

# **Community Support, Fire and Rescue Portfolio - Summary**

## **Performance Summary**

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

### **Fire and Rescue Service**

- With the continued challenges for safe and well visits we have focussed on conducting sustained post fire activity in and around the communities where fires have occurred. This is proving beneficial with a number of additional referrals and fire safety checks being undertaken by our crews and volunteers.
- To supplement our full fire safety audits, our frontline crews are now conducting business fire safety checks in low-risk high street premises like shops and take-aways. These are premises that would otherwise not attract an inspection by the fire service, but the early indication is that this activity is yielding some positive risk reduction results and helping our partner agencies with other regulatory issues such as housing and environmental health.
- The new joint fire control centre continues to deliver improvements with the latest changes to the mobilising system helping to improve appliance attendance times. We have also approved a new working group to begin to look at future technology that will further assist the reduction in mobilising times and wider operational awareness for control.
- Now that the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) has been approved and launched we are busy planning the implementation to ensure that the key proposals and objectives of the plan are delivered in a prioritised and timely way. Starting with the extension of the day crewed system and review of the retained duty system we anticipate these two projects will contribute significantly to the improved availability, resilience, and performance of the service.
- To ensure the golden thread of the CRMP all the objectives filter down through the organisation into service plans which get approved at our Service Executive Board and then into the personal objectives for our teams which are being set as part of the performance discussions which are being completed this quarter.

### **Community Support**

- During this quarter the National Test and Trace service allocated over 24,000 cases for contact tracing to the Community Hub until the announcement made by the Prime Minister on 21 February 2022 which set out the plans for living safely with Covid-19 in England ceasing contact tracing activity.
- The Community Hub have been working closely with internal teams, partners and District and Borough Councils utilising the Household Support Fund to support over 14,000 individuals across 5,100 households during quarter four. This support has been focused on those requiring support with food, energy,

water bills and who are experiencing hardship for reasons not necessarily linked to Covid-19.

- At the end of quarter four, the Community Hub began leading on a range of activities to support the Homes for Ukraine Scheme including DBS checks, safeguarding checks and property visits for all Sponsors. The Community Hub is managing all contact and enquiries from Sponsors including an online enquiry form, telephone, and email enquiries.
- The Customer Relations Team have continued to successfully manage the upswing in complaints following the easing of pandemic restrictions, processing 497 new Complaints and MP enquiries over the last quarter as well as 26 stage two complaints.
- In quarter four the Registration Service has seen deaths go back to pre-pandemic levels, however due to workload of doctors and hospitals we are having significant delays in receiving the medical certificate of cause of death (MCCD), which has a knock-on effect on timeliness to register.
- We saw a record number of notices in March due to the high demand for ceremonies across the County. An additional 500 ceremonies have been booked for this year as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.
- The One Public Estate (OPE) initiative has continued to develop and deliver fifteen projects during quarter four. WSCC has been awarded £0.1m development funding to support development of new OPE projects.
- In March the Record Office was awarded a £0.092m grant to carry out a survey of AIDS and HIV archives in England and Wales over the next two years. The archive of AVERT, a leading HIV charity set up in Horsham in 1986, was deposited at the Record Office in 2021.
- Customer visits to library buildings have grown 250% over the year, reflecting continued resumption of services, representing 50% of pre-pandemic levels. Physical book borrowing has returned to 80% of pre-pandemic levels, evidencing the need to re-grow the programme of events and activities providing community-based support in addition to the digital offer which has been widely used during the pandemic and is being sustained.
- Healthy Child Programme clinics began operating from 12 libraries during quarter four, sustaining local access to health visitors for families in those communities.
- As part of the work that the Trading Standards undertakes to prevent age restricted products being sold to children the Service requested a review of a Littlehampton shop's alcohol licence after it sold two bottles of alcohol to a child volunteer. The shop had already received advice and guidance from officers after receiving reports that e-cigarettes were being supplied to children. The licence was suspended for seven days. A similar process is underway for a Worthing shop.

## Our Council Performance Measures

Community Support, Fire and Rescue		2021/22 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods			DoT	Performance Analysis	Actions
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.	1,750	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22		Mar-22: The wider protection and fire safety environment is a very challenging one currently with significant demand for qualified people to assist with the changes in fire and building safety regulations. This has created unexpected turnover for our protection team and challenges in recruitment and retention. This has affected our ability to meet the target of 1750 visits which is based on a full department staffing model that is operating at competent level. Significant recruitment has taken place but this has the effect of further demand on qualified staff to help in developing new starters and Covid is also still playing a part in restricting numbers, both from a staffing perspective, but also from having the right person at the audit from the business to provide the right information.	Significant work has taken place to recruit colleagues with skills and backgrounds that will expedite their development in fire safety. We are also working hard to attract qualified officers back into the service to support schemes such as primary authority and fire safety engineering. Now that the new fire safety system and smarter working has been embedded, we are confident that officers will be able to work independently of the office in order to improve productivity and respond quicker to fire safety issues that occur at short notice. We are also continuing the roll out training for station-based response crews to undertake fire safety checks within their communities. Whilst these will not be recorded as full audits, they will reduce risk and increase our footprint into the built environment and therefore enhance our business engagement, providing additional routes to identify unsafe fire safety practice. These checks are already proving valuable with increasing evidence of wider fire safety concerns being uncovered by crews that ordinarily may not have surfaced through our routine inspections.
			468	623	841	↗		
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.	4,000	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22		Mar-22: In Q4 we carried out 883 SWVs and 192 home checks. We have seen a month on month increase in visits in 21/22, ending the year with a 38% increase on last April's figure. We attribute the increase to the remedial actions taken and the ongoing development of referral pathways. Staff based at fire stations have undertaken reactive post-incident as well as proactive referral generation activity. Whilst restrictions relating to the pandemic have been removed, the impact of the pandemic remains evident with a reduction in referrals and requests for visits with vulnerable people still less willing to have services in their homes. Neighbouring FRSs have seen similarly low numbers of visits. Whilst the total number of visits is below this year's target we have delivered a 12% increase on last year. The emergence of the Omicron variant in Q1 resulted in a shortfall that we were unable to recover from. In addition to the 3355 full visits completed we have visited a further 1075 homes to repair, replace, or install smoke detection equipment, with advice being provided where relevant – this gives a total number of visits to 4,430 homes that the FRS visited to make people safer.	We continue to work with our partners, particularly in health and social care, along with telecare providers to increase referrals of Safe and Well Visits. We are also offering revisits to some members of the public due to the time since we last visited them. We have changed the way our stations are supporting and completing Safe and Well Visits through new guidance and we are reviewing risk reduction activity to ensure that every contact can result in a Safe and Well Visit where possible. In many cases the resident has declined a full Safe and Well Visit, this may in part be due to Covid which we hope will change as we move forward. We continue to use data to target our activity to areas in which our most vulnerable residents live and we are making the most of every opportunity to deliver focused community safety activities following incidents at residential properties. This will lead to more prevention activity being delivered to those at risk or those affected by an incident.
			1,561	2,468	3,355	↗		
42	Percentage of 'critical fires' where the first appliance in attendance meets our emergency response standard	89.0%	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22		Mar-22: Performance for this quarter is 93.58%, which is our highest recorded quarter for this performance measure. For the last nine months we have been trialling the Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT) in fire control. This tool allows control operators to assess the impact of any standby moves on response times before implementing them. In Q4 we adjusted the way that the DCT is used by providing data on response times broken down to a district or local level to the control room operators. The first quarter's results for this approach are promising but we will continue to monitor and to ensure that this is an embedded improvement.	We are carefully monitoring the impact of the DCT and continue to work with JFC to train the control operators and identify every possible efficiency in our mobilising system. We also continue to undertake work at our fire stations to ensure we are doing everything we can to respond to incidents as quickly as possible.
			82.1%	86.7%	93.6%	↗		

Community Support, Fire and Rescue		2021/22 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods			DoT	Performance Analysis	Actions
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%	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22		Mar-22: We measure critical special service calls separately from critical fires. Critical special service calls can occur anywhere in the county and often away from the population centres which either (due to the number of incidents) warrant a wholetime fire station or have sufficient population density to support an RDS station. This is the most challenging of our three attendance measures and is particularly influenced by the availability of RDS appliances. Performance for this quarter is 80.06%, which is our joint second highest recorded quarter's performance. For the last nine months we have been trialling the Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT) in fire control. This tool allows control operators to assess the impact of any standby moves on response times before implementing them. In Q4 we adjusted the way that the DCT is used by providing data on response times broken down to a district or local level to the control room operators. The first quarter's results for this approach are promising but we will continue to monitor and to ensure that this is an embedded improvement.	We are carefully monitoring the impact of the DCT and continue to work with JFC to train the control operators and identify every possible efficiency in our mobilising system. Specifically with critical special service calls we are working with partner agencies to help improve the time taken to transfer calls and information. We also continue to undertake work at our fire stations to ensure we are doing everything we can to respond to incidents as quickly as possible as well as maximise the availability of RDS fire engines at times of the day when we know these incidents are most likely.
			77.1%	77.9%	80.6%	↗		
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%	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22		Mar-22: The Service has been able to maintain a 100% intervention rate to the referrals received from the National Scams Team.	Using proceeds of crime confiscated from rogue traders a project is underway installing call blocker devices to protect the vulnerable in their own homes.
			82.0%	100.0%	100.0%	→		
33	Use of virtual/digital library services by residents  Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Accumulative	5.45m	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22		Mar-22: 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.	Continue to support growing demand though investment in eLibrary platforms and production of virtual and online library events content
			2.93m	4.31m	5.81m	↗		
34	Number of people reached and supported via the West Sussex Community Hub during the Covid-19 pandemic  Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Accumulative	35,000	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22		Mar-22: 76k residents supported to March 2022. This includes 59k residents supported as part of the Central Government Covid-19 Shielding Programme, which ended on the 15/9/2021. From October 2021 the Community Hub has supported residents with Covid-19 related needs and households with wider essential needs such as food, energy, and water bills via the Household Support Fund. Please note this measure does not include the volumes for the Local Tracing Partnership.	The Community Hub continues to provide support to residents remaining agile in its delivery, flexing to support where required, helping those who need additional help and support due to the impact of COVID-19 and to vulnerable households.
			59,097	62,270	76,477	↗		

## Finance Summary

### Portfolio In Year Pressures and Mitigations

Pressures	(£m)	Mitigations and Underspending	(£m)	Year end budget variation (£m)
Covid-19 pandemic expenditure	£10.271m	Funding from Covid-19 grant	(£10.271m)	
Fire – Additional costs within the Electronic Services Group and Joint Fire Control	£0.250m	Fire – Reduced support costs arising from staffing vacancies across the Fire Service	(£0.206m)	
Fire - Increased pressure from supply of enhanced tactical PPE firefighter uniforms	£0.088m	Fire – Reduced spend in fleet services on staffing and fuel	(£0.082m)	
Fire - Increase in costs of front-line provision driven by increased overtime within the Fire Response Service	£0.333m	Communities – Increased demand for registrar's services	(£0.222m)	
Communities – Additional cost following work undertaken on long inquests	£0.189m	Communities –Staffing vacancies and additional income within Trading Standards	(£0.248m)	
		Communities – Underspending and staffing vacancies within Libraries, Archives and Safety and Wellbeing teams.	(£0.487m)	
		Communities - In year underspending from homeworking/ change in service delivery due to pandemic restrictions	(£0.065m)	
<b>Community Support, Fire &amp; Rescue Portfolio - Total</b>	<b>£11.131m</b>		<b>(£11.581m)</b>	<b>(£0.450m)</b>

### Significant Financial Issues and Risks Arising

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

### Financial Narrative on the Portfolio's Position

- The 2021/22 outturn position for the Community Support, Fire and Rescue Portfolio is an underspend of £0.450m. This is a reduction of £0.753m when compared to the £0.303m overspend forecasted in December. The main movement during this period relates to a reduction in staffing expenditure within Communities.

### Review of the 2021/22 Financial Year

- During the year, a number of pressures emerged within the Fire and Rescue Services including:
  - £0.250m of additional costs relating to the Electronic Services Group and the operation of the Joint Fire Control.
  - £0.088m of additional costs relating to the supply of enhanced tactical protective firefighter uniforms.

- £0.333m of additional costs within front line services covering Response, Prevention and Protection largely driven by overtime expenditure within the Fire Response team.
5. These costs have been partly mitigated by £0.260m of reduced support costs arising from vacancies across the Fire Service and a £0.082m underspend in Fleet Services following a staffing vacancy and a reduction in planned fuel costs where reduced utilisation has exceeded inflationary price pressures.
  6. Within Communities, the Coroner's Service have had £0.189m of additional costs associated with the undertaking of inquests during the year. This budgetary pressure has been mitigated by:
    - £0.222m of increased income from Registrar's Services, due to an increase in demand for ceremonies following the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions during the year.
    - £0.248m of underspending within the Trading Standards Service following in-year staffing vacancies and additional income.
    - £0.487m of underspending within Libraries, Archives and Safety and Wellbeing Teams due to staffing vacancies during the pandemic.
    - £0.065m of in-year homeworking savings as a direct result of reduced travel during the pandemic.

### Proposed Carry Forward Requests

7. A number of carry forward requests have been actioned during the closing of the accounts including the following items within the Community Support, Fire and Rescue Portfolio:

2021/22 Carry Forward Requests	Amount
<b>Domestic Homicide Reviews</b> – Due to legal processes beyond the authorities' control, there are a number of outstanding review cases which were not completed in year. The cost of these reviews (once complete) will be realised in 2022/23.	£115,000
<b>Bequest for Worthing Fire Station</b> – A generous bequest has been left to Worthing Fire Station. Plans are being considered on how this gift will be utilised.	£98,000
<b>Trading Standards - Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) Restricted Funds</b> – Funding received from proceeds of crime has been carried forward into 2022/23 to be used for specific projects in detection and prevention of future crime.	£37,800

## Savings Delivery Update

8. 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	March 2022		Narrative	2022/23
Communities - Increased income from Registrars Services	150	150	B		B

Saving Activity	2021/22 Savings £000	March 2022		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	B		B
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		B

### Savings Key:

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

## Capital Programme

### Performance Summary - Capital

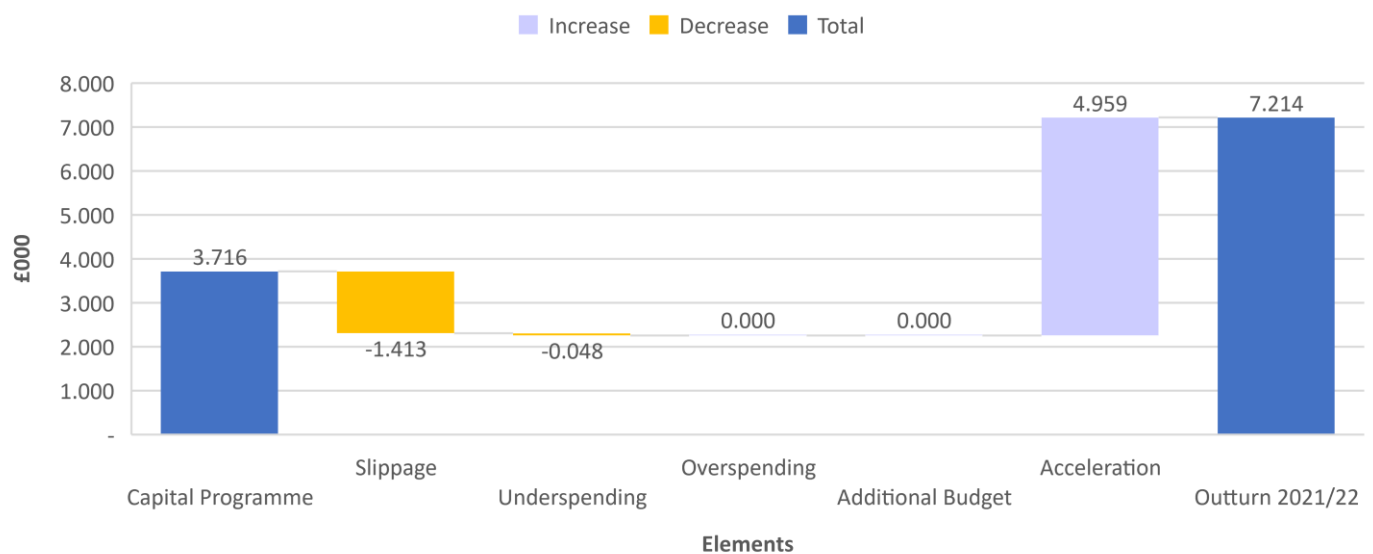
9. There are six schemes within the portfolio with all six schemes in delivery rated green, indicating that the schemes are progressing as planned.

### Finance Summary - Capital

10. 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.
11. During the year, the Portfolio spent £7.214m, an increase of £2.484m when compared to the profiled spend in December 2021.



## Capital Programme - Community Support, Fire and Rescue 2021/22



### Key:

Capital Programme – The revised planned expenditure for 2021/22 as at 1st April 2021.

Slippage – Funding which was planned to be spent in 2021/22 but has since been reprofiled into future years.

Underspending – Unused funding following the completion of projects.

Overspending – Projects that require further funding over and above the original approved budget.

Additional Budget – Additional external funding that has entered the capital programme for the first time.

Acceleration – Agreed funding which has been brought forward from future years.

Outturn 2021/22 – Total capital programme expenditure as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

12. Details of movements of the financial profiling within the capital programme between December and March are as follows:

- **Slippage: (-£1.413m). Movement since Q3 report: (-£0.463m)**
  - **Worthing Community Hub – (-£0.159m)** - This project has completed. £0.159m has been reprofiled into 2022/23 whilst the final invoices are negotiated, it is likely there will be a small underspend that would be returned corporately.
  - **Fleet – (-£0.150m)** – Small amount of slippage as costs profiled were slightly different to actuals, expenditure will go through in 2022/23.
  - **Fire Equipment – (-£0.134m)** – Internal resourcing issues are causing delays in being able to progress for approval therefore the funding has been reprofiled into 2022/23.
  - **Fire Equipment – (-£0.020m)** - Internal resourcing issues are causing delays in being able to progress for approval therefore the funding has been reprofiled into 2022/23.
- **Underspending: (-£0.048m). Movement since Q3 report: £0.000m**



- **Acceleration: £4.959m. Movement since Q3 report: £2.947m**
  - **Live Training Centre and Horsham Fire Station: £2.947m -**  
Works on the new fire station have continued to progress at pace therefore funding from 2022/23 was accelerated to meet expenditure.

## Risk

13. 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 <b>HMICFRS improvement plan</b> , leading to an adverse effect on service delivery; which may result in failing any subsequent inspection.	15	15

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