



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
(Guildford)**

**SURREY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
ANNUAL REPORT**

12 SEPTEMBER 2012

KEY ISSUE

This report outlines the major strands of activity being undertaken within Guildford Area by the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) teams based at Guildford and Gomshall Fire Stations.

SUMMARY

The report contains information on the various activities undertaken by the Borough Team to reduce the risk from fire, water and road traffic incidents to the residents of Guildford Borough, including direct contact, public education programmes and campaigns.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee is asked to:

- (i) Recognise the achievements of the borough teams within Guildford Borough and support their commitment to improve initiatives to reduce risk and make Guildford Borough safer through the delivery of the borough plan.

- (ii) Note the targets and initiatives set within the Guildford borough plan for 2012/13 at Annexe 1 and support the Fire and Rescue Service in the delivery of this plan.
- (iii) 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 The Guildford area continues to be a safe place to live, which is reflected in the following performance figures.
- 1.2 There were 153 primary fires in the year April 2011 - Mar 2012. This represents a 30% reduction on the previous year.
- 1.3 There were 112 deliberate fires in Guildford, which is a 13% increase on the previous year's figures.
- 1.4 There have been 27 fires in non residential premises during the last year. This is compared with 42 for the previous year which is a 35% decrease. This is well within the target set for Guildford for 2011-2012.
- 1.5 The total number of accidental fires in dwellings for the year 2011 -12 is 55, a 17% decrease on the previous year's total. This continues to be a low number given the concentration of property in the Guildford area and the management team have worked hard over the year to keep this figure low with targeted campaigns in the Bushy Hills area and other community works in identified areas.
- 1.6 Deliberate fires in vehicles were reduced from the previous year to 12 incidents. This represents a decrease of 69%.
- 1.7 Hoax calls are continuing their downward trend with 16 calls this year against the 18 calls received last year.
- 1.8 False alarms from Automatic Fire Detection systems have also decreased by 16% from 406 to 338 calls. This is due to the procedures that are followed by our operational staff when they identify a repeat offender. This figure is still very low overall considering the large amount of properties undergoing renovation or change.

2 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 **Road Traffic Casualties** - Following additional funding from all eleven Boroughs in the last financial year the Service's award-winning Safe Drive Stay Alive (SDSA) event continues to be an unqualified success. Personnel from Guildford fire station have also continued to deliver the 'Lifecut' events at the station – these days reflect the SDSA and FF4AD (Fire fighter for a day) methodologies and continue to improve road safety and vehicle awareness amongst young people.
- 2.2 **Schools' education programme** This is an ongoing programme of fire safety education for school children, with classroom-based input in years 2, 5, and 8. This is backed up by the education carried out by station personnel both at local schools and at the fire station. These visits occur two or three times a week as a rule.
- 2.3 **Wildfire** - Comprehensive fire plans have been updated for all commons in the borough and are available to operational crews via the mobile data platform carried on all front line appliances. I am pleased to report that the new off road fire-fighting vehicles (Unimogs) are operationally available in the Service. They have been used very successfully several times this year already and attended the large incident at Swinley Forest in the summer period of 2011.
- 2.4 **Calls to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA)** - Following on from the introduction of Call Challenge system introduced on 1st January 2008 for dealing with AFA's at commercial premises calls to this type of

incident continue to decline. When operational crews do attend such incidents they will discuss with the owners/occupiers methods for reducing such calls in the future. All such incidents are monitored and persistent activations at any particular premise are dealt with in an escalating process culminating if necessary in enforcement action.

- 2.5 **Community Safety Works** - Guildford continues to be proactive in delivering its community safety messages. Some of its works lead the way for Surrey Fire and Rescue Service in improving Community Safety. Successes last year have included targeted Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) campaigns, Lifecut, FF4AD and good partnership working across many different aspects of our work.
- 2.6 **Youth Engagement Scheme** - There have now been 8 highly successful schemes run in the West Area, which includes Guildford. In total the last year saw 6 young people referred to the courses and 2 of these graduated. Whilst this is a good ratio of referred young people to those graduating, there needs to be more referrals coming from the Guildford area and this is something that the prevention team with Mark Taylor will be working on over the coming months. The effect on the young people that complete this course is very positive and often sees them, for example, return to full time education.
- 2.7 **Firefighter for a Day** – Guildford run numerous FF4AD events with over 65 young people participating last year. The scheme is carefully targeted and reflects the lessons taught in the Youth Engagement Scheme.
- 2.8 **Schools Education** – The changes to the prevention team at Reigate will possibly see the suspension of the schools education programme for the next two years. In this time firefighters will be trained to ensure that the programme can be re-launched successfully, possibly in September 2013. Locally Guildford personnel will continue to ensure that carefully targeted safety messages and education programmes are delivered to those most in need.
- 2.9 **Firewise** – This continues to be a very successful initiative ensuring that young people who have a fascination with fire are educated to prevent any further incidences from happening. Six young people were referred to the Firewise programme from the Guildford borough over the last year.

3 CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 The Service consults - where possible face to face and where not, electronically - with Members and other partners to ensure the community safety initiatives in Guildford continue to target priority areas and contribute to our aim of making Surrey safer. Whilst we deliver the borough plan each year we would like to see as much input as possible from partners to maximise its success. To that end there are some current issues that we would like to highlight.

3.2 Issue - Condition of Guildford Fire Station

3.2.1 The working conditions at Guildford Fire Station, which were poor, are now adequate following the considerable investment by SCC over the preceding period. The planning and approval process for a new station for Guildford has now been agreed. Plans are now publicly available to view, and work will start shortly to build the new station and enhance the training and working environment for the boroughs firefighters.

3.3 Issue – Availability of Gomshall Fire Appliance

3.3.1 The availability of the Gomshall appliance remains poor. SFRS Public Safety Plan will see an alternative service provision developed at Gomshall, but in the meantime the existing arrangements will be maintained and recruitment, even though it is difficult in the area is ongoing.

3.3.2 Consideration is being given to a number of options in relation to the service provision at Gomshall and this options analysis will be undertaken in conjunction with the wider on-call review.

4 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Currently planned initiatives will be met from within existing Fire and Rescue Service budgets. These initiatives have been fully researched and focused on the boroughs significant issues, trends, or target groups within the local community. We present a professional image and deliver a much more powerful message at the events that we attend.

4.2 Prevention is a high priority for the service in future plans, and we will look to attract additional funding from local committees and organisations where appropriate, to enhance our activities and partnership working for the benefit of the local communities.

5 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

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

6 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 SFRS is an active member of the Safer Guildford Partnership and contributes to a range of initiatives and campaigns within the Guildford area intended to achieve a reduction in crime and disorder particularly in relation to arson and vehicle crime.

7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Guildford Borough Plan for 2012/13 will deliver community risk reduction and partnership working within the Guildford area.

8 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Members to be aware of past performance and support the planned initiatives in Guildford Borough Area over the coming year.

9 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 9.1 Members asked to support borough plan for 2012/13
- 9.2 Members asked to recognise good performance by Guildford personnel in 2011/12

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: Guildford Borough Plan 2012/13

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