



Guildford Borough Fire Plan

Surrey County Council Local Committee for Guildford

10th March 2010

Key Issue

To report to the Committee on the Borough Plan for 2010/11 that will deliver community safety in Guildford, help meet the needs of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and enhance the overall performance of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS).

To report on the achievements of the borough plan for 2009/10

Summary

SFRS in Guildford continues to improve its performance, evidenced by implementation and development of projects to reduce the number of calls to automatic fire alarms, arson, road traffic collisions and dwelling fires. The projects continue to have an impact on the Service's performance figures and improve community safety.

The Borough Plan for 2010/11 offers real improvement over previous years with targeted activities reflecting local need and LAA priorities.

Staff continue to use the flexibilities that are available to them via Limited Borough Autonomy to support safety initiatives across the borough.

The Service is an active member of the Safer Guildford Partnership and the borough manager continues to work with relevant agencies and services to promote community safety locally

Officer Recommendations

The Local Committee is asked to:

- a) Recognise the achievements of the borough teams within Guildford and support their commitment to improve initiatives to reduce risk and make Guildford safer through the delivery of the borough plan.
- b) Note the targets and initiatives set within the Guildford borough plan for 2010/11 and support the Fire and Rescue Service in the delivery of this plan.
- c) Support the achievements of the retained duty personnel at Guildford and Gomshall and acknowledge the availability offered by employers who release staff, and those who are self-employed.

1 Introduction and background

- 1.1 Guildford continues to be one of the safest boroughs in the county in which to live and work, which is reflected in the following performance figures, which relate to the reporting period April 2009 to December 2009.
- 1.2 The service has attended 170 calls to primary fires in the reporting period to date. This is consistent with previous years performance but when the number of outdoor fires that qualify as primary fires are taken into account, represents a slight improvement from the previous year's figure at this stage.
- 1.3 The number of deliberate fires in both premises and vehicles has dropped from the previous reporting period and this continues the downward trend in this type of fire in the borough.
- 1.4 The number of false alarms from automatic fire detection systems has decreased from this time last. However the number of calls remain the highest in the County and this is an area of focus for the borough team. Notable successes have been achieved working with Surrey University for example. Robust management of this type of call through the Service's call challenge and education initiatives will continue to be implemented to ensure this figure continues to fall.
- 1.5 The number of malicious false alarms is under target and this is not a problem to the borough. The borough team monitors the situation
- 1.6 The five key areas for the year 2010/11 and the approach to reducing risk and increasing safety are described in detail in the Guildford Borough Plan (Annexe 1). These areas ensure that the borough team remains focused on improving performance against the performance indicators, meet LAA needs and that they are achieved in line with Surrey County Council values.

2 Analysis

Borough Plan

- 2.1 The borough plan has been reviewed and re-written to ensure that it reflects both Service and local needs and that it reflects how Surrey Fire and Rescue Service contributes to the LAA in Guildford.
- 2.2 The plan is divided into five sections – reduction in accidental dwelling fires, reduction in the number of road traffic collisions, reduction in the number of unwanted calls, reduction in the incidents of arson and general community risk reduction initiatives.

Accidental Dwelling Fires

- 2.3 A number of targeted home fire risk check campaigns will take place in 2010/11. These events will be run in conjunction with our partners wherever possible and deliver community safety in the identified risk areas in Guildford.
- 2.4 We will also work with our partners (Age Concern, Police and GBC) as well as deal with ad hoc requests for home fire risk checks to ensure that we carry out at least 400 home fire safety checks in the year from April.
- 2.5 We will also work hard on education initiatives to ensure that people are more aware of the risks in their own homes. On occasions this will be in a road where a fire has occurred when people are more aware of the everyday hazards that may exist in their homes – our 'Hot Strike' campaigns

Road traffic collision reduction

- 2.6 Guildford personnel will support fully both local and national campaigns aimed at reducing deaths and injuries on our roads. We will support the national drink drive and mobile phone awareness campaigns
- 2.7 We will demonstrate road traffic accident techniques and provide safe driving advice at the County Show.
- 2.8 We will ensure that one of the key messages delivered at the station open day is road safety
- 2.9 Guildford personnel support the Services SDSA shows at Dorking Halls every year and were actively involved in the filming of the new video this year.

Unwanted Call Reduction

- 2.10 Automatic fire alarms and malicious calls stop the Fire and Rescue Service from attending life-threatening incidents, create a risk on our roads whilst an appliance is travelling to these incidents and impact on the environment.
- 2.11 As such we will run a number of initiatives in Guildford aimed at reducing these calls. These will include monitoring automatic fire alarm calls and working with the top five identified premises to reduce unwanted calls.

Reduction in arson incidents

- 2.12 We will run a number of joint inspections with the Guildford Borough Council waste management team
- 2.13 Outdoor fire safety will be a key area for Guildford in order to prevent the unnecessary damage that wildfires cause to the environment, our wildlife and their habitat. We will therefore run a number of targeted campaigns aimed at educating the public in key areas to be identified once the full year statistics are available.
- 2.14 We will also look to ensure all abandoned vehicles are removed and that derelict buildings are made safe and hence not a target for arson.

Community Risk Reduction

- 2.15 We will gather risk information about premises in Guildford to make them, their occupants and our firefighters safer. This will also ensure a more informed response to any incident at one our identified risk premises.
- 2.16 We will put resources into education initiatives such as visiting schools and youth groups and also look at the possibility of running the first “Firefighter for a Day” scheme in Guildford.
- 2.17 We will support the five National Campaigns including candle safety and electrical safety

3 Options

Issue - Condition of Guildford Fire Station

- 3.1 The working conditions at Guildford Fire Station, which last year were poor, are now adequate following the considerable investment by SCC over the last 6 months.
- 3.2 Ongoing maintenance at the station will be required, until the plans in the Public Safety Plan (PSP) come into effect, to ensure that the working conditions remain adequate.

Issue – Availability of Gomshall Fire Appliance

- 3.3 The availability of the Gomshall appliance remains poor. Recruitment in the area remains difficult. Applications have been received on a regular basis from individuals but they have often lived outside the catchment area
- 3.4 Any longer term changes for Gomshall will be through the PSP process. In the meantime efforts will continue to be put into attracting new employees into the area.

Issue – Fires in Commercial Premises

- 3.5 There have been above average numbers of fires in commercial premises in the Guildford. There are no identifiable trends and the overall numbers are still low given the make up of the borough
- 3.6 The borough plan 2010/11 will pick up on this trend and we will continue to work with local businesses to make them safer

4 Consultations

- 4.1 The service will consult with members and partners to ensure the community safety initiatives in Guildford 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.

5 Financial and value for money implications

- 5.1 CLG funding for smoke detectors ends in March and as such a decision has to be made by the Service regards the direction of their targeted home fire safety checks – whether for example we can continue to provide smoke detectors as a part of this service
- 5.2 Most other local prevention activity is carried out as ‘business as usual’ by station personnel and attracts no specific budget. Value for money for all this work therefore continues to be excellent.
- 5.3 There may be specific activities during the year in need of some funding and bid(s) if appropriate will be made to members at this time.

6 Equalities and diversity implications

- 6.1 All initiatives, campaigns and operational procedures will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. The Committee will also note the support given to promoting self-reliance as set out in the preceding paragraphs

7 Crime and disorder implications

- 7.1 SFRS is an active member of the Safer Guildford Partnership and contributes to a range of initiatives and campaigns within Guildford intended to achieve a reduction in crime and disorder particularly in relation to arson and vehicle crime.
- 7.2 The Guildford team is also contributing to the promotion of the self-reliance agenda by engaging with partners and developing schemes that encourage youth engagement, particularly in priority areas. For example the firefighter for a day scheme to be introduced to Guildford in the next 12 months.

8 Conclusion and reason for recommendations

- 8.1 As per officer recommendations above The Borough Plan for 2010/11 will enable the Fire and Rescue Service to continue to play an important role in delivering community safety in Guildford, help meet the needs of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and enhance the overall performance of the service

9 What happens next

- 9.1 Members asked to comment on the draft borough plan for 2010 / 11.
9.2 The plan will be finalised at the end of March, at which time all feedback from consultation will have been considered and the plan revised as appropriate.
9.3 Members are asked to support the borough plan for 2010/11

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Background papers: Guildford Borough Plan 2010/11
