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Foreword from the Deputy Chief Fire Officer – Neil Stocker

The purpose of this strategy is to support the long term strategic outcomes of West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (WSFRS). The strategy will support the development of a service which is highly effective and trusted while also ensuring that modernisation, integration and collaboration are at the forefront of how we work. It will be the strategy for the Fire and Rescue Customer Centred Value for Money Delivery Board which supports the WSFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2018-22.

WSFRS operates in an increasingly challenging and changing environment. In order to continue to provide a resilient, responsive and professional service, we will need to meet a range of internal and external challenges as follows:

- Meet the requirements of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 by supporting collaboration and integration with other public services and partners
- Keep the customer at the heart of everything we do
- Keep our stakeholders engaged and informed
- Operate as efficiently as possible
- Operate within increasing financial constraints
- Improve customer service through management of performance

I will be looking to ensure that the service supports effective strategic leadership to enable WSFRS to successfully support the delivery of this strategy. A programme of transformation and collaboration has been identified and will be taken forward via the Customer Centred Value for Money Board that will manage the work streams for Customer Centred Value for Money (CCVFM). This board is one of four that will concurrently deliver a continuous improvement plan for WSFRS reporting to the Senior Leadership Team, as well as the executive IRMP Board.

Our staff are our greatest asset and are instrumental in the realisation of this strategy. We will use this strategy to drive a customer centred workforce which works to get the best value for money for the communities of West Sussex.

Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities – Debbie Kennard

Welcome to West Sussex County Council’s (WSCC) Fire and Rescue Authority vision for Customer Centred Value for Money 2018-2022.

I am honoured to be the County Council Cabinet Member with responsibility for our fire and rescue service and I am determined to ensure that WSFRS continues to deliver the high quality service that our residents have come to expect. As the Fire and Rescue Authority and governing body for the county, WSCC has a legal duty to ensure that we provide a highly effective and efficient fire and rescue service that is also value for money.
WSFRS is part of the WSCC Communities and Public Protection Directorate. This integrated working and close collaboration with other services means that WSFRS plays a key role in delivering the council’s objectives as well as those of the fire and rescue service. I fully recognise that effective partnership and collaboration is the best way of providing effective services to our communities, and I am fully behind the fire and rescue service as it works with others to deliver the objectives that the Fire Authority has set.

Our firefighters proactively protect our communities every day with their safety and prevention work as well as providing a professional emergency response. The people who work for WSFRS are vital to enabling the service to make this happen and this includes both firefighting and support staff. It is really important that we strive to ensure we have a positive customer centred culture that continually focuses on our residents.

I am proud of our fire and rescue service and I am committed to working to ensure their continued success. This vision will enable us to ensure we deliver a service to our residents in the most efficient and effective way.

Introduction

The aim of this document is to deliver the outcomes as identified in the IRMP. The fifth priority contained within the IRMP is to develop a customer centred value for money service, and in turn to support safer, stronger and more resilient communities, through an efficient and effective fire and rescue service. Achieving this has three key benefits:

- Ensuring that residents and visitors to West Sussex are well served
- Meeting statutory commitments
- Being able to demonstrate this, through customer feedback, under inspection or under review by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Achieving this requires a focus, which can be encapsulated in the following vision statement:

“A fire and rescue service that is focused on the customer and the delivery of a value for money emergency response, prevention and protection service, operating to the highest performance standards to ensure the safety of residents and visitors to West Sussex. We aim to continuously improve in everything we do.”
Values

Our values help shape how we engage with our employees, customers and partners on a day-to-day basis and play a crucial role in our ability to achieve our vision and corporate priorities. We have five core values:

**Proud to be customer-centred** – we put the customer central to everything we do.

**Listen and act upon** – we listen to each other and act on what we say.

**Honest and realistic** – we are honest and realistic about what we can achieve.

**Trust and support** – we trust and support each other to achieve our goals.

**Genuinely valued** – we feel our contribution is valued and our achievements are recognised.

The values come to life in our daily work and will be demonstrated throughout the organisation from the Executive Directors, Corporate Leadership Team, elected members and by all levels of staff within the organisation.

Scope

Our four year plan will identify our key priorities and intentions while also looking at improving existing ways of working and developing modern and collaborative approaches to providing the service.

This document aims to provide clarity to all staff and partners in terms of the approach and plans for CCVFM initiatives, which will be delivered through the IRMP action plans for the next four years to 2022. It will also provide a framework to improve focus and prioritisation; enabling support services to work with us in identifying the enabling resources and support that will help us to provide value for money and a customer centred approach for our communities.

This document pertains specifically to WSFRS; however, as a service which is fully integrated into WSCC there will be synergy with the wider county council.

This strategy will serve to enable WSFRS to work collaboratively with both internal and external partners by identifying stakeholders, their needs, completing a gap analysis and subsequently prioritising areas of work. The Customer Experience Team will work in partnership with the fire and rescue service to deliver this strategy ensuring a focus on customer experience, engagement and improvement of services through customer feedback, information and data gathered.
Our continued success is dependent upon the quality and commitment of our staff, in achieving our collective vision and delivering these key actions.

**Approach**

The WSFRS Strategy for CCVFM has been developed using information gathered from the following:

- After the Incident Survey 16-17
- Compliments, complaints and freedom of information requests data
- Croydon Social Value Toolkit
- Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018
- HMICFRS Fire and Rescue Service Inspection
- Human Behaviour in Accidental Dwelling Fires Research (Kent Fire and Rescue Service)
- MOSAIC Segmentation and Dwelling Fire Risk in West Sussex
- National Audit Office
- National Fire Chief Council Strategy 2017-20 (NFCC)
- Saving Lives Is Not Enough (Kent Fire and Rescue Service)
- Stakeholder engagement
- The WSCC Customer Promise
- The West Sussex Plan
- WSFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan 2018-22 (IRMP)

The WSFRS Strategy for CCVFM will be developed into a detailed four year action plan. It is the intention that this will be an organic document and will be reviewed regularly by the fire and rescue service Senior Leadership Team (FRSLT).
Themes

The WSFRS Strategy for CCVFM has been sub divided into four main themes and supporting critical success factors as follows:

1. Customer centred
   - Understanding who our customers are
   - Identifying a baseline in our service
   - Developing strategies to meet their needs in the most efficient way
   - Developing strategies to engage with our customers, hearing their feedback and ensure we are keeping the customer at the heart of everything we do
2. Consultation feedback/engagement
   - Have Your Say surveys
   - After the Incident surveys
   - Engagement sessions programme with customers throughout the year
3. Value for money
   - Operating in the most efficient and effective way, linking with one council in each service area
   - Savings (when required)
4. Operational performance review
   - Establish a performance management framework
   - Develop our management of information
   - Regular performance scrutiny

As part of this strategy we propose the following structure for the CCVFM Board and the supporting discovery activities which will feed into the action plan for the next four years:
These are further broken down into high level outcomes:

- **Customer centred outcomes:**
  - All initiatives and new projects will have a clear link to the customer and a strong customer focus before gaining approval from the board
  - We will have a clear understanding of our customers and their needs
  - We will have a clear understanding of what work is currently taking place to meet our customer needs and what work needs to take place to bridge this gap
  - Our action plans will reflect our understanding of the customer needs
  - We will measure our success through the board and customer feedback

- **Consultation feedback/engagement outcomes:**
  - We will engage at appropriate times, in a way that suits all staff
  - We will maintain positive engagement with representative bodies
  - We will gather staff feedback to drive forward improvements regularly providing feedback on ‘you said, we did’
  - We will gather public feedback to drive through improvements and regularly provide feedback through our website and direct communications
  - We will gather collaboration and external stakeholder feedback to drive through improvements and regularly provide feedback through direct communications

- **Value for money outcomes:**
  - Team processes will be mapped to identify where efficiencies could be made utilising technology
and keeping the customer at the heart of everything we do
  o Opportunities to make efficiencies and improve the customer experience will be prioritised with clear baselines recorded and measures of success
  o Teams will be encouraged to identify and implement continuous improvement opportunities to promote growth and change within WSFRS
  o Reinvestment of identified efficiencies directed back into the prioritised areas of the WSFRS and the County Council whenever possible
  o Savings will be assessed when required, solutions will be identified and risk assessed. Options will be presented and consulted on

The National Audit Office uses the following criteria to assess the value for money of the government spending i.e. the optimal use of resources to achieve the intended outcomes:

- Economy – minimising the cost of resources used or required (inputs) – spending less;
- Efficiency – the relationship between the output from goods or services and the resources to produce them – spending well;
- Effectiveness – the relationship between the intended and actual results of public spending (outcomes) – spending wisely; and
- Equity – the extent to which services are available to and reach all people that they are intended to – spending fairly. Some people may receive differing levels of service for reasons other than differences in their levels of need

These criteria will support this strategy and new ideas moving forward.

- **Operational performance review outcomes:**
  - Have a clear understanding of our agreed key performance indicators (KPIs)
  - Understand the links of KPIs to the IRMP 2018-22
  - Monitor and challenge KPIs through a regular performance board
  - Use the data to drive forward improvements and evidence success through action plans
  - Ensure we are challenged and scrutinised through the county council Business Planning Group and the Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee
  - Invite and embrace internal and external audit from the county council and national Fire Chiefs Council peer reviews
  - Act upon feedback from audits, challenge and scrutiny
Priority areas and next steps

It is anticipated that the priority elements of the strategy for CCVFM 2018-2022 will be the focus of the IRMP year one action plan for CCVFM. These are:

- **Customer centred:**
  - We will hold a series of workshops with staff and stakeholders to identify who their customers are and how we engage with them at present
  - We will use the information gathered from the workshops to complete a gap analysis and agree next steps
  - We will engage nationally with other customer centred work to understand their customer engagement strategies and any learnings they have
  - Develop an action plan for the 2018-2022 period for delivery

- **Consultation feedback/engagement:**
  - We will engage with key communications and customer centred teams to inform them of the strategy and how they could support key messages
  - We will work together to form a communications and engagement plan for stakeholders
  - We will design and agree a regular feedback and engagement activity to engage frequently with all of our customers and stakeholders both internally and externally

- **Value for money:**
  - We will hold a series of workshops with staff to identify partners in the county council, our roles and responsibilities and teams which can support our customer needs
  - We will work with teams to map their processes and identify any efficiencies or new ways of working which could be adopted, engaging with customers where appropriate
  - We will share findings from the information gathered and review where we could identify similar opportunities
  - We will create and monitor action plans to deliver areas where value for money initiatives are identified and identify the areas to reinvest the finances

- **Operational performance review:**
  - We will review performance KPIs and determine which board should monitor them
  - We will review the gathering of performance data and investigate the feasibility of a new data tool to revolutionise the way we visualise and use data effectively
  - We will set up a regular performance review to ensure a robust internal challenge and scrutiny group led by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer to hold team leaders to account
All CCVFM related projects will be able to demonstrate that they align with these key priorities, as well as with the acceptance criteria for the WSFRS Transformation Programme. This is as follows:

- Improves the customer experience
- Evidences efficiency and customer centred design
- Supports statutory operational requirements
- Be in accordance with the overall WSFRS IRMP 2018-22

Any project will be able to attend the Challenge and Scrutiny Committee, which will provide an opportunity for interested stakeholders to have their say about the project, to ensure it aligns to customer centred and value for money priorities, and to share lessons learnt from previous projects.

The CCVFM Board will work closely with the WSCC Customer Experience Team during a scoping phase that will look to support the service and its enablers in designing and defining a robust and sustainable approach to customer centred planning, implementation and delivery within WSFRS.

As this work develops there is scope to collaborate with both internal and external partners, such as other emergency services.

The plan – what we will achieve by 2022

The ultimate outcomes for WSFRS will be the following:

- We will have developed a customer centred culture
- We will provide a good value for money service
- Our customers for each team will be clearly identified, and we will understand the needs of those customers and how to meet them
- We will challenge decisions to ensure the customer is kept at the heart of everything we do
- We will utilise existing technology and engagement tools, such as Have Your Say surveys and social media, to understand our customers and how we can connect with them proactively
- We will have delivered our data visualisation and performance reporting system vision
- We will understand and learn from our data gathered to make improvements to our processes and customer journeys
- We will ensure all staff are aware of our strategy and understand the role they play in delivering it
The case for change

The following evidence represents WSFRS case for change in relation to the strategy for CCVFM. This data provides helpful information and evidence to support the strategy and the action arising from it. It will also help us to measure the ongoing progress of the action plans that support delivery of the strategy.

Fire and Rescue National Framework for England – May 2018

The Fire and Rescue National framework for England underpins how fire and rescue services should operate and plays a big role in the development of our strategies. Items 2.4-2.8 show the need to provide a customer centred approach in our delivery and the need to have a clear understanding of who our customers are and their needs. Items 5.1, 5.2 and 5.11 demonstrate the need to evidence value for money and the need to deliver an effective and efficient service. By working with services under WSFRS we will be able to identify potential efficiencies and new ways of working to support these requirements.

National Fire Chiefs Council Strategy 2017-20 (NFCC)

The NFCC, as the leading professional and technical voice of the UK fire and rescue, is committed to supporting the development of local services to ensure that they deliver the best possible outcomes for their communities. To achieve this they have developed a strategy.

After the Incident Survey 16-17

The After the Incident Survey 16-17 shows that the service receives very positive feedback (99% satisfied with overall service at domestic incidents, 100% satisfaction with overall service at non-domestic incidents). However, response rates are low with a return rate of 27% for domestic incidents, and 31% for non-domestic incidents with return rates being higher from the older cohort (est.40%). Gathering feedback from a broad range of customers is vital so we can continue to improve and develop as a service.

Saving Lives Is Not Enough (Kent Fire and Rescue Service)

The document contains a whole section dedicated to the customer experience and its importance:

"As a professional and public service, it would seem appropriate that the aim is to ensure the best possible service and experience through knowing and meeting the wider customer needs.

"For obvious reasons, no specific solutions are suggested here, other than there is a need to provide a different professional (customer experience) and public perspective to the general experience. The experience of the human behaviour research suggests that it is likely this will identify improvement opportunities not yet considered by the FRS."
This again supports the need for a customer centred strategy to ensure we are meeting our customers’ needs and working in the most effective and efficient way.

**Human Behaviour in Accidental Dwelling Fires Research (Kent Fire and Rescue Service)**

This paper describes how fire and rescue services can use new knowledge of human behaviour in accidental dwelling fires to reduce their impact on the public. This again supports the proposals to engage more with our customers and understand the behaviours which can result in fires and how we can meet their needs.

**HMICFRS Fire and Rescue Service Inspection**

The inspection document highlights three areas which will be reviewed, broken down into more detailed aspects. Our strategy will look to address the aspects contained within the Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) documentation relevant to CCVFM.

**Compliments, complaints and freedom of information requests data**

WSFRS works within the county council operating policy for the following:

- Compliments
- Complaints
- Freedom of information requests

Compliments and the corporate complaints procedure is centrally managed by the Customer Relations Team (CRT). The CRT is responsible for recording the complaint, ensuring it is passed to the correct person to respond, and monitoring and recording the progress of the complaint. The CRT also advises customers and staff about the complaints procedures.

- WSFRS received 16 complaints, 44% of which were upheld in 2017-18
- WSFRS received 95 compliments in 2017-18

Under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 we are obliged to respond to requests for recorded information.

- WSFRS received 86 FOI requests

The reasons behind these compliments, complaints and FOI requests will help us to understand where we could improve the customer experience.

We will use the CCVFM to drive down the number of FOI’s received by being open and transparent with our data.

**WSCC values**

We recognize our values are a key driver for this piece of work.

**Croydon Social Value Toolkit**

This document highlights the importance of working towards outcomes and looking at the wider impact of services and why we do them. This will influence how we structure the
discovery workshops, interpret the output and the approach to next steps.

Bibliography

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