



**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL  
LOCAL COMMITTEE EPSOM & EWELL  
7 March 2011**

**PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

**Question 1 – Mr James Tigwell**

**Re: Surrey Fire & Rescue Services Public Safety Plan and the safety of the local community in Epsom & Ewell**

I have a question for the next Epsom and Ewell Local Committee Meeting 7th March 2011. In response to Surrey Fire and Rescues Services Public Safety Plan

How will the increased response times (up to an extra 3.5 minutes) and loss of one of Epsom's Fire appliances both day and night improve the safety of the community of Epsom and Ewell bearing in mind since 2006 we have lost 5 residents (higher than any other borough) to fire all of whom are classified as vulnerable and that it is estimated that 80% of households in the UK have working smoke alarms (ODPM Fires in the Home Findings from 2004/2005 Survey of English Housing).

**Officer Response:**

The proposals for Epsom fire station are to provide two fire engines between 0700-1900 hours, 7 days per week, and one fire engine between 1900-0700, 7 days per week. This means that the impact on the average attendance time for the first fire engine is minimal, i.e. if the fire engine is at its station then the response time for the first fire engine across the 24 hour period will be the same. It is recognised that at night the average attendance time for the second fire engine is likely to be longer as it will need to come from a surrounding station. This is one of the reasons for ensuring that there are 5 fire fighters on every fire engine.

Safety from fire and other emergencies is not solely based on emergency response. The draft Public Safety Plan is clear on the Service's intention to focus its preventative activity on those identified as being more vulnerable. For clarity, since 2006 there have been 4 deaths caused by accidental fires in dwellings in Epsom and Ewell.

The statistic quoted regarding smoke detector ownership means that 20% of the population do not have what is one of the most important elements for a safer household. Surrey Fire and Rescue Service are determined to address this issue, whilst also improving the training and development for all of our staff.

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**Question 2 Mr Russell Giles**

**Re: Surrey Fire & Rescue Public Safety Plan and reduction to services**

I would like to ask the local committee if it is in favour of reducing Fire and Rescue services to the most densely populated Borough in Surrey 75 000 residents and surrounding area bringing the total of 107 000 residents by 50% seriously putting our community at risk, Is Epsom & Ewell becoming a second rate town & borough within Surrey, with Loss of Courts, Loss of Police station facilities not open to public at night and part of weekends (all patrols work out of Esher) possible downgrading of Epsom General Hospital. Epsom Fire Station was opened in 1935 by the then Borough of Epsom & Ewell it has always had two or more Appliances, how is it now deemed to be possible to reduce services The Two Appliances at Epsom Are amongst the busiest in the County. After events in Warwickshire (prosecution of Fire Service Managers and council) do you think this is appropriate?

**Officer Response:**

The proposals for Epsom fire station are to provide two fire engines between 0700-1900 hours, 7 days per week, and one fire engine between 1900-0700, 7 days per week. This means that the impact on the average attendance time for the first fire engine is minimal, i.e. if the fire engine is at its station then the response time for the first fire engine across the 24 hour period will be the same. It is recognised that at night the average attendance time for the second fire engine is likely to be longer as it will need to come from a surrounding station. This is one of the reasons for ensuring that there are 5 fire fighters on every fire engine.

We recognise that the configuration of stations has remained the same for many years and yet the risks and demand are different. Within the last 10 years we have seen a significant decrease in the number of incidents that we attend, from over 15,000 in 2001-02 to fewer than 12,000 in 2009-10. This is in part due to our automatic fire alarm reduction policy but is also reflected in a decrease in the number of dwelling fires. This means that we need to reassess the disposition of our resources to ensure that we are able to provide an appropriate response to all incidents in the county.

There are currently legal proceedings taking place following the tragic events at a fire in Warwickshire where 4 fire fighters lost their lives, until such time as these are complete we are not in a position to comment. The Public Safety Plan is, however, clearly focussed on improving fire fighter and community safety. Increasing staff training, enhancing community risk intelligence and targeting community safety activity, whilst maintaining an appropriate level of emergency response will achieve this.