

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

- July saw the much-anticipated publication of the Her Majesty Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) report from the second full round of inspections. The report highlighted the marked improvement in the service since the first formal inspection in 2018 but noted that there was still more work to do. Across the three pillars, the service was judged as requires improvement in effectiveness and people whilst achieving good in the efficiency pillar. We will now focus on an action plan to respond to the one remaining cause of concern which relates to people and culture. Our Fire and Rescue Service Improvement Plan is therefore now completed and this action plan, along with ongoing continuous improvement work, will now be managed through our People Service Plan within the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).
- The second quarter also saw one of the busiest operational periods for the Fire Service in recent history with the impact of the long hot summer and record high temperatures. There was significant demand on resources both nationally and here in West Sussex with many neighbouring counties experiencing protracted major wildfire incidents. We responded with well-rehearsed business continuity procedures and support from our specialist wildfire tactical advisors to ensure that we remained prepared throughout this difficult period.
- The summer period saw lots of public engagement and events with many very successful open days at fire stations in Worthing, Shoreham, Crawley, Haywards Heath, and many more. This was the first time in over two years that stations had been able to fully open their doors and with a mixture of warm weather, excellent media and exciting displays, we had record crowds around the county to help us promote crucial community safety messages including the very successful 'disposable barbecues campaign'.
- A number of major projects and project consultations began during this quarter including the first formal CRMP project on 'Day Crewed 7' where we are planning to increase immediate response availability across four-day crewed stations from five to seven days. We also launched two major procurement projects in collaboration with Surrey and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Services to jointly purchase breathing apparatus and incident command vehicles. These are the first projects of this size and scale being led by West Sussex which present an exciting opportunity for greater operational alignment between the services whilst providing wider efficiency and economies of scale in the process.

Community Support

- Teams continue to work together to respond to the needs of Ukrainians entering the UK. Demand remains high and as a result a new Ukraine Support Team has been set up to deal with locality-based need and support, complex needs requiring ongoing casework and the provision of relevant information to enable customers to help themselves and build their independence. Proactive calls are also being made to all sponsors and guests at month four to understand if they are intending to remain in their placement or discuss their plans after the initial six-month period. This is being complemented with a programme of engagement sessions undertaken with guests and hosts approaching the six-month point. In addition to the £350 monthly payment for sponsors, a £400 payment is being made at the four-month stay point to offset some of the additional utility bill and household expense experienced as a result of hosting guests.
- The Community Hub has been working closely with partners distributing the second round of the Household Support Fund. Early analysis indicates that over 3,868 households or 10,821 individuals have been supported by the Household Support Fund (second allocation) since April 2022. Additionally, the Community Hub, with other partners, are distributing funds to those experiencing hardship including Citizens Advice and Carers Support West Sussex.
- The Countering Extremism Team provided 31 different training sessions (both virtually and face to face) to a total of 509 participants, enabling them to recognise the signs of radicalisation and to take appropriate action. By the end of the second quarter, some 245 taxi drivers were trained in essential safeguarding (covering modern slavery, county lines, exploitation, domestic abuse and radicalisation) as part of their license arrangements with district and boroughs across West Sussex.
- During this quarter, 195 residents/professionals engaged in digital safety training. 5,409 people are currently signed up to receive the monthly Staying Safe Online E-newsletter. It is estimated that over 200,000 people were reached via sharing key online safety information by social media, radio, press release and newsletters.
- Customer visits to libraries have continued to grow following the disruption of lockdowns, with visits this period up 41% compared with the second quarter of 2021/22. The Summer Reading Challenge also grew in participation with 10,436 children taking part; an increase of 24% when compared to the 2021/22 uptake.
- The Record Office partnership with Ancestry has resulted in parish registers of baptisms, marriages and burials for West and East Sussex, dating back to 1538, being digitised and made available on the Ancestry website with over 1.3 million views in the first six weeks alone. The first royalty payments have been received for this new income stream, with further records due to go online over the next year. Ancestry is now available free of charge for residents to use at West Sussex Record Office and all libraries.

- For ceremonies, the first half of the year has been exceptionally busy for notices of intent with 4,330 taken. This is a 37% increase compared to the five-year pre-Covid average of 3,160 for this period. 2,577 ceremonies were delivered between April – September, 25% more than the five-year pre-covid average of 2,058 for this period.
- Within Trading Standards there was a seizure of 6,000 illicit cigarettes and 8kg of illicit rolling tobacco seized from shops in Worthing and Littlehampton. 10,600 'Huggy Wuggy' and 'Marvel Superhero' plush and battery powered toys were stopped at Gatwick Airport as they were non-compliant with toy safety requirements. Samples of Cannabidiol (CBD) food taken for analysis showed some contained banned cannabinoids and one £30 jar of jam only contained 10% of the declared CBD. American authorities have also been working with the UK National Trading Standards Scams Team, which has resulted in our Trading Standards Team receiving money to pass back to around 30 local scam victims.

Our Council Performance Measures

Fire and Rescue Service Performance Measures

- The following section provides updates of the performance KPIs agreed in Our Council Plan and the action taking place, comprising a wider performance view, with KPI measures comparing performance over the last three periods - this may be quarterly, annually or other time periods (depending on how regularly data is released); however, each measure will explain the reporting period.

Fire and Rescue		2022/23 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	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	↑	G
	<p>Performance Analysis: Sep-22: At the end of Q2 it was agreed that as a result of the significant challenges that the department faces in relation to development of competency, the previous target of 1,750 audits would be amended to 1,000 per year. Departmental performance is currently 55 audits behind our half-year schedule, however the number of audits undertaken in Q2 was significantly higher than in Q1, despite Q2 being the period where a significant amount of leave is taken.</p> <p>Items that have affected Q2 performance include a number of case conferences following a Prohibition case that has seen two Simple Cautions issued for offences committed. Q3 will also see the team continuing a significant case load to take forward for prosecution.</p> <p>Actions: Now that the target has been amended to reflect some of the internal and external market factors, we are only 55 audits behind schedule. We have a clear plan on how to address this shortfall that includes watch-based fire safety activity, use of retained duty staff and more use of desk top audits.</p>	841	218	445			

Fire and Rescue		2022/23 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods			DoT	Year End Forecast
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>	4,000	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22		G
	<p>Performance Analysis: Sep-22: In Q2 we carried out 1,300 Safe and Well Visits and 489 home checks. We have seen a month on month increase in visits in the last 12 months which we attribute to the remedial actions taken, the ongoing development of referral pathways and more customers being receptive to having someone visit their home, although our previous referral pathways have yet to return to their pre-Covid levels. Staff based at fire stations are continuing to undertake reactive post-incident as well as proactive referral generation activity.</p> <p>Actions: We continue to promote Safe and Well Visits through our health and social care partners and train their staff to recognise and respond to fire risk. In addition, customer details are being shared to increase referrals of Safe and Well Visits. Crews use local data to drive and target prevention activity to areas where our most vulnerable residents live and we make the most of every opportunity to deliver focused community safety activities following incidents at residential properties. This is leading to more prevention activity being delivered to those at risk, particularly those who are in the vicinity of an incident.</p>		3,355	1,151	2,451	↑	
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%	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22		G
	<p>Performance Analysis: Sep-22: Q2 saw an extended dry spell which placed significant demands on all fire and rescue services across the country, with many services declaring major incidents due to the impact on resources. The impact of this higher demand in West Sussex was a reduction in performance on this measure.</p> <p>Actions: We are confident that the changes we have seen around the introduction of performance data on turn out times being available to Immediate Response stations and the move back to a more normal level of demand will mean we will achieve the target for this measure across the year. The proposals we have for increasing the cover in Mid-Sussex and Shoreham will ensure we have more resilience when facing future occasions of high demand.</p>		93.6%	91.0%	86.0%	↓	
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%	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22		G
	<p>Performance Analysis: Sep-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 a Retained Duty System (RDS) station. This is the most challenging of our three attendance measures and is particularly influenced by the availability of RDS appliances. Performance this quarter remains high, providing further reassurance that the use of the Dynamic Cover Tool (which provides data on potential response times broken down to a district or local level to the control room operators) is having a positive impact on this core measure. 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 this quarter remains high, providing further reassurance that the use of the Dynamic Cover Tool (which provides data on potential response times broken down to a district or local level to the control room operators) and the initiative we have introduced this quarter to use our wholetime firefighters more proactively to support RDS availability are both having a positive impact on this core measure.</p> <p>Actions: We continue to work 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.</p>		80.6%	82.2%	81.4%	↓	

Community Support Performance Measures

Community Support		2022/23 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods			DoT	Year End Forecast
4	Measure: Percentage of suspected scam victims, identified to WSCC by the National Trading Standards Scams Team, receiving a pro-active intervention from the Trading Standards Service Reporting Frequency: Quarterly	100%	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	→	G
			100%	100%	100%		
Performance Analysis: Sep-22: – American authorities have been working with UK National Trading Standards Scams Team and, as a result of an American intervention, WSCC will be receiving some money back for approximately 30 local victims which will be passed back to them. Actions: There are currently 121 call blockers installed in vulnerable persons homes that have blocked 112,301 scam/nuisance calls. The call blockers were paid for using the proceeds of crime that had been confiscated by the courts in a previous Trading Standards criminal prosecution.							
33	Measure: Use of virtual/digital library services by residents Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Accumulative	5.45m	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	↗	G
			5.81m	1.39m	2.87m		
Performance Analysis: Sep-22: Customer usage of virtual library services is stabilising to a 'new normal' after the significant increases seen during the pandemic lockdown periods. Actions: Continue to support growing demand though investment in e-Library platforms and production of virtual and online library events content.							
34	Measure: Number of people reached and supported via the West Sussex Community Hub during the Covid-19 pandemic Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Accumulative	36,000	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	↗	G
			76,477	85,840	87,298		
Performance Analysis: Sep-22: From October 2021, the Community Hub supports residents and households with wider essential needs such as food, energy, and water bills via the Household Support Fund. The Household Support Fund has been extended until March 2023 and ongoing support to help those households in need continues. In the 9 months to September 2022 10,821 individuals have been supported by the Household Support Fund. Actions: Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is making a third round of funding available to support those most in need to help with global inflationary challenges and the significantly rising cost of living.							

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 work undertaken on long inquests	£0.188m	Community Support – Staffing vacancies within the service	(£0.232m)	
Community Support – Shortfall in libraries and archives income relating to changes in customer behaviour post pandemic	£0.240m	Community Support – Additional ceremonies income projected as this is the first summer season in recent times with no pandemic restrictions	(£0.230m)	
Community Support – Other variations	£0.070m			
Community Support, Fire & Rescue Portfolio - Total	£0.498m		(£0.462m)	£0.036m

Significant Financial Issues and Risks Arising

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

Financial Narrative on the Portfolio's Position

- As at September, the Community Support, Fire and Rescue portfolio is projecting a £0.036m overspend, a reduction of £0.206m when compared to June. The main variations are described below.

Fire and Rescue Service

- Although the Fire and Rescue Service is currently projecting a balanced budget, there is pressure emerging within the Command and Mobilising budget because of a £0.063m in-year reduction to the Fire Link Grant which supports expenditure on data costs associated with the use of service radios. This is a national reduction that will continue over the next three years and is linked to the introduction of a new national communication solution which has been subject to a number of delays. The service continues to work on mitigations to cover the loss of grant over the medium term but in-year this is currently being mitigated by staff vacancy savings.

Community Support

- The Coroner's Service is projecting an overspend of £0.188m which relates to in-year inquest requirements which will result in additional costs.
- The Archive and Library Service have continued to experience a shortfall of income which relates to changes in customer behaviour post-pandemic restrictions. It is forecast that there will be a shortfall of £0.240m in 2022/23.

8. These budgetary pressures have been partly mitigated by projected staffing vacancy savings of £0.280m and a forecasted increase in Registrar Service income of £0.230m. This increase is due to a surge of ceremonies being planned in 2022/23 following the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions.

Covid-19 Expenditure Update

9. As the pandemic continues, there remains a need to provide quality services and assistance to residents. The Community Support Service are continuing to provide support to residents by working with local partners and helping vulnerable people through the Community Hub and other front-line services. As the length and severity of the pandemic still remains unknown at this time, £1.162m of non-ringfenced Covid-19 grant has currently been earmarked to enable the Community Hub and other support to residents to continue and potentially increase if needed.
10. Within the Fire and Rescue Service, £0.371m has been earmarked from the non-ringfenced Covid-19 grant to cover a number of potential in-year pandemic pressures including additional cost arising from required firefighter isolation periods, sickness and overtime, as well as the provision of a one-year rural engagement officer within the Prevention Team to support vulnerable people living in rural areas who have been isolated during the pandemic.

Savings Delivery Update

11. There remains £0.070m of savings from the 2021/22 financial year which were not delivered on an on-going basis. This saving is reported in the table below to ensure that it is monitored and delivered during the year:

Saving Activity	Saving to be Delivered in 2022/23 (£000)	September 2022		Narrative
		Delivered	At Risk	
Community Support - Development of adapted Library Service offer in conjunction with Parish Councils	70	70	A	A permanent solution is being sought for 2022/23.

Savings Key:

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

Capital Programme

Performance Summary - Capital

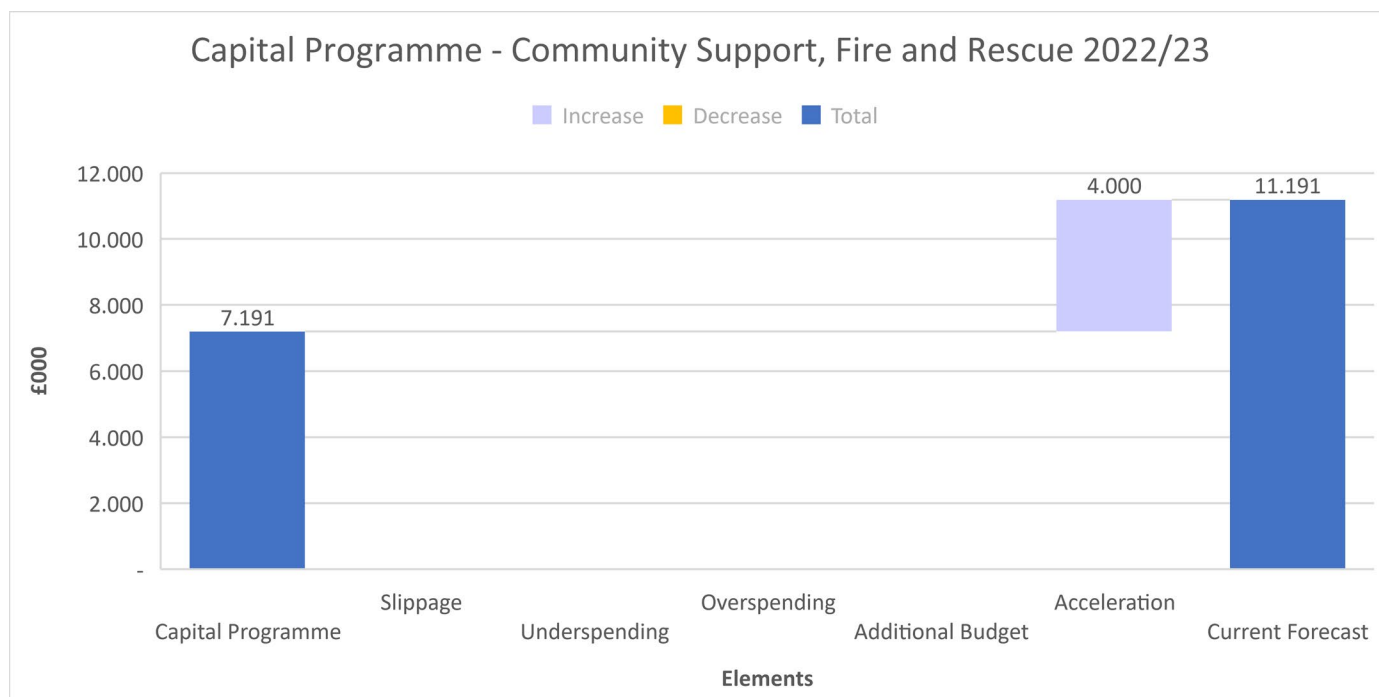
12. There are six schemes within the portfolio. Four of the schemes in delivery are rated as green, indicating that the project is reporting to plan. One scheme is

rated amber, indicating that there is an issue but that it could be dealt with by the project manager or project delivery team, and one scheme is within its final retention phase. An update on the progress of the schemes not rated green are detailed in the table below:

Scheme	RAG Status at Sep 2022	Reason	Latest RAG Status	Updated Position
Horsham Fire Station and Training Centre	AMBER	Utility connection and S278 issues that may impact on timeline.	AMBER	Power legal agreement issued. Final duct routes to be provided by BT (S278).

Finance Summary - Capital

13. The capital programme; as approved by County Council in February 2022, agreed a programme totalling £9.725m for 2022/23. £2.534m of expenditure, originally profiled to spend in 2022/23, was accelerated into 2021/22, revising the capital programme to £7.191m.
14. Since this time, the profiled spend has increased overall by £4.000m, to give a current year end projection for 2022/23 of £11.191m. This increase relates to projects where funding has been accelerated from future years.



Key:

- Capital Programme – The revised planned expenditure for 2022/23 as at 1st April 2022.
- Slippage – Funding which was planned to be spent in 2022/23 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.
- Current Forecast – Latest 2022/23 financial year capital programme forecast.

15. The latest Capital Programme Budget Monitor is reported in **Appendix 3**.

Risk

16. There are currently no corporate risks assigned to this portfolio following the closure of risk CR60 - HMICFRS Improvement Plan this quarter. Risks allocated to other portfolios are specified within the respective portfolio sections.

17. Further details on all risks can be found in **Appendix 4** - Corporate Risk Register Summary.