

Community Support, Fire and Rescue Portfolio - Summary

Performance Summary

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

- The Fire and Rescue Service is currently undergoing a second full inspection from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The inspection will focus on the three pillars of efficiency, effectiveness and people with a particular look at how well we have responded to the recommendations from the last full inspection.
- The Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) is in the final stages of preparation before the full consultation document is published on the 15th November. There will be a consultation platform utilising the WSCC Your Voice Engagement Hub which will be the primary engagement tool for both the consultation process and final CRMP content.
- The Horsham Fire Station and Training Centre project is back on track after resolving some final contractual issues which means that work on the site can start as early as November 2021. The project is likely to take up to 18 months to complete.
- This last quarter has seen a continued low number of accidental dwelling fires (ADF) and injuries. ADFs form a key focus of our prevention activity and these latest low numbers are a reflection of the continued work of our teams to ensure that the most vulnerable are kept safe from fire.
- Staff sickness remains very low in the Fire and Rescue Service which in the context of the pandemic is a positive reflection on the support and intervention provided by the service. We have recently changed occupational health provider and launched a service wide well-being app all to ensure that we continue to give the best support to staff to keep them well at home and work.
- The Resettlement Team played a vital role at short notice in the immediate provision of clothing, toiletries, baby care supplies and other essential items to support Afghan nationals and UK citizens arriving in the UK without any personal belongings during the evacuation from Kabul Airport, Afghanistan. Alongside work to procure supplies, packaging parcels and distributing to families during their quarantine period the team worked with partners to ensure that urgent health and wellbeing needs, especially for babies and pregnant women, were addressed. The team have also been working hard and at pace to secure properties in West Sussex for relocation of Afghan families under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy Scheme. It has been successful in securing a number of properties, meeting Home Office expectations, that will be ready for accommodating families later in the year.
- During this quarter the Library Service delivered a successful Summer Reading Challenge with 8,423 children taking part. It brought families back into our libraries and 2,372 children became new library members.

Customers unable to visit libraries received a total of 376 deliveries of books and other resources via the Essential Delivery Service (EDS).

- To keep West Sussex residents Safe Against Scams the West Sussex Community Safety & Wellbeing Team alongside Trading Standards have been [running free monthly scams awareness webinars](#) for residents to attend.
- Registration services continue to be very busy with 1,435 Ceremonies delivered and 2,182 notices of intent taken. Many of these ceremonies had been postponed multiple times due to the pandemic. Death appointment availability remained good during the quarter with progress made to clear the backlog of births accumulated during the pandemic with approximately 180 babies over six weeks remaining to be registered (down from 437 end of Q1).
- At the beginning of July, the Registration Service moved into new offices located within the refurbished Worthing Library which gives much improved facilities. The Shoreham office reopened in September and plans are underway to return to Midhurst and Bognor in early November.
- Trading Standards have been helping food businesses prepare for 'Natasha's Law' which came into effect on 1st October. The rules require businesses to provide full ingredient lists and allergen labelling on foods that are prepared and packed for sale on same premises.

Our Council Performance Measures

Community Support, Fire and Rescue	2021/22 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods			DoT	Performance Analysis	Actions	Year End Forecast
3 Fire Safety Order regulated buildings in West Sussex having received an audit under the Risk Based Inspection Programme. Measured cumulatively in each financial year, from 1st April. Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Reported a quarter in arrears.	1,750		Jun-21	Sep-21		The pandemic has continued to impact the type of work that is either required or possible, and inspecting officers have carried out remote and tabletop audits where premises remained inaccessible. We have sent out communications and letters to premises outlining what actions they should be considering as they remain open to the public. Officers have continued to support other Protection core functions, which account for over 50% of the department activity. This includes building regulation consultations, licensing applications and other forms of inspections.	The target of 1750 visits per year is based on a full department staffing model which we are currently operating below. Our key priority is to increase audit activity and we will achieve this through continued recruitment to bridge the staffing gap, ensuring a full competence and capability structure. Several appointments have been made, however a full compliment of staff has not yet been achieved. Interest in recent recruitment campaigns was lower than anticipated so we will further explore broadening our opportunities to increase the applicant numbers received for vacancies within our succession planning cycle.	R
		New Measure No Data	208	468	↗			
10 Number of Safe and Well Visits delivered to households with at least one vulnerability or risk factor. Measured cumulatively in each financial year, from 1st April. Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Accumulative. Reported a quarter in arrears.	4,000		Jun-21	Sep-21		At the end of Q2 we were 23% below our half yearly target of 2000 visits. As we move into Q3 the shortfall has decreased slightly to 20%. We attribute this to the remedial actions taken, including the creation of new referral pathways and building on existing ones. Staff based at fire stations have been undertaking reactive post-incident activity as well as proactive referral generation activity and this is having a positive effect. A recent workshop where station based referral ideas and tactics were shared across the response team, will support this upward trajectory in referral generation. Referrals for a Safe and Well Visit have increased by 200% since Q1. The pandemic continues to have an impact with a vast reduction in referrals and requests for Safe and Well Visits with vulnerable people nervous about allowing services into their homes. Low numbers of visits is not a problem unique to West Sussex, our neighbouring Services have indicated that they too are seeing significantly lower numbers than usual. With the interventions and increased activity we remain confident that we will meet our target.	Work continues with our partners, particularly health and social care, to increase referrals for Safe and Well Visits through an introduction from a trusted partner. We are also about to offer existing customers a revisit and we are looking at using incident data to further generate visits. Now that Covid restrictions have been relaxed operational crews are able to undertake work in their local communities and have been using data to target their activity to areas where most vulnerable residents live. We have already seen some excellent examples of focussed activity following small fires that have generated a number of referrals and generally helped the fire service engage back into local communities.	R
		Mar-21	2,998	780	1,561			
42 Percentage of 'critical fires' where the first appliance in attendance meets our emergency response standard Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Reported a quarter in arrears.	89.0%		Jun-21	Sep-21		Following six quarters of strong performance in meeting first fire engine attendance standards we had a significant drop this quarter. Q2 saw a significant reduction in Retained Duty System (RDS) availability which would have impacted this measure. At the start of Q2 a trial for the full implementation of a new operational Dynamic Cover Tool commenced. This tool is used to continually maximise average response times across the entire county. Reading across the three attendance time measures, and carrying out detailed analysis of all incidents where we failed to meet our response time, indicates that the standby moves undertaken to maximise countywide availability had a positive impact but could not fully mitigate the consequences of the drop in RDS availability on our attendance to critical fires.	As part of the trial of the Dynamic cover tool a full report on Q2 performance response is being produced. In this report attendance time failures are being examined to identify reasons and action plans created to address any patterns. This will be available for scrutiny and inform discussions with Joint Fire Control to propose actions to fine tune the tool and it's use by our fire control operators if required. Further actions are being undertaken to increase RDS availability which will have a positive impact on this measure.	G
		Mar-21	89.1%	93.1%	82.5%			

43	Percentage of 'critical special service incidents' where the first appliance in attendance meets our emergency response standard Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Reported a quarter in arrears.	80.0%	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Despite the significant reduction in retained availability there was only a small reduction in the overall countywide attendance to critical special service incidents. At the start of Q2 the Dynamic Cover Tool trial was implemented. This is designed to assist control room operators in ensuring that the resources that are currently available are always in the best place to maximise overall response times. It would appear that the use of the dynamic cover tool has been effective in mitigating the overall reduction in retained availability with respect to critical special service calls.	As part of the trial of the Dynamic cover tool a full report on Q2 performance response is being produced. In this report attendance time failures are being examined to identify reasons and action plans created to address any patterns. This will be available for scrutiny and inform discussions with Joint Fire Control to propose actions to fine tune the tool and it's use by our fire control operators if required. Further actions are being undertaken to increase RDS availability which will have a positive impact on this measure.	A
			81.5%	76.9%	75.7%			
4	Percentage of suspected scam victims, identified to WSCC by the National Trading Standards Scams Team, receiving a proactive intervention from the Trading Standards Service Reporting Frequency: Quarterly	100.0%	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	This area of work had been affected by Covid-19 with regards to the restrictions that have been in place around carrying out face to face visits.	We are now initiating face to face interventions again and at the end of September were also therefore able to recruit a second Protecting The Vulnerable Officer, on fixed term contract to help with the back log of visits moving forward.	R
			82.0%	82.0%	82.0%			
33	Use of virtual/digital library services by residents Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Accumulative	5.45m	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	We are continuing to see higher than normal levels of demand for eBooks and virtual library services, evidence of some customers making greater use of online services which they found through lockdowns.	Not applicable.	G
			5.45m	1.48m	2.93m			
34	Number of people reached and supported via the West Sussex Community Hub during the Covid-19 pandemic Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Accumulative	35,000	Jun-20	Jun-21	Sep-21	A further 867 people reached and supported via the West Sussex Community Hub in July to September 2021. This count excludes the Local Tracing Partnership (LTP) contacts. The increase is relatively small compared to earlier quarters as there have been no mass communications by letter or email to the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable cohort.	Not applicable.	G
			34,000	58,230	59,097			

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

Finance Summary

Portfolio In Year Pressures and Mitigations

Pressures	(£m)	Mitigations and Underspending	(£m)	Year end budget variation (£m)
Covid-19 pandemic forecast expenditure/ allocations to third parties	£6.206m	Assumed funding from Covid-19 grant	(£6.206m)	
Fire – Additional costs within the Electronic Services Group and other related pressures including the Dynamic Cover Tool	£0.300m	Communities – Increased demand for registrar's services	(£0.100m)	
Fire - Increased pressure from supply of enhanced tactical PPE firefighter uniforms	£0.125m	Communities - Staffing vacancies within Trading Services and Communities teams	(£0.165m)	
Fire - Increase in overtime within the Fire Response Service	£0.075m			
Communities – Additional cost following work undertaken on long inquests	£0.152m			
Communities – Increase in mortuary contract	£0.075m			
Community Support, Fire & Rescue Portfolio - Total	£6.933m		(£6.471m)	£0.462m

Significant Financial Issues and Risks Arising

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

Financial Narrative on the Portfolio's Position

- The Community Support, Fire and Rescue Portfolio is currently projecting a £0.462m overspend. During the second quarter of the year, a number of pressures, totalling £0.300m, have emerged within the Fire and Rescue Service, including additional costs relating to the Electronic Services Group and related costs associated with the Dynamic Cover Tool.
- Communities have also experienced some additional pressures during the quarter. £0.125m of additional costs relating to Assistant Coroners working on inquests are included within the projection, alongside a £0.075m increase in the contract cost of the Mortuary Service. These pressures have been mitigated by £0.165m of staffing vacancies and £0.100m of expected additional income generated by the Registrar's Services following an increase in demand for ceremonies as a direct result of the easing of Covid-19 restrictions during July.

Savings Delivery Update

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

Saving Activity	2020/21 Savings £000	September 2021		Narrative	2022/23
Communities - Increased income from Registrars Services	150	150	G	Saving is now on track to be made following the easing of Covid-19 restrictions in July.	G

Saving Activity	2021/22 Savings £000	September 2021		Narrative	2022/23
Development of adapted Library Service offer in conjunction with Parish Councils	70	70	G	Discussions with Parish Councils are continuing to deliver this saving on a long-term basis; however, in year mitigations have been found.	A
Increased income from copy certificates for Registrars' Services	150	150	G		G
Removal of Community Initiative Fund (CIF)	140	140	B		B
Review of Partnerships & Communities Team	70	70	B		B
Review of agency staff	8	8	B	Saving is now on track to be made following the easing of Covid-19 restrictions in July.	B

Savings Key:

R Significant Risk
 A At Risk
 G On Track
 B Delivered

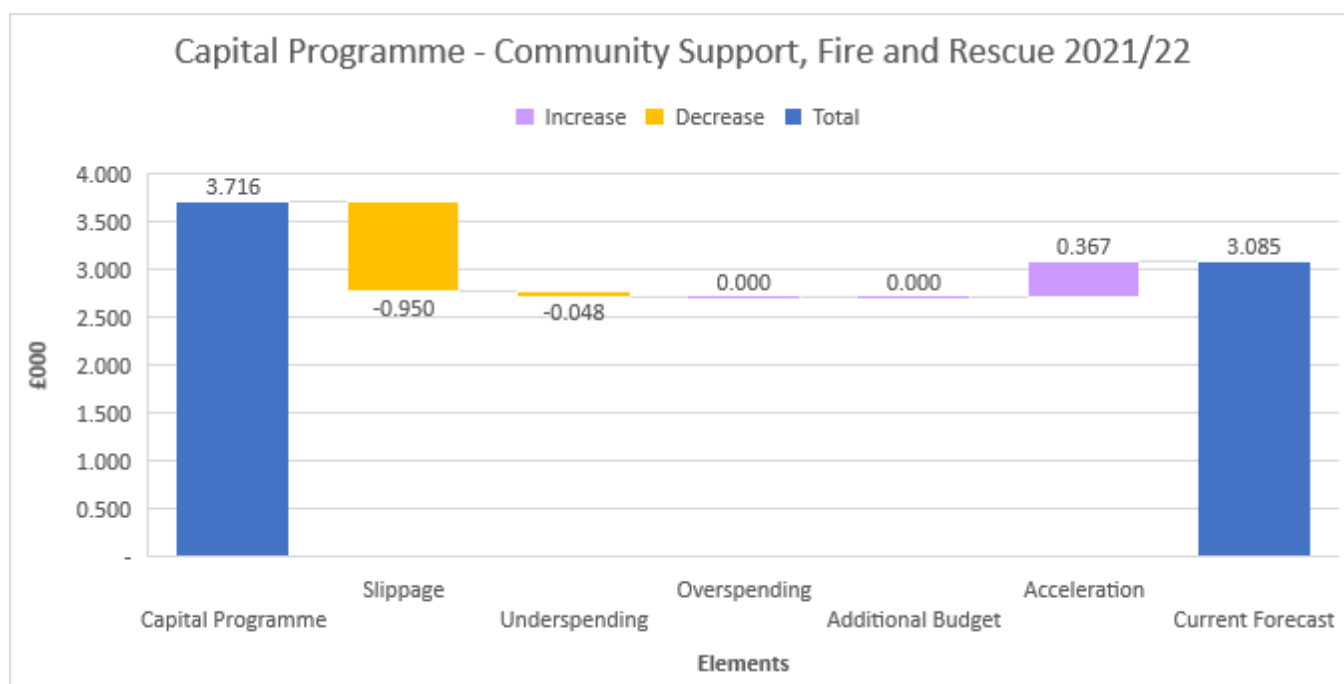
Capital Programme

Performance Summary - Capital

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

Finance Summary - Capital

- The capital programme; as approved by County Council in February 2021, agreed a programme totalling £3.645m for 2021/22. £0.071m of expenditure, originally profiled to spend in 2020/21, was slipped into 2021/22, revising the capital programme to £3.716m.
- Since this time, profiled spend has decreased overall by £0.631m, to give a current year end projection for 2021/22 of £3.085m. Of this decrease -£0.950m relates to slippage, -£0.048m relates to underspending within current projects and £0.367m relates to projects where funding has been accelerated from future years.



- Details of movements of the financial profiling within the capital programme are as follows:

- Slippage: (-£0.950m)**

- Fire Fleet – (-£0.950m).** To ensure the long-term fleet replacement programme meets future service needs, a period of time is being taken to enable the correct decision making; therefore £0.950m has been slipped into future years.

- **Underspending: (-£0.048m)**
 - **Library Self Service Terminals – (-£0.048m).** The project has completed with a small underspend. The funding will be returned to fund future capital schemes.
- **Acceleration: £0.367m**
 - **Worthing Community Hub - £0.367m.** The project is expected to complete in 2021/22, therefore funding from future years has been accelerated in line with the project completion date.

Risk

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

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

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