



# Communities and Public Protection

## 2016-2020





## Introduction

The Communities and Public Protection directorate works to support West Sussex to become safer, stronger and more resilient. The services we deliver are fully aligned to the core priorities of the Future West Sussex Plan to:

- Give children the best start in life
- Champion the West Sussex economy
- Promote independence in later life

To achieve this our vision is to support individuals, communities and businesses to be safer, stronger and more resilient; help maintain and improve wellbeing; deliver our statutory duties and transform services.

The directorate brings together a range of skills, background and experience that we believe can support these aims in the most efficient way possible.

West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service is at the heart of the directorate. It is a service well-known for its emergency response and will always be there for people in times of need. However, now, more than ever, our service is focused on prevention and protection, rather than simply providing a blue-light rescue operation when things go wrong.

That approach is indicative of the whole of Community and Public Protection directorate. Fire and rescue teams work alongside community and public health professionals, Resilience and Emergency colleagues and Trading Standards experts.

We believe this blend of professional teams can jointly deliver the best service possible to the communities we serve. We are also expanding the type of work we do, and the range of organisations we work with.

This document sets out the work we have underway now and our key priorities for the next five years.

Please get involved – we want to hear your views. Details of how you can contact us are included at the end of this document.

**Lee Neale**

**Acting Executive Director for Communities and Public Protection and Chief Fire Officer**



## Our strategic plan

As a relatively new directorate, formed in 2014, this is the first time we have, collectively, set out how we plan to work over the next five years to support a number of key outcomes. These outcomes are shared across our directorate as every team has a part to play to make a difference to the communities we serve. Our outcomes and priorities are set out on the West Sussex County Council website, where we will provide more detailed business plans and report on performance:

**C&PP 3-5 Year plan 2016-20**

This 3-5 year plan supports WSCC Future West Sussex Plan

**Strategic Outcomes :**

- OSA 1** Individuals will be Safer, Stronger and more Resilient
- OSA 2** Communities will be Safer, Stronger and more Resilient
- OSA 3** Business will be Safer, Stronger and more Resilient
- OSA 4** Wellbeing is maintained and improved
- OSA 5** Statutory Duties will be Delivered
- OSA 6** Services will be transformed

For each of these action plans our **Strategic Priorities are:**

Working with Services, Partners, Communities and the Voluntary sector to

- SP 1** Help give children the best start in life
- SP 2** Support the economy by keeping businesses safe, resilient and within the Law
- SP 3** Help the vulnerable and socially isolated to live independently for longer
- SP 4** Reduce reliance on the County Council and have Services ready to respond in times of need.
- SP 5** Ensure that WSCC is resilient and able to deliver its statutory duties.

The following sections detail the services within the directorate and give an over-view of our key areas of work.

## West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service

West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service is one of 14 fire services managed within a local government setting. However, we believe we are the first to play such a critical role at the heart of a local authority. Our Chief Fire Officer is also the Executive Director for Communities and Public Protection. Our primary role is to keep West Sussex safe. We do this through a combination of prevention, protection and response activities, coordinated via our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), available via the WSCC website. The analysis of data we collect from incidents, and our communities, informs where we direct our energy and time to make the most difference to improving the safety and wellbeing of our residents.



We are working to:

- Reduce the number of emergency incidents and their consequences
- Work with partners to build safe, strong and more resilient communities
- Provide value for money services
- Ensure we have safe, healthy and competent employees
- Reduce our impact on the environment
- Support the management of risk, whether corporate, community or through change, county council wide.

The number of incidents we are called to continues to fall. Last year we attended approximately 8,500 incidents, although around half of these are likely to be false alarms, either through calls made with good intent, accidental alarm activations or malicious calls.

## Start of Life

We deliver education from primary school age upwards. We have a valuable role to play teaching children about fire prevention and road safety, but also use firefighters as positive role models.

At the same time we are seeing a growing number of referrals to our Firewise programme, which can help young people understand the consequences of experimenting with fires.

Our FireBreak programme, aimed at 12 to 14-year-olds, promotes a culture of safety and community awareness.

## Economy

We work with businesses across the county to help them keep their customers, staff and our crews as safe as possible.

We work with organisations to increase their understanding of fire safety regulations and to help them comply with their responsibilities. However, in the very worst cases, we can act as enforcing authority to ensure any necessary

actions are taken. Our Technical Rescue Unit is regarded around the world for the expertise it can provide after natural disasters. The team's specialist skills are also deployed on a daily basis closer to home, like helping people during floods or supporting the rural economy with its large animal rescues. Safe and efficient transport systems are critical to the local economy and we work to reduce the risks to drivers, whatever their age or experience. We play a key role in the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership, working with partners including Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire & Rescue, the Highways Agency, East and West Sussex County Councils and Brighton and Hove City Council and our hard-hitting roadshow, Safe Drive Stay Alive, has been seen by thousands of students.

## Later Life

The number of residents in West Sussex over the age of 65 is growing. Not all people in this age range will be vulnerable but our statistics show most people affected by fires are in this age category and live alone.

We carry out more than 5,000 high risk home safety visits every year, helping to spot and reduce common risks in the home and installing specialists alarms where appropriate.

Our firefighters are trusted within our communities, which can often give them access to people who might be reluctant to engage with other organisations.

Our safeguarding training programme helps our frontline staff refer hundreds of people for additional support every year.

We work to keep communities safe, warm and well – the picture opposite was taken at a pilot project in Crawley, where we worked in partnership with UK Power Networks, the company responsible for delivering electricity to a large part of the county.

The event provided home and electrical safety advice and was supported by Trading Standards, a local school and members of the local Community Wellbeing team.

Over the next five years we will build on our success, we know the advice we are giving and the equipment we're installing, like specialist home safety alarms and community defibrillators at fire stations, are saving lives.

We will continue to increase and develop people's knowledge and skills to equip them to make safer decisions and keep themselves safe.

We will carry on exploring new concepts, partnerships and new ways of working with communities and wider partners.

The outcome will be new and expanded programmes of work, many of which will offer a more holistic approach to keeping people safe and sound.



## Trading Standards

Trading Standards fulfills West Sussex County Council's responsibilities for the enforcement of a wide range of consumer, business, environmental and economic protection legislation. This includes controlling the production, storage, marketing and supply of food, goods and services throughout the supply chain, and the behaviours of businesses that operate from and within the county. The statutory responsibilities of the service are wide and include food and product safety, intellectual property protection for businesses, animal disease control, control of the supply of age restricted products, licensing and inspection of explosives and petroleum storage facilities, rogue traders, deceptive trade practices, unfair contract terms, weights and measures and providing regulatory compliance advice and business support. Our team receives 15,000 complaints every year and intervenes in both individual complaints and wider emerging issues identified through trend analysis. Measures it can take range from consumer and business advice, through to civil and criminal enforcement mechanisms. Trading Standards is also the local enforcement function of a number of national agencies and Government Departments, this includes food standards and animal feed controls, on behalf of the Food Standards Agency, and animal disease controls, in conjunction with DEFRA. The wide statutory duties of Trading Standards are weighted to support the core priorities of the Future West Sussex plan.



## Start of Life

Trading Standards supports Public Health to protect the long term health of residents by regulating the supply of tobacco and alcohol. It can intervene to disrupt the supply of cheap, illicit, uncontrolled alcohol and tobacco and ensure such products are not being made available to young people.

This work can include test purchasing by children, sniffer detection dogs and alcohol licence reviews.

It also works to disrupt the supply of unsafe legal highs.

## Economy

Trading Standards supports economic growth by ensuring a fair, responsible and competitive trading environment in which businesses have the confidence to invest and grow.

It delivers a business support scheme, to provide regulatory compliance advice and guidance, along with the Buy With Confidence trader assurance scheme to approve local traders.

To support the food sector, and consumers, Trading Standards ensures that food supplied from, or bought within, West Sussex is safe to eat, meets compositional requirements and is accurately described.

To support the rural economy, the team works to reduce the risk of animal disease outbreaks.

## Later Life

Trading Standards proactively intervenes to protect vulnerable members of the community from becoming victims of doorstep crime, mass marketing fraud and predatory trading.

Partnership working with Adult Social Services is key to help support individual victims and to address wider emerging areas of concern across West Sussex.

In the scheme pictured below, money obtained from criminal activity has been used to safeguard residents from scams.

Using funds seized from criminal activities, a number of telephone callblocker devices have now been provided to stop the targeting of those at increased risk of fraud and unsolicited calls. A 91-year-old lady in East Wittering was the first to have the device installed.



## Resilience and Emergencies

The Resilience and Emergencies Team (RET) works with communities to ensure there is capacity and capability to respond when hazards, incidents or disruption occur.

The team also works across the county council to ensure every department is prepared to deal with emergencies, which could be anything from small local incidents through to large-scale events affecting wide areas.

Resilience and Emergencies:

- Works with communities across West Sussex
- Plays a key role within the Sussex Resilience Forum
- Works with emergency planning and safety advisory groups across district and borough councils
- Develops training and emergency exercises
- Co-ordinates WSCC's response during emergencies and disruption
- Ensures businesses recover as swiftly as possible after major events

One key programme is Operation WATERSHED, where communities can submit requests for financial support to deliver targeted localised flood prevention schemes. The team is also developing a database of individuals and organisations willing to volunteer and help during major incidents.

## Start of Life

Promoting and delivering the Duke of Cornwall scheme with partners is a key piece of work for the team. The scheme, set up by Prince Charles following the floods that swept the UK in 2012, is aimed at five to 18-year-olds and promotes personal and community resilience. RET also works with schools to support the development of their emergency plans.

## Economy

Helping businesses recover after major incidents is a key area of work for the team. A new programme, called What If? is being rolled out to help parishes and communities prepare for a range of incidents. This programme is also being used to build bridges with local business groups and forums to get small and medium business owners to think about how they could cope in the event of adverse events like flooding, fire, widespread employee illness or long-term loss of IT.

## Later Life

Resilience and Emergencies works with communities to ensure they are best placed to help themselves, and safeguard the most vulnerable, when everyday life is disrupted. The team also works with care homes to help develop and test their emergency plans.





## Community Operations

The Community Operations team brings together relevant groups and interested parties to help communities to help themselves.

This includes work to improve health and wellbeing hand-in-hand with local communities and a wide range of partners.

The team works across six areas, mapped to the district and borough council boundaries, and provides a link between county councillors, local councils and communities, the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).

Much of the team's wellbeing work is based upon the New Economics Foundation (NEF) Five Ways to Wellbeing, which stems from the concept that wellbeing comprises two main elements - feeling good and functioning well. NEF has a set of actions to maintain and improve wellbeing:

- **Connect...** with people around you... they support and enrich life
- **Be active...** to suit your level of mobility and fitness.... this is one of the best routes to maintaining physical and mental health
- **Take notice...** of the world around you; look out for others... reflect on good experiences
- **Keep learning...** to improve confidence and engagement.... try new challenges
- **Give...** time to link with the wider community, this creates connections

## Working across communities

More than 50 organisations were brought together to promote the range of health and wellbeing services for adults in the Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex areas. Those taking part included Age UK, British Red Cross, Carers Support, Citizens Advice, Wellbeing Hubs, Alzheimer's Society and a range of locally organised community services.

The team has helped to spread the word about, and support development of, the Men in Sheds movement.

The scheme provides opportunities for mainly older men to socialise and share skills and interests while working on a variety of projects - making, mending and reusing a variety of materials.

There are now six groups in West Sussex, with more in the pipeline, and they are proving to be effective in engaging the interests of older men, who may have experienced loneliness and isolation.

The team is supporting Keep Lancing Lovely, a beach litter-picking group which has forged links with a wide range of local groups and businesses. It has a solid group of regular volunteers, with spin-off groups now extending clear up activity to local parks.

Support has also been given to the MS Treatment Centre, in Southwick, a member-led facility which provides social support and treatment for people suffering from MS and other chronic conditions.

The coaching provided has given the centre members confidence and skills to push forwards with an ambitious project to replace their ageing facility. All of these activities contribute to building communities that are safer, stronger and more resilient as individuals and communities are more able to support each other to ensure that their local community is a positive place to be.



## Community Safety and Wellbeing

The Community Safety and Wellbeing Service deliver a number of statutory obligations for West Sussex County Council under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 and the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

It develops, enables and delivers projects, services and community responses to prevent and reduce crime and to improve outcomes for vulnerable individuals.

When individuals feel safe, community cohesion improves. When communities feel safe and secure, there is a positive effect on wellbeing and the sense of belonging, pride and connection with a place is strengthened.

Safe communities present a firm platform for trusting relationships to be built between individuals, and where more trusting connections are made between people, there are greater possibilities for

communities to come together to do more for themselves.

Individual and community strength and resilience against adversity does not come from things like increased police presence or more local authority services. Research shows that building and sustaining strong communities comes from communities sharing a common vision, where strong and positive relationships are developed between people from different backgrounds; where individuals contribute to the economic and cultural life of the area, and where people want to invest in their communities so that they thrive. To create the conditions to enable such development, the team works in partnership with voluntary and community sector groups, Sussex Police, district, borough, town and parish councils, the Police and Crime Commissioner's office, local communities and others to find new ways of getting the most from our scarce resources and creating the greatest impact.



Key pieces of work include campaigning to make people aware of Child Sexual Exploitation (see picture opposite) and partnership work to prevent 'Hate incidents', when a person is subjected to unpleasant behaviour because the perpetrator is hostile or prejudiced towards the victim's actual or perceived disability, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or transgender identity.

This work includes commissioning a Hate Incident Support Service from Victim Support to offer free, confidential emotional and practical support to victims.

## Parish and Town Councils and Local Governance Team

The team builds relationships with parish and town councils to equip them to recognise local community strengths and how these strengths might be used and developed to benefit those communities.

Work includes promoting how parish and town councils can become more involved in the services that may currently be provided by the county council, and identifying how to enhance the relationship between our councils through, for example, the exchange of information, knowledge and skills.

This includes work on community resilience, volunteering and Community Partnerships.

The team also leads on the Community Covenant for West Sussex County Council, ensuring that former and serving military personnel suffer no disadvantage in how we work and the services the county council provides.

## Making a difference

This document highlights just a small sample of some of the work being carried out by the Communities and Public Protection teams. We believe this blend of professional teams can jointly deliver the most efficient and effective services possible to the communities we serve, helping to ensure West Sussex is safe, strong and resilient.

We're keen to hear your views, both in terms of our current priorities and with ideas for new ways of working going forwards.

If you would like to get involved, or have any comments on this document, please contact us: Media and Communications, WSFRS HQ, Northgate, Chichester, PO19 1BD.

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