



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (ELMBRIDGE)

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

21 SEPTEMBER 2009

KEY ISSUE

The performance of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in Elmbridge for the period 1 April 2008 – 31 March 2009.

This report is for information only.

SUMMARY

Elmbridge continues to be one of the safest boroughs within the County.

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) performance within Elmbridge has been positive. Pro-active strategies have resulted in Elmbridge achieving a 21% reduction compared to the Total Calls received in 07/08 and exceeded performance against the 08/09 Target. The Elmbridge Borough Team has achieved a 28% reduction in the Number of Primary Fires attended since the previous 07/08 year. Elmbridge has also witnessed a 27% reduction in the Number of ADF's, (Accidental Dwelling Fires) when compared to the 07/08 year figures.

The Elmbridge Borough Team has seen an increase of Malicious False Alarms, against the 08/09 Target. The Team aim to improve in 09/10 through targeted campaigns as identified in their Borough Plan.

This year (08/09) Elmbridge has experienced, due to spontaneous events, a single loss of life and 2 injuries to members of the public occurred as a result of ADF's. Targeted activities to ever reduce and maintain a reduction within this performance area will continue throughout the year 09/10.

Through targeted campaigns and policy adjustment the Service has seen a dramatic overall reduction in False Alarms caused by AFD's. In Elmbridge, this reduction is reflected above by a 30% reduction when compared to the 07/08 figures.

Deliberate Fires (Vehicle). This year Elmbridge have achieved a 59% reduction on the 07/08 figures and exceeded the 08/09 target.

Deliberate Fires (Non Vehicle) - Elmbridge has witnessed a 22% reduction when compared to the 07/08 figures. The Service has been working extensively in partnership with Surrey Police, through the established Arson Task Force to combat further occurrences of this incident type.

Another area of success in Elmbridge has been the overall reduction of Fires in Non-Domestic Premises. A 41% reduction when compared to the 07/08 figures is further reinforced by the originally proposed increase in incidents, as demonstrated by the set 08/09 target, used to sustain good overall performance.

SFRS are keen to work with partners to dramatically reduce the level of incidents as detailed within this report. Fire crews within Elmbridge continue to work on projects with partner organisations to reduce the number of calls to dwelling fires, arson incidents, automatic fire alarm activation and road traffic collisions.

Preventative strategies also take the form of direct contact public education programmes; the provision of free smoke alarms through home fire risk checks (HFRC) and national safety campaigns.

Officer Recommendations

That the Elmbridge Local Committee agree to:

- i) Note the performance of SFRS within Elmbridge.
- ii) Support the achievement of personnel at Walton, Esher and Cobham Fire Stations.
- iii) Support the commitment by SFRS to embrace new technology and improved initiatives, to reduce risk further and make Elmbridge safer.
- iv) Endorse SFRS to continue working with partners to influence behaviour in the community.
- v) Recognise that following evaluation of initiatives funding may be requested in order for them to be implemented, maintained or continued.

1 Introduction Background

- 1.1 Responsibility for delivering the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Public Safety Plan (PSP) in Elmbridge is devolved to the North Area Management Team and the Borough Manager for Elmbridge, together with the personnel based at Walton, Esher and Cobham Fire Station.
- 1.2 The framework to achieve this has been through the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Borough Plan for Elmbridge 2008/09. Issues specific to the borough such as the building of partnerships with the local authority, police, schools, youth offending team and the identification of incident trends ensure the borough team contribute fully to the specific needs of Elmbridge.
- 1.3 Through our prevention and protection work businesses are advised on how best to conform to fire safety legislation. Additionally we undertake safety activities in local schools and the community. The aim is to encourage people to change their behaviour thereby reducing the risk of emergency incidents occurring. However, accidents happen and we need to ensure we are able to respond when required through intervention.
- 1.4 To continuously improve SFRS performance in Elmbridge four key projects are being maintained. These are to reduce the number of calls to accidental dwelling fires, arson incidents, automatic fire alarm activation and road traffic collisions.

2 Analysis and Commentary

The following comparisons are based on service statistics compared to the same reporting period last year.

- 2.1 SFRS within Elmbridge attended 276 calls to all fires, a downward trend of 21% compared to the same period last year. The number of incidents recorded, 276, down from 351, SFRS has utilised local press and community events to inform the public regarding Fire Safety. By establishing effective partnership workings and promoting the Home Fire Risk Check and targeting specific areas of the community we are actively seeking to reduce the number of incidents that occur still further.
- 2.2 During 2008/9 malicious false alarm calls were reduced from 23 down to 20. This, compared to the same reporting period last year, represents a decrease of 13%. In an attempt to reduce this figure still further, borough personnel will actively support the national hoax call campaign and highlight the potential impact that can result from making hoax calls.
- 2.3 False alarms from Automatic Fire Detection (A.F.D) systems decreased dramatically from 340 down 30% to 237, this is a significant decrease in going All incidents continue to be monitored and a 'Call Challenge' process will further reduce the number of unwanted fire calls.
- 2.4 The number of deliberate fires, excluding deliberate fires in vehicles, decreased by 22% from 110 down to 86, A link has been established with Elmbridge Business network to assist in information being passed to local businesses, the aim of which is to assist the companies in protecting themselves from the possibility of arson.

- 2.5 Deliberate fires in vehicles decreased significantly from 37 down 59% to 15.
- 2.6 The number of calls to fires in non domestic premises decreased significantly by 41%, down from 32 to 19 incidents.
- 2.7 The number of calls to accidental dwelling fires shows a 27% decrease
Hot strikes, an initiative to publicise recent fires in the vicinity of incidents, were undertaken accordingly and HFRC's and smoke detectors fitted where appropriate. Partnership working has been established with Elmbridge Housing Trust thus promoting awareness of the HFRC scheme to over 3000 local authority housing tenants.

A total of 645 HFRC's were completed in the borough.

Operational Equipment Update

Waterborne Capability.

- 2.8 Recently a new powered boat has been purchased and is based at Walton Fire Station. Walton is the base station for the services Swift Water Rescue technicians and equipment. Smaller inflatable boats, Ice Paths etc are carried in a designated vehicle which also transports the boat to incidents, the swift water rescue teams and equipment are used on all incidents involving water from fires on the river and islands through to incidents involving flooding Personnel from other stations in Elmbridge are currently receiving training to deal with flooding incidents.
- 2.9 In July 2008 Crews tested the operational capabilities of the Swift Water Rescue Teams and personnel from surrounding Stations by organising 5 Exercises on the River Wey at Brooklands, by creating a situation where members of the public were trapped in the river, good learning points were raised from these exercises and were felt beneficial to all who attended
- 2.10 The services Large Animal rescue team and equipment are based at Cobham Fire Station. Personnel from Esher Fire Station have also received awareness training to assist the crews from Cobham. The services Incident Command vehicle is also based at Cobham and teams at Cobham and Esher are trained to operate the vehicle which provides a strategic command point at larger scale incidents
- 2.11 Between Cobham and Esher fire station there are 52 personnel who provide operational cover based on a 2-2-4 shift based system personnel are flexible and can provide cover at either station to allow for un planned shortfalls such as sickness or Annual leave. Walton fire station is crewed by 12 personnel who provide operational cover between 0800 and 1900 hrs, outside of these hours the operational cover is crewed from a team of 18 retained firefighters, All crews when not attending operational incidents are working in the community to make the people of Elmbridge feel safe in their homes the additional personnel at Walton allow for dedicated teams to work in partnership with teams such as Elmbridge Community partnership, without having to be called away to attend incidents which improves the success of community action days. This crewing system is one of only two in Surrey and provides a family friendly system for personnel who do not wish to work on 2-2-4.

- 2.12 In September the operational capabilities of Fire Service in Elmbridge and operators of BP site at Waterside Drive were tested when a series of exercises was completed, since these other scenarios have been devised and further exercises are planned for autumn 2009, a good working relationship has been established with operators of BP.

3 Community Safety Activity

Schools Education Programme

- 3.1 This is an ongoing programme of Fire Safety Education for school children, with classroom-based input in years 2, 5, and 8. Firefighters from Elmbridge will be visiting Nursery school children promoting the Early Years learning box. In year 6, additional input comes in the form of the Junior Citizens scheme, which is a two-week, multi-agency event and is once again being hosted at Walton Fire Station in June 2009.

Duke Of Edinburgh Bronze Award and Firefighter for a Day

- 3.2 In April 2008 SFRS ran a Duke Of Edinburgh Bronze Award scheme, which was hosted at Walton Fire Station and ran over a 12-week period. This event is run in partnership with the Elmbridge Duke Of Edinburgh coordinator and attracted students from local schools within Elmbridge. The course involves weekly attendance by the students who complete a structured programme of events both theoretical and practical in Fire Safety awareness culminating in an assessment. If successful the students claim the Bronze Award. Despite some initial teething problems with the course all students successfully completed it and we are currently looking at further improvements on how to improve the content and delivery of any subsequent courses.

Firefighter for a Day

- 3.3 This initiative consists of a day structured around raising the awareness of risks and the implications of fire. Practical scenarios are included to run alongside theoretical sessions that allow the students to have hands on experience of firefighting skills. It is important to target appropriate participants for these courses, with the intention of raising aspirations, particularly to vulnerable teenagers. These include those that have been excluded from mainstream education.

4 Firewise Scheme

- 4.1 This scheme is aimed at young people who have displayed an unhealthy interest in fire, which has led or could lead to deliberate fire setting. It has been running for many years with great success.
- 4.2 For the reporting period April 2008 to March 2009, 87 young persons in Surrey were referred onto the scheme from nine different agencies, resulting in 129 visits being made by trained Firewise advisors. Following initial visits by Firewise advisors, 6 monthly checks are made with parents / carers to check on progress. Current statistics show that 91% say they have not had any incidents since the visit, and 9% say that incidents have become less frequent and far less serious. When parents / carers were asked if they were satisfied

with SFRS 95% said they were "Very Satisfied" and 5% said they were "Satisfied".

- 4.3 Firewise - In this reporting period Elmbridge has received 10 referrals. Of these 10, 20 home visits were made to the young persons. Follow up calls indicate that the outcomes have been successful with no repeat incidents.

Youth Engagement Scheme (YES)

The Youth Engagement Scheme is a one week, five day practical programme (Monday to Friday), based on a fire station, for young people aged 14 – 17. The scheme aims to aid personal development of the young people and address anti-social behaviour in the community, including fire and vehicle related crime. YES is part of an intervention package, which can last up to 3 months and is delivered in partnership with Surrey Youth Justice Service and Educational Welfare Service. The course is accredited by the National Open College Network, which provides three credits towards accessing future post 16 courses, such as the Public Service course. This unit was written by Surrey Youth Justice Service. 36-42 young people per year in North Surrey attend a course at Walton fire station. SFRS is increasing this to 108-126 young people attending one of nine courses in 09/10. This year within the borough of Elmbridge 13 young people graduated from the scheme.

5 Domestic Fires

- 5.1 Borough Personnel continue to work alongside existing partners in generating Home Fire Risk Checks (HFRC's) and fitting smoke detection where required. In addition borough teams proactively promote the free HFRC service at all public events attended. It is expected to undertake 560 Home Fire Risk Checks within the borough this year and data shows we are on target to achieve this figure.

6 Automatic Fire Alarms: Reduction In number of calls

- 6.1 New initiatives introduced by SFRS are aimed at reducing the number of unwanted fire alarm signals. These measures include top offenders being issued letters reinforcing recent changes to legislation and their responsibilities. Along with visits from the protection team based in Elmbridge This is then further supported with data gathering inspections by borough personnel.
- 6.2 Available statistics show a reduction of 67%. (477 incidents down to 159 incidents) compared to the same period last year.

7 Road Traffic Collision Reduction

- 7.1 Drink drive campaigns are planned for the summer and winter of 09/10 to build on the success of 08/09 winter Drink Drive campaigns targeting pubs where our target audience of young drivers use.
- 7.2 SFRS continues to actively promote the 'Safe Drive, Stay Alive' (SDSA), campaign and personnel from within the borough are actively promoting this to the local schools and colleges. To date, nine colleges from Elmbridge have attended the presentations, which begin again in November 2009, SFRS will increase the number of SDSA performances in 09/10. With a more flexible

format that the new DVD and materials support, our target audience and particularly those within Elmbridge that have been hard to reach can now benefit from this award winning scheme. Likewise the new format will be of greater use to offender rehabilitation initiatives. only two colleges from Elmbridge who are invited do not attend.(Esher College,and Yehudi Menuhin School).

- 7.3 On average nearly four people a month are killed or seriously injured on Surrey's roads as a result of impaired (mainly through drink) drivers and around Christmas and the New Year there can be even more temptation for people to drink and drive.

On 1 December 2008 Surrey Fire and Rescue launched a joint drink-drive awareness campaign alongside Surrey Police and Surrey County Council. To support the campaign called 'Drinking and driving shatters lives', the North area, organised its own initiative targeting drinkers and engaging them in a number of simple exercises to bring home the campaign message.

Watches responsible for Road Traffic Collision (RTC) reduction, sought out venues popular with the target audience and with the consent of the landlord took along the 'fatal vision' beer goggles and the break reaction kit from Walton. This interaction afforded the crews the opportunity to promote road safety and get the drink-drive discussions going, raising the general level of awareness amongst drinkers.

Other Community activities

Sainsbury's Fire Safety Week to generate HFRC's.

Neighbourhood Watch used to promote Community Fire Safety.

Surrey Trading Standards - to promote No Cold Calling Zones

Elmbridge Housing Trust - Stamp out Boredom - St John's Estate

One Elmbridge partnership – Community partnership days
Elmbridge Community Safety Team- Community action days- St Johns Estate, Lower Green Thames View House, Cobham Heart Shopping Centre, Vicarage Fields.

Joint reassurance patrols with PCSO's in areas identified through JAG, specifically areas in St John's Estate Walton and Lower Green area Esher.

Leaflet Drops in relation to six Service / nationally launched campaigns.
Dialogue with Elmbridge Housing trust to have HFRC information provided to every new tenant in a starter pack.

Fire Service attendance at Police panels.
Three Station Open Days - Open day themes were RTC reduction based with operational demonstrations and advice given.

Two Positive Action Day (PAD) at Walton one held in August second held in March to celebrate International women's day.
Brooklands Joint Emergency Services Day.

Joint Patrols with NSO & PCSP in St John's Estate, Appliances carrying out reassurance work in Pool road, Long Ditton and Lower Green.

Community Action and Partnership days are held in Areas where any incidents of Arson have been identified, working with EHT & EBC to remove rubbish / graffiti and give advice on refuse bin fires.

Notifying Elmbridge Borough Council of derelict property and Vehicles for removal / boarding up.

Informing EHT of small incidents

Encouragement EHT/JAG to inform Fire Service of incidents which are not reported to Fire Service

8 Community Room

The Community Room at Walton Fire Station is now an extremely useful resource to the borough, the facility has been able to be offered to many local partners for them to hold meetings and training sessions as well as giving borough personnel a professional environment in which to educate the local community groups which frequently visit the station.

8.2 Regular bookings for the room are now taken from the Youth Justice Service and most recently Surrey County Council used the room to host an induction day to recently elected Councillors.

9 Consultations

9.1 SFRS will consult with Members, partners and key stakeholders to ensure the community safety initiatives in Elmbridge continue to target priority areas and contribute to our aim of making Surrey safer. Additionally, there may be issues not covered within this report that Members may wish to discuss further. Further information may be attained from the North Area Manager Les Dodd on 07968 834550 or Elmbridge Borough Manager Kevin Noble on 07800 621957.

10 Financial and Value For Money Implications

10.1 All other initiatives are carried out within existing budgets of Surrey Fire and Rescue with no additional funding being sought at this time.

10.2 Following evaluation of new initiatives funding may be requested in the future in order for effective implementation, maintenance and review.

11 Equalities and Diversity Implications

11.1 SFRS Diversity Strategy ensures that Surrey Fire and Rescue Service provide a fair and equitable service, both internally to all of our staff and externally to the communities of Surrey. We value everyone within these audiences, as an individual, whether they are an employee or a service user.

11.2 All initiatives, campaigns and operational procedures will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. There are no equality implications directly related to this report.

12 Crime and Disorder Implications

- 12.1 The Area Manager for the North (Les Dodd) represents Surrey Fire and Rescue Service at the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), the Borough Manager (Kevin Noble) represents SFRS at the Elmbridge Joint Action Group (JAG) ensuring the Services views and expertise contribute to reducing crime and enhancing safety.
- 12.2 Initiatives and campaigns within Elmbridge will continue to contribute to a reduction in crime and disorder, particularly in relation to arson and vehicle crime. The link between abandoned cars and arson is proven and any decrease in the former will influence the latter.
- 12.3 The Borough Manager and Fire Safety officers participate in multi agency visits within the local authority and Police to licensed premises. This entails advising owners / licensees, or using enforcement powers in the interest of public safety.

13 Conclusion and reasons for Recommendations

- 13.1 The report contains information on the various activities undertaken by the Borough Team to reduce the risk from fire and road traffic collision injuries to the residents of Elmbridge, including direct contact, public education programmes and campaigns.
- 13.2 Fire crews and appliances based at Walton, Esher and Cobham form part of the wider resource required to meet the Fire and Rescue Services Public Safety Plan for Surrey. The number of calls to incidents is not directly in the control of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service. The number of calls is influenced by outside factors, for instance, a long hot summer, changes in scrap prices for vehicles or an individual with an unhealthy interest in fire. Road traffic collisions do not respect borough boundaries; a driver killed or seriously injured in one borough could be from any part of the county.
- 13.3 To address these issues SFRS plan to address performance issues through a balance of prevention, protection and response initiatives that are focussed through the local Borough Plan to meet the identified needs of Elmbridge.
- 13.4 The Committee is asked to note the performance of SFRS in Elmbridge and to recognise the potential for improved performance offered by the projects that form the 2009/10 Elmbridge Borough Plan.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: IRMP, Elmbridge Borough Plan, SFRS Website.