

Making West Sussex safer for everyone.



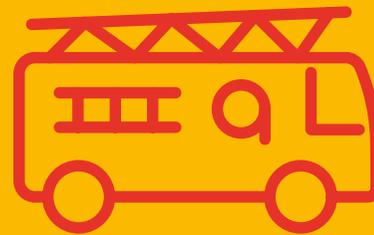
West Sussex Community Risk Management Plan 2026–2030



PREVENTION



PROTECTION



SERVICE DELIVERY



PEOPLE



RESOURCES

Contents

Our Community Risk Management Plan	3	Our county	18
Community risk management planning	5	Our service priorities and objectives 2026-2030	19
Our statutory responsibilities	6	Strategic Priority 1: Proud to prevent	19
Our vision and mission	7	Strategic Priority 2: Proud to protect	21
Your feedback on our service	8	Strategic Priority 3: Proud to deliver	23
Consultation feedback	9	Strategic Priority 4: Proud of our people	25
Our culture and ethics	10	Strategic Priority 5: Proud of our resources	27
Fit for the Future	11	Measuring outcomes	29
How we make decisions	11	Budget and finance	30
Looking back at what we've achieved over the last five years	12	Revenue budget	30
Assuring our service	14	Additional investment in the fire and rescue service	31
Our understanding of risk in West Sussex	16	Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation in the FRS	32
		Summary of our objectives	34

Our Community Risk Management Plan



Duncan Crow

Cabinet Member for Community Support,
Fire & Rescue, West Sussex County Council

A message from the Cabinet Member for Community Support, Fire & Rescue, Duncan Crow

I am pleased to introduce West Sussex Fire Authority's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2026-2030. This plan is a vital document that explains how we will continue to protect lives, property, and the environment across West Sussex. It aligns with West Sussex County Council's priorities set out in Our Council Plan and reflects our shared commitment to safety, sustainability, and community resilience.

The CRMP is built on evidence, consultation, and collaboration. We have listened to our residents, staff, and partners to ensure that this plan meets local needs and is clear and accessible.

It sets out how we will prevent emergencies, protect people and property, as well as respond swiftly and effectively when incidents occur. It also highlights our focus on supporting our workforce and making the best use of our resources to ensure we deliver an effective and efficient service.

West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service plays a critical role in keeping our communities safe. This plan ensures that we continue to deliver a modern, efficient, and inclusive service that meets the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to shaping this plan by taking part in our public consultation. Your input into this process has allowed us to create a plan that will ensure West Sussex is a safer place for all.

“West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service plays a critical role in keeping our communities safe. This plan ensures that we continue to deliver a modern, efficient, and inclusive service that meets the challenges of today and tomorrow.”

Our Community Risk Management Plan



Gary Ball
Chief Fire Officer,
West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service

A message from the Chief Fire Officer, Gary Ball

I am proud to present our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) as we enter an exciting period for our fire and rescue service.

This plan sets out how we will continue to protect and serve the people of West Sussex by reducing risk and responding effectively to emergencies. It reflects our commitment to delivering effective service across our Prevention, Protection and Service Delivery areas, ensuring that we use our resources wisely and deliver the highest standards.

This CRMP sets out our clear objectives of how we can help improve safety and resilience across West Sussex. Our approach is shaped by national guidance, local priorities, and the feedback we have received from our communities, staff, and partners. Emergencies will always happen, but by working together, we can help prevent many incidents from occurring and reduce the impact that they may have.

This plan demonstrates how we will meet our statutory duties and uphold our Values and Core Code of Ethics to ensure that we are a fire and rescue service that our communities can continue to be proud of.

The last four years have been extremely busy since we launched our previous CRMP, with the delivery of a number of key projects set out in that plan to improve the way we deliver our service. We are proud of what we have achieved during the past four years, but we know there is more to do.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to its development, either through our public consultation, our community questionnaire or our new e-panel. Your input ensures that our service remains focused on what matters most: keeping people safe.

“This plan demonstrates how we will meet our statutory duties and uphold our Values and Core Code of Ethics to ensure that we are a fire and rescue service that our communities can continue to be proud of.”

Community risk management planning

Fire and rescue services must periodically create, review, and update their risk management plans based on national guidelines so we can explain how we will reduce risks and use our resources. This is required by the National Framework produced by the Home Office and is supported by guidance from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service looks at all possible risks and considers the needs of its communities, stakeholders, and partners. We also identify what resources are needed to improve our Prevention, Protection, Service Delivery, People and Resources services.

We respond to recommendations from inspections by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to focus on areas for improvement.

We have developed this plan by consulting with staff, partners, representative bodies, and the community to make sure it meets their needs, is easy to understand and available to everyone.

Strategic Assessment of Risk



Our statutory duties

West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service operates under key legislation, including the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, which requires us to:

- Conduct firefighting, fire prevention, and fire protection activities
- Rescue people from road traffic collisions
- Respond to other emergency situations that may harm people or the environment

Additionally, as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, we are responsible for emergency planning and resilience.

We also enforce fire safety law in public and commercial buildings and domestic flats with common areas under the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022.

Other relevant legislation:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Fire and Rescue (Emergencies) (England) Order 2008
- Equality Act 2010
- Localism Act 2011
- Care Act 2014
- Accounts and Auditing Regulations 2015
- Policing and Crime Act 2017
- Data Protection Act 2018

The Government's National Framework for England outlines our duty to produce a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), identifying and assessing foreseeable risks and outlining how we will mitigate and respond to them. It requires us to:

- Make sure we have plans for preventing fires and responding to emergencies
- Identify and understand all foreseeable fire and rescue risks in our area
- Work with other emergency services and partners to improve our services
- Be responsible to the community for the services we provide
- Build and maintain a team that is professional, strong, skilled, adaptable, and diverse

Our vision and mission

Our Vision

At WSFRS our vision is that we are all **Proud to Serve**. This commitment in our vision is at the heart of our mission.

Our Mission

We work with our communities and partners every day to prevent emergencies, ensuring safety and improving lives in West Sussex.

Emergencies will always happen, and when they do, we are ready to respond quickly and effectively, saving lives and supporting people in their time of need.

We empower and support our people to be the best they can be, delivering the highest standards when serving our communities and upholding the values of our fire and rescue service.

Our Strategic Priorities

The Council Plan (2021-2028) sets out WSCC's focus over seven years, structured around five priorities with climate change as an underpinning theme. Our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) priorities align with WSCC's priorities:

West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Priorities

- Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations
- A sustainable and prosperous economy
- Helping people and communities to fulfil their potential
- Making the best use of resources
- Maximising the benefits of devolution and local government reorganisation for our residents and communities



West Sussex Fire & Rescue (WSFRS) Service Priorities

- Preventing fires and emergencies from happening
- Protecting people, firefighters and property by making buildings as safe from fire as they can be
- Responding to fires and emergencies quickly and effectively
- Having a safe and valued workforce
- Making the best use of resources



Your feedback on our service

To create this plan, we asked the community and our staff for their opinions by launching a Community Questionnaire in 2024. This helped us see how well we were doing with our goals and understand your concerns about fire and rescue incidents.

“Overall I feel confident that if ever I needed the fire service it would be competent and efficient.”

“My main thought of the fire brigade is that they are able to react quickly to an emergency, which they seem to do.”

“I’ve never had cause to call the fire service but at work have seen lots of work being done to promote fire safety... and evacuation exercises.”

“I have total trust in West Sussex Fire Service and use them a number of times yearly with wildlife rescues and I do know the public appreciate it.”

“The service covers a wide range of emergencies and not just fires. I have seen emergency vehicles attending to incidents locally and they always present a professional image.”

“Lots of information on social media about activities that the service does to keep people safe.”

“Whilst I trust WSF&RS regarding keeping buildings safe, I wonder how much control they have over private owners/landlords and any enforcement action for non-compliance.”

“Vehicles need to be looked at with feedback and advice from firefighters taken into account.”

“Difficulty in getting on-call firefighters may affect performance in rural areas.”

“Attending any emergency is becoming more challenging because of traffic volume/roadworks and badly parked vehicles.”

“They make the best use of limited resources and tight funding.”

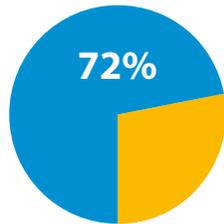
“Its impossible to totally prevent fire and emergencies from happening, but it is possible to reduce the impact they have and to be ready to respond when they do.”

Consultation feedback

To create this plan, we asked the community and our staff for their opinions by launching a Community Questionnaire in 2024. We used this feedback from the Community Questionnaire and our internal staff focus groups to help shape the draft objectives for our next CRMP. We then engaged again, with our staff and community; consulting on how these objectives would help us deliver our priorities.



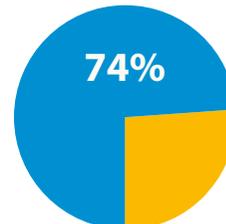
To what extent do you think the Prevention objectives outlined in this plan will improve WSFRS's ability to prevent fires and emergencies from happening?



72% of staff and public who responded rated these objectives at 7/10 or higher.



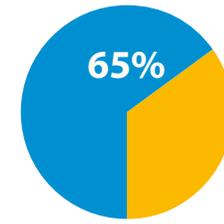
To what extent do you think the Protection objectives outlined in this plan will improve WSFRS's ability to make buildings as safe from fire as they can be?



74% of staff and public who responded rated these objectives at 7/10 or higher.



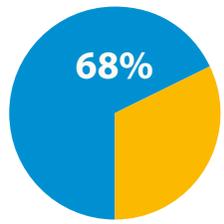
To what extent do you think the Service Delivery objectives outlined in this plan will improve WSFRS's ability to respond to fires and emergencies quickly and effectively?



65% of staff and public who responded rated these objectives at 7/10 or higher.



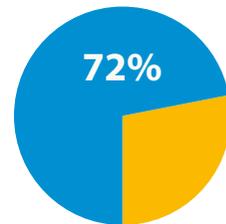
To what extent do you think the People objectives outlined in this plan will improve WSFRS's ability to have a safe and valued workforce?



68% of staff and public who responded rated these objectives at 7/10 or higher.



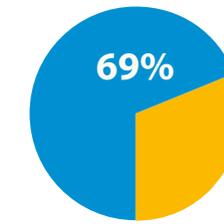
To what extent do you think the Resources objectives outlined in this plan will improve WSFRS's ability to make best use of resources?



72% of staff and public who responded rated these objectives at 7/10 or higher.



To what extent do you think these priorities will improve West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service?



69% of staff and public who responded rated these objectives at 7/10 or higher.

Our culture and ethics

We have adopted the national Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services in England. This code was created with help from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), Local Government Association and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners. It helps fire and rescue services in England follow the same values and behaviours.



The Core Code has five main principles:

- **Putting our communities first:** We always put the public, community, and service users first.
- **Integrity:** We are open, honest, and consistent in everything we do.
- **Dignity and respect:** We make fair decisions based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.
- **Leadership:** We are positive role models, flexible, and strong leaders. We take responsibility for our actions and challenge any behaviour that doesn't meet high standards.
- **Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI):** We value EDI within our service and the communities we serve. We stand against discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, build strong relationships, and celebrate differences.



Fit for the Future

Fit for the Future (FfF) outlines a shared vision for the future of fire and rescue services in England for the next five years. It aims to identify necessary changes based on solid evidence and determine how to implement these changes both locally and nationally, ensuring all services can adopt them.

FfF was reviewed in 2024 to reflect how the sector had changed since its initial development.

FfF identifies three key themes which all fire and rescue services (FRS) must improve, these are:

- Service delivery and the role of a firefighter
- Leadership, people and culture
- National infrastructure and support

Fire and rescue services must continually evolve to address societal and environmental changes, especially in response to climate change, which poses significant risks through extreme weather events like flooding, wildfires, and storms. The FRS plays a crucial role in both responding to these events and preparing for them through prevention, protection, and resilience activities.

Additionally, the built environment and infrastructure must adapt to withstand climate change impacts. The FRS is also heavily involved in rescue operations, such as road traffic collisions and assisting vulnerable individuals in their homes.

Regular training and the latest equipment are essential for effective response to these types of incidents.



How we make decisions

West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service works with different parts of West Sussex County Council to keep people safe. This includes planning for emergencies, transport, infrastructure, helping vulnerable people, managing flood risks, and shaping the community.

Fire and rescue authorities need to show they are handling money, governance, and operations well. They must also prove they are following their Community Risk Management Plan.

Decisions about the fire and rescue service and its changes are reviewed by WSCC's Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee, which was set up in 2019.

Looking back at what we've achieved over the last CRMP

West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service allocates resources based on risk, not demand. Over the last CRMP we have:

- Improved our first appliance response time to 999 calls
- Reduced fire fatalities
- Delivered more than 22,000 Safe & Well Visits
- Undertaken more than 4,000 fire safety audits.

HMICFRS have reported over the last five year period we have had:

- Fires - 9.8 per 1,000 population (national 10.4)
- Non-fire incidents - 3.6 per 1,000 population (national 3.5)
- False alarms - 4.4 per 1,000 population (national 4.3)

We have also managed major incidents, including:

- The fire at the Angel Inn in Midhurst
- Simultaneous coastal flooding in Littlehampton and Medmerry
- A large-scale waste fire in Climping
- Three concurrent building fires
- Multiple wildfires across the county in a single day

Each incident required us to adapt and increase capacity while maintaining our ability to respond to other emergencies.

Whilst we have been busy responding to incidents and making communities safer, we also want to continue to improve on these figures whilst increasing our focus on road traffic collisions and the most vulnerable people in our county.



During the delivery of our last Community Risk Management Plan we have:

- Increased crewing from five days a week to seven days a week at our day-crewed fire stations.
- Developed and evolved our Local Risk Management Plans
- Developed a new Firefighting and Rescue Strategy
- Improved our targeting of those at highest risk through better community engagement
- Improved how we deliver and evaluate our prevention activities
- Introduced new Emergency Response Standards
- Reviewed our Specialist Capabilities
- Developed a Leadership and Cultural Programme
- Improved our leadership connectivity across the service
- Responded to the Grenfell Tower recommendations
- Run a team-based culture coaching programme
- Introduced a call challenge policy for commercial automatic fire alarms
- Built a brand-new state of the art training centre and fire station in Horsham, Platinum House
- Improved our productivity and efficiency
- Embedded the NFCC Core Code of Ethics
- Updated our IT systems to be more resilient, reliable, accurate and accessible
- Started improvement works on our fire stations
- Procured new hybrid and electric vehicles
- Delivered inclusive behaviours training to all staff
- Improved processes to mitigate contamination and minimise the risk to our firefighters following incidents.



Assuring our service

We use a combination of National Fire Standards and National Operational Guidance to help us manage our fire and rescue service in a safe, professional and consistent way. They have been created by the NFCC to make sure all firefighters follow the same high standards when responding to emergencies, preventing fires, and keeping communities safe.

The standards are important because they:

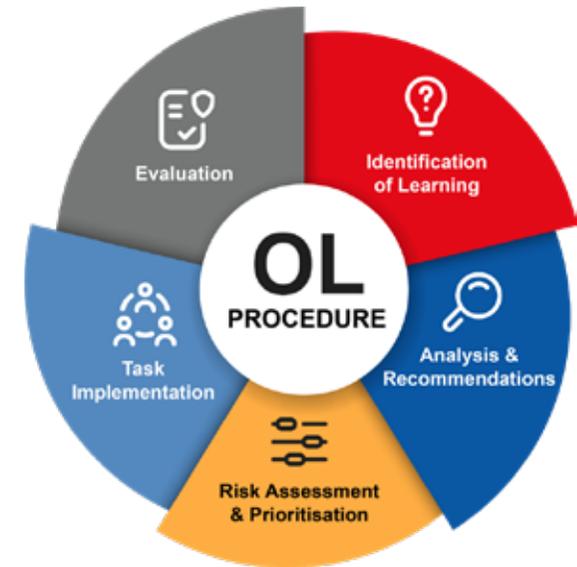
- Ensure firefighters across the country are well-trained and work efficiently.
- Help keep the public safe by improving fire prevention and emergency response.
- Make sure firefighters have the right skills and knowledge to do their jobs.
- Promote transparency, ethical leadership, and compliance with national guidance.

The NFCC National Operational Guidance provides a consistent framework of good practices and procedures for the UK Fire and Rescue Services, to ensure safe and effective responses to incidents like fires, road traffic collisions, and chemical emergencies. This supports interoperability, continuous improvement and operational alignment with other FRSs.

Fire and rescue services also need to show that they are providing value for money, good management, and effective services. We must follow certain rules and be clear about how we are meeting these expectations. This helps communities understand and trust what we are doing. Our annual Statement of Assurance provides this assurance to the communities we serve.

Organisational learning (OL)

We learn from everything we do. We have a system to collect feedback from our work to see what we did well and what we can improve. We have a comprehensive near-hit process which allows staff to report areas of concern to minimise future risk. This helps us keep everyone safe and reduce accidents. We also have processes to monitor risks within our teams and across the whole organisation. We maintain a register to monitor organisational risk. We regularly ask our staff for feedback through surveys and group meetings so we can listen and make changes. We also use independent auditors to check how well we are managing our work. These processes help ensure that everything is running smoothly and safely with our service. This helps us improve and achieve our goals.





Every few years we undergo an inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) who independently assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of fire & rescue services.

The latest inspection of West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (published in October 2024) looked at how effectively we keep people safe and respond to emergencies. The inspectors checked different areas and gave the following judgements:

- **Understanding risks:** We are good at knowing the dangers in our area and planning our resources based on risk



- **Preventing fires:** We are good at mitigating the risk of fire



- **Fire safety enforcement:** We are good at making sure buildings follow fire safety rules



- **Responding to emergencies:** We get to incidents quickly and handle them well though we could improve the availability of our on-call firefighters and our plans to adopt national standards



- **Responding to major incidents:** Working with other services in major incidents though we could improve how we share information with the control room during major fires



- **Using resources wisely:** We have suitable future financial plans though could improve our plans for income generation



- **Workplace culture:** We are good at managing our budget. We are good at prioritising our resources to address the highest risk



- **Getting the right people and skills:** We are good at making sure everyone is trained with the right skills



- **Making sure everyone is treated fairly:** We ensure fairness and diversity are promoted though we could do more to use positive action to create a more diverse workforce



- **Performance management:** We manage performance and develop leaders well though we could do more to manage peoples' careers to broaden our future talent pool



Our understanding of risk in West Sussex

We define risk as the likelihood and consequences of hazardous events. Risk involves the potential for emergencies that may threaten life, cause harm to people, property, or the environment, impact critical infrastructure, or place prolonged demands on emergency services.

To adapt to our changing environment, we constantly update our understanding of risk in West Sussex. To do this we create a Strategic Assessment of Risk that supports our Community Risk Management Plan and review it annually to adapt to changes.

To do this, West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (WSFRS) follows several key steps, looking at both our own data and working with partners to identify risks. These steps involve:

- Engaging with communities, partners and staff.
- Using local risk data and producing risk maps.
- Using national and community risk registers.
- Identifying local, regional, and national issues which might affect our services in the future.

We then analyse the identified risks from all our data sources to make important decisions about how to improve the service.

Our risks are categorised into five types: community concerns, everyday risks, resilience risks, and future risks.

1. Community concerns:

Most important issues identified by residents, workers, or visitors in West Sussex:

- Accidental house fires,
- Road traffic collisions,
- Fires in commercial buildings, and
- Incidents involving hazardous materials.



2. Individual risk factors

Factors which increase a person's likelihood of experiencing a fire or other emergency:

- Behavioural
- Physical
- Societal



3. Everyday risks:

Regular incidents for WSFRS which our data shows pose the highest risk to people:

- Accidental house fires,
- Road traffic collisions,
- Rescues from property, and
- Fires in the open/outdoor structures.



4. Resilience risks:

Highest risk scenarios that are identified in the Community Risk Register which require WSFRS to be prepared to respond to:

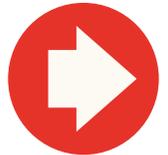
- Flooding,
- Major fires,
- Terrorism, and
- Wildfires.



5. Future concerns:

Most important emerging and future risks identified by internal subject matter experts, external partners and communities and supported through professional judgment and AI:

- Increased risk of wildfires, floodings and extreme weather events
- Changing built environment and risk profile
- Digital transition and technological enhancements
- More people living at home with illnesses, and poor well-being.



The results of our community engagement survey show that the public's fire and rescue related concerns are similar to the risks which we respond to every day. Our internal and independent external analysis of data confirms that we have the right resources in the right places to handle all fire and rescue risks. We have one Joint Fire Control with East Sussex and Surrey fire and rescue services, 24 fire stations and 35 fire engines. However, we need every fire engine and firefighter to maintain our response standards and be able to expand our capacity during high demand periods,

whether these are due to a single large incident or multiple smaller incidents across the county. Therefore, we must continue to ensure that we increase the availability of our frontline fire engines.

We will continue to measure and evaluate our improvements throughout the life of the plan to ensure we provide effective, efficient, and valuable services and have the right balance of resources to manage all our risks.



Our county

West Sussex has different kinds of risks that create a unique challenge. We regularly update our understanding of risk in our county through our Strategic Assessment of Risk. We need to understand these risks to keep you safe. You can find more information on our website about [our county](#) and [the incidents we attend](#)

- **Service area: 769 sq miles** 

- **Population: 890,000** 

- **Population increase - increased by 4% in last 5 years** 

- **Woodland: 21% - second most densely wooded county in the UK** 

- **Rural land: more than 50% of land designated as protected countryside, the largest area of this being the South Downs National Park** 

- **5 major rivers: Arun, Adur, Ouse, Lavant and Western Rother** 

- **Rail network: good transport links with London. Mainline rail services between Brighton, Southampton and Portsmouth** 

- **Motorway: M23** 

- **Road network: More than 15,000 miles, including a number of major A roads.** 

- **6 control of major accident hazards (COMAH) sites** 

- **11 household recycling centres** 

- **50 miles of coastline** 

- **More than 41,000 buildings covered by the Regulatory Reform Order – of which over 6,800 are high or very high risk** 

- **More than 60 high-rise buildings** 

- **2 commercial airports: one of which is Gatwick, the busiest single runway airport in Europe** 

- **Ports: Shoreham Port is West Sussex's only port** 

- **Heritage: 185 Grade 1 listed buildings and 8,000 other heritage buildings** 

Our service priorities and objectives 2026-2030

At West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, we are all Proud to Serve. Everything we do aims to make the communities of West Sussex safer from fire and other emergencies.

Proud to prevent

Priority 1. Prevention: preventing fires and emergencies from happening.

We work with our communities to improve their safety, health, and wellbeing by helping them to make safer choices.

We focus on people in our risk reduction work, using an inclusive approach to make them safer. Our goal is to reduce the number of incidents, prevent injuries or deaths, protect outdoor spaces, and preserve the environment.

By using accurate data, sharing knowledge and learning with our partners, we can better identify and help those most at risk. Working with other organisations and engaging with communities helps us understand and meet their diverse needs.

We will:

What: Enhance how we use data and technology to prevent fires and other emergencies.

Why: To deliver our prevention activities more efficiently, increase productivity, and better capture and share data with partners.

How: New mobile devices will help our teams share safety advice on the spot, update risks and record important information quickly, making prevention work more responsive and effective. We're also making it simpler for you to reach us. Whether it's through social media, online tools like the Home Fire Safety Checker, face to face, or flexible contact options, we want to ensure everyone, especially those often overlooked, can get the help they need before an emergency happens.



We will continue to:

What: Place our communities at the centre of our activities.

Why: To build closer connections, co-design services, improve resilience and deliver better services to all communities, especially to those who are seldom heard.

How: We're improving how we engage with local communities and gather feedback. Your concerns help shape our safety messages and ensure we're reaching the right people with the right information to not only make you safer but to make you feel safer as well. We'll continue offering Safe and Well Visits to the most vulnerable people in society and will introduce Home Fire Safety Visits for those who do not need a full safe and well visit, delivered by the right people, at the right time, using a person-centred approach to maximise our reach.

What: Prioritise those at the highest risk from fire and rescue incidents.

Why: To improve our prevention services and reduce injuries and fatalities from fires and road traffic collisions.

How: We're reviewing how we deliver road safety education and prevent fires from new risks, including those linked to personal light electric vehicles such as e-scooters. We also want to learn from serious road incidents like we do from fires to help prevent future tragedies. We're following national safety campaigns and tailoring our messages to groups who are more at risk, like people living alone for the first time or older dependant adults. We're also improving support for those affected by emergencies. We're also improving our learning from past incidents, like accidental house fires and serious emergencies, to improve how we prevent future ones. By analysing this data, we can create more targeted safety advice and resources that really make a difference to those at highest risk in our communities.

What: Enable children and young people to make safe decisions and reach their potential.

Why: To keep young people safe from fire, prevent road deaths and support our duty to reduce serious violence.

How: Through partnerships and education programmes we're helping prevent harmful behaviours and prioritising the fire safety, deliberate fire setting and the wellbeing of young people. We'll continue to look for innovative ways to expand our successful Fire Cadet programme so that we can help young people learn the skills they need to succeed in life.



Proud to protect

Priority 2. Protection: protecting the public and firefighters by making buildings as safe as they can be.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 states that owners, managers, or operators of businesses have a responsibility to make sure that premises reach the required standards and employees are provided with adequate fire safety training. The Fire Safety Team supports businesses to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and other legislation, so that building owners or managers minimise the risk of fire, understand duties and continue to manage and maintain the arrangements required within the order. We help places like hospitals, care homes, hotels, and other businesses create effective fire safety plans. Our Fire Safety Team manages data on buildings that pose risks to firefighters, the public, property, or the environment. We ensure that firefighters can access this important information on their fire engines during emergencies.

With more than 35,000 non-domestic properties in West Sussex, keeping the county safe is complex. Our Fire Safety Team supports public safety and business resilience by providing support and advice to premises, such as hospitals, care homes, hotels and other businesses, so that fire safety plans can be effectively managed. The Fire Safety Team inspects high-risk and vulnerable places, like care homes, high-rise buildings, hospitals, and special locations like Gatwick Airport. They also respond to fire safety issues that need immediate attention.

We help businesses follow fire safety laws to reduce fire risks and ensure they understand their responsibilities. We continue to update our policies based on the Grenfell Tower fire report, especially for high-risk residential buildings. We operate a Risk Based Inspection Programme to ensure that we focus our activities on those premises which we consider pose the greatest risk to their occupants. You can read more about our Risk Based Inspection Programme on [our website](#).



We will:

What: Implement the outcome of our review into our audit and risk management system and enhance the technology we use for protection work.

Why: To easily capture and access data, improve efficiency, identify trends, reduce fires, and improve our protection services.

How: We will ensure that the system that we operate is the most appropriate to help us manage our protection work. We will enhance our use of data to target those at highest risk and enabling us to improve our productivity. We're also introducing mobile devices to improve how we record, audit, and manage fire safety data. This means:

- Faster, more accurate reporting
- Easier sharing of safety information across teams
- Better tools for inspections and compliance checks

We will continue to:

What: Develop a knowledgeable and skilled workforce in fire safety.

Why: To ensure we have well-trained people in fire safety, to protect you and improve our understanding of the causes of fire.

How: We're continuing to enhance our training for our Fire Safety teams so we can meet the recommendations resulting from the tragic Grenfell Tower fire and improve building safety for all. We'll continue to use national campaigns from the National Fire Chiefs Council to spread key fire safety messages and encourage safer practices across all communities.

What: Strengthen partnerships with seldom-heard business communities and improve business continuity support.

Why: To enhance our protection services, prevent future incidents, and help businesses adapt to climate change.

How: We're working to improve fire safety compliance, especially in communities that are often overlooked. Through Primary Authority Partnerships, we're helping businesses meet safety standards with expert guidance and support. As West Sussex moves toward carbon net-zero, we're helping businesses and communities adapt buildings to be safer in the face of climate change. Our goal is to protect both residents and firefighters from all emerging risks.

What: Train firefighters on fire safety systems in buildings.

Why: To improve our response to incidents and adapt to the changing built environment.

How: We'll continue to enhance firefighters' knowledge of fire safety systems so they can carry out checks more confidently and respond to emergencies with greater insight and precision whilst increasing productivity and effectiveness of a response service.



Proud to deliver

Priority 3. Service Delivery: responding to fires and emergencies quickly and effectively

Emergencies can happen anytime, and we are ready to respond quickly with a trained, professional, and safety-focused teams to protect people and save lives.

We know that we cannot keep our communities safe alone. West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service are part of the Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF), which includes emergency services, local authorities, the Environment Agency, health agencies, and other groups in East and West Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

The SRF looks at non-malicious risks (hazards, not threats) that are likely to happen and their impact on the county. They make sure there are good plans for dealing with these incidents, natural hazards and social risks.

The SRF also publishes a Community Risk Register to inform people about local risks so they can be better prepared at home, in their communities, and in their businesses. Our services support community resilience and help people who live, work and visit West Sussex to be prepared.

For national and malicious events like terrorism, there is a National Risk Register (NRR). The NRR provides information on the most significant risks that could happen in the next two years and their potential impact on the UK. It also explains what the government and other partners are doing about these risks and gives advice to the public.

Our Joint Fire Control, in collaboration with Surrey and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Services, has skilled operators who handle emergency calls and deploy the nearest fire crews with the right equipment.

Together we manage various emergencies, including fires, road traffic collisions, specialist rescues, flooding, and hazardous materials incidents, often working closely with other emergency services like the police and ambulance services. By partnering with these organisations, we can tackle complex challenges more effectively.



Besides emergency response, our firefighters also deliver prevention and protection activities in the community through local risk management plans (LRMPs). In partnership with the South East Coast Ambulance Service and other healthcare providers, we support the wellbeing of West Sussex residents and strengthen community resilience.

We will:

What: Optimise our resources based on our Emergency Response Standards.

Why: To enhance our productivity, value for money and availability of our fire engines to improve the services we deliver to you.

How: We have introduced new emergency response standards which enable transparent reporting and benchmarking of our performance. We have no plans to reduce the number of frontline fire engines. Instead to support these new standards we're reviewing how fire stations are crewed to make sure resources are used efficiently and firefighters can access vital training whilst making our response to fires and emergencies quicker and more effective. We're improving the on-call system to boost reliability and ensure firefighters have fair working conditions that support their productivity and wellbeing.

What: Implement the outcomes from our specialist capability review, and firefighting and rescue strategy.

Why: To improve our response to fires, rescues, and other emergencies and align with national guidance.

How: Our firefighting strategy is being updated to ensure crews have the latest training, techniques and equipment to respond to the changing risks across the county. We're implementing findings from our specialist capability review, ensuring teams are equipped to handle complex incidents like those involving hazardous materials or technical rescues.

What: Review our attendance at low-risk incidents.

Why: To ensure we are always ready and available to respond quickly

and effectively to our high-risk incidents.

How: We'll review our attendance at low-risk incidents to focus on more critical incidents. We're also exploring charging options for Automatic Fire Alarms and other special services to encourage responsible use and ensure resources are available when truly needed. We're reviewing how we respond to non-emergency incidents, making sure we stay ready for high-risk emergencies while still supporting the community.

We will continue to:

What: Adapt our frontline services to meet the changing needs and demands of West Sussex communities.

Why: To ensure we keep learning from everyone and adapt as our operating environment changes.

How: We'll continually update our understanding of risks across the county, so we remain ready for future challenges such as increasing risks from climate change such as flooding incidents and wildfires. We're adopting new technology and techniques to stay ready for climate-related challenges and evolving risks. We're assessing how we can better support ambulance services during busy periods and improving rescue procedures for vehicles and buildings, whilst strengthening how we work with other emergency agencies. A full road risk review will be completed to improve safety for road users, this will help us understand the changing risks on our roads and continue to prioritise the replacement of vehicles and equipment based on risk, ensuring value for money and public safety. We'll continue to enhance how we learn from operational incidents and other organisational learning, making sure firefighters have access to the best knowledge and support for tackling emergencies.

Proud of our people

Priority 4. People: having an inclusive, safe and valued workforce

We know our people are the heart of our service and key to our success. We make sure everyone who works for us follows the Core Code of Ethics.

Our culture is one of our greatest strengths, and we aim to create a sense of belonging for everyone – because when people feel safe, valued and included, anything is possible. This means no one is left out, everyone can thrive, and everyone understands the importance of feeling safe.

Our 'Inclusive, Safe & Valued Workforce' ensures colleagues are supported from the start. This makes them 'Proud to Serve' and inspires them to do their best.

We support colleagues to be 'Proud to Serve' through:

- Proud to Welcome
- Proud to Develop
- Proud to Belong

The fire service includes operational staff (firefighters) and non-operational staff. Our operational staff are:

- Wholtime firefighters, based at fire stations and responding to emergency calls from there.
- On-call firefighters, responding to emergency calls from their home or main job in their local area.

Our non-operational staff provide essential specialist services that help our firefighters and officers strive to deliver the best services to keep West Sussex communities safe from fires and other emergencies.



We will continue to:

What: Develop and empower leaders who are connected, model our values, and drive cultural improvements.

Why: Give communities and teams more control and influence, so everyone is safe, valued and included.

How: We're developing skilled leaders through thought-provoking learning opportunities. We celebrate achievements, fostering a positive culture, guided by our Code of Ethics. We're improving data use to guide decisions and track progress towards a culture where everyone feels valued and safe. Our vision and values remain central, and we'll strengthen feedback channels so staff voices shape improvements.

What: Support inclusion, psychological safety, and well-being at every level of the service.

Why: To help everyone reach their potential, support our workforce needs, and ensure a healthy work-life balance.

How: Creating a safe, inclusive workplace, where everyone feels heard, remains a top priority. We're continuing to embed health and wellbeing into our culture, with tailored support, and focusing on work/life balance so our people can be at their best at work. As we go through Devolution we will ensure policies remain fair and inclusive, supporting staff throughout their careers.

What: Train our teams to national standards and enhance our operational professionalism.

Why: To have highly trained and adaptable teams that can respond to emergencies with the highest levels of professionalism and work seamlessly with neighbouring fire and rescue services.

How: We're enhancing training systems and reviewing our Maintenance of Competence processes to ensure staff are ready for any challenge.

We will fully embed National Operational Guidance to make sure our firefighters learn and train to the latest skills and techniques, enabling us to work seamlessly with neighbouring fire and rescue services.

What: Build trust and understanding in positive action to attract, develop, and retain talent from the widest pool.

Why: To be an employer of choice and reflect the communities we serve.

How: Our recruitment will remain fair and welcoming, attracting talent from all backgrounds. We're exploring alternative entry routes, where budgets allow, to make joining us more accessible. We're building trust in, and taking positive action to increase diversity in leadership and remove barriers to progression.

What: Ensure every colleague can develop relevant skills, through equal access to opportunities and active management of careers.

Why: So everyone can achieve their potential now and in the future.

How: We're committed to accessible career pathways, helping staff grow personally and professionally. Our progression pathways will continue to support leaders in becoming effective role models, and provide strong leadership, clarity and support through Devolution. Every colleague will have clear goals, supported by open reviews and development plans that they own and drive.

This is all part of our promise to build a fire and rescue service that reflects our communities - one that's inclusive, forward-thinking, and ready for the future.

Proud of our resources

Priority 5. Resources: making best use of our resources

Our resources are essential for improving our services and supporting our vision to be 'Proud to Serve'. We aim to provide the best services while offering good value for money and keeping people safe from fires and other emergencies, despite financial challenges.

We constantly update our vehicles, equipment, buildings, training, and protective clothing to ensure our firefighters have the latest tools and methods to work safely and effectively.

Our resources consider everyone's diverse needs and offer good value for money. We provide an inclusive, professional, and modern work environment for staff and partners, while also promoting safety in the community.

West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service supports West Sussex County Council's climate change goals. The climate change strategy guides our daily activities and focuses on five key commitments:

- Reduce carbon emissions by 2030.
- Adapt to and be resilient to climate change.
- Use resources sustainably.
- Support and grow the local green economy.
- Transform how we work.

We will continue to:

What: Introduce new fire and rescue vehicles and equipment to address climate change.

Why: To adapt to climate change and improve our services.

How: We're replacing older fire engines that are costly and more damaging



to the environment, helping reduce emissions, improve reliability and reduce costs. This ensures better value for money and supports our commitment to contribute towards net-zero carbon emissions.

What: Adopt new technology and secure communication systems.

Why: To respond quickly to emergencies, protect data, and improve operational procedures.

How: A new mobilising system and mobilising app will improve emergency response times and coordination. We're embedding smarter tools like the new Incident Recording System and Fire Survival Guidance technology to support those in critical situations. We're strengthening cyber security and upgrading fireground communications to keep our systems safe and efficient. Fire stations will benefit from improved connectivity and digital infrastructure including preparations for the analogue to digital switch-over.

What: Improve our community-led fire stations.

Why: To provide safe, modern, accessible, and inclusive work environments for all.

How: We're upgrading our fire stations ensuring facilities meet modern safety standards. Our estates will align with West Sussex's net-zero strategy, including making sure we comply with the Worker Protection Act and continue to reduce the impact of fire contaminants.

What: Use our resources effectively to keep our staff safe at work.

Why: To ensure everyone is safe before, during, and after delivering services.

How: We're adapting to changing risks and reducing harmful contaminants to protect our firefighters. Our contaminants programme is entering its third phase and will ensure we meet the national guidance. We're exploring cost-neutral healthcare improvements, including scanning options, wearable health monitors and enhanced Occupational Health services. We're also

assessing the best way to clean contaminated equipment to reduce contamination risks and protect firefighter health. We'll work with partners to ensure firefighters have the best personal protective equipment, while delivering best value for money through joint purchasing.

What: Develop our long-term income strategy.

Why: To ensure the service is sustainable and we can invest in our future.

How: To make sure that our services are sustainable for the long term we are looking at new ways we can generate income through our existing activities, whilst also making our communities safer. To help us prioritise our resources we're evaluating the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Economic and Social Value tool to establish if it can help us guide decisions that benefit communities the most. A new commercial strategy will help generate income while maintaining excellent service delivery.

What: Support local and national goals for effective and efficient fire and rescue services, develop our long-term strategy and make devolution work for everyone.

Why: To ensure all our services are fit for the future and continue to provide the best value for money.

How: We're preparing for future challenges through scenario testing and support for local government reform and devolution. We are working hard to embed all the NFCC Fire Standards so we can continue to improve. Our next Community Risk Management Plan for 2030 and beyond will reflect the evolving needs and risks facing us, whilst ensuring we continue to deliver the best value for money.

Measuring outcomes

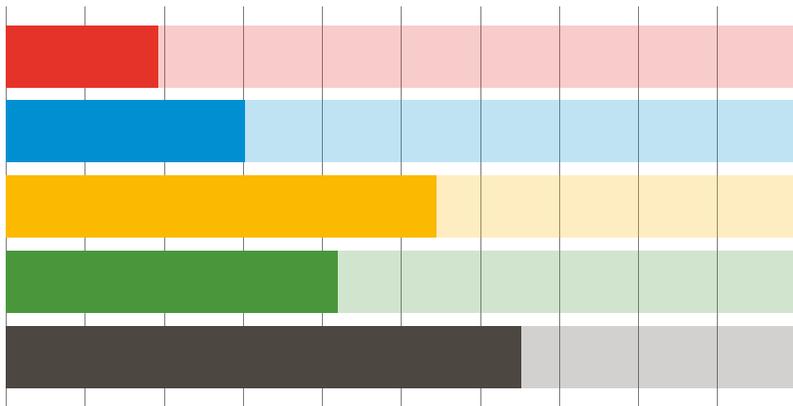
To see how well we're doing, we've set up some key performance measures. These help us, the public, and others check our progress.

Some of these measures are the same, some have new targets, and some are new areas we're looking at. We'll share our targets each year and update you on our progress regularly.

We want to adapt how we evaluate the services we provide as new technology and data becomes available to help evaluate the benefits we deliver, prioritising the outcomes for communities which are delivered in an effective and efficient way.

We'll keep reviewing our targets and expect them to change as we improve and face new challenges. We'll also use these measures to check our local performance, making sure local risk management doesn't affect our core services.

You can see how we measure our outcomes and ensure we are delivering the most effective and efficient fire and rescue service we can on [our website](#).



Budget and finance

We have a plan to keep improving things, however in the current economic environment there is a need to be innovative in our approaches to continuously improve. We're also trying to reach our goal of using no more carbon by 2030 and getting ready for some big changes in how things are run. This uncertainty means there is a need for a more adaptable approach within the current financial envelope and we have developed this plan to support our ability to adapt.

Our plan is ambitious, and we might need to change it as we learn more about these big changes. We've already made a lot of progress and will keep looking for ways to make best use of resources and achieve the best results for people in West Sussex. Since we can't predict future funding, our plan is flexible and can be adjusted if needed.

The cost of a West Sussex firefighter is £26.40 per person per year (National £26.96).

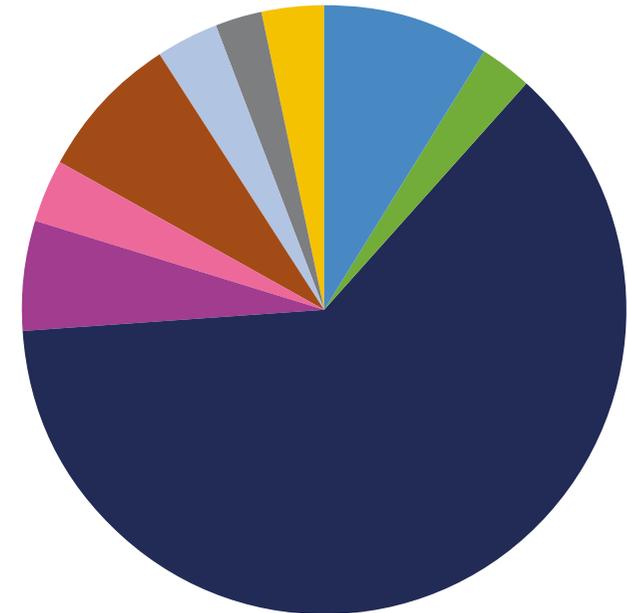
Revenue budget

The West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service revenue budget is approved by Full Council annually as part of the Council Plan and Budget. The budget is published each year on the county council's [website](#).

How we spend our budget:

Fire & Rescue revenue budget

Service area	Base budget 2025/26 £
● Fleet & Commercial	3,270,000
● Prevention	1,042,000
● Service Delivery	24,084,000
● Protection	2,220,000
● Fire Pensions	1,302,000
● Operational Training	3,014,000
● Organisational Assurance & Governance	1,267,000
● Safety & Preparedness	1,027,000
● Service Executive Office	1,206,000
Total base budget	38,432,000



Additional investment in the fire and rescue service

The West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (WSFRS) capital budget is funded by Corporate Resources. For 2026/27 this represents an investment of more than £8.8m.

This investment goes towards adapting our frontline services to meet the changing needs and demands of our communities by investing in our equipment, fleet and buildings.



WSFRS Capital Programme	2026/27 Estimated Outturn £
Buildings	2,790,000
Vehicles	4,000,000
Equipment	1,095,000
Joint Fire Control	955,000
Totals	8,840,000

Devolution and Local Government in the FRS

Devolution

In December 2024, the government published the English Devolution White Paper, which set out a new framework for English Devolution which will move power out of Westminster and into the hands of those who know their area best. The White Paper sets out how further devolution to local areas within England can help deliver economic growth and more joined-up delivery of public services, and increase trust in politics.

The Shaping West Sussex business case, published by West Sussex County Council in September 2025, outlines a major reorganisation of local government that could significantly affect the West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (WSFRS).

As stated in the business case, WSFRS is undergoing a programme of transformation aimed at improving service culture, prevention activity, and operational resilience. As part of future planning, the service is expected to transition into the governance framework of the Strategic Authority once established, supporting more coordinated emergency service delivery across the region.

The timing of this change is not confirmed meaning interim arrangements may be needed to ensure safe fire prevention and response services across the county area.

The key challenges WSFRS may face include:

- Navigating the transition to a new governance structure.
- Financial pressures associated with the reorganisation. While the business case projects long-term savings, the short-term reality may involve constrained budgets, especially if the Fair Funding Review reduces core funding.
- Adapt quickly to new leadership and accountability frameworks while maintaining high standards of public safety and emergency response.
- Ensuring continuity of service during this period will require careful planning, strong leadership, and clear communication with both internal teams and the public.

To enable and support this local government reorganisation, WSFRS will:

- Ensure WSFRS continues to deliver business as usual prevention, protection and emergency response services to

West Sussex throughout the devolution process

- Establish a Devolution Evolution programme to plan and deliver the transformational changes required to take WSFRS through devolution and into the new government organisation.

Local Government Fire Reform

The UK government has launched a Fire Reform White Paper aimed at modernising fire and rescue services in England. The reform is part of a broader push to improve local governance and public service delivery:

Three pillars of reform

- People: Enhancing recruitment, diversity, and leadership development
- Professionalism: Strengthening training, standards, and operational consistency
- Governance: Clarifying accountability and improving transparency

Drivers of reform

- Lessons from the Grenfell Tower tragedy
- Findings from HM Inspectorate reports
- Desire for more consistent service across regions

Local Government Governance Changes

Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution are reshaping who oversees fire services:

- **Mayoral Oversight:** In areas with elected mayors, fire and rescue responsibilities may be transferred to them, especially where boundaries align with police force areas
- **Strategic Authority Alignment:** Future devolution deals aim to align fire service boundaries with other local governance structures for better integration



Summary of our objectives

Across our five strategic priorities, there are 23 objectives that we have set out in our Community Risk Management Plan to be achieved in the delivery of this plan. They are:



Proud to prevent

- 1.1** Enhance how we use data and technology to prevent fires and other emergencies.
- 1.2** Place our communities at the centre of our activities.
- 1.3** Prioritise those at the highest risk from fire and rescue incidents.
- 1.4** Enable children and young people to make safe decisions and reach their potential.



Proud to protect

- 2.1** Implement the outcome of our review into our audit and risk management system and enhance the technology we use for protection work.
- 2.2** Develop a knowledgeable and skilled workforce in fire safety.
- 2.3** Strengthen partnerships with seldom-heard business communities and improve business continuity support.
- 2.4** Train firefighters on fire safety systems in buildings



Proud to deliver

- 3.1** Optimise our resources based on our Emergency Response Standards.
- 3.2** Implement the outcomes from our specialist capability review, and firefighting and rescue strategy.
- 3.3** Review our attendance at low-risk incidents.
- 3.4** Adapt our frontline services to meet the changing needs and demands of West Sussex communities.



Proud of our people

- 4.1** Develop and empower leaders who are connected, model our values, and drive cultural improvements.
- 4.2** Support inclusion, psychological safety, and well-being at every level of the service.
- 4.3** Train our teams to national standards and enhance our operational professionalism.
- 4.4** Build trust and understanding in positive action to attract, develop, and retain talent from the widest pool.
- 4.5** Ensure every colleague can develop relevant skills, through equal access to opportunities and active management of careers.



Proud of our resources

- 5.1** Introduce new fire and rescue vehicles and equipment to address climate change.
- 5.2** Adopt new technology and secure communication systems.
- 5.3** Improve our community-led fire stations.
- 5.4** Use our resources effectively to keep our staff safe at work.
- 5.5** Develop our long-term income strategy.
- 5.6** Support local and national goals for effective and efficient fire and rescue services, develop our long-term strategy and make devolution work for everyone.

