

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

- Quarter three marked a significant milestone in our improvement journey as a service after the county council's Cabinet formally closed off our improvement plan. This was implemented following the service's HMICFRS inspection report in 2019 and was drawn up to address those concerns raised by the inspectorate and to ensure the service was on a sound footing. Work continues to monitor performance through our Assurance Framework which will now also include a continuous improvement report to replace the improvement plan.
- Significant progress was made on the breathing apparatus project. Workshops took place with suppliers to demonstrate the scope of the equipment they offer and included colleagues from East Sussex, Surrey and Kent. This is as an important piece of work towards operational alignment, and our collaborative approach with our neighbouring services will allow us to invest in and procure the very best equipment available.
- In December we launched the new policy for the non-attendance at automatic fire alarms in certain premises. This is a key priority set out in our Community Risk Management Plan and the change will deliver a targeted reduction in the numbers of Unwanted Fire Signals we attend creating greater capacity for prevention activity.
- The Fire Brigades Union formally opened its ballot for members on the issue of pay. This development initiated our business continuity planning process to begin preparing for potential industrial action. These are now well rehearsed arrangements which were implemented throughout the preparations for EU Exit and the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Children and young people continue to be a key target audience for our prevention messages. In this quarter ten students from Chichester College successfully completed the first ever IGNITE programme run by our Targeted Education Team. The project is aimed at young people aged 16 and over in further education who are willing to learn but struggle with low self-esteem, low self-confidence, and resilience. Over the five-day course, the students took part in a range of activities and drills, as well as learning about the physicality of being a firefighter and the importance of nutrition.
- Finally in this quarter we welcomed our 10 new wholetime firefighters to the service after their intensive 13-week training course. These colleagues will initially assist with workforce planning to maintain high levels of crewing and appliance availability. A further course will commence during the fourth quarter as these colleagues will begin to provide the additional crewing for the increases in establishment as part of the day crewed 7 proposals.

Community Support

- The newly formed Ukraine Support Team continues to respond to the needs of Ukrainians entering the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme and their hosts. Demand for support remains high from both guests and hosts in relation to accommodation needs, finances, education, transport and English lessons.
- To support the continuation of sponsor and guest arrangements and in recognition of cost-of-living pressures, the Council have increased monthly "Thank You" payments to sponsors with a sliding scale approach depending on number of guests. Communicated at the end of November this will be in place for 4 months with the uplift commencing in January.
 - 1 – 3 guests is increased from £350 to £500
 - 4 – 5 guests is increased from £350 to £600
 - 6 + guests is increased from £350 to £700
- In addition to monthly 'Thank you' payments for Sponsors a £400 milestone payment is being made at the 4-month stay point to offset some of the additional utility bill and household expense experienced as a result of hosting guests. The Council has expanded the milestone payments so that payments are now also made at the 8-month and 12-month milestone.
- The Community Hub remains available for residents, providing support with cost of living and distributing Household Support Funds. Skilled advisors provide information, advice, guidance, signposting and practical support, resolving issues where possible, and signposting internal/external services and support when needed. Household Support Fund (3) funding from national government runs until 31 March 2023; WSCC was allocated £4.8 million. Funding criteria apply with a focus on households in the most need, particularly those who may not be eligible for other government support, including families with children, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and people with disabilities. Distribution of funds for the first three months has seen at least 26,256 households provided with support via this funding stream.
- Libraries have been supporting residents experiencing cost of living pressures as an integral part of their business-as-usual activity: providing an information, enquiry and signposting service; offering books, leaflets and online resources on relevant topics; delivering an events/activities programme for targeted audiences; and providing access to partner services (e.g., Citizens Advice). Our network of 36 Libraries is supporting people experiencing hygiene poverty through distribution of essential toiletries packs. Targeted promotion enabled households most in need to benefit, particularly pensioners, disabled people, carers and families with young children. Around 2000 packs were successfully distributed before Christmas. The model will be repeated with an initiative to support individuals experiencing period poverty.
- Cost of Living related scams and online safety information has been shared widely across partnership and community networks. A successful romance fraud themed webinar took place and an online harms talk was delivered to a range of professionals at the West Sussex Strategic Community Safety

Partnership conference. Digital Crime was the focus of the Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Committee in November.

- During this quarter 277 residents/professionals engaged in digital safety training. 5,824 people are currently signed up to receive the monthly Staying Safe Online E-newsletter. Estimated over 200,000 people reached via sharing key online safety information by social media, radio, press release, blogs, local magazines and e-newsletters.
- A Storrington business whose employee sold alcohol without asking for proof of age received a 12-week suspension of its licence after selling alcohol to a West Sussex Trading Standards child volunteer.
- West Sussex currently has 84 licensed explosives stores of which 12 are bulk stores keeping between 250kg and 2,000kg of explosives. In the run up to 5th November, these stores were all visited to ensure explosives are being kept and stored safely. West Sussex also has three retailers who are licensed to sell fireworks all year round.

Our Council Performance Measures

Fire and Rescue Service Performance Measures

2. 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
			Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22		
	<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	218	445	722	↗	G
3	<p>Performance Analysis: Dec-22: Q3 has seen the highest number of fire safety audits completed in any quarter since the start of 2020/21 when the revised performance framework was introduced. This is a very positive outcome considering the ongoing challenges with vacancies and long-term sickness absences in the department. The actions reported in previous reports such as watch based fire safety, use of retained duty staff and desk top audits are all starting to drive improvement in efficient audit delivery whilst maintaining a focus on quality risk-based inspections.</p> <p>Actions: The department is 38 audits under target at the end of Q3. It is expected that the support from watch-based staff and retained duty colleagues will ensure that this will be made up in Q4 so that the target of 1,000 audits this year is met. Work continues to plan for next year's risk-based inspections to ensure we maximise our resources across West Sussex and that, as our inspectors achieve the requisite qualifications and we manage sickness, a further review of the target can be considered.</p>						

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	<p>Jun-22</p> <p>1,151</p>	<p>Sep-22</p> <p>2,451</p>	<p>Dec-22</p> <p>3,384</p>		G
	<p>Performance Analysis: Dec-22: In Q3 we carried out 1,284 Safe and Well Visits and 773 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 referrals have yet to return to their pre-Covid levels the reactive post-incident work by crews and proactive referral generation activity has led to a steady increase in prevention activity across the Service.</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>						
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%	<p>Jun-22</p> <p>91.0%</p>	<p>Sep-22</p> <p>86.0%</p>	<p>Dec-22</p> <p>89.1%</p>		G
	<p>Performance Analysis: Dec-22: The improvement seen this quarter is largely down to the introduction of performance data on turn out times being available to our teams on stations and the focus on expectations and professional standards in service delivery. This means that appliances turn out from the station more quickly and inform Fire Control more immediately when they arrive at the scene. The number of occasions where crews turned out within 90 seconds improved by 1.86% and similarly the 60 seconds turn out target performance improved by 1.77%. The new Service Delivery Support team regularly analyse this data and have begun to deliver training on data accuracy.</p> <p>Actions: We will continue to monitor and review the performance data locally on our stations. The Day Crewed 7 proposal within our Community Risk Management Plan to increase the cover in Mid-Sussex and Shoreham is planned to go live March 2023. This will ensure more resilience is available when facing occasions of high demand, contributing to maintaining good performance in this measure.</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%	<p>Jun-22</p> <p>82.2%</p>	<p>Sep-22</p> <p>81.4%</p>	<p>Dec-22</p> <p>81.6%</p>		G
	<p>Performance Analysis: Dec-22: Critical special Service Calls can occur anywhere in the County and we measure these separately to critical fires. 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/local level to the control room operators) is now embedded in our ways of working. The initiative we have introduced to use our wholetime firefighters more proactively to support RDS availability and improvements in our turn out times is also 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 to occur using our Crewing Optimisation Group.</p>						

Community Support Performance Measures

Community Support		2022/23 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods			DoT	Year End Forecast
33	Measure: Use of virtual/digital library services by residents Reporting Frequency: Quarterly, Accumulative	5.45m	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22		G
	1.39m		2.87m	4.50m			
Performance Analysis: Dec-22: Whilst customer use of virtual library services is stabilising, post-pandemic, this figure represents an 18% increase on Q3 last year, illustrating the continued growth trend for this provision. Actions: Continue to support growing demand through investment in eLibrary 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	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22		G
	85,840		87,298	89,957			
Performance Analysis: Dec-22: From September 2022 – November 2022 there have been 2,659 reached by the Community Hub for support with food, energy and wider essentials. Actions: Measure is changing 2023/2024 to reflect quality rather than quantity to ensure positive outcomes at first point of contact for residents that require support from the Community Hub.							

Finance Summary

Portfolio In Year Pressures and Mitigations

Pressures	(£m)	Mitigations and Underspending	(£m)	Year end budget variation (£m)
Covid-19 pandemic forecast expenditure – Community Hub (£1.0m) and Fire and Rescue (£0.2m) expenditure	£1.206m	Covid-19 Grant – Assumed funding	(£1.206m)	
Fire and Rescue – Joint Control Centre additional inflationary costs	£0.300m	Fire and Rescue – Other minor variations	(£0.076m)	
Community Support – Additional coroner costs projected following work undertaken on long inquests	£0.340m	Community Support – Staffing underspends in Community Safety and Wellbeing, Library Service and Trading Standards.	(£0.540m)	
Community Support – Shortfall in libraries income relating to changes in customer behaviour post pandemic	£0.180m	Community Support – Additional ceremonies income projected as this is the first summer season in recent times with no pandemic restrictions	(£0.270m)	
Community Support, Fire & Rescue Portfolio - Total	£2.026m		(£2.092m)	(£0.066m)

Significant Financial Issues and Risks Arising

3. There are no significant issues to raise this quarter.

Financial Narrative on the Portfolio's Position

4. As at December, the Community Support, Fire and Rescue Portfolio is projecting a £0.066m underspend, an increase in underspending of £0.102m when compared to September. The main variations are described below.

Fire and Rescue Service

5. The Fire and Rescue Service is currently projecting to overspend by £0.224m. The County Council contributes to the cost of running the Joint Fire Control Centre based on actual costs incurred. Surrey County Council has recently provided figures that have indicated that there will be additional inflationary costs relating to the Joint Fire Control Centre. This has led to a projected £0.3m overspend for 2022/23 which also takes account of inflationary increases in goods and services.
6. The pay award for firefighters is still under negotiation but the current forecast assumes these costs can either be contained within existing budgets if funded through contingency.
7. Staffing vacancies within the Protection and Strategic Risk and Improvement Teams have helped to mitigate some of this additional pressure.

Community Support

8. Overall, Community Support is projecting a £0.290m underspend as at the end of December.
9. The Coroner's Service is projecting an overspend of £0.340m which relates to increases in mortuary and pathology provision and inquests. Excess deaths have caused an increase in spend due to the need to use agency cover and external mortuary provision. In addition, the County Council has facilitated a number of inquests this year which have led to additional expenditure, including the recently concluded Shoreham Inquest.
10. The Library Service has 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 £0.180m in 2022/23.
11. These budgetary pressures have been partly mitigated by projected staffing vacancy savings of £0.540m and a forecasted increase in Registrar Service income of £0.270m. 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

12. 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. Non-ringfenced Covid-19 grant of £1.0m has been earmarked to enable the Community Hub and other support to residents to continue and potentially increase if needed.
13. Within the Fire and Rescue Service, £0.2m has been earmarked from the non-ringfenced Covid-19 grant to cover a number of 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

14. 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)	December 2022		Narrative	2023/24
Community Support - Development of adapted Library Service offer in conjunction with Parish Councils	70	70	G	Saving mitigated in-year through staffing underspends. A permanent solution is still required for 2023/24.	A

Savings Key:

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

Capital Programme

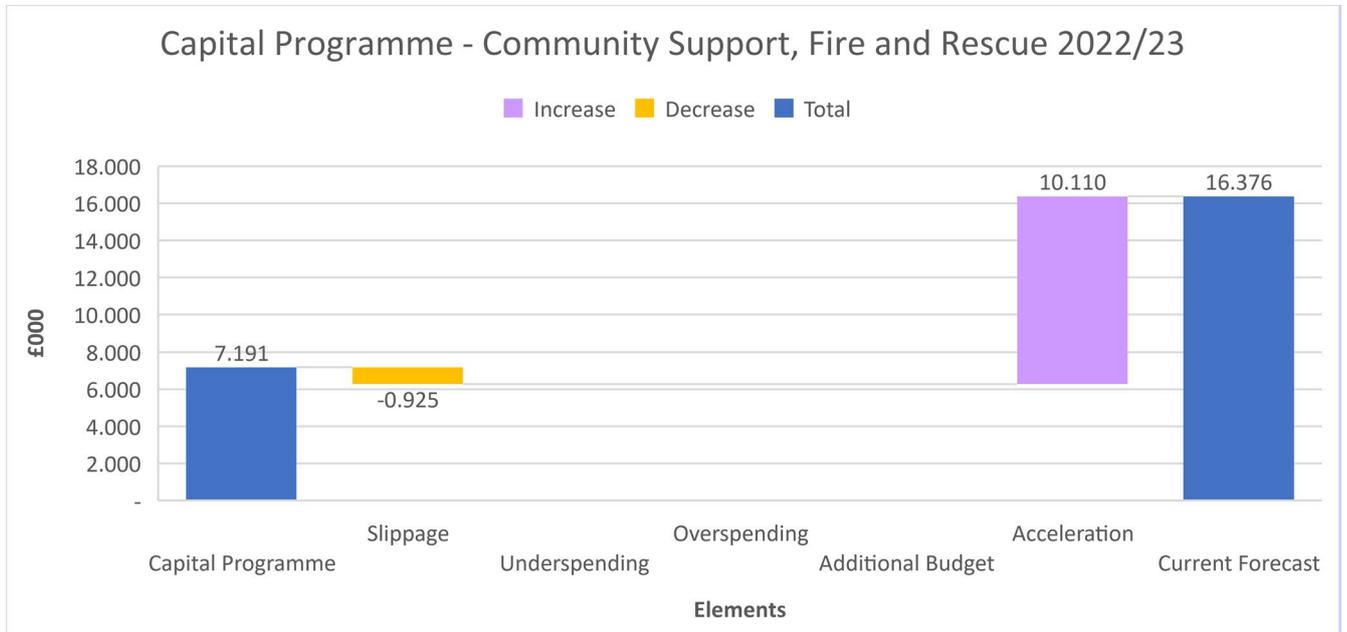
Performance Summary - Capital

15. There are five schemes within the portfolio. Four of the schemes in delivery are rated as green, indicating that the project is reporting to plan and one scheme is within its final retention phase.

Finance Summary - Capital

16. The capital programme; as approved by County Council in February 2022, agreed a programme totalling £9.725m for 2022/23. Budget of £2.534m originally profiled to spend in 2022/23, was accelerated into 2021/22, revising the capital programme to £7.191m.

17. Since this time, the profiled spend has increased overall by £9.185m, to give a current year end projection for 2022/23 of £16.376m. Of this increase, -£0.925m relates to slippage and £10.110m 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.

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

- **Slippage: (-£0.925m). Movement since Q2 report: (-£0.925m)**
 - **Fire and Rescue Estates Improvement Programme:(-£0.125m).** The feasibility study is due to be completed imminently. Once options have been reviewed and approved through the relevant governance the expectation is that works will commence in 2023/24.
 - **Fleet: (-£0.800m).** Only the initial stage payments are now due in 2022/23 for the procurement of specialist fire vehicles, therefore funding has been reprofiled into 2023/24.

- **Acceleration: £10.110m. Movement since Q2 report: £6.110m**
 - **Live Training Centre and Horsham Fire Station: £6.110m.** Works continue to progress quicker than first anticipated therefore funding has been accelerated from 2023/24 into 2022/23.

19. The latest Capital Programme Budget Monitor is reported in **Appendix 3** and full details of all individual schemes are set out in the [Budget Report](#) published in February 2022.

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 4** - 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.