

# Community Support, Fire and Rescue Portfolio - Summary

## Performance Summary

1. Performance highlights this quarter:

### Fire and Rescue Service

- **Platinum House, the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Training Centre and Horsham Fire Station** became operational in July. After six weeks of successful commissioning and testing, the site was ready to be handed over to operational crews and training colleagues. This was a momentous landmark for the Fire Rescue Service which will unlock new opportunities for training and exercising for both fire and wider County colleagues and support the County Council's aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.
- The service is reaching the midway point of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and in line with proposals, two new projects were launched on **Emergency Response Standards and a Specialist Capability Review**. These crucial projects will continue to support improvement in KPIs by matching risk and resource and ensuring the Council have the right specialist equipment available to protect the community. Initial proposals from this work are expected to emerge during quarter four of this year.
- Also in the CRMP is a commitment to **review the Fire Service Retained Duty System (RDS)**. Initial work commenced in July when a staff survey was conducted and a series of focus groups to capture the ideas on what we need to focus on first within the project. The project formally starts in quarter four of this year, but this early engagement will help establish the scope and begin to help address some of the performance issues being experienced in the RDS core measure.
- In September, the service took delivery of its new innovative **Welfare Unit**. This is a new vehicle which has been specifically designed to provide enhanced support and facilities for staff during operational incidents. The introduction of the Welfare Unit to the fleet marks a significant milestone in our efforts to prioritise the welfare of staff.
- This quarter, the Fire and Rescue Service **welcomed its latest new retained duty system firefighters**. These new colleagues will provide further resilience to key retained stations to help improve our core measures and wider retained availability.
- A mixture of the excellent rural prevention activity and the wet weather resulted in **fewer rural and wildfire incidents** than expected. The most notable operational incident of the summer occurred in Littlehampton in August with a large fire at the Harvester Restaurant on the seafront. The incident led to 12 fire engines attending the scene which attracted significant press interest.

## Community Support




- This summer 11,500 children joined the **Summer Reading Challenge** in West Sussex libraries, with over half completing the challenge to read six or more books over the summer holidays. Library staff provided training and support to 248 volunteers, who in turn gave over 3,500 hours of their time talking with children about the books they had read and celebrating their achievement. Running the Challenge at all libraries for eight weeks over the summer means libraries had their busiest period in July and August, with customer visits 12% above the monthly average. Evidence shows families reading for pleasure is a keyway for children to maintain attainment levels over the longest school holiday period.
- **Worthing Library** passed the two years open since refurbishment milestone this quarter. Visitor footfall data shows an average of 16,150 customers use the building every month, accessing library, family, health, and registration services. It is projected that customer reach will have grown 7% by year-end.
- Libraries reported 36 incidents of **anti-social or disruptive behaviour** from customers during the summer period, with emergency calls to the police on 17 occasions. This represents a one-third reduction in incidents from last quarter but remains eight-fold magnitude above baseline (pre-pandemic) norm.
- **A new small ceremony room in Worthing Library** has been made available for by the Registers Service for ceremonies from September. This room is offered every Tuesday as a low-cost option in the South of the County and is proving a very popular venue.
- Online safety remains a key priority for the Community Safety and Wellbeing Team and during this quarter, 1,794 young people, residents and professionals have participated in **digital safety focused training/engagement activities**. The Digital Safety Team engaged with students and teachers at the Freshers Fair Event at Chichester College about how to stay safe online and avoid falling victim to online scams.
- Since September 2021, the Community Safety and Wellbeing Team have been running **safeguarding training webinars for taxi drivers** across West Sussex and beyond, providing awareness raising and information around the main aspects of safeguarding, including vulnerabilities, indicators, and methods of reporting concerns. To date, approximately 2,000 drivers have been trained in various District and Boroughs across West Sussex and also, Rother and Wealden, in the East. For the period July to September 2023, seven webinars were held on the new Eventbrite platform, providing training to 95 drivers in this period.
- The Countering Extremism Team continue to offer a **range of support to reduce the risk of people being drawn into or supporting terrorism**. This includes statutory Prevent Duty training for internal and external partners, as well as inputs on recognising racism and the impact of hate crime in relation to extremism. Mandatory Prevent training has been approved for all County Council Children, Young People and Learning staff which will be delivered over the next year, and as part of the County Council's community engagement strategy, the team will be delivering training to infrastructure organisations in


the voluntary and community sector. Facilitating and chairing the West Sussex Channel Panel remains a key responsibility as part of the statutory Channel Duty, alongside organisational compliance with the national benchmarks introduced over the past year by the Home Office.

## Our Council Performance Measures




### Fire and Rescue Service Performance Measures

2. The following section provides KPI updates comparing performance over the last three periods (each measure will explain the reporting period).

Fire and Rescue		2023/24 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods			DoT	Year End Forecast
3	<p><b>Measure:</b> 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.</p> <p>Reporting Frequency: Quarterly</p>	1,000	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23		G
			G	A	G		
			1,004	247	515		
<p><b>Performance Analysis:</b> Sep-23: The services Fire Safety Regulators have maintained a good level of performance during Q2 and are on track to meet the target for the year, being ahead of profile at this half year stage. (515 audits out of an annual target of 1,000). In comparison to the six-monthly performance through Q1 and Q2 of 2022/23, the team have achieved 13% more fire safety audits so far this year.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> The level of performance is starting to increase and is representative of the expectation now that more Fire Safety Regulators have concluded their development training. There is still further development being undertaken, however it is hoped that this will have a slightly lower impact upon our day-to-day output.</p>							
10	<p><b>Measure:</b> 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.</p> <p>Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Accumulative.</p>	5,000	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23		G
			G	G	G		
			4,680	1,298	2,622		
<p><b>Performance Analysis:</b> Sep-23: 1,324 Safe and Well Visits (SWVs) and 324 home safety interventions were completed in Q2. There continues to be a significant increase from the number of SWVs delivered in previous years. At the end of Q2 2022/23, the team had completed 2,100 SWVs; whereas at Q2 2023/24, 2,622 visits have been accomplished - 522 more than the previous year. This measure is on track to meet the target of 5,000 SWVs this year.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> The service continues to support referrals and requests for Safe and Well Visits through partnerships and local initiatives promoting them. Data is used to target those most at risk of being injured or dying in a fire.</p>							
42	<p><b>Measure:</b> Percentage of 'critical fires' where the first appliance in attendance meets our emergency response standard</p> <p>Reporting Frequency: Quarterly.</p>	89.0%	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23		G
			G	G	G		
			92.1.%	89.4%	94.7%		
<p><b>Performance Analysis:</b> Sep-23: Performance for the fourth consecutive quarter remains above target. Fire Stations are continuing to mobilise quickly, responding to incidents in their communities. By continuing to embed our professional standards in Service Delivery the team have been able to maintain this level of performance. In addition to this, crews have been increasingly engaged with their communities through fire safety initiatives, meaning they are off-station more and working in high-risk areas ready to respond more quickly. This activity is being captured through our Local Risk Management Plans. Joint fire control also continues to utilise the dynamic cover tool to ensure our resources are in the right areas at the right times ready to meet our response standards.</p>							

Fire and Rescue		2023/24 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods			DoT	Year End Forecast
<b>Actions:</b> Monitoring and reviewing the performance data locally at stations through the Local Risk Management Plans via Service Delivery Governance meetings will continue, whilst seeking continuous improvements.							
43	<b>Measure:</b> Percentage of 'critical special service incidents' where the first appliance in attendance meets our emergency response standard  Reporting Frequency: Quarterly.	80.0%	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23		G
			G	G	G		
			80.8%	82.2%	84.6%		
<b>Performance Analysis:</b> Sep-23: Performance remains high for a fourth consecutive quarter, providing assurances that the established use of the Dynamic Cover Tool (which provides data on response times broken down to district/local level displayed to control room operators) is now embedded in the services' ways of working when mobilising fire engines to calls.  <b>Actions:</b> Working with partner agencies has helped to improve the time taken to transfer calls and information, enabling control staff to mobilise quicker. Work also continues to be undertaken at fire stations to ensure everything is being done to enable quick responses to incidents, as well as maximising the availability of retained fire engines at times of the day when these incidents are most likely to occur using the Crewing Optimisation Group.							

## Community Support Performance Measures

Community Support		2023/24 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods			DoT	Year End Forecast
4	<b>Measure:</b> Percentage of interventions to identified West Sussex residents that demonstrate an increase in ability for resident to deal with scams.  Reporting Frequency: Quarterly	90.0%		Jun-23	Sep-23		G
				G	G		
			New Measure – No Data	91.0%	94.0%		
<b>Performance Analysis:</b> Sep-23: No anticipated issues in meeting year-end target.  <b>Actions:</b> The service continues to work with partners to keep residents safe.							
33	<b>Measure:</b> Use of virtual/digital library services by residents  Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Accumulative	5.45m	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23		G
			G	G	G		
			6.30m	1.69m	3.72m		
<b>Performance Analysis:</b> Sep-23: Increased use driven by new ebook provision (ULibrary) which has increased choice and availability for customers. The summer period sees peak usage across all library services, driven by the annual Summer Reading Challenge.  <b>Actions:</b> Continue to support growing demand though investment in eLibrary platforms and production of virtual and online library events content.							
34	<b>Measure:</b> Community Hub provides positive outcomes for residents at first point of contact.  Reporting Frequency: Quarterly	95.0%		Jun-23	Sep-23		G
				A	G		
			New Measure – No Data	92%	100%		

Community Support	2023/24 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods	DoT	Year End Forecast
<p><b>Performance Analysis:</b> Sep-23: Currently achieving 100% for Q2, The Community Hub continues to deliver a high-quality service to the residents of West Sussex providing information and guidance signposting practical support focusing on Cost of Living and Household Support Fund enquiries.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> Continuing to regularly review the streamlining of processes as Household Support Fund moves us to a more digital focus.</p>				

## Finance Summary

### Portfolio In Year Pressures and Mitigations

Pressures	(£m)	Mitigations and Underspending	(£m)	Year end budget variation (£m)
Community Support – Additional coroner costs projected following continued increase in the number of excess deaths since the pandemic.	£0.365m	Community Support – Additional ceremonies income projected.	(£0.100m)	
Community Support – Transfer of Coroner Officers from Sussex Police	£0.160m	Libraries and Archives – Staffing vacancies	(£0.080m)	
		Edes House – Addition income generation from external functions	(£0.020m)	
<b>Community Support, Fire &amp; Rescue Portfolio - Total</b>	<b>£0.525m</b>		<b>(£0.200m)</b>	<b>£0.325m</b>

### Financial Narrative on the Portfolio's Position

- As at the end of September, the forecast against the Community Support, Fire and Rescue budget is a projected overspend of £0.325m, an increase of £0.040m when compared to the June position.

### Community Support

- As previously reported, the pressure on the Coroner's Service has continued into 2023/24 largely as a result of the continued increase in excess deaths since the pandemic which is being seen nationally. Currently £0.365m of additional costs associated with increased pathology, body storage, histology and coroner time are included within the overall projection.
- In addition, the Coroner's Service has also welcomed the transfer of Coroner Officers from Sussex Police from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. The projected costs associated with the transfer have increased by £0.040m from the £0.120m reported in June to £0.160m. Staff terms and conditions are still being finalised.
- Additional income forecast to be generated from the Registration Service has been reduced from £0.2m reported in June to £0.1m. This projection has been revised down following a review of ceremonies planned in 2023/24. This

reduction has been offset by £0.080m of projected staffing vacancies within the Libraries and Archives services alongside an additional £0.020m of income generation from external functions at Edes House.

## Savings Delivery Update

7. There are £0.670m of planned savings to be delivered within the Portfolio. Details are shown in the table that follows:

Saving Activity	Year	Saving to be delivered in 2023/24 (£000)	September 2023		Narrative
Community Support - Optimise Use of Grants	2023/24	£0.200m	£0.200m	<b>G</b>	
Resilience and Emergency Team - Structural Review	2023/24	£0.100m	£0.100m	<b>G</b>	
Staffing vacancy increase in vacancy factor from 5% to 6%	2023/24	£0.370m	£0.370m	<b>G</b>	Staffing budgets currently assume a vacancy factor of 5% but over the last few years, this has averaged 6% across the organisation and is expected to remain at this level for 2023/24.

### Savings Key:

**R** Significant Risk    **A** At Risk    **G** On Track    **B** Delivered

## Capital Programme

### Summary - Capital

8. The Community Support, Fire and Rescue capital programme; as approved by County Council in February 2023, agreed a programme totalling £9.089m for 2023/24. Budget of £4.864m originally profiled to spend in 2023/24, was accelerated into 2022/23, revising the capital programme to £4.225m.
9. Since this time, the profiled spend has decreased overall by £1.220m, to give a current year end projection for 2023/24 of £3.005m.
10. The portfolio's capital programme contains six projects. Five of the projects are in delivery and one is practically complete and is in its retention phase whilst snagging and cosmetic works are completed. The performance and financial details for each are reported below.

	Community Support, Fire Rescue Capital Projects	Performance RAG Status			Total Project Budget	Previous Years Expenditure To 2022/23	2023/24 Expenditure to Date	In Flight Remaining Project Budget
		Time	Quality	Cost				
1	<b>Project:</b> Fire and Rescue Equipment Block Programme - Block	G	G	G	£0.263m	N/A	£0.263m	£0.000m
	<b>Latest Estimated Completion Date:</b> On-Going			<b>Project Phase:</b> In Delivery				
	<b>Narrative:</b> Block funds have been spent. Scoping of future projects underway.							
2	<b>Project:</b> Fleet Replacement Programme - Block	G	G	G	£4.072m	N/A	£0.078m	£3.994m
	<b>Latest Estimated Completion Date:</b> On-Going			<b>Project Phase:</b> In Delivery				
	<b>Narrative:</b> Projects are going through the governance process.							
3	<b>Project:</b> Live Training Centre and Horsham Fire Station	G	G	G	£25.608m	£23.935m	£0.958m	£0.715m
	<b>Latest Estimated Completion Date:</b> July 2023			<b>Project Phase:</b> Practically Complete – In Retention				
	<b>Narrative:</b> The new building and site has been handed over to the service. The site became operational on Monday 10th July 2023. Funding remains for final invoices and retention payments.							
4	<b>Project:</b> Fire and Rescue Estates Improvement Programme	G	G	G	£1.852m	£-	£-	£1.852m
	<b>Latest Estimated Completion Date:</b> TBC			<b>Project Phase:</b> In Delivery				
	<b>Narrative:</b> Business Case being created by Service and is expected in October 2023.							
5	<b>Project:</b> Worthing Community Hub	G	G	G	£2.852m	£2.693m	£-	£0.159m
	<b>Latest Estimated Completion Date:</b> May 2022			<b>Project Phase:</b> Practically Complete - In Retention				
	<b>Narrative:</b> Works complete.							
6	<b>Project:</b> Libraries Digital Asset	G	G	G	£0.030m	£-	£0.006	£0.024m
	<b>Latest Estimated Completion Date:</b> TBC			<b>Project Phase:</b> In Delivery				
	<b>Narrative:</b> West Sussex Library Service were successful in obtaining a grant of £30k from LibraryOn, a project led by the British Library working in consultation with Arts Council England, to pay for a suite of new digital assets including films about library activities to go on the library webpages.							

11. A summary of the latest Capital Programme Budget Monitor is reported in **Appendix 4** and full details of all individual schemes are set out in the Budget Report published in February 2023.

## **Risk**

12. There are no corporate risks assigned to this portfolio. Risks allocated to other portfolios are specified within the respective portfolio sections. Further detail on all risks can be found in **Appendix 5** - Corporate Risk Register Summary.
13. Full details of the latest Risk Register, including actions and mitigations can be found under the County Council's [Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee Agenda](#) website.