

Community Support, Fire and Rescue Portfolio - Summary

Performance Summary

1. Performance highlights this quarter:

~~Fire and Rescue Service~~

- ~~This quarter contained a number of **challenging weather related events**; notably Storm Ciaran, which occurred over a week at the beginning of November and brought severe weather and resultant damage to much of the South Coast. The week-long storm once again demonstrated the excellent capability within the Fire and Rescue Service to implement well-rehearsed plans. These plans also ensured that the organisation paced itself for the protracted nature of the storm and also highlighted the great partnership working with wider West Sussex County Council departments, the Sussex Resilience Forum and Joint Fire Control.~~
- ~~October saw the completion of the **internal Focus Group work** that had been commissioned as an opportunity for the organisation to ask the workforce questions and to help gather opinions about what is working well, what is not and where improvements can be made. This insight will be invaluable as the fire services strives to continuously improve and provide assurance on what is working well. Over 170 colleagues engaged with the 24 separate focus groups with the results being coordinated ready for publication in Q4 of this year.~~
- ~~Also, in October the organisation welcomed its latest **cohort of IGNITE students to Lancing Fire Station**. IGNITE is one of our targeted education courses for young people that uses the dynamic environment of the Fire Station and the local community to promote social and emotional development in young people, with an emphasis on nurturing resilience. The courses are always a huge success with the young people, their families and schools and help promote fire safety within the community.~~
- ~~Improving retained officer availability continues to be a priority for the Fire Service and the Community Risk Management Plan contains a project to further review the retained duty system to ensure a sustainable model for the future. Underpinning this work, one of the West Sussex Fire and Rescue senior officers is now the National Fire Service Lead on retained. In November, this officer arranged a **national conference** at the new training centre in Horsham. The event was a chance to look at the work of on-call teams and share best practice in order to help improve the retained model across the sector.~~

Community Support





- The **Registration Service** delivered 653 ceremonies in Q3 and completed 1,195 notice appointments. During the quarter, the service also registered 1,983 deaths and 2,009 births.

- The **new small ceremony room in Worthing Library**, which is offered as a low-cost option in the South of the county, is proving very popular. The service has conducted 34 ceremonies out of a possible 36 slots in Q3.
- During **Libraries Week** in October, the Library Service launched a set of **short films as part of their "Libraries Are For Everyone" campaign**. The films showcase key services like Rhyme Time, Digital Support and Home Library Direct. These films were commissioned using a British Library grant, and in time, will form part of a brand new national public libraries online platform called Library On, which is designed to raise the profile and reach of libraries in communities. The films are being used on County Council social media channels and with partner agencies to promote the service offers to relevant target audiences.
- Following an increase of anti-social and disruptive behaviour from customers, **specialist training for 100 front-line library staff on managing difficult situations** has been completed. Evaluation of the training sessions indicate that 94% of staff were positive about the training and felt that it is helpful in their day-to-day work.
- The **Record Office** held a successful **Open Day** in November to **celebrate the 50th anniversary of the West Sussex Archives Society (WSAS)**. Over 160 people attended, many of whom were new visitors. Attendees were able to enjoy behind the scenes tours and a display of the very many archives that the WSAS has helped the Record Office to purchase for its collections. The Sussex Family History Group provided advice and guidance to visitors, Screen Archive South East put on an archival film show and the Royal Sussex Regimental Association brought along a display of their museum collections. There were also displays on the latest Record Office projects including Transatlantic Ties, the New Jerusalem's Project featuring the archives of Crawley New Town and work on the HIV/AIDS Archives Project. The Open Day was supported by Cllr Duncan Crow as Cabinet Member, the High Sheriff, Andy Bliss, and by Lord Egremont, the President of WSAS.
- The two new West Sussex Public Health-funded **Trading Standards Enforcement Officers** took up their roles during the quarter, focusing on the sale of illegal vapes and illicit tobacco. In the officers' first operation, they seized 1,400 illegal vapes and tobacco from three shops in Littlehampton and Bognor. These new officers are also supporting the work of the team to tackle the sales of vapes to children by rogue businesses.
- Other **Trading Standards operations** on businesses in Worthing and Littlehampton took place during Q3 which resulted in a total of 580 illegal vapes, 2,258 illicit/counterfeit packs of hand rolling tobacco and 74 packs of illicit/counterfeit cigarettes being removed. In addition, the team also carried out an enforcement operation in Horsham at three target premises, where more illicit tobacco and illegal vapes were seized along with a seizure of cash under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

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>Measure: 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	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23		G
			A	G	G		
			247	515	753		
<p>Performance Analysis: Dec-23: Fire Safety Regulators have maintained a good level of performance during Q3. The service remains on schedule to meet its target for the year. In comparison to the nine monthly performance for 2022/23, the service has achieved 10% more fire safety audits so far this year than for the same period last year.</p> <p>Actions: The service is on track to deliver 1,000 inspections by the end of 2023/24. It should be noted that the level of performance is remaining high even when a number of fire safety inspectors were undertaking training courses in Q3.</p>							
10	<p>Measure: 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	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23		G
			G	G	G		
			1,298	2,622	3,828		
<p>Performance Analysis: Dec-23: 1,206 Safe and Well Visits (SWVs) and 327 home safety interventions were completed in Q3. There continues to be a significant increase from the number of SWVs delivered in previous years. At the end of Q3 2022/23, the team had completed 3,384 SWVs; whereas at Q3 2023/24, 3,828 visits have been accomplished – 444 more than the previous year. This measure is on track to meet the target of 5,000 SWVs this year.</p> <p>Actions: 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>Measure: Percentage of 'critical fires' where the first appliance in attendance meets our emergency response standard</p> <p>Reporting Frequency: Quarterly.</p>	89.0%	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23		G
			G	G	G		
			89.4%	94.7%	89.1%		
<p>Performance Analysis: Dec-23: Performance for the fifth consecutive quarter remains above target. Fire stations promptly respond to community incidents, demonstrating the commitment to professional standards in service delivery. Crews actively participate in fire safety initiatives, spending more time in high risk areas, contributing to swift response capability. These efforts are documented in Local Risk Management Plans, and joint fire control efficiently deploys resources using the dynamic cover tool to meet response standards.</p> <p>Actions: 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.</p>							
43	<p>Measure: Percentage of 'critical special service incidents' where the first appliance in attendance meets our emergency response standard</p> <p>Reporting Frequency: Quarterly.</p>	80.0%	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23		G
			G	G	G		
			82.2%	84.6%	84.6%		

Fire and Rescue	2023/24 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods	DoT	Year End Forecast
<p>Performance Analysis: Dec-23: For the fifth consecutive quarter, performance has consistently stayed strong, assuring that the integration of the Dynamic Cover Tool into operational procedures, offering detailed response time data at the district/local level to control room operators, is firmly established when dispatching fire engines to calls.</p> <p>Actions: 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.</p>				

Community Support Performance Measures

Community Support	2023/24 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods	DoT	Year End Forecast	
Measure: 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 G	Sep-23 G	Dec-23 G	G
		91.0%	94.0%	97.6%	
<p>Performance Analysis: Dec-23: The Service is currently performing well in relation to this KPI and is on track to reach year-end target. 98% of residents that are engaged with report an increase in their ability to deal with scams as a result of the visit. As part of these visits, the service have installed 108 call blockers into higher risk homes.</p> <p>Actions: The service continues to work with partners to keep residents safe.</p>					
Measure: Use of virtual/digital library services by residents Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Accumulative	5.45m	Jun-23 G	Sep-23 G	Dec-23 G	G
		1.69m	3.72m	5.81m	
<p>Performance Analysis: Dec-23: Increased use of YouTube channel as a result of brand-new video content produced as part of national Library On project.</p> <p>Actions: Continue to support growing demand though investment in eLibrary platforms and production of virtual and online library events content.</p>					
Measure: Community Hub provides positive outcomes for residents at first point of contact Reporting Frequency: Quarterly	95.0%	Jun-23 A	Sep-23 G	Dec-23 A	G
		92.0%	100%	94.0%	
<p>Performance Analysis: Dec-23: The Community Hub continues to deliver a high-quality service to the residents of West Sussex providing information, guidance signposting a practical support focusing on Cost of Living and Household Support Fund enquiries. We are continuing to regularly review the streamlining of processes as Household Support Fund moves us to a more digital focus.</p> <p>Actions: Although there is a reduction during this quarter, the service is still expected to average across the year to achieve the 95% target based on current work. An increase in demand was seen during Q3 due to Household Support Fund applications.</p>					

Finance Summary

Portfolio In Year Pressures and Mitigations

Pressures	(£m)	Mitigations and Underspending	(£m)	Year end budget variation (£m)
Fire and Rescue – Pressure relating to the reduction in Airwave grant funding	£0.235m	Fire and Rescue – Staff vacancies	(£0.300m)	
Fire and Rescue – Price increases for required fleet vehicle parts	£0.165m			
Community Support – Additional coroner costs projected following continued increase in the number of excess deaths since the pandemic.	£0.450m	Community Support – Utilisation of grant to fund staff supporting grant funded activities	(£0.538m)	
Community Support – Transfer of Coroner Officers from Sussex Police	£0.220m	Community Support – Libraries, Archives and Safety and Wellbeing staffing vacancies	(£0.134m)	
Community Support – Gypsy and Traveller site increased reactive maintenance and utility costs	£0.251m	Community Support – Additional ceremonies income projected.	(£0.100m)	
		Edes House – Addition income generation from external functions	(£0.020m)	
Community Support, Fire & Rescue Portfolio - Total	£1.321m		(£1.092m)	£0.229m

Financial Narrative on the Portfolio's Position

- As at the end of December, the forecast against the Community Support, Fire and Rescue budget is a projected overspend of £0.229m, an improvement of £0.096m when compared to the September position. The main budget variations are detailed below.

~~Fire and Rescue~~

- ~~The Fire and Rescue Service is projecting a £0.1m overspend at the end of December.~~
- ~~The **Home Office Firelink Grant** allocation continues to be reduced each year by 20%. The service has had a 40% reduction in funding to date and are mitigating this pressure through ensuring the use of radios for service critical activity only, although this has only partly mitigated the impact of the reduction and has left a pressure of £0.235m.~~
- ~~**Fleet maintenance** are reporting a notable increase in prices of vehicle parts which has led to a projected overspend of £0.165m.~~
- ~~These pressures are being actively mitigated by £0.3m of in-year savings arising from **managing vacancies** within the service.~~

Community Support

8. The Community Support Service is projecting a £0.129m overspend at the end of December.
9. 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 £0.450m of additional costs associated with increased pathology, body storage, histology and coroner time are included within the overall projection; this is an increase of £0.085m from the £0.365m reported in September.
10. The Coroner's Service has welcomed the **transfer of Coroner Officers from Sussex Police** from 1st April 2023. The projected costs associated with the transfer have increased by £0.060m from the £0.160m reported in September to £0.220m. Staff terms and conditions have now been agreed.
11. Additional costs and loss of income relating to the County Council's **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Sites** is projected this quarter. This is due to £0.113m of additional reactive maintenance expenditure forecast, alongside a shortfall of £0.048m of income at New Withy Park following on-going issues at the site and a shortfall of £0.090m in utility income across all sites due to the difference between the domestic and non-domestic energy price cap. Work is underway to resolve these issues including investigations into the option of amending utility provision for a council intermediary model to a resident/ supplier direct relationship.
12. Community Support is in **receipt of a number of grants** which are administered by the service. Following a recent reconciliation, £0.538m of staffing costs have been reimbursed from grant funding to reflect the staff supporting grant funded activities.
13. Staffing vacancies within the **Safety and Wellbeing Team** of £0.054m have increased the projected staffing underspend to £0.134m in December from £0.080m reported in September.
14. Additional income of £0.1m forecast within the **Registration Service** and £0.020m of income generation from external functions at **Edes House** remain.

Savings Delivery Update

15. 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)	December 2023		Narrative
Community Support - Optimise Use of Grants	2023/24	£0.200m	£0.200m	B	
Resilience and Emergency Team - Structural Review	2023/24	£0.100m	£0.100m	G	
Staffing vacancy increase in vacancy factor from 5% to 6%	2023/24	£0.370m	£0.370m	B	Staffing budgets currently assume a vacancy factor of 5% but over the last few years, this has averaged 6% across the organisation and has remained at this level in 2023/24.

Savings Key:				
R Significant Risk	A At Risk	G On Track	B Delivered	

Capital Programme

Summary - Capital

16. 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.
17. 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.
18. The portfolio's capital programme contains six projects. Four of the projects are in delivery and two are practically complete and are in their 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	Project: Fire and Rescue Equipment Block Programme - Block	G	G	G	£0.309m	N/A	£0.277m	£0.032m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: On-Going			Project Phase: In-Delivery				
	Narrative: Overall programme is on track.							
2	Project: Fleet Replacement Programme - Block	G	G	G	£4.072m	N/A	£0.135m	£3.937m

	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	In-Flight Projects			
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: On-Going			Project Phase: In-Delivery				
	Narrative: Projects are going through the governance process.							
	Project: Live Training Centre and Horsham Fire Station	G	G	G	£25.608m	£23.935m	£0.996m	£0.677m
3	Latest Estimated Completion Date: July 2023			Project Phase: Practically Complete - In Retention				
	Narrative: The project is currently in the defect's liability period. The project was among the finalists at the Excellence in Fire and Emergency Awards (December 2023), Categories: 'Project of the year' and 'Innovation of the year'. Funding remains for final invoices and retention payments.							
	Project: Fire and Rescue Estates Improvement Programme	G	G	G	£1.852m	£-	£-	£1.852m
4	Latest Estimated Completion Date: TBC			Project Phase: In-Delivery				
	Narrative: Full Business Case progressed through Capital Governance in October 2023. Key Decision taken in December 2023.							
	Project: Worthing Community Hub	G	G	G	£2.852m	£2.693m	£-	£0.159m
5	Latest Estimated Completion Date: May 2022			Project Phase: Practically Complete - In Retention				
	Narrative: Works complete.							
	Project: Libraries Digital Asset	G	G	G	£0.030m	£-	£0.025m	£0.005m
6	Latest Estimated Completion Date: March 2024			Project Phase: In Delivery				
	Narrative: Project is on track. All timescales and budgets are being met. Evaluation of project now underway before evaluation document sent to grant awarding body in January.							

19. 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

20. 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.

21. 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.