



**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S
LOCAL COMMITTEE IN
EPSOM & EWELL**

Fire & Rescue Service Annual Report

4th June 2007

KEY ISSUE:

The performance of Surrey Fire & Rescue Service in Epsom & Ewell for the period 1 April 2006 – 31 March 2007.

SUMMARY:

Five Areas of Performance Monitored – One on Target, Four off target.

The improved performance of Epsom continues, evidence of this is shown by achieving volunteers for, Fire fighter for a Day, Youth Engagement Scheme. Also, staff are now more willing to use the flexibilities that are available to them via new working arrangements (Limited Borough Autonomy) to support initiatives for Road Traffic Collision reduction and Recruitment at local Schools and Colleges.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Epsom & Ewell Local Committee

- (a) Note the performance of the Service within Epsom & Ewell.
- (b) Support the achievement of the personnel at Epsom Fire Station.
- (c) Endorse the initiatives by the Service to reduce the hazards of fire and other incidents in the community.
- (d) Endorse the initiatives by the Service to work with partners to influence behaviour in the community.
- (e) 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 & Rescue Services Integrated Risk Management Plan in Epsom & Ewell is devolved to the North Area, the Borough Manager for Epsom and Ewell together with the fire crews based at Epsom Fire Station.
- 1.2 The framework to achieve this has been through the Surrey Fire & Rescue Service Borough Plan for Epsom & Ewell 2006 -2007. Issues specific to the borough such as the building of partnerships with the local authority, police, schools, YOT and the identification of incident trends were also set to ensure the borough team was contributing fully to the specific needs of Epsom & Ewell.
- 1.3 Through prevention and protection we advised businesses on how best to conform to fire safety legislation and carried out safety activities in local schools and the community. The aim was, and remains, 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 Surrey Fire and Rescue Performance is measured against Best Value Performance Indicators. For the Service as a whole, nine of the 16 indicators are on or better than target and four are significantly worse (over 10% off target). The four BVPI's off target are; BVPI 143ii Number of Injuries from accidental dwelling fires, BVPI 149i Number of False alarms caused by automatic fire detection, BVPI 206i Number of deliberate primary fires, BVPI 207 Number of fires in non-domestic premises.

2 ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

The fire ground covered by the appliances based at Epsom fire station also covers the northern part of Reigate & Banstead, taking in **Banstead, Epsom Downs, Tadworth, and Kingswood** and as far south as **Walton on the Hill**. Incidents attended included;

- Dwelling Fires, Station Ground 79, Epsom Borough 53, R&B 26
- Road Traffic Collisions Station Ground, 90, Epsom Borough 56, R&B 34
- Automatic Fire Alarms Station Ground 385, Epsom Borough 261, R&B 124

- 2.1 The major areas of performance of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service in Epsom and Ewell are monitored against the following five groups of Best Value Performance Indicators.
- 2.2 **On Target BVPI 146ii** Number of calls to malicious false alarms. Significant improvement on last year to be the second best performer in Surrey. This successful reduction on 2005/06 is due to the proactive

approach taken where inappropriate use of buildings was identified and remedied.

- 2.3 **Off Target BVPI 142i** Number of fires attended, 1st Q 105 Amber, 2nd Q 104, Amber, 3rd Q 65 Amber, 4th Q 49 Amber, continued effort on projects, links to Home Fire Risk Checks and Arson Reduction initiatives. Current problem with Longmead identified as evenings and School Holidays, short and medium term plans in place, also working with Area Arson Coordinator, the Arson Task Force and through JAG.
- 2.4 **Off Target BVPI 149i** Number of false alarms caused by automatic detection (AFA's) 1st Q 55 calls, 2nd Q 98 calls, 3rd Q 61 calls Amber, 4th Q 49 calls Amber. Trend is down, with fewer calls than last year. NB. 124 incidents occurred in Reigate & Banstead. The main offenders have been identified and the crews are working with the North Protection Team to see how the increase in calls can be reduced, if necessary via enforcement action. Launch of AFA Reduction Project, links to North Area Watches, and improving availability of Protection team should see an improvement in performance.
- 2.5 **Off Target BVPI 206i & 206iii** Number of deliberate fires (excluding vehicles) 1st Q 20 calls Green, 2nd Q 46 calls Red, 3rd Q 12 calls Red 4th Q 13 calls Red. Less calls than last year. Refuse container fires continue to be an issue, this is being tackled through a multi-agency approach. In addition launch of an Arson Reduction Project for 2007-08 and closer links with the Arson Task Force should lead to improved performance.
- 2.6 **Off Target BVPI 206ii & 206iv** Number of deliberate fires in vehicles, 1st Q 15 calls, 2nd Q 5 calls, 3rd Q 5 calls, 4th Q 2 calls Red, Op Cubit was planned for Jan-March but unfortunately has not gone ahead due to contractual difficulties. Seen as crucial to assisting with the removal of 'vulnerable' vehicles from the streets. The data gathering exercise for Op Cubit, however, was not wasted and is now being used as part of the overall strategy for tackling these fires.
- 2.7 To plan a reduction in activity and monitor the risk reduction in the Borough four projects have been introduced for 2007-08. They are Unwanted Call Reduction (AFA & Hoax), Dwelling Fire Reduction, Arson Reduction and Road Traffic Collision Reduction, they form the major part of the 2007-8 Epsom and Ewell Borough Plan.

3 CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 Dialogue with our partners has been continuous in order to inform current and future practice.
- 3.2 Formally this has taken place at various levels and includes the Local Strategic Partnership, the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, the Joint Action Group and Nuisance Prevention Group. However, many more

informal links have been created and maintained that have enhanced our overall contribution to the Borough.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 For 2006-07 funding was requested to support a youth engagement activity known as Fire Fighter For a Day. Total funding for scheme £3167, of which £1583.50 was provided by the Local Committee and £1583.50 was provided by the CDRP. Nine events are planned providing a capacity for 108 candidates. The first events ran over the Easter Holiday Break, with further dates scheduled for the School Summer Holidays.
- 4.2 During 2007-08, following evaluation of progress with implementing the four key projects (Unwanted Call Reduction (AFA & Hoax), Dwelling Fire Reduction, Arson Reduction and Road Traffic Collision Reduction) funding may be requested in order to support risk reduction initiatives linked to the projects.

5 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Area Manager for the North (Dave Steggles) represents Surrey Fire and rescue Service at the CDRP, the borough manager for Epsom and Ewell (Steve Schooling) represents the Service at JAG, NPG and the Crime Prevention Panel ensuring the Service's views and expertise contribute to reducing crime and enhancing safety.
- 5.2 The main area where SF&RS support the CDRP agenda and the reduction in crime statistics (BCS basket of ten indicators) is through reducing criminal damage (arson). The link between abandoned cars and arson is proven and any decrease in the former will influence the latter.
- 5.3 The Firewise Advisory Scheme has brought its concerns about specific cases to the NPG. This partnership approach has ensured a wider view has been taken in order to prevent an escalation of offending behaviour.
- 5.4 Personnel from the fire station are now contributing to the Youth Engagement Scheme run at Walton Fire Station. This sees the borough contributing financially and practically in one area to assist with youth diversion.
- 5.5 The station has also supported other youth diversion and safety projects such as 1st Gear and Junior Citizens
- 5.6 The borough manager and fire safety officers participate in multi-agency visits with the local authority and police to licensed premises. This entails advising owners/licensees, or using enforcement powers in the interest of public safety.

6 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Service Diversity Strategy ensures that Surrey Fire & 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.

7 CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Fire crews and appliances based at Epsom form part of the wider resource required to meet the Fire and Rescue Services Integrated Risk Management 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. The Service therefore plan to address performance issues through a balance of prevention, protection and response initiatives that are focused through the local Borough Plan to meet the needs of Epsom and Ewell.
- 7.2 The Committee is asked to note the performance of the Service in Epsom and Ewell and to recognise the potential for improved performance offered by the projects that form the 2007/08 Epsom and Ewell Borough plan.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: Available on request from Dave Steggles, the Epsom & Ewell Borough Plan, The Integrated Risk Management Plan – Our 2020 Vision
