The following written responses were received as part of the public consultation on the WSFRS Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) that was held between 11th July – 5th August 2016.

Respondents were asked to complete an online questionnaire with a ‘free text’ box for any additional comments, questions or suggestions for service improvement.

The questionnaire provided for some anonymity and did not mandatorily require all respondents to submit their name or contact details. We have therefore provided a generic response to all the points raised in the document below.

Thank you to everyone that took part.

Of the eighty online questionnaire responses received:

- 87.5% agreed or strongly agreed the CRMP was easy to understand
- 82.5% agreed or strongly agreed the community risk information was clearly explained
- 88.75% agreed or strongly agreed that emergency response activity was clearly explained
- 88.75% agreed or strongly agreed that WSFRS reduces risk through its prevention, protection and emergency response activities.

Twenty four additional (anonymous) responses were received via the ‘free text’ box, plus email responses from Henfield Parish Council, Selsey Town Council and East Grinstead Town Council.

The full transcript of each additional text response is shown below.

1. Is there any scope for the Fire and Rescue service to work more closely with, for example, other emergency response services such as the Ambulance Service as they are currently trialling in London? This would provide the residents in West Sussex with a greater emergency response for things like heart attacks (I understand Fire Crews already know who to use defibrillators) but this would reduce the risks for our aging population going forward.

   We regularly work with other emergency services in a manner of ways, including our work through the Sussex Resilience Forum. More specifically, in October 2016 we are about to start a pilot to co-respond to some emergency ambulance calls in a partnership with South East Coast Ambulance Service.

2. Could be seen as misleading as it states some RDS storages but not highlighting how bad the situation can be at times with so many fire engines off the run. The fact that on whole-time stations both the fire engines and specials cannot be crewed at the same time that many times pumps run with less than five crew restricting their ability to use BA in the same safe way as with a crew of five or six. It gives the impression that their tax money is being well spend but in truth not always the case.

The Retained Duty System personnel provide a valuable service to communities across West Sussex but availability is an ongoing national issue for Fire & Rescue Services. Retained crewing and availability issues are complex with no one simple answer or solution. WSFRS has been working closely with retained staff to examine these issues and, as a result of these...
discussions, we are about to trial new contracts for retained firefighters. We will continue to work with all internal and external stakeholders to make the retained crewing system resilient and sustainable.

It is not the case that a fire engine and special appliance cannot be crewed at the same time. For example, if Worthing’s Aerial Ladder Platform was called to an incident they can send the ALP and an appliance at the same time. The same is true of Crawley with its Heavy Rescue Tender. This form of ‘alternate crewing’ is widely used by fire and rescue services and has been for many years.

With regards to BA use - we have a safe system of work in place for crews of four or more when breathing apparatus is required.

3. In spite of the many "prevention" activities stated in the report, the only vital requirement by residents of West Sussex is that a fire engine arrives fast in an emergency. The performance statistics indicate that this need is only about 75% efficient and that is just not good enough. The shiny new appliance here in Steyning has hardly been used and when a 999 call is made in the town we have to wait for a response from Shoreham, Storrington or Henfield. Anyone can write a glowing report which accentuates the plusses, but statistics can - and have been - 'massaged'. Fitting smoke alarms may be a worthy occupation and photo-opportunities at a junior school with a big red engine may be a good story, but the real capacity to fight fire, to respond in an emergency and to save lives has never been more at risk in West Sussex and countrywide. However much WSCC tries to assess fire risk into a series of bar-charts and tables, the fact is that fires and rescues are by definition completely unpredictable. Hope for the best, BUT prepare for the worst.

Our statistics are verified in a number of ways to ensure we produce robust and transparent data. This data is available and updated regularly via the West Sussex County Council website. This is also published in our Annual Report.

WSFRS recognise that prevention is at the heart of the service we provide and preventing an incident happening is far better than having to respond. It is nationally recognised that fire prevention activity has had a positive impact on the number and severity of fires across the country.

Fire engines don’t put out fires – our crews do – and these are mobilised on the nearest and quickest available resource at any time. We measure our response times from the time the member of the public is connected to the Sussex Control Centre where we take 999 emergency calls.

4. Not under WSFRS control but the Government's categorisation of terrorist risks is outdated and unhelpful in planning strategy. It is the outcome of the terrorist attack which is of concern to WSFRS not the organisation or individuals responsible. For Sussex it would be attacks on Gatwick, sports stadia, stations, farm and factory buildings, Hindhead tunnel etc.

As the respondent states, the Government’s categorisation of terrorist risks is not under WSFRS control, however we work closely with all emergency services, agencies and partners to train, prepare and respond to such incidents.

5. The risk management actions "what are we going to do about it" under Population are vague to say the least. Future actions are clearly defined for other risks.

Our future planning constantly assesses potential demand on our services. A population rise in itself will not necessarily increase risk. The data we use combines information from a
variety of sources to help us ensure we have resources where they are most likely to be needed.

6. I see no specific mention of the Brighton/Hove conurbation. Surely there must be liaison across that border?

We work closely with all of our neighbouring Fire & Rescue Services and there are reciprocal arrangements for supporting one another. However, specific planning for Brighton and Hove is the responsibility of East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.

7. What could be a weighty document has been clearly separated into easily identifiable sections.

Thank you. No additional response required.

8. I remain surprised that East and West Sussex Fire & Rescue Services have not been amalgamated.

The possibility of a merger was examined in 2012/2013 but was not progressed at that stage due to funding issues and the implications on council tax. We collaborate locally and nationally with other FRS and partners for many of the areas of work we undertake.

9. There would appear to be difficulty in maintaining the necessary numbers of retained officers. Should the report contain more specific measurable ways in which this problem should be overcome?

Unfortunately, recruitment and retention of retained staff are an ongoing problem for Fire & Rescue Services across the country. The issues of retained crewing and availability are complex with no one simple answer or solution. WSFRS has been working closely with retained staff to examine these issues and, as a result of these discussions, we are about to trial new contracts for retained firefighters. Work on the details of this these contracts had not been completed prior to the CRMP consultation so was not included in the document. We will continue to work with all internal and external stakeholders to make the retained crewing system resilient and sustainable.

10. I think fire and rescue is a national service and better coverage could be obtained by abandoning the link to WSCC both for liaison and funding. Local fire service administration could still make recommendations to central body but strategic decisions are national not local.

This is a Community Risk Management for West Sussex and is not designed for discussions on national governance models.

11. Because the plan is put together by people who probably spend their lives working in this area there is a small problem with "jargon" e.g. the use of the word "retained" it IS explained but not till the end!!

The report is compiled by subject matter experts but with input from non-technical authors. We do try to avoid jargon and apologise if the language within this report is not as clear as it could be in some areas.

12. Trotton is classified as a low risk area. We have a busy road in the A272, beloved of motorcycle enthusiasts, large areas of woodland and heathland attracting riders and cyclists, plus horseboxes, farm machinery and even a small petrol station. While we are pleased with the performance against response time targets for our area, and with recruitment targets at Midhurst, we remain concerned that our closest Immediate Response station is at Chichester,
at best some 20 minutes away, with Midhurst, Petersfield and Liphook all remaining as Retained Only stations.

A recent roadshow by Sussex Police showed a similar movement of resources away from rural areas to the population centres along the coast and Crawley. The Ambulance service appears to be following suit with "make ready" hubs. Our concern would be that, although less frequent, our emergencies are just as urgent as those on the coast and our needs no less deserving of a rapid response in the early critical stages of an incident.

Our emergency response standards and resource allocations are based on risk. Nationally, crewing in rural areas such as Trotton is predominantly covered by retained, on-call, firefighters.

13. Identification of right-wing extremism under terror risks - left wing and religious extremism from a range of religions is equally a risk and right wing should not be identified individually.

The reference to right-wing extremism has been removed. The threat of right-wing extremism is one of the key risks identified by central Government and the wording in our report simply reflects that. However, we jointly plan with other emergency services for all manner of terror risks.

14. The literature issued by WSF&RS is easily readable and seems to cover all aspects of the service in the correct detail.

Thank you. No additional response required.

15. Is the plan solely written by WSFRS, is there any independent analysis.

Yes the CRMP has been written by WSFRS; however, the processes that this report draws from have previously been independently and externally verified.

The CRMP was scrutinised by Members of the WSCC Environmental and Community Services Select Committee on September 15th 2016 and subsequently endorsed.

16. I read through all the documentation very carefully: I think it is very complacent it gives one the feeling that all is well- the Fire and Rescue Service (and associated C.C. and D.Cs,) are well up to dealing with any emergency. I looked to see if there was any planning to deal with a wide spread emergency of the size of the 15/16 October 1987. A situation when all surrounding areas were equally struck- no possibility of outside assistance: massive power outages, communication networks inoperative, considerable damage to properties and deaths. In the Rural areas we now have no localized police; the local fire service is massively diminished. Our former military base - and emergency resource in Chichester has gone. I am concerned that there is no mention of a proper full emergency plan - honed and regularly tested.

Planning and response to widespread emergencies has changed considerably since the 1980s with the creation of the 2004 Civil Contingencies Act and the formation of the Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF) which includes representation from the emergency services, local authorities, health services, government agencies and the military, as well as utility companies and transport providers. The SRF plans and exercises coordinated multi-agency responses to known and predicted risks, including extreme weather-related incidents.

17. The plan sets out the number of emergency calls attended stating that approximately half are false alarms, given that a number of these will have been with good intent this is still a large percentage. There is no mention of work being carried out to reduce this figure. It is
good to note that climate change has vagaries, which cannot be predicted or blamed on specific activity however, making provision for expectations of change is worthwhile. The emphasis on education and prevention is in my opinion the most important part of the activity after the saving of life; I hope this continues to be followed.

We do a great deal of work to reduce the number of false alarms through our operational crews and Business Fire Safety teams and work closely with those organisations where patterns of false alarms can be identified. This work is ongoing.

In recent years we have invested considerably and enhanced our capacity, training and response to flooding and incidents relating to climate change.

We thank you for your understanding of the importance of our prevention work which we deliver with a wide range of partners.

18. The plan itself is too long and could have done with a clear and concise summary. There are areas in the plan where the writing becomes repetitive and boring. Some insight into areas which posed difficulties for the plan and how these were resolved would have given a more honest approach.

We have tried to make this document as readable as possible and limited the length by sign-posting and providing links to other information.

19. The opportunity to reduce back office cost is being ignored. The opportunity to protect the front line is being squandered. Amalgamation of East and West Sussex FRSSs under the PCC is the only pragmatic way forward.

Our back office costs have reduced considerably in recent years and are predominantly absorbed within services provided by the county council.

We always welcome suggestions on how we could be be more efficient.

20. I find it difficult to comment as the report is technical and I have no expertise. That said, I have the impression of something carefully thought out. The claims about the success of preventative work are impressive. I am though worried at the implications of such a significant level of cuts since 2010 - how much better could the service be without such austerity, especially away from the main urban centres?

Like all public sector organisations we have to work within the resources available to us. Fire stations in rural areas are predominantly covered by retained, on-call, firefighters and the availability of these crews is not directly linked to changes in funding levels.

21. There was a lot of information to read which would have been difficult to process for an elderly or a person not used to reading very much. What was said was clear and interesting as it relates to how Fire and emergency services operate throughout the County. I was pleased to see that you have planned for flood risks and future population surveys.

Thank you for your comments.

22. Huge concern fire services remain solely in WSCC hands!

Your comments have been noted.

23. The plan is easy to understand and provides a well-rounded contextual description of West Sussex overall as well as a more detailed piece on the fire and rescue service. Although the community risk information has been explained it is not fully clear how that links in to the location and use of your resources. The Critical Fire Risk map is referenced in the CRMP and
seems to be the pivotal tool for deciding the level of resource for particular risks in the community. It would be useful if the Critical Fire Risk or at least a representation of the information it provides could be shown to your communities to allow them to understand why you have your resources in their current locations and at their current levels. With regard to over the border arrangements Hampshire FRS would like to sign post you to our own Integrated Risk Management Plan http://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/about-us/a-safer-hampshire/need-more-details/ and to emphasise that we would very much want to continue to work with you in West Sussex as we implement change to ensure the services we provide at the border of our respective counties continues to successfully manage risk in those communities. More detailed information around our Service Delivery Re-design will be sent to you outside of this questionnaire as we continue to work together to maintain and improve the safety of our communities.

Our Critical Risk Map is available on the WSCC website and we will be inserting a link to the Critical Risk Map in the final published Community Risk Management Plan.

24. This document does not meet the requirements of an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), and even fails to deliver as a Community Risk Management Plan. Much of the information in the document may be useful in a general information brochure, but the absence of key information on the outcomes of the last IRMP and plans for dealing with future risk makes this an inadequate IRMP. Despite a statement that ‘Station Profile’ and ‘County Profile’ documents are produced each year and are available on the website, I have been unable to find them on the website. Even a search for them only resulted in ‘Sorry, no results were found’ being displayed.

We have produced this CRMP following the national guidance for IRMP’s. It was stated that these documents would be available on the website or available on request. Documents have been sent when requested, however work is ongoing to publish the latest up-to-date profiles on the WSCC website by the end of the year.

The dubious selection of figures for fire deaths seems intended to disguise the failure to deliver on the 2010-15 IRMP’s statement that fire deaths would be reduced. The latest figures, that would show accidental dwelling fire fatalities for 2015/16, have been omitted and, oddly, figures for 2004/05 have been included. That is presumably to misrepresent the situation by starting the chart with a particularly high number of fire deaths. According to Government figures, the actual deaths for the period of the last IRMP were 28, compared to the previous five years when there were just 13. So instead of a reduction they have more than doubled.

The figures included within this document were the latest official figures available at the time the report was collated. The figures for 2015-16 were not available at that time and are still subject to the findings of a coroner (for example, the Shoreham air crash.) Fire deaths will inevitably vary each year but the long term trend remains down. Our performance data is made publically available on the WSCC website.

The 2010-15 IRMP also said that WSFRS would “look at new and creative options to maintain cover and continue to attract new retained recruits.” Not only has WSFRS failed to do this, but changes to contracts, training and management of Retained Duty System (RDS) personnel have made things worse. Mysteriously, the retained appliance availability target of 88% in 2011/12 has been cut to 75%. Despite the serious implications, this has apparently been done without any consultation with either the public or with County Councillors. Yet even this reduced target is not being met and average availability has fallen from 87% in 2009/10 to 59% last year. Some stations have even dropped from 100% to just 30%
availability during that period. The failure to address this problem suggests that WSFRS is happy to allow the retained service to wither and die. This is evidenced by inadequate efforts to stop the decline and the repeated process of removing lower availability RDS crewed fire engines from service. Nine have been cut so far. Clues to the root causes of these failures may be shown in a recent national survey of RDS firefighters by the Retained Firefighters Union. The results showed that 69% did not feel their service was doing enough to resolve the problem, and 60% felt that they were undervalued by Principle Officers. The only way WSFRS is going to properly tackle the RDS problem is by working with communities, County Councillors, Parish Councils, local business and community groups, partner agencies, the South Downs National Park Authority and others.

The issues of retained crewing and availability are complex with no one simple answer or solution. WSFRS has been working closely with retained staff and the representative bodies to examine these issues and as a result of these discussions we are about to trial new contracts for retained firefighters.

The current RDS contracts were implemented in 2013 and were collectively agreed with representative bodies in order to ensure we were legally compliant with employment law and to enable us to better understand our RDS availability. Since these contracts have been running, we have developed a far better understanding of our true RDS availability and some of the root-cause issues. WSFRS is recognised by the Chief Fire Officers Association RDS group as being at the forefront of improving RDS recruitment and working arrangements. We are constantly seeking new ways to improve our RDS and following extensive engagement and co-design with our RDS staff, we will be piloting new contracts in November 2016. We will continue to work with all internal and external stakeholders to make the retained crewing system resilient and sustainable.

Much is made of partnership working, yet on this critical problem WSFRS seems intent on avoiding the involvement of anyone that may be able to help find new and creative options. Whilst the Crewing Optimisation Group may seem a useful interim solution to the RDS crewing difficulties, it is expensive as a long term solution and fails to cover all periods of RDS crew shortages. Operating it when there are 12 wholetime crews available, but not operating it when there are only 8 wholetime crews on duty suggests a lack of planning. Especially as there are times, during the periods that the Crewing Optimisation Group is not available, when RDS shortages are as bad as they are when the Crewing Optimisation Group is available. There continues to be an inadequate assessment of risk and an even more inadequate provision for dealing with it.

We continue to examine ways to improve our overall retained resilience and sustainability. Our Crewing Optimisation Group has not been designed as an ‘interim solution to RDS crewing difficulties’ and this system too is regularly being reviewed to ensure it is working as effectively as possible. This team plays a wider role in supporting communities in a number of ways, including targeted prevention work.

The last IRMP is claimed to have resulted in “a considerable reduction in the number of ‘Very High’ Critical Fire risk areas”, yet no evidence can be found to support this claim. It appears that this may not be an actual reduction of risk, but simply a slight drop in the number of calls received in some areas. The risk to individual lives and property remains, and the risk of losing lives or property is actually greater in areas classed as ‘low risk’, because it takes longer to get firefighters to those areas. The risk to life is particularly high in respect of road traffic collisions, with the more serious ones tending to occur in rural areas. Not only are response times greater, but WSFRS is failing to meet target times for one in four incidents. Neither is the provision matched to the risk or the volume of calls.
The reduction in ‘Very High’ Critical Fire risk areas is presented in table format in the CRMP (page 23) and shows a reduction from six in 2010-11 to one in 2015-16.

A risk rating is based on a number of factors and not just ‘a slight drop in the number of calls received’. These factors include:

- Dwelling fire rate
- Other critical building fires
- Dwelling fire casualties
- The social deprivation rating for each area in the County

Crawley continues to be the fire station area requiring the most fire & rescue service responses in the County. In addition, this document says that the population in that area is expected to increase by 25%. Yet, WSCC has cut the number of fire engines and crews in Crawley from five to two. There is a correlation between population and number of calls, yet this document has no proposals to deal with an inevitable increase in emergencies in the Crawley area. The number of fire engines at Crawley fire station was reduced from three to two in April 2015 with the removal of the third (retained crewed) fire engine. We will continue to use resources to match risks and operational demands.

The document states, “We use analytical resources, such as computer modelling software, to help us predict risk and assess the likely impact of changes”. Unfortunately, history shows that the results of that modelling are ignored when it does not suit the Council’s political agenda. Modelling of proposed changes in 2010 was reported, as it showed no increase in deaths or property damage. Yet when modelling of the cuts in 2015 showed an increase in deaths and property damage, efforts were made to disguise and later discredit the modelling.

Computer modelling has been made publically available by WSFRS and is one of many sources of data and information that can be used to indicatively forecast future demands on our services.

We use a wide variety of externally verified, best practice processes, alongside the expertise of current serving firefighters, to design services best-suited to the communities we serve.

It is reassuring that WSFRS recognises the reduction in firefighter experience of real fires. However, extra training at the Fire Service College is not enough. The cut in wholetime firefighter numbers and the shortage of retained firefighters have made it difficult to maintain skills with continuation training, and at the same time maintain adequate fire cover. In house training facilities need to be improved and more firefighters must be employed to enable training facilities to be used without undermining fire cover.

We continue to invest in firefighter training and are pleased to have a new training facility at Horley, which has recently been used to train our first new intake of wholetime firefighters. It has also been able to provide intensive residential courses for retained firefighters from both West and East Sussex and we will continue to work with neighbouring fire and rescue services and partners (including the Fire Service College) to ensure our firefighters are safe and trained to a high standard. We have also increased the number of paid training hours for our RDS and underpinned our maintenance of competency training by developing and implementing new, modern, flexible on-line training, which has proven extremely successful and popular with operational staff.

The document includes the Sussex Control Centre (SCC) in the list of specialist teams in WSFRS, when in fact the SCC is operated by East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS). The Control function is effectively contracted out. No mention is made of the worrying fact that
the combined mobilising system, that was fundamental to the improvement of the control function, is now three years overdue. ESFRS has refused to state how many times the combined mobilising system has failed acceptance tests and they have given no indication of when this problem will be resolved. Other problems with the SCC are not mentioned, including the excessive amount of overtime required to maintain minimum staffing levels. In 2015/16, overtime was required on 425 shifts. Of particular concern is that, unlike the previous WSFRS Fire Control, the SCC does not record mobilising errors. If they are not recorded, then problems are not being identified and remedial action cannot be taken.

The Sussex Control Centre is a partnership between East and West Sussex Fire & Rescue Services. The SCC has been successfully operating since May 2014, to provide key 999 call handling and mobilising services to communities across Sussex. We are currently updating the mobilising system in collaboration with other Fire & Rescue Partners in Southern and Eastern England.

The document states that around half the incidents attended by WSFRS were false alarms. It is concerning that this number has been artificially increased by classifying attendance at some road traffic collisions as false alarms, simply because no action was required when the service arrived. To describe an actual road traffic collision that the service attended as a false alarm is misrepresenting the facts and the work of the service. Will attendance at actual fires that are out on arrival be the next to be misrepresented as false?

The categorisation of calls is agreed nationally. There may be occasions where we have been called to a car fire or single vehicle RTC where this turns out to be no more than a broken down vehicle or mechanical fault, and in these circumstances this would rightly be classified as a false alarm. Call statistics are recorded on our mobilising system in accordance with these nationally agreed categories.

The document states, “our change in operating model has not altered the emergency response standards we agreed with you in 2009”. Yet it fails to inform the public that those standards are not all being met and that the degree of failure has increased. In particular for both fire engines arriving at critical fires and for the first fire engine arriving at critical special services.

Our performance data is publically available on the WSCC website and is updated monthly. It is also published every year in our Annual Report.

The addition of the High Volume Pumping Unit is to be welcomed, but it does not offset the loss of 11 fire engines. Storms and flooding primarily require a large number of standard fire engines to respond to the high volume of emergency calls received in a short space of time. WSFRS is now less well prepared to respond to the predicted increase in severe weather events and no improvements are planned.

The way fire and rescue services respond to flooding and other weather related emergencies has changed considerably in recent years and this information is outlined in the CRMP.

The claim that this is a ‘Community Risk Management Plan’ is dubious. Despite fine claims about integration, this document has little or no mention of the smaller units now controlled by the Chief Fire Officer, the legislation covering their work, or any plans for their future work. These smaller departments seem to be completely overshadowed by the fire & rescue service and their effectiveness seems to have suffered as a result.
This document is designed to reflect our greater role within communities, however it focuses on the role of fire and rescue services as this is a requirement under the National Framework document for fire services in England.

A recent example being the Council’s latest IT Strategy report. The Civil Contingencies Act and resilience are not mentioned, yet resilience of such a core facility, which is essential to all WSCC services, should be a key strategic objective. If the Council cannot meet their legal obligations on such a fundamental report, there is little hope of them setting an example to others.

Apologies, we are unclear whether this is a question or a statement for us to respond to.

Finally, the inadequacy of the consultation. There are just two sections on the ‘Plan’, one of which contains four questions designed to get a favourable response, and the other is simply blank for additional comments. Yet there are seven sections about the person submitting the response! There are no questions about the public’s views on deteriorating fire engine availability, or on increasing failures to meet response times. Both are of significant concern to the public and they are entitled to be properly informed and invited to comment. They should also be asked if they consider £33.68 per person per year is sufficient to spend on their protection. I consider it inadequate and I am sure many others would agree. Firefighters continue to do a superb job, but the decreasing support they receive from the County Council is a disgrace. The public also deserve a much more open, transparent and accountable fire & rescue service. This Community Risk Management Plan does little to meet those objectives. Sadly, its inadequacies will simply strengthen the Police & Crime Commissioner’s case to take control of the fire & rescue service.

The questions within this consultation document were co-designed with input from engagement and consultation specialists. Equalities legislation dictates some of the additional personal information we are required to ask.

The free text option was included to allow for personal comments and to allow respondents to submit any concerns, questions or suggestions for service improvement.

Responses by email

Henfield Parish Council welcomes this document and is pleased to see the emphasis on prevention and the improvements that this approach has generated. We think the positioning of the Fire Service within the broader work of West Sussex County Council makes a lot of sense and see no reason to change that. Finally Henfield Parish Council is happy that there is a continued presence in the village and know the community value and feel reassured by that presence.

We thank you for your positive comments.

The East Grinstead Town Council are pleased to respond to the consultation on the above document. We congratulate the service on the strategy document which is well presented, easy to read and informative to the public. We are pleased that the integration of the fire service with West Sussex CC has proved so positive, the home safety visits are an exemplar of joined up service where the referrals to other parts of the County Council services can be highlighted. We are pleased to see that East Grinstead is remaining as one of the 25 stations in the County; however we notice that there are no immediate response hubs in the Mid Sussex District which encompasses East Grinstead, Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill. Mid Sussex District is having significant pressure to plan for housing for not only its own predicted growth but also taking numbers for Crawley, Horsham, Brighton and Hove and Tandridge
Districts where they are unable to meet their own demand. As a result we would like to see that one of the Mid Sussex stations be reconsidered in the future for upgrading to immediate response. We are aware that the strategy will link with the emergency resilience plans for Parishes and we welcome this. East Grinstead is currently reviewing its plan and will seek input from the emergency services as it does so. We note no reference in the plan to the current trend of doubling up by the fire and rescue to support the paramedic service in parts of the country. We welcome that WSFRS is not looking to supplement the paramedic service as we believe the two services should be stand alone with sufficient resourcing to meet their specialist needs, and provide the absolute best professional service to the public.

We thank you for your positive comments. In terms of the concerns you raise we are constantly reviewing our resources according to risk, needs and fire data. It should be noted that we are about to embark on a trial to co-respond to some of the most serious ambulance calls with South East Coast Ambulance Service. This is part of a pilot designed to save lives. However, these calls will not be responded to where a detrimental impact is then experienced to fire cover.

Selsey Town Council has noted the contents of the Plan but has no comments to make.

Thank you, no additional response required.