

Community Support, Fire and Rescue Portfolio - Summary

Performance Summary

1. Performance highlights this quarter include:

Fire and Rescue Service

- His Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) have recently visited to conduct their third **full inspection of the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service**. This inspection involved an eight-week review of almost all parts of the organisation. The service awaits the outcome of the Inspection with the report due shortly.
- The West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (WSFRS) **Annual Statement of Assurance 2023-24** was approved by Cabinet, highlighting that for the second year in a row, all four of our County Council performance objectives were met. In 2023-24, the annual target for the number of Safe and Well Visits delivered was increased by 25% from the previous year and delivery exceeded the increased target by 335 Safe and Well Visits.
- Throughout the last quarter, the service has developed its **Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024 – 2025** in-line with the requirement set by The National Framework. The Productivity and Efficiency Plan sets out the current funding assumptions and gives specific detail on how this money is spent within the service. It highlights how the service has contributed to closing the budget gap in the wider County Council, current performance and how it is delivering value for money compared to other fire and rescue services as well as defining how it aspires to improve productivity and efficiency.
- A project to **review the Retained Duty System** has been launched as part of the commitments set out in the Community Risk Management Plan. The project aims to improve the current systems and processes, as a key priority enabling the service to co-create a system that works for a modern-day fire and rescue service.

Community Support

- A **new Record Office website** was launched on Sussex Day (16th June) which offers brand new functionality for residents to search and access a rich database of historic images and records as part of work to extend the reach of our archives service to engage new audiences in our heritage. The new online platform allows customers to access useful research guides online, search the collections and place requests for items they wish to view in the Search Room. There is also a brand-new online shop making it easier for customers to browse and purchase from our collection of exclusive books and DVDs.
- The Library Service received grant funding of £30k to deliver a **pilot adult literacy support project**, matching learners with volunteers to complete a one-to-one 'learning to read' programme. During this quarter, the scheme had

16 learners registered and a further seven waiting to be matched with volunteers. The grant funding concludes in Q2 so work now is focused on embedding the pilot practice to ensure that core library staff can maintain the offer to reach even more adults in need of basic literacy support.

- The **Registration Service** delivered 1,079 ceremonies, registered 2,287 deaths and 2,132 births during Q1. The service continues to work closely with the Medical Examiner's Office in preparation for the Medical Examiner's scrutiny of all medical certificate of cause of death (MCCDs) becoming statutory on 9th September 2024.
- In Q1, the **Coroners Service** received 937 referrals resulting in the opening of 190 Inquests. Coroners concluded 153 Inquests between April and June 2024 meaning a total of 359 court sessions were listed. In addition, the new Coroners Court facility in Horsham is now operational.
- The County Council has been allocated £4.870m of **Household Support Fund** for the period 1st April – 30th September 2024. Funding has been distributed in accordance with the guidance by a range of partner agencies including District and Boroughs, Citizens Advice, and community-based organisations. During the quarter, the Community Hub received 5,325 online forms requesting support from members of the public and external professionals. Of the practical support provided:
 - 4,825 requests for urgent practical assistance have been met by way of vouchers or purchasing goods or services that has seen over 14,000 individuals supported.
 - Food support continues to see the largest demand with 97% of requests being from those in urgent need of food supplies.
 - Families continue to be the largest cohort requesting support with 64% of requests received from households with children.
 - During the May half-term, 19,621 children eligible for term-time Free Schools Meals were supported with a £10 supermarket voucher.
- The **Trading Standards Service** were extremely pleased that in 100% of **test purchases of age restricted products** recently conducted, no trader sold to the underage volunteer. This is a big improvement on the situation from two years ago when the authority adopted a zero-tolerance approach due to the high levels of non-compliance found.
- During the quarter, officers working on an **initiative funded by Public Health** seized 13,000 illicit cigarettes, 29 pouches of illicit tobacco, and 1,500 illegal vapes.
- During the quarter, **two high-profile Trading Standards court cases concluded**:
 - A rogue trader was [sentenced to six years imprisonment after a lengthy investigation by Trading Standards](#). One victim paid more than

£95,000 after originally being quoted less than £50 for some loose roof tiles.

- A Lancing shopkeeper received a [12-month community order to carry out 240 hours of unpaid work, fines totaling almost £5,000 and prosecution costs of £3,000](#) after he pleaded guilty to a series of alcohol and tobacco offences.

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		2024/25 Target	Performance Over the Last 3 Periods			DoT	Year End Position or Forecast
3	Measure: Fire Safety Order regulated buildings in West Sussex having received an audit under the Risk Based Inspection Programme Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Accumulative Aim High Measure	1,000	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	▶	G
			G	G	G		
			753	1,032	260		
Performance Analysis: Jun-24: Q1 performance has exceeded the same period last year. This is a particularly notable achievement given recent retirements in the team. Additionally, significant resources have been allocated to managing ongoing Crown Court cases, which demanded over 80 hours of inspector time in Q1. The strategic focus remains on maintaining high performance while managing these substantial legal commitments and a challenging succession planning landscape. Actions: The number of audits that have been undertaken in Q1 is satisfactory. The percentage of audits being undertaken from the Risk Based Inspection Programme sits at 73% of all audits undertaken which demonstrates that we continue to prioritise higher risk work with the resourcing challenges that we are currently experiencing.							
10	Measure: Number of Safe and Well Visits delivered to households with at least one vulnerability or risk factor Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Accumulative Aim High Measure	5,000	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	▶	G
			G	G	G		
			3,828	5,335	1,552		
Performance Analysis: Jun-24: In Q1, a total of 1,552 Safe and Well Visits were completed. This is the highest number of Safe and Well Visits completed in a single quarter. An additional 255 Home Fire Safety Interventions were also completed by the service. 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.							
42	Measure: Percentage of 'critical fires' where the first appliance in attendance meets our emergency response standard Reporting Frequency: Quarterly Aim High Measure	89.0%	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	▲	G
			G	G	G		
			90.5%	90.0%	91.9%		
Performance Analysis: Jun-24: Performance has remained consistently strong for the seventh quarter in a row, surpassing the target set. The fire stations, including the Day Crewed 7 stations, respond quickly to community incidents, demonstrating our commitment to high service delivery standards. Crews actively participate in fire safety initiatives identified in their Local Risk Management Plans, spending more time in high-risk community areas to improve the services							

Fire and Rescue		2024/25 Target	Performance Over the Last 3 Periods			DoT	Year End Position or Forecast
<p>ability to respond quicker. The Fire Control Centre continues to effectively allocate resources using the dynamic cover tool to help us meet response standards.</p> <p>Actions: Monitoring and reviewing the performance data at a local level through the Service Delivery Governance meetings and continuing to deliver against Local Risk Management Plans will continue to enable learning through positive practice and identifying areas for improvement.</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> <p>Aim High Measure</p>	80.0%	<p>Dec-23</p> <p>G</p> <p>86.0%</p>	<p>Mar-24</p> <p>G</p> <p>83.7%</p>	<p>Jun-24</p> <p>G</p> <p>86.3%</p>	<p>G</p> <p></p>	G
	<p>Performance Analysis: Jun-24: Performance has stayed strong for seven quarters in a row. The incorporation of the Dynamic Cover Tool into the operational processes ensures that Control Room operators at district and local levels have quick access to detailed response time information. This integration is crucial in effectively deploying fire engines to emergency situations.</p> <p>Actions: The Fire and Rescue Service continues to work with partner agencies to help improve the time taken to transfer calls and information, enabling control staff to mobilise quicker. The service is also working hard to maximise the availability of retained fire engines at times of the day when it is known these incidents are most likely to occur, using the Crewing Optimisation Group and Retained Liaison Officer.</p>						

Community Support Performance Measures

Community Support		2024/25 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods			DoT	Year End Position or Forecast
33	<p>Measure: Use of virtual/digital library services by residents</p> <p>Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Accumulative</p> <p>Aim High Measure</p>	8.8 million	<p>Dec-23</p> <p>G</p> <p>5.810m</p>	<p>Mar-24</p> <p>G</p> <p>7.890m</p>	<p>Jun-24</p> <p>G</p> <p>2.273m</p>	<p>G</p> <p></p>	G
	<p>Performance Analysis: Jun-24: Due to a continued increase in popularity of the virtual and digital library services, it is proposed that the 2024/25 target for this measure is increased to 8.8m.</p> <p>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 through investment in eLibrary platforms and production of virtual and online library events content.</p>						
34	<p>Measure: Community Hub provides positive outcomes for residents at first point of contact</p> <p>Reporting Frequency: Quarterly</p> <p>Aim High Measure</p>	95.0%	<p>Dec-23</p> <p>G</p> <p>98.0%</p>	<p>Mar-24</p> <p>G</p> <p>96.0%</p>	<p>Jun-24</p> <p>G</p> <p>99.0%</p>	<p>G</p> <p></p>	G
	<p>Performance Analysis: Jun-24: 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.</p> <p>Actions: The County Council is continuing to regularly review the streamlining of processes as Household Support Fund moves towards a more digital focus.</p>						

Community Support		2024/25 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods		DoT	Year End Position or Forecast
63	Measure: Percentage of identified targets receiving intervention by Trading Standards in relation to regulating the supply of tobacco and alcohol	100%			Jun-24	A
	Reporting Frequency: Quarterly				R	
	Aim High Measure		New Measure	New Measure	60% 	
<p>Performance Analysis: Jun-24: The work relating to illegal vapes, illicit tobacco and age restricted sales continues to absorb significant resources for the Service and this area of work is reflected at both regional and national level.</p> <p>Actions: Officers have further days planned with a young person as a volunteer test purchaser and inspections using a detector dog.</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 Firelink Grant used to fund Airwave system	£0.420m	Fire and Rescue – One-off rebate from Airwaves contractor	(£0.150m)	
		Fire and Rescue – Projected workforce underspend	(£0.270m)	
Fire and Rescue Service - Subtotal	£0.420m		(£0.420m)	(£0.000m)
Coroners Service – Increasing service delivery costs	£0.370m	Registration Service – Additional ceremony income and increase in statutory certificate fees	(£0.150m)	
Gypsy and Travellers – Increase in additional reactive maintenance	£0.200m			
Community Support Service - Subtotal	£0.570m		(£0.150m)	£0.420m
Community Support, Fire & Rescue Portfolio - Total	£0.990m		(£0.570m)	£0.420m

Financial Narrative on the Portfolio's Position

- As at the end of June, the forecast for the Community Support, Fire and Rescue Portfolio is a projected overspend of £0.420m.

Fire and Rescue

4. The Fire and Rescue Service is projecting a balanced budget as at the end of June, however there are a number of pressures and mitigations that the service is controlling to forecast this position.
5. The **Home Office Firelink Grant** allocation continues to be reduced each year by 20%. The service has had a 60% reduction in funding to date and are partly mitigating this pressure through ensuring the use of radios for service critical activity only. This pressure is also partly mitigated this year from **a one-off income rebate** of £0.150m following a change in the Airwave contractor.
6. The continued increasing costs associated with **Fleet Maintenance** is of concern, however the service is actively reviewing commitments to ensure costs do not exceed the set budget.

Community Support

7. The Community Support Service is projecting a £0.420m overspend as at the end of June.
8. The pressure experienced in the **Coroner's Service** in 2023/24 has continued to increase with additional costs associated with increased pathology, body storage, histology, toxicology, post mortems and coroner time, leading to a forecast £0.470m overspend.
9. Additional reactive maintenance works required across the County Council's **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Sites** has resulted in a forecast £0.2m overspend.
10. Additional income of around £0.150m is forecast within the **Registration Service** due to an increase in ceremonies scheduled to take place during the year as well as additional income from the statutory fee for certifications which increased from £11.00 to £12.50 from 1st April.

Savings Delivery Update

11. There are £0.575m of savings to be delivered within the portfolio in 2024/25. Details relating to each saving is reported in the table below:

Saving Activity	Year	Saving to be delivered in 2024/25	June 2024		Narrative
Fire and Rescue – Prevention and Protection – Review of risk reduction areas	2024/25	£0.150m	£0.150m	A	Saving is expected to be delivered in a different way than originally envisaged.

Saving Activity	Year	Saving to be delivered in 2024/25	June 2024		Narrative
Fire and Rescue – Staffing, Training and Equipment	2024/25	£0.175m	£0.175m	B	Saving delivered.
Fire and Rescue - Additional Income from Horsham Training Centre	2024/25	£0.150m	£0.150m	G	
Community Support – Record Office - Opening Hours	2024/25	£0.100m	£0.100m	G	

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

Capital Programme

Summary - Capital

12. The Community Support, Fire and Rescue Capital Programme; as approved by County Council in February 2024, agreed a programme totalling £3.025m for 2024/25. Budget of £0.141m originally profiled to spend in 2024/25, was accelerated into 2023/24, revising the capital programme to £2.884m.

13. The portfolio’s capital programme contains four projects. Two 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 2023/24	2024/25 Expenditure	In Flight Remaining Project Budget
		Time	Quality	Cost				
1	Project: Fire and Rescue Equipment Block Programme - Block	G	G	G	£0.255m	N/A	£0.023m	£0.232m
	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	£3.937m	N/A	£0.033m	£3.904m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: On-Going			Project Phase: In Delivery				
	Narrative: Programme is currently progressing to plan although there are some issues in relation to cost being reviewed.							

	Community Support, Fire Rescue Capital Projects	Performance RAG Status			Total Project Budget	Previous Years Expenditure To 2023/24	2024/25 Expenditure	In Flight Remaining Project Budget
		Time	Quality	Cost				
3	Project: Live Training Centre and Horsham Fire Station	G	G	G	£25.608m	£24.971m	£0.002m	£0.635m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: July 2023			Project Phase: Practically Complete – In Retention				
	Narrative: The project is practically complete and is currently in the defect’s liability period. The project won the Construction Excellence SECBE Award of Building Project of the Year 2024- over £20m category, in June 2024.							
4	Project: Worthing Community Hub	G	G	G	£2.852m	£2.796m	£0.003m	£0.053m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: May 2022			Project Phase: Practically Complete - In Retention				
	Narrative: Project complete.							

14. 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 2024.

Risk

15. The following table summarises the risks within the Corporate Risk Register that would have a direct impact on the portfolio. Risks to other portfolios are specified within the respective portfolio sections.

Risk Number	Risk Description	Previous Quarter Score	Current Score
CR77	If the council have ineffective or untested disaster recovery arrangements internally and in collaboration with partners/third parties, there is a risk that we will not be adequately prepared to respond to and recover from unplanned or unexpected serious/critical civil or malicious incidents (e.g., significant local or regional power outages, CBRN, pandemics, fuel shortages). This may lead to the council being unable to deliver or ensure access to core services.	10	10

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