



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
ELMBRIDGE**

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

20 SEPTEMBER 2010

KEY ISSUE

This is an information report on the performance of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in Elmbridge for the period 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010.

SUMMARY

Elmbridge continues to be one of the safest boroughs within the County. Fire and Rescue performance within Elmbridge has been positive. Pro-active strategies have resulted in The Elmbridge Borough Team attending 163 Primary Fires. Although this was an increase on the 2008/09 totals it was still within the Service's anticipated target. Of the 163 calls, 64 were accidental fires in dwellings which again within the Service's anticipated target.

There were no fatalities due to primary fires and only three injuries to members of the public occurred arising from fires in dwellings. Targeted activities to ever reduce and maintain a reduction within this performance area will continue throughout the year 10/11.

The Elmbridge Borough Team has seen a reduction of Malicious False Alarms, against the 08/09 target. They attended 7 against a target of 12. The Team aim to continue this reduction throughout 2010/11 by utilising targeted campaigns as identified in their borough plan.

Through targeted campaigns and policy adjustment the Service has seen a dramatic overall reduction in False Alarms caused by Automatic Fire Detection (AFD). In Elmbridge, this reduction is reflected by a 30% reduction when compared to the 08/09 figures. Elmbridge attended 165 calls against a target of 227 in this reporting period.

Elmbridge also attended 78 calls to deliberate fires (excluding vehicles) compared to 86 the year before. Unfortunately there has been an increase in deliberate fires in vehicles, 26 in this reporting year compared to 15 in 2008/09. The Service has been working extensively in partnership with Elmbridge Safety Partnership and Surrey Police, through the established Arson Task Force to combat further occurrences of this incident type.

Elmbridge attended a total of 19 fires in non-domestic premises against a target of 22, there was no increase from 2008/09 figures.

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service 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 (RTC). This year teams have been identifying derelict properties and with the assistance of our partners; Elmbridge Borough Council, Elmbridge Safety Partnership and Surrey Police. These properties have been secured preventing those becoming targets for Arson. Examples of this partnership working to reduce arson were, Walton Social Club (Walton), Dees-Direct Design (Molesey) and the Surveyor Public House (Molesey).

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:

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

1 INTRODUCTION AND 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 2010/2011. 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 RTCs.

2. ANALYSIS AND COMMENTRY

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

- 2.1 Within Elmbridge, the Service attended 286 calls to all fires in 2009/10, which was an upward trend of 3.5% compared to the same period last year (276). The Service has utilised local press and community events to inform members of the public regarding fire safety. By establishing effective partnership workings and promoting the HFRC and targeting specific areas of the community we are actively seeking to reduce the number of incidents that occur still further.
- 2.2 During 2009/2010 malicious false alarm calls were reduced from 20 down to 7. This, compared to the same reporting period last year, represents a decrease of 65%. In an attempt to reduce this figure 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 (AFD) systems decreased dramatically from 237 down 30% to 165. This is a significant decrease and all incidents will continue to be monitored and our 'Call Challenge' process is expected to further reduce the number of unwanted fire calls.

- 2.4 The number of deliberate fires, excluding deliberate fires in vehicles decreased by 9% from 86 down to 78. 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 increased from 15 up to 26. The increase in these incidents rose significantly within the third and fourth quarters of the reporting period. A factor in this rise could be attributed to the decrease in the value of scrap and the ceasing of the Government car purchasing schemes.
- 2.6 The number of calls to fires in non-domestic premises (9) remained the same as 2008/09 figures.
- 2.7 The number of calls to accidental dwelling fires shows a 6% increase from 60 in 2008/09 to 64 in 2009/10. Of those incidents 94% of the fires were confined to room of origin, which the Service believes is a success of the smoke detector ownership. Following all dwelling fires Hot Strikes, an initiative to publicise recent fires in the vicinity of incidents, were undertaken and HFRCs and smoke detectors were fitted where a need was identified. 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 **582** HFRCs were completed in the borough.

Operational Equipment Update

Waterborne Capability.

- 2.8 In April 2009 a new powered boat was purchased and is based at Walton Fire Station. The boat is a Pioneer Rescue boat, 5.5m long and powered by a 4-stroke 75HP outboard engine. A specific feature of this type of craft is a bow ramp to assist in casualty handling and rescue. Walton is the base station for the Service's Swift Water Rescue Technicians and associated equipment. Smaller inflatable boats, ice paths etc are carried in a designated vehicle that also transports the boat to incidents and launch sites. The swift water rescue teams and equipment are used on all incidents involving water, ranging 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 to compliment the Walton personnel.
- 2.9 The Services Large Animal rescue team and equipment are based at Cobham Fire Station and supporting personnel from Esher Fire Station have also received awareness training to assist the crews from Cobham. The Service 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 large scale incidents.

- 2.10 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 unplanned shortfalls such as sickness or annual leave. Walton Fire Station is crewed by 12 personnel who provide operational cover between 0800 and 1900 hours. Outside of these hours the operational cover at Walton is through the use of 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 i.e. those not crewing the fire engine, allow for dedicated teams to work in partnership with teams such as Elmbridge Community Partnership, without having to be called away to attend incidents. This system has positively contributed to the success of Elmbridge Community action days. The 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.
- 2.11 In October the operational capabilities of both SFRS and operators of BP site at Waterside Drive were tested through a series of on and off site exercises/scenarios. This year the scenario involved a lorry transporting chemicals which had crashed into a pipeline carrying aviation fuel. The off site COMAH plan was tested in March 2009 with all emergency services and SCC Emergency Planning team taking an active part. This event was held over two days, ending in a table top exercise held at Elmbridge Borough Council offices. A good working relationship has been established with operators of BP and should the need arise for both to work together at a real emergency then these exercises will prove to be of benefit.

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 2010. In 2009 approximately 1200 children took part from schools all across the borough.

Firefighter For A Day

- 3.2 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 2009 to March 2010, 61 young persons in Surrey were referred onto the scheme from 11 different agencies, resulting in 61 visits being made by trained Firewise advisors. Following initial visits by Firewise advisors, six monthly checks are made with parents/carers to check on progress. When parents/carers were asked if they were satisfied with SFRS 89.5% said they were "Very Satisfied" with the overall service and 92.1% were "Very Satisfied" with the visit itself.
- 4.3 Firewise - In this reporting period Elmbridge has received 7 referrals (10 referrals made in 2008/2009). Follow up calls indicate that the outcomes have been successful with no repeat incidents.

Youth Engagement Scheme (YES)

- 4.4 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 increased this to 108-126 young people attending one of nine courses in 2009/2010. This year within the borough of Elmbridge, seven young people graduated from the scheme. Since the scheme started in 2006, 61 young people from Elmbridge have started courses and 57 have graduated (85%) success rate.

5 Domestic Fires

- 5.1 Borough Personnel continue to work alongside existing partners in generating HFRCs 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 582 HFRCs 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 30% (237 incidents down to 165 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 2009-2010 to build on the success of 08-09 winter 'Drink Drive' campaigns targeting pubs where our target audience of young drivers use. Public houses across the Borough displayed safety messages and crews attended with Brake Reaction tester.
- 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, six colleges from Elmbridge have attended the presentations, which begin again in November 2009. SFRS will increase the number of SDSA performances in 2009/2010. 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. 590 students attended in 2009/2010, with 500 students booked to attend April 2010 performance from Brooklands College.

- 7.3 On average nearly four people a month are killed or seriously injured on Surrey 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 2009 Surrey Fire and Rescue Service launched a joint drink drive awareness campaign alongside Surrey Police and Surrey County Council. To build on the success of 2008, 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 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 brake 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.

8. Other Community activities

- Sainsburys 'Fire Safety Week' to generate HFRCs.
- Neighbourhood Watch AGM held at Sandown Park used to promote Community Fire Safety.
- Training given to NHW champions identified by PC Mark Howells.
- 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 road.
- Joint reassurance patrols with PCSOs in areas identified through JAG, specifically areas in St John's estate in Walton and Lower Green area of 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 within 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 Cobham Fire Station open day used to launch Cobham 'No Cold Calling Zone'.
- Joint patrols with NSO and PCSO in St Johns 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 and EBC to remove rubbish/graffiti and give advice on refuse bin fires.
- Brooklands Public Services Day (May Bank Holiday weekend) to promote safety on roads and demonstrate role of Fire Service at a RTC.
- 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.

9. Community Room

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 Regular bookings for the room are now taken from the Youth Justice Service and Local councillors.

10. Consultations

- 10.1 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-07800 621957.

11. Financial And Value For Money Implications

- 11.1 All other initiatives are carried out within existing budgets of Surrey Fire and Rescue with no additional funding being sought at this time.
- 11.2 Following evaluation of new initiatives funding may be requested in the future in order for effective implementation, maintenance and review.

12 Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 All initiatives, campaigns and operational procedures will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. There are no equality implications directly related to this report.

13. Crime and Disorder Implications

- 13.1 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 Community Incident Action Group (CIAG). Station Manager Mark Barrett represents SFRS at the Elmbridge Joint Action Group (JAG) ensuring the Services views and expertise contribute to reducing crime and enhancing safety.
- 13.2 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.
- 13.3 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.

14 Conclusion And Reasons for Recommendations

- 14.1 The report contains information on the various activities undertaken by the Borough Team to reduce the risk from fire and RTC injuries to the residents of Elmbridge, including direct contact, public education programs and campaigns.
- 14.2 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. RTCs do not respect borough boundaries; a driver killed or seriously injured in one borough could be from any part of the county.
- 14.3 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.
- 14.4 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 20010/11 Elmbridge Borough Plan.

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Background Papers: IRMP, Elmbridge Borough Plan, SFRS Website.

