

Recommendation to SPB: (Tolerate or Treat)

Tolerate: The Retained Marginal Gains project continues to make incremental improvements to the availability of our retained fire engines. This is being further supported by a station by station review to identify the specific availability needs of each station, this review will result in a workforce action plan for each of our 23 retained sections.

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CM26: Working time lost to sickness across all staff groups

Olive Jones

Head of POD

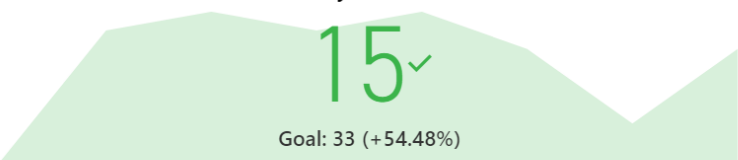
The proportion of staff not sick.

Target

>95%Green, 90%-95%Amber, <90%Red

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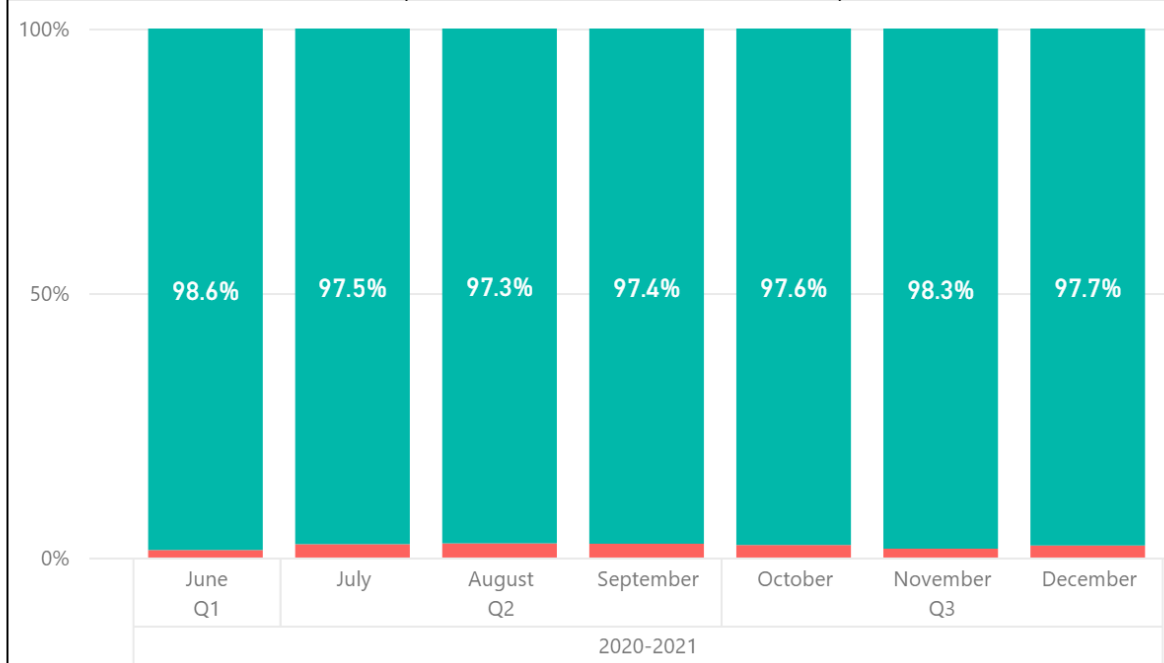
Total Number of Personnel off Sick and 95pct Sick Goal
by Date



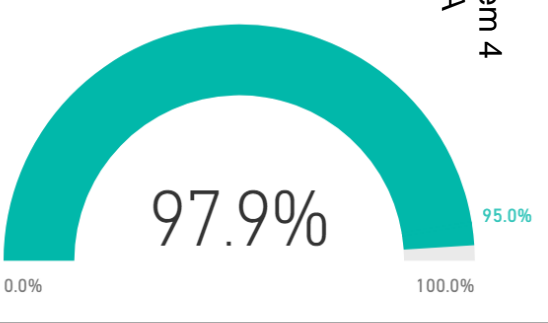
Total other absence (not covid related) [includes sickness, alternative duties, unpaid I by Date



Proportion of Staff not Sick - All Groups



CM26: % Staff Sickness



Date Range

29/06/2020

31/12/2020

97.7%

Sickness FY

Commentary and Mitigating Actions

The number of staff off work due to non-Covid related sickness absence has remained between 2.28% to 2.58% over the last quarter therefore the target of 95% attendance has been achieved each month in the last quarter. The HR team continue to work closely with managers to ensure that long term absence is managed within policy and meetings are held promptly to facilitate an early return to work.

Recommendation to SPB: (Tolerate or Treat)

Tolerate: All sickness cases are reviewed monthly and appropriate officers are ensuring that there is support for individual to return to work safely.

Report to Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee

26 March 2021

Priority Programme Update

Report by Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Electoral divisions: All

Summary

This report provides an overview of the priority programmes of work during Quarter 3 of 2020/2021. This includes progress against the People Action Plan, the Improvement Plan and the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Action Plan.

This is a standing item on the Work Programme for the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee.

Focus for Scrutiny

The Committee is asked to review the progress reported in relation to the priority programmes, which include the IRMP Action Plan, the Improvement Plan and the People Action Plan and provide any comments to the Cabinet Member.

Proposal

1 Background and context

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Improvement Plan

- 1.1 The Inspectorate identified four 'causes of concern', as well as ten additional specific areas for improvement that the Service needed to address.
- 1.2 Officers were required to submit an update to HMICFRS on 18 December 2020 on progress against the Causes of Concern.
- 1.3 HMICFRS revisited the service in February 2021 to review progress against the Causes of Concern.
- 1.4 HMICFRS round two inspection for West Sussex Fire & Rescue (WSFRS) is likely to commence in Autumn 2021/22.

2 Cause of Concern 1 - Preventing Fire and Other Risks

- 2.1 Only two outstanding actions remain in relation to this Cause of Concern with considerable work having been undertaken to enable us to recommence the activity as COVID restrictions lift.
- 2.2 The delivery of Safe and Well Visits (SWVs) and safeguarding training has been evaluated using observed visits, this is to assure the service of the quality of visits. Volunteers will furthermore be surveying a sample over the telephone in Quarter 4.
- 2.3 Operational fire crews have not been undertaking community safety events as they would normally due to Covid restrictions. The reduction in community events has partly contributed to the reduction in requests for a SWV which means the Service is not going to meet its SWV annual target of 4,000 visits. If requests for visits continue at the same rate, it is currently anticipated achieving 95% of the target by year end.
- 2.4 The Service has worked hard to increase the number of SWVs delivered. This has been done by phoning people visited previously and offering SWVs at the same time as carrying out welfare checks and delivering food parcels. To date this has generated almost 100 additional requests for a visit.
- 2.5 Leaflets promoting SWVs have been distributed in all emergency food parcels (over 6,000) for vulnerable people, at food banks, vaccination centres, and GP practices, fire safety awareness training has been delivered to social care and Primary Care Trust staff. SWVs were also recently promoted in the Council's newsletter which is sent to 200,000 homes.
- 2.6 In the 2018 report the HMICFRS observed that in reference to the Volunteer group '*The Service could develop this group more and increase its capacity to do prevention work*'. This comment is being addressed through the volunteer development plan, with one element being to increase volunteer numbers. Training programmes have been written and delivered to develop and upskill existing volunteers so they can undertake a broader range of prevention work. This is supported by a clear operating procedure, volunteer induction development and a skills audit to ensure that the Service is mindful of the volunteer's skills and training to offer and engage them in appropriate and meaningful activities.
- 2.7 Volunteer recruitment has been delayed, following approval through the organisational governance until Spring 2021. Volunteers have largely been self-isolating through the pandemic which has proved a challenge with existing volunteers. Recruiting new volunteers at the present time could result in them feeling disengaged through a lack of community engagement or station contact due to COVID restrictions.

3 Cause of Concern 2 - Protecting the Public Through Fire Regulation

- 3.1 All actions have been undertaken with regards to this Cause of Concern and considerable work has been undertaken to enable the Service to recommence the activity as COVID restrictions lift.
- 3.2 As outlined in the Fire Safety Enforcement Strategy, each inspector is subject to quality assurance audits carried out by their line manager and through the central quality audit team. The results of these quality audits will be used

to improve individual and team performance. With a target of three per inspector per annum. A report can be created on the feedback from these audits to provide assurance to the Strategic Performance Board.

- 3.3 A clear approach has been agreed in relation to the attraction and retention of staff. This structure has a better balance of the number of Green and Grey Book posts and it provides a better career path for both employee groups.
- 3.4 Utilising the apprenticeship levy, will allow WSFRS to offer an entry route into WSFRS, for those wishing to deliver fire safety/fire engineering which has been a positive addition to the team structure to be implemented by April 2021.

4 IT system for Prevention & Protection

- 4.1 The Farynor implementation project is now coming to a closure and will be presented to HMICFRS in the visit in February 2021.
- 4.2 The Prevention team went live with Farynor on 7 October 2020, Protection went live on 19 November 2020 and Response followed on the 7 December 2020.
- 4.3 The development of the Premises Risk Management module continues with delivery planned in Quarter one 2021/22.
- 4.4 The legacy system, Terian, will be fully decommissioned by 31 March 2021 when the contract ends demonstrating efficiency and delivery of the project objectives.

5 People Action Plan

- 5.1 The People Action Plan has been able to continue to keep its momentum despite the pandemic and some key fundamental changes have been implemented to support the service with its improvement. The staff engagement and the cultural change aspects will take longer to achieve the required level of change, in order to deliver this successfully the Service has ensured that the plan allows time for the appropriate staff engagement. There have been some positive steps towards the future state as demonstrated in the closure of the Independent Advisory Panel.
- 5.2 The Causes of Concern are addressed below, and a significant level of progress has been achieved.

6 Cause for Concern 3 - Promoting the Right Values and Culture

- 6.1 The Service's values and behaviours have now been linked to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) framework and embedded in all staff appraisals. This is supported by examples of acceptable, those that exceed and unacceptable behaviours. The appraisal process also enables the Service to ensure that individuals have had objectives set and regular conversations are being undertaken. This has been further evidenced that of 100 randomly sampled staff, 71% feel that the discussions that are being held are meaningful. This will continue to be monitored by the Service to ensure that this trend continues.
- 6.2 There have been twelve appraisal briefing sessions delivered between August to November 2020 to brief managers on the new appraisal process, respond to queries and embed understanding of how appraisals and individual performance is intrinsically linked to the Service's vision, mission and values.

- 6.3 The Service refreshed its vision and mission, a mission provides the organization with a clear and effective guide for making decisions, while the vision ensures that all the decisions made are properly aligned with what the organization hopes to achieve and how it links to the Service's values. Heads of Service have role modelled this through individually sharing what the vision and mission means to them.
- 6.4 Eight Mental Health Awareness Workshops have been delivered in November and December 2020. Due to popularity, further workshops are planned to be delivered in February and March 2021. Mental Health Knowledge Training, which consists of a series of online modules has been commissioned by West Sussex County Council and is to be rolled out by end of March 2021 and will be compulsory for all FRS managers.
- 6.5 A Wellbeing & Inclusion site was launched on 10 October 2020, which is easily accessible for staff that contains information and guidelines on Mental Health, Wellbeing information, Guidance on Bullying & Harassment, as well as information on Diversity & Inclusion.
- 6.6 Nine WSFRS staff to commence Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) training in March 2021 and will be qualified by the end of April 2021. There are already two qualified MHFAs within the service.
- 6.7 A review of the provisions for managing stress continues to ensure that the appropriate tools and guidance is provided for managers to ensure they are well equipped to support their staff effectively. Appropriate guidance will also be developed for staff to self-serve.

7 Cause for Concern 4 - Ensuring Fairness and Promoting Diversity

- 7.1 Fifteen diversity champions have volunteered across the service, and bi-monthly meetings are being held to ensure momentum continues. A clear role profile for the diversity champions has been created including the appropriate training for all champions which will continue as the role evolves.
- 7.2 A Diversity & Inclusion Steering Group has been developed made up of representatives from across the service, to set the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategic direction, support the Diversity Champions and hold the People & Organisational Development team accountable for delivery of EDI objectives. The Board will be chaired by Deputy Chief Fire Officer and the inaugural meeting was held on 16 March 2021.
- 7.3 Recognising Racism webinars have been undertaken for all middle managers, to raise awareness and create understanding of impact of unacceptable behaviour and language.
- 7.4 To ensure fairness a full review of how the service staff movements and transfers to ensure that it is fair and consistent process including how the Staff Control Group (SCG) operates.
- 7.5 A full review of the Promotions Board process has been undertaken, to ensure that staff are promoted in a fair and consistent manner. The Promotions Board has been replaced with Assessment Centres. The Service undertook Crew and Watch Manager Assessment Centres in December 2020.

- 7.6 An Assessment Centre candidate feedback survey was sent out after these and 92% of respondents strongly agreed that the Assessment Centres were operated in a fair and consistent manner. This directly addresses staff concerns raised as part of the listening groups and provides assurance that the changes implemented are making a difference for those undertaking assessment centres.
- 7.7 In preparation for the Assessment Centres, interviewee skills workshops have been developed to support staff attending. Eight workshops have been delivered to date and 75% of Assessment Centre candidates strongly agreed that the workshop helped them to understand the process.
- 7.8 A Dignity and Respect Framework is in development, which is aimed at outlining the expectations of staff, managers and senior leaders. This is to be reviewed by the diversity champions in March 2021. To further support this there are plans to develop half day dignity and respect workshops for managers.
- 7.9 As part of the listening groups, one area that was highlighted was the loss of Fire and Rescue Service identity. New workwear was been agreed at Service Executive Board (SEB) in October 2020 following a consultation with staff and preferred uniform selected. The order of workwear is to be completed by March 2021.
- 7.10 A Shadow Board has been implemented, aimed at improving the connection and engagement between staff and the principal officers. It will also enable the SEB members to hear directly from employees about the impact of decisions made on operational and support staff, including hearing voices of those with lived experience of being in underrepresented groups. Nine staff have expressed interest in becoming members, and the chair and vice-chair of the board have been elected. The first meeting is scheduled for Monday 22 March 2021.
- 7.11 A review of the current recruitment attraction methods used for WSFRS new recruits has been undertaken and has been embedded into the new fire fighter recruitment process launched on 5 March 2021. The success of the changes will not be known until after the recruitment process ends in October 2021.

8 Areas for Improvements updates

- 8.1 Local risk management plans have progressed well, with some activity having required adaptation due to the current pandemic. There has been a challenge with some resources to undertake the updates to the community risk data which is being addressed. Engagement sessions with appropriate members is to be planned once restrictions lift.
- 8.2 Responding to false alarms is an unnecessary demand on the service, reducing the overall effectiveness, which was highlighted by HMICFRS as an area for improvement. A major cause of this demand is the Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS), that are generated by the Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) installed to protect many non-domestic properties. In West Sussex, this unnecessary demand equated to approximately 4,800 hours per year which could be used more effectively for activities such as training and prevention. The Service's approach is to:

- 8.2.1 Reduce demand through advice and enforcement by implementing policy changes to advice and enforcement to include greater engagement with occupiers by front line crews.
- 8.2.2 Reduce impact through call filtering by initiating business engagement to review UwFS attendance levels and reinforce robust call filtering protocols at Joint Fire Control.
- 8.2.3 We will explore options to further reduce demand through call charging, in the development of the 2022 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) including assessing and consulting on options for levying a charge under the Localism Act.

9 Integrated Risk Management Plan 2018-22 (IRMP)

- 9.1 The Service's 12 Tonne Fire Engine project was closed in February 2021. WSFRS determined to upgrade its fleet with two sizes of fire engine - 18 tonne Super Rescue Pump (SRP) and 12 tonne Medium Rescue Pump (MRP) vehicles. All fire engines are fully deployed and now in service and will be managed, reviewed and monitored under warranty, as part of the WSFRS fleet/vehicle maintenance cycle.
- 9.2 The Prevention 2020 project was created to restructure the Prevention Team and broaden the community safety offer beyond fire and road safety. The Prevention 2020 closure report was approved in November 2020 on schedule. As reported in the Cause of Concern 1 previously, there were six additional posts, funded through the improvement plan added within the Prevention Team. The structure was revised and implemented to incorporate the new roles as well as the activity within the Prevention 2020 project. This included delivery of benefits such as increased prevention capacity, upskilling of the Service's operational crews, as well as consistency across prevention delivery.
- 9.3 IRMP 2022 development has moved into delivery phase and a strategic steering group has been developed to ensure the appropriate momentum is applied to the risk analysis and associated staff and public engagement. This includes forward planning for the required scrutiny and governance for its approval and publication.

10 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 10.1 Updates on priority programmes are agreed through the work programme of the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee at each meeting.

11 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 11.1 Continuous consultation with staff and members on the work of the Fire and Rescue Service Priority Programmes, including discussion at each meeting of the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee.

12 Finance

- 12.1 Most of the agreed WSFRS budget is invested in frontline services including firefighting, rescue operations and community safety activity. This is summarised as the following:

- 12.1.1 Firefighting and rescue operations: £22,011,154

12.1.2 Community Fire Safety: £4,352,772

12.1.3 Fire Service Emergency Planning and Civil Resilience: £390,071

13 Risk implications and mitigations

- 13.1 Further information on risk for the Fire and Rescue Service is contained in the [Integrated Risk Management Plan](#).

14 Policy alignment and compliance

- 14.1 This report has positive implications for the community, and it supports the benefits of an effective Fire and Rescue Service to all residents in West Sussex.
- 14.2 In terms of environmental sustainability, the IRMP makes clear the authority's commitment to reducing the environmental impact of its operations and provides an indication of work done to date.

Sabrina Cohen-Hatton, **Chief Fire Officer**.
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Appendices: None

Background papers: None

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Report to Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee

26 March 2021

Report of the Task and Finish Group – Joint Fire Control Centre

Report by Chairman of the Task and Finish Group

Electoral division(s): All

Summary

A Task and Finish Group was established by the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee. Its purpose was to scrutinise the Joint Fire Control Centre's work since its establishment on 4 December 2019 (JFC), specifically examining:

- Whether the JFC collaboration project had produced the project deliverables;
- Whether the JFC delivered the project to agreed cost and savings;
- What improvements the JFC collaboration has achieved in the last 12 months since;
- The improvements and benefit deliverables over the next 12 months;
- Future partnership expansion opportunity during 2021; and
- Staffing implications.

The TFG undertook its work at a single meeting on 18 January 2021 with the conclusions being forwarded for consideration by the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee on 26 March 2021 through this report.

The TFG comprised the following members: Cllr Lionel Barnard (Chairman), Cllr David Barling and Cllr Bob Smytherman.

Focus for Scrutiny

The Committee is asked to review the conclusions from the Task and Finish Group for the Fire and Rescue Service, as detailed in paragraph 3, namely:

1. The TFG agreed that the Joint Fire Control collaboration project has produced the project deliverables including cost and delivery date;
2. The TFG considered and noted the improvements the Joint Fire Control collaboration had achieved over first 12 months;
3. The TFG considered and noted the planned improvements and benefits over the next 12 months;
4. Members requested that a detailed breakdown is provided on the £1million savings that have been delivered;
5. The TFG requested that a visit is arranged for members to the Joint Fire Control Centre at an appropriate time; and

6. That this item on the Joint Control Fire Centre is reviewed in one year's time.
-

Proposal

1. Background and context

- 1.1 West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (WSFRS) has chosen to outsource mobilising arrangements since 2012 under section 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. In 2018/19 the service took an opportunity to review its mobilising arrangements and IT infrastructure. A thorough options appraisal was completed in partnership with West Sussex County Council IT team.
- 1.2 Following the options appraisal, a business case was written, and member scrutiny undertaken following which a key decision was made by the Cabinet Member for Fire & Rescue and Communities to collaborate with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS).
- 1.3 The project was delivered within the estimated project cost, in addition a saving was identified within the fire service budget and £1 million of savings were realised in year one of the project.
- 1.4 The project has transformed the way WSFRS mobilise resources to emergency incidents with the mobilising technology at the heart of all the new systems. One year on from the transfer of the fire control capability, the service continually seeks new collaboration opportunities to deliver a more effective and efficient IT road map with several areas of work completed and underway between the two collaborating services.
- 1.5 The Joint Fire Control Centre was transferred to West Sussex County Council on 4 December 2019.
- 1.6 East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service will join the Joint Fire Control Collaboration in September 2021 which will create further efficiencies and economies of scale in addition to the wider operational benefits that this wider partnership will offer.
- 1.7 The Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee agreed at its meeting on 30 September 2020 to establish a task and finish group in order to scrutinise the first year of the JFC.

2. Findings of the Task and Finish Group

- 2.1 The task and finish group met on 18 January 2021 and concluded its work at a single meeting.
- 2.2 Members heard evidence from officers within the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, as well as representatives from Surrey Fire and Rescue Service.
- 2.3 Members of the TFG questioned officers and made a number of points:
 - The £1m savings stemming from the new arrangements break down as 75% from transferring to the new control centre and 25% from supporting functions

- The Joint Fire control utilises an efficient staffing system which has four watches of eight staff with six on duty at any one time and is supported by modern state of the art technology.
- Surrey Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS) already uses the market leading mobilising system, VisionDS, which is paired with the Emergency Services Network (ESN) ready resilient Communication System
- The Airwave communications network that West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service currently uses is likely to be replaced by ESN which can transmit data faster
- Governance arrangements consisted of a strategic leadership board and a project delivery board during the delivery phase before moving to Operational and Strategic Joint Governance boards with rotating chairmen
- Each authority will continue to have its own scrutiny arrangements
- Inflated business case figures meant the figures had been increased to take into account cost of living expenses
- The business case was delivered within budget
- A dip in performance was to be expected whilst new systems were embedded but it was expected that the Joint Fire Control has add to overall performance improvements.
- Mobile IT devices provide crews with information such as maps and hazard data to improve fire fighter and public safety help respond to incidents.

3. Conclusions of the Task and Finish Group

- 3.1 Members of the Task and Finish Group concluded the following, to be considered by the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 26 March 2021:
1. The TFG agreed that the Joint Fire Control collaboration project has produced the project deliverables including cost and delivery date;
 2. The TFG considered and noted the improvements the Joint Fire Control collaboration had achieved over first 12 months;
 3. The TFG considered and noted the planned improvements and benefits over the next 12 months;
 4. Members requested that a detailed breakdown is provided on the £1million saving that have been delivered (this has been provided in Appendix A);
 5. The TFG requested that a visit is arranged for members to the Joint Fire Control Centre at an appropriate time; and
 6. That this item on the Joint Control Fire Centre is reviewed in one year's time.

4. Other options considered

- 4.1 No other options were considered.

5. Consultation, engagement and advice

- 5.1 The Task and Finish Group heard from officers from West Sussex and Surrey Fire and Rescue Services.

6. Finance

- 6.1 All financial implications were considered as part of the original work undertaken on the JFC, there are no further financial implications from the conclusions of the Task and Finish Group.

7. Risk implications and mitigations

- 7.1 During the Joint Fire Control project each individual area of the project was risk assessed as contained within the original business case. Ongoing assessment of risk is undertaken through the fire and rescue service Strategic Risk Team. There are no open risks regarding the Joint Fire Control.

8. Policy alignment and compliance

- 8.1 This report has positive implications for the community and it supports the benefits of an effective fire and rescue service to all residents in West Sussex.
- 8.2 In terms of environmental sustainability, the IRMP makes clear the Authority's commitment to reducing the environmental impact of its operations, and provides an indication of work done to date.

Lionel Barnard

Chairman of Task and Finish Group

Background papers: None

Appendix A: Detailed breakdown on £1m saving

Control Centre Savings	£600,000
Supporting IT infrastructure changes and innovations	£215,000
Internal IT Resource changes	£185,000
Savings	£1,000,000

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Report to Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee

26 March 2021

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services COVID Inspection Letter

Report by Chief Fire Officer

Electoral division(s): All

Summary

In August 2020, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) was commissioned by the Home Secretary to inspect how fire and rescue services in England were responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. This letter (detailed at Appendix A) to West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service sets out the assessment of the effectiveness of the service's response to the pandemic.

Focus for Scrutiny

The Committee is asked to examine the letter (attached at Appendix A) received from the HMICFRS and consider whether there is any learning from the context that should be considered for inclusion as part of work programme planning for the Committee.

Proposal

1. Background and context

- 1.1 In August 2020, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) was commissioned by the Home Secretary to inspect how fire and rescue services in England were responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. This letter (detailed at Appendix A) to West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service sets out the assessment of the effectiveness of the service's response to the pandemic.
- 1.2 The pandemic is a global event, which has affected everyone and every organisation. Fire and rescue services have had to continue to provide a service to the public and, like every other public service, have had to do within the restrictions imposed.
- 1.3 For this inspection, the HMICFRS was asked by the Home Secretary to consider what is working well and what is being learned; how the fire sector is responding to the COVID-19 crisis; how fire services are dealing with the problems they face; and what changes are likely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.4 West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service was inspected between 5 October and 16 October 2020. The letter at Appendix A summarises the findings of that inspection.

- 1.5 The letter commented on the positive and constructive way the service engaged with the inspection and the positive contribution the service made to the community during the pandemic.
- 1.6 The HMICFRS proposes to restart the second round of effectiveness and efficiency fire and rescue inspections in Spring 2021, when it will follow up on the findings.

2. **Finance**

- 2.1 Conclusions from this inspection have no financial implications to the Council.

3. **Risk implications and mitigations**

- 3.1 The Fire Authority and members of the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee will continue to monitor the performance of the fire and rescue service to ensure that any risk from ceasing this process is mitigated through effective performance management through the Performance and Assurance Framework.

4. **Policy alignment and compliance**

- 4.1 This report has positive implications for the community as it supports the continued improvement journey of the Fire and Rescue Service to all residents in West Sussex.

Sabrina Cohen-Hatton

Chief Fire Officer

Sabrina Cohen-Hatton, Chief Fire Officer Link No: External 033022 24993 | internal 24993E-mail: Sabrina.Cohen-Hatton@westsussex.gov.uk

Appendix A – COVID Inspection letter

Background papers

None

Matt Parr CB

Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services
Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

Dr Sabrina Cohen-Hatton
Chief Fire Officer
West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

Councillor Duncan Crow
Cabinet Member
West Sussex Fire and Rescue Authority

22 January 2021

Dear Dr Cohen-Hatton and Cllr Crow,

COVID-19 INSPECTION: WEST SUSSEX FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

In August 2020, we were commissioned by the Home Secretary to inspect how fire and rescue services in England are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. This letter sets out our assessment of the effectiveness of your service's response to the pandemic.

2. The pandemic is a global event, which has affected everyone and every organisation. Fire and rescue services have had to continue to provide a service to the public and, like every other public service, have had to do so within the restrictions imposed.
3. For this inspection, we were asked by the Home Secretary to consider what is working well and what is being learned; how the fire sector is responding to the COVID-19 crisis; how fire services are dealing with the problems they face; and what changes are likely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognise that the pandemic is not over and as such this inspection concerns the service's initial response.
4. I am grateful for the positive and constructive way your service engaged with our inspection. I am also very grateful for the positive contribution you and your service have made to your community during the pandemic. We inspected your service between 5 October and 16 October 2020. This letter summarises our findings.
5. In relation to your service, Sussex Local Resilience Forum (LRF) declared a major incident on 20 March 2020.
6. In summary, we were impressed by how the service continued to provide its statutory functions and support the wellbeing of staff throughout the pandemic.

7. Our last inspection identified areas of concern. The service has received extra funding from the county council to support improvement and increase its workforce. The increased workforce has helped to make the service more resilient and productive. The service implemented new ways of working to maintain appropriate levels of prevention, protection and response. It gave additional support to the community. Staff visited the most vulnerable people and wore personal protective equipment (PPE) when they made these visits. This meant the people of West Sussex were well supported throughout the pandemic.

8. The service prioritised the wellbeing of its staff and introduced new ways to achieve this. Staff engagement was a priority. The service carried out a staff survey at the start of the pandemic to understand their needs (such as caring responsibilities and the need to shield). It used this information to identify flexible working arrangements to support staff. The service's financial position has not yet been significantly affected by COVID-19. It has invested in virtual meeting platforms to support new ways of working. It has also used technology to give training, and to communicate with staff and the public.

9. We recognise that the arrangements for managing the pandemic may carry on for some time, and that the service is now planning for the future. In order to be as efficient and effective as possible, West Sussex FRS should focus on the following areas:

(a) It should determine how it will adopt for the longer-term, the new and innovative ways of working introduced during the pandemic, to secure lasting improvements.

(b) It should evaluate how effective its extra activities have been. It should then consider how its activities can give local communities the most benefit in future.

Preparing for the pandemic

10. In line with good governance, the service had a pandemic flu plan and business continuity plans in place which were in date. These plans were activated. They were detailed enough to enable the service to make an effective initial response, but understandably didn't anticipate and mitigate all the risks presented by COVID-19. The service has reviewed its plans to reflect the changing situation and what it has learnt during the pandemic.

11. The plans now include further detail on what elements of the service should maintain response capability if loss of staff is greater than normal. These are the degradation arrangements. They cover prevention, protection, response and support functions, social distancing, making premises COVID secure, remote working, mutual aid, and supply of PPE.

Fulfilling statutory functions

12. The main functions of a fire and rescue service are firefighting, promoting fire safety through prevention and protection (making sure building owners comply with fire safety legislation), rescuing people in road traffic collisions, and responding to emergencies.

13. The service has continued to provide its core statutory functions throughout the pandemic in line with advice from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). This means the service has continued to respond to calls from the public and attended emergencies. In continuing its prevention and protection work, it has prioritised its work and has done more remotely. It has made safe and well visits to the most vulnerable people in the community. And it has introduced desktop fire safety reviews for high-risk premises.

Response

14. The service told us that between 1 April and 30 June 2020 it attended fewer incidents than it did during the same period in 2019.

15. The overall availability of fire engines was better during the pandemic than it was during the same period in 2019. Between 1 April and 30 June 2020, the service's average overall fire engine availability was 83.1 percent compared with 65.2 percent during the same period in 2019. We were told that this was the result of lower sickness levels among wholetime staff and an increased number of on-call firefighters being available to respond to emergencies due to being furloughed from their primary employment.

16. The service didn't change its crewing models or shift patterns during this period.

17. The service told us that its average response time to fires improved during the pandemic compared with the same period in 2019. This was due to several reasons, including lower sickness levels, better fire engine availability, and less road traffic during this period. This may not be reflected in [official data recently published by the Home Office](#), because services don't all collect and calculate their data the same way.

18. The service shares its control room with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service. The two services had adequate arrangements in place so that its joint control room had enough staff during the pandemic.

19. This included effective resilience arrangements, such as training more staff for control room roles, introducing temperature monitoring equipment into the building, and restricting access to the premises to only staff who work there.

Prevention

20. The NFCC issued guidance explaining how services should take a risk-based approach to continuing prevention activity during the COVID-19 pandemic. The service adopted this guidance.

21. The service conducted fewer safe and well visits than it would normally undertake. It didn't review which individuals and groups it considered to be at an increased risk from fire as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through its work with the LRF, the service shared data on vulnerable people with partner organisations. Prevention staff contacted those people who the service considered to be at high risk from fire. They made initial contact by telephone. Staff only made face-to-face visits if they believed the person was at higher risk.

22. The service decided to continue offering face-to-face safe and well visits because it could give staff suitable PPE. However, it also introduced the option of a safe and well visit by telephone or virtual meeting platform instead of face-to-face safe and well visits. The service followed up the remote contact by posting a fire safety leaflet to the person they had contacted.

Protection

23. The NFCC issued guidance on how to continue protection activity during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included maintaining a risk-based approach, completing desktop audits and issuing enforcement notices electronically. Activity included carrying out audits on those premises that are at the greatest risk from fire. The service broadly adopted this guidance.

24. The service didn't review how it defines premises as high risk during the pandemic. But it changed its approach. The service initially contacted care home owners to explain that it didn't want to visit in order to reduce the risk of infection. Instead, the service explained fire safety requirements, and gave advice and guidance. During the pandemic, the service re-started fire safety audits in care homes. It did this on a risk-assessed basis.

25. The service conducted fewer fire safety audits than it would normally undertake. It decided to continue face-to-face fire safety audits and enforcement work because it could give staff suitable personal protective equipment. It introduced risk-based desktop appraisals instead of face-to-face audits to minimise face-to-face contact between members of staff and the public.

26. The service continued to issue enforcement notices and prohibition notices. It also continued responding to statutory building control consultations. It also introduced other measures to reduce social contact, such as using telephone calls to make the initial contact and completing more desktop assessments. It also updated information on its website, liaised with business associations to give information and guidance, and had fewer staff carrying out visits.

27. The service has continued to engage with those responsible for fire safety in high-risk premises with cladding similar to that at Grenfell Tower, in particular, premises where temporary evacuation procedures are in place.

Staff health and safety and wellbeing

28. Staff wellbeing was a clear priority for the service during the pandemic. It identified wellbeing problems, and responded to any concerns and further needs. Senior leaders actively promoted wellbeing services and encouraged staff to discuss any worries they had. In March 2020, the service carried out a staff impact survey. The results allowed the service to understand how staff would be impacted by COVID-19. The survey highlighted staff who had caring responsibilities, those who needed to shield, and those who would be supported by flexible working arrangements. The service introduced flexible working patterns to support its staff.

29. Most staff survey respondents told us that they could access services to support their mental wellbeing if needed. Support put in place for staff included occupational health, counselling, and peer support. The service used external support, such as specialist counselling, for those staff who were receiving support before the pandemic.

30. Staff most at risk of COVID-19 were identified effectively, including those from a black, Asian and minority ethnic background and those with underlying health problems. The service worked with staff to develop and implement processes to manage the risk. The service offered an individual risk assessment and issued guidance to managers on how to complete it, including for higher risk members of staff such as those from a black, Asian and minority ethnic background.

31. Wellbeing best practice was also shared with other services. The service doesn't yet intend to discuss with its staff how it should plan for the potential longer-term effects of COVID-19 on its workforce.

32. The service made sure that firefighters were competent to do their work during the pandemic. This included keeping up to date with most of the firefighter fitness requirements. The service assessed the risks of new work to make sure its staff had the skills and equipment needed to work safely and effectively

33. The service provided its workforce with appropriate PPE on time. It participated in local arrangements and the national fire sector scheme to procure PPE, which allowed it to achieve value for money.

Staff absence

34. Absences have decreased compared with the same period in 2019. The number of days lost due to sickness absence between 1 April and 30 June 2020 decreased by 34.8 percent compared with the same period in 2019.

35. The service updated the absence policy so that it could better manage staff wellbeing and health and safety, and make more effective decisions on how to allocate work. This included information about recording absences, self-isolation, testing, training for managers, and bereavement. Data was routinely collected on the numbers of staff either absent, self-isolating or working from home.

Staff engagement

36. Most staff survey respondents told us that the service provided regular and relevant communication to all staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included regular virtual team meetings, written correspondence, one-to-ones with a manager or equivalent, weekly newsletters, weekly video briefings from principal officers, and regular evening briefings from the chief fire officer with staff about wellbeing and health and safety.

37. Most on-call firefighter survey respondents told us that they received either the same amount of, or more, communication than usual during the pandemic. The service made use of telephone, email, social media, messaging services, and virtual meeting platforms when communicating with on-call staff during the pandemic. In addition, the chief fire officer wrote to all on-call firefighters to thank them for their efforts during the pandemic.

38. The service intends to maintain changes it has made to its ways of working in response to COVID-19, including its use of virtual meetings; staff have given positive feedback about them. In September 2020, the service conducted an evaluation, asking staff for their views. It intends to use this feedback to inform its future approach.

Working with others, and making changes locally

39. To protect communities, fire and rescue service staff were encouraged to carry out extra roles beyond their core duties. This was to support other local blue light services and other public service providers that were experiencing high levels of demand, and to offer other support to its communities.

40. The service carried out the following new activities: in co-ordination with neighbouring fire services, it trained staff to drive ambulances (although they were not required to do so). Staff delivered food and medicine to vulnerable people, delivered PPE, and carried out checks on vulnerable people in their homes.

41. A national 'tripartite agreement' was put in place to include the new activities that firefighters could carry out during the pandemic. The agreement was between the NFCC, National Employers, and the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), and specified what new roles firefighters could agree to engage in during the pandemic. Each service then undertook local consultations on the specific work it had been asked to support, to agree how any health and safety requirements including risk assessments would be addressed. If public sector partners requested further support from services with additional roles that were outside the tripartite agreement, the specifics would need to be agreed nationally before the work could begin.

42. The service consulted locally to implement the tripartite agreement with the FBU, the Fire Officers Association and the Fire and Rescue Services Association. Other unions were engaged, including UNISON, if their members were asked to do extra work, including under the tripartite agreement. All of the new work done by the service under the tripartite agreement was agreed on time for it to start promptly and in line with the request from the partner agency.

43. There were extra requests for work by partner agencies that fell outside the tripartite agreement, including visiting vulnerable people in their homes to check on their safety, when other organisations were not able to do so. This work was agreed and undertaken on time and in line with the request from the partner agency.

44. All new work, including that done under the tripartite agreement, was risk-assessed and complied with the health and safety requirements. No extra allowance was paid to staff who carried out additional roles.

45. The service hasn't yet fully reviewed and evaluated its activities to support other organisations during this period. It hasn't identified which to continue.

Local resilience forum

46. To keep the public safe, fire and rescue services work with other organisations to assess the risk of an emergency, and to maintain plans for responding to one. To do so, the service should be an integrated and active member of its LRF. West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service is a member of Sussex LRF. It was an active member of the LRF during the pandemic. The service told us that the LRF's arrangements enabled the service to fully engage in the multi-agency response.

47. As part of the LRF's response to COVID-19, the service was an integral member of the strategic co-ordination group. It was a member of the PPE and vulnerable people sub-groups. The service was able to allocate suitably qualified staff to participate in these groups without affecting its core duties.

Use of resources

48. The service's financial position hasn't yet been significantly affected by the pandemic. It has made robust and realistic calculations of the extra costs it has faced during the pandemic. Its main extra costs were staff overtime. It fully understands the effect this will have on its previously agreed budget and anticipated savings.

49. At the time of our inspection, the service received £14,000 of extra government funding to support its response. It spent this money on staff overtime. It has shown how it used this income efficiently, and that it mitigated against the financial risks that arose during this period.

50. The service didn't use any of its reserves to meet the extra costs that arose during this period. When used, overtime was managed appropriately. The service made sure that its staff who worked overtime had enough rest between shifts.

Ways of working

51. The service changed the way in which it operates during the pandemic. For example, it supported staff working from home. Staff could take chairs and IT equipment home to work safely. It had the necessary IT to support remote working where appropriate. Where new IT was needed, it made sure that procurement processes achieved good value for money. The service supported staff returning to work in its premises. It made a video, showing the new working arrangements in its buildings. There was an emphasis on showing social distancing arrangements, such as screens and one-way systems.

52. The service could quickly implement changes to how it operates. This allowed its staff to work flexibly and efficiently during the pandemic. The service plans to consider how to adapt its flexible working arrangements to make sure it has the right provisions in place to support a modern workforce.

53. The service has had positive feedback from staff on how they were engaged with during the pandemic. As a result, the service plans to adopt these changes in its usual procedures and consider how they can be developed further to help promote a sustainable change to its working culture.

54. The service made good use of the resources and guidance available from the NFCC to support its workforce planning, and help with its work under the tripartite agreement.

Staffing

55. The service had enough resources available to respond to the level of demand during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to re-allocate resources where necessary to support the work of its partner organisations.

56. Arrangements put in place to monitor staff performance across the service were effective. This meant the service could be sure its staff were making the best contribution that they reasonably could during this period. Extra capacity was identified and reassigned to support other areas of the service and other organisations.

57. As well as performing their statutory functions, wholetime firefighters volunteered for extra activities, including those under the tripartite agreement. For most of the pandemic, the main role for wholetime firefighters was to provide the service's core responsibilities, while work under the tripartite agreement was done by other parts of the workforce. Non-operational staff carried out activities agreed in the tripartite agreement. We expect services to keep their processes under review to make sure they use their wholetime workforces as productively as possible. This approach was taken because the service felt this was the best way to make sure it had the resources it needed to meet its foreseeable risk.

58. The on-call workforce took on extra responsibilities covering most of the roles agreed as part of the tripartite agreement and the shifts of absent wholetime staff.

Governance of the service's response

59. Each fire and rescue service is overseen by a fire and rescue authority. There are several different governance arrangements in place across England, and the size of the authority varies between services. Each authority ultimately has the same function: to set the service's priorities and budget and make sure that the budget is spent wisely.

60. Members of West Sussex Fire and Rescue Authority were actively engaged in discussions with the chief fire officer and the service on the service's ability to discharge its statutory functions during the pandemic.

61. The fire and rescue authority maintained effective ways of working with the service during the pandemic. This made sure the service could fulfil its statutory duties as well as its extra work supporting the LRF and the tripartite arrangements. The fire and rescue authority put arrangements in place to give its members relevant and regular information about how the service responded to the pandemic. It made use of technology and held meetings virtually.

62. During the pandemic, the fire and rescue authority continued to give the service proportionate oversight and scrutiny, including of its decision-making process. It did this by regularly communicating with the chief fire officer and receiving the service's written briefings.

Looking to the future

63. During the pandemic, services were able to adapt quickly to new ways of working. This meant they could respond to emergencies and take on a greater role in the community by supporting other blue light services and partner agencies. It is now essential that services use their experiences during COVID-19 as a platform for lasting reform and modernisation.

64. West Sussex FRS has improved how it works with other organisations during the pandemic. This includes its work with representative bodies and the LRF.

65. The health and wellbeing of the workforce is a priority for the service. It has offered flexible working arrangements, where possible, to accommodate any personal requirements and to support safe working practices. The service has invested in virtual meeting platforms to support new ways of working, provide training, and communicate with staff and the public. The service carried out an internal evaluation process to capture learning from all members of staff. This learning includes wellbeing as well as operational issues. It set up the Reset and Reboot group to consider how to use this learning in the future.

66. Good practice and what worked was shared with other services through the NFCC. The service met regularly with neighbouring services before the pandemic. The established working groups continued to meet virtually to share information in the initial stages of the pandemic. Staff met with counterparts to share information on prevention, protection and staff wellbeing. These meetings discussed best practice and how to apply NFCC guidance.

Next steps

67. This letter will be published on our website. We propose to restart our second round of effectiveness and efficiency fire and rescue inspections in spring 2021, when we will follow up on our findings.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MParr', followed by a long, sweeping horizontal stroke.

Matt Parr CB

Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

Draft Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee Work Programme March 2020 – March 2021

Topic/Issue	Other information	Timing
Performance & Assurance Framework Core Indicators		26 March 2021
Priority programmes: IRMP update, Improvement update		26 March 2021
Joint Control Room TFG Report		26 March 2021
HMICFRS Covid Inspection letter		26 March 2021
Work Programme Planning	Standing item on each agenda.	26 March 2021
Inspection preparedness report		TBC
FUTURE ITEMS TO BE TIMETABLED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Risk Register/Operational Risks (Part of June agenda, discussion as to whether further work needs to be timetabled) • Impact of COVID-19 on the FRS (wider discussion required on how best to scrutinise this work across the council, and at what point is appropriate) • Fire Safety Bill • Retained firefighters (likely to be autumn 2021) 	

Appendix A – Check List

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Scrutiny Work Planning Guide and Checklist

1. Principles

- (a) Scrutiny should improve outcomes for West Sussex by providing:
 - Robust challenge to the executive and service performance; and
 - Timely opportunities to influence budget and policy planning
- (b) Scrutiny holds the executive to account and should be objective, evidence-based, transparent and constructive
- (c) It acts as a critical friend to the decision-maker to enable the most effective delivery of the Council's priorities.
- (d) It takes a strategic perspective, focussing on the wider community needs and outcomes for all residents and service users
- (e) It should aim for consensus and avoid party politics.

2. Work Programme Planning

- 2.1 The Committee plans its business and considers what to scrutinise. Business emerges from sources including:
 - The Forward Plan or items referred by a Cabinet Member
 - Member requests for an item to be considered
 - Performance issues identified from the Total Performance Monitor or other sources
 - A proposed decision being 'called-in'
 - The annual process of developing budget and corporate priorities
- 2.2 Committee members should have a good understanding of the budget and performance issues for their portfolio. The Committee should prioritise business to ensure time for detailed scrutiny of the most important issues within the resources available, using the checklist at paragraph 5.
- 2.3 Scrutiny Committees should have a **clear focus on the objectives and desired outcomes** for their work. This should inform work prioritisation, planning agendas and the approach to managing meetings. The Committee should do so by use of the checklist set out below which should focus on key lines of enquiry.
- 2.4 **Performance and Finance Select Committee** (PFSC) should ensure all scrutiny arrangements are effective and are dealing with the most important issues for the Council. It may do so by receiving and considering scrutiny committee work programmes from time to time. An annual report for PFSC allows it to monitor the scrutiny work programme and developments and to highlight best practice and training needs. As set out in Standing Orders, paragraph 8.12), the scrutiny work programme should be reviewed by the end of May each year by PFSC and then by County Council.

3. Agenda Planning

- 3.1 A pre-agenda meeting (PrAM) is held two weeks before the formal meeting attended by the chairman and vice-chairman, Democratic Services officers, and the officers preparing reports. It is a brief session of no more than one hour to:

- Ensure the agenda and approach meet the needs of the committee
- Agree scrutiny aims or outcomes from each item
- Plan the management of the meeting (timing, presentations, witnesses)
- Decide whether a pre-meeting would be helpful
- Discuss what information members may need for effective scrutiny

3.2 The pre-agenda meeting should identify the key lines of enquiry for scrutiny of the subject and ensure that the report covers what is required for the scrutiny focus. Its role is not to review draft reports.

3.3 Agendas should be short to allow time and focus to produce meaningful outcomes. Items for information only must not be taken. Information gathering and questions of detail should be dealt with outside formal meetings.

4. **Committee Tasks**

Task	Objective
Programme setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree outline committee work programme
Programme planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritisation of business • Prepare a balanced work programme to ensure priority items have sufficient time • Consider the best and most timely approach
Performance and Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Performance Monitor quarterly to identify issues for the committee.
Agenda planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining the scrutiny aims of agenda items • Identification of witnesses and evidence
Project Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups (TFGs) • Identify other ways to carry out work
Publicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify how best to promote the work of the committee and how to engage the public

5. **Business Planning Checklist**

5.1 **Priorities** - Is the topic

- a corporate or service priority? In what way?
- an area where performance, outcomes or budget is a concern? How?
- one that matters most to residents? Why?

5.2 **What is being scrutinised and Why?**

- What should the scrutiny focus be?
- Where can the committee add value?
- What is the desired outcome from scrutiny?

5.3 **When and how to scrutinise?**

- When can the committee have most influence?
- What is the best approach - committee, TFG, one-off small group?
- What research, visits or other activities are needed?
- Would scrutiny benefit from external witnesses or evidence?

5.4 **Is the work programme focused and achievable?**

- Have priorities changed – should any work be stopped or put back?
- Can there be fewer items for more in-depth consideration?
- Has sufficient capacity been retained for future work?