



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)

SURREY FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY DRAFT PUBLIC SAFETY PLAN 2011-20

03 MARCH 2011

KEY ISSUE

Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority are required by statute to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (known as the Public Safety Plan) following public consultation. The draft plan for 2011-2020 is presented for consultation.

Following the consultation period the plan, subject to any revisions, will be presented to the Fire Authority (the Cabinet of Surrey County Council) for final approval.

SUMMARY

The draft Public Safety Plan for 2011-2020 describes Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority's proposals for the future development of fire and rescue for Surrey. The plan presents 13 proposals, supported by analysis and commentary. The proposals are designed to deliver an overall improvement to the fire and rescue service for Surrey.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Mole Valley) is asked to consider the Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority draft Public Safety Plan and provide comment by the 4th March 2011

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority Public Safety Plan for 2011-2020, sets out in detail the improvements it is proposed to make to fire and rescue services in Surrey during this period. This plan continues to build on the strategic ambitions as described in the previous Public Safety Plan and describes the intentions to build on the successes that have been achieved so far.
- 1.2 The Public Safety Plan is an Integrated Risk Management Plan, based on the principles outlined in the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework and guidance notes issued by central government. These guidance notes clearly state that “Fire and Rescue Services should serve all sections of our society fairly and equitably by:
- reducing the number of fires and other emergency incidents occurring;
 - reducing loss of life in fires and accidents;
 - reducing the number and severity of injuries in fires and other emergency incidents;
 - reducing the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergency incidents;
 - safeguarding the environment and heritage (both built and natural),
 - providing value for money.”
- 1.3 The risk analysis of the County, based upon intelligence, risk information and historical incident data, provides the foundation for the plan and identifies areas for improvement.

2 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 The draft Public Safety Plan, 2011-2020 presents 13 proposals that provide the strategic framework for an improvement in the integrated approach to reducing risk in Surrey,
- 2.2 The plan has been developed in order to address the challenges facing Surrey Fire and Rescue Service. These challenges include meeting the increasing requirements for staff training, identifying and reaching vulnerable residents and providing the service within the existing and predicted financial constraints.

3 OPTIONS

3.1 **Proposal 1: To revise the response standard.**

Although the quickest response is sent to emergencies, the response standard is a target used to measure performance. The current standard is misleading as it relates to a non specific percentage of the population. A revised standard is proposed, which reflects the current performance:

For incidents where life and/or property is at risk; the 1st fire engine will arrive within 10 minutes and the 2nd fire engine will arrive within 15 minutes on 80% of occasions. For all other incidents a fire engine will arrive in 16 minutes on 95% of occasions. The time will be calculated from the point where sufficient information on the type and location of the incident has been provided to mobilise a response.

This revised standard is clearer, is based on current performance and provides an appropriate level of emergency response across the county. Other options were considered and have been included as an appendix to the draft plan.

For further information on this proposal, see page 31 of the draft PSP)

Proposal 2: To match resources provision to predicted demand levels.

The incident profile across the 24 hour period shows that on average the Service attends more incidents during the day than at night. There are currently more fire engines available at night than during the day. This means that resources are not appropriately matched to the demand. The Service intends to address this by having more fire engines available during the day and fewer at night. This will also increase the capacity for training, risk information gathering and prevention work as well as providing an additional response resource when required (see proposal 5).

For further information on this proposal, see page 52 of the draft PSP)

Proposal 3: To improve the balance of service provision across Surrey.

The Service aims to provide a more balanced level of service across the county in order to reflect the analysis of the risk. We believe that we can further improve this balance by crewing some of our fire stations in a different way. This will enable us to achieve an overall improvement in the attendance time of the first fire engine, specifically for incidents where life and/or property is at risk. This will involve moving fire engines and other specialist vehicles from where they are currently based.

For further information on this proposal, see page 47 of the draft PSP)

Proposal 4: To crew all fire engines with five firefighters.

Currently the Service aims to crew fire engines with 5 firefighters as often as possible, however there are times when only 4 firefighters are available. The Service intends to crew all fire engines with 5 firefighters in all but exceptional circumstances, to improve the effectiveness of the first response to incidents.

For further information on this proposal, see page 31 of the draft PSP)

Proposal 5: To create capacity to improve firefighter and community safety.

Firefighting is a complex role that requires professional staff with the appropriate knowledge, skills and information to undertake their role safely and effectively. The risk in the community is changing and the expectations on the Service are expanding, which impacts on the statutory duties of the Fire Authority as an employer.

In the medium term (prior to the London 2012 Olympics), capacity created from implementing proposals 2 and 6 will be used to improve what we call 'operational assurance'. This means that all staff will have time dedicated to training, risk information gathering and community safety work. This equates to 20 firefighters per day on operational assurance work, who can be diverted to emergency response cover should the need arise.

For further information on this proposal, see page 44 of the draft PSP)

Proposal 6: To change the working arrangements for staff.

The Service employs staff on a range of contracts and duty systems, including wholtime and Mobilising Control, variable crewing, retained and flexible duty system staff. We want to change these systems to enable proposals 2 - 5 to be achieved, to meet our legislative requirements and also to provide greater flexibility for staff.

These changes will be conducted in discussion with staff and through negotiation with the relevant representative bodies.

For further information on this proposal, see page 39 of the draft PSP)

Proposal 7: To increase the use of volunteers.

The Service currently uses volunteers to support firefighters in community safety work and at emergencies, such as the Fire and Emergency Support Service (British Red Cross) and for staff Welfare (Women's Royal Voluntary Service). As part of the Big Society, the Service will consider the scope to increase the use of volunteers to maximise the potential of local communities and expertise. This will primarily be used to release firefighters to undertake their professional role not replace them. For example, a lot of time and money is spent training firefighters to operate boats yet the communities who live and work on the Thames in Surrey may be able to undertake this role.

For further information on this proposal, see page 43 of the draft PSP)

Proposal 8: To ensure the most appropriate response to all calls for assistance

Since 2008 a policy has been in place which means that Mobilising Control staff will gather additional information for automatic fire alarm calls to certain premises. Often these incidents can be resolved without the need to send a fire engine, which has reduced the number of false alarms attended and minimises the impact on businesses. The Service intends to expand this policy to further reduce the number of unnecessary emergency responses made, whilst ensuring that sufficient resources are sent when required. This could include the provision of additional advice to callers to support them in dealing with their emergency themselves, or by signposting to more appropriate support.

For further information on this proposal, see page 32 of the draft PSP)

Proposal 9: To increase income generation and cost recovery.

The Service intends to explore a range of opportunities to increase the level of income generation and cost recovery, these include:

- Charging for responses to some incidents which we may but currently do not charge for, such as animal rescue and domestic flooding.
- The provision of services to other organisations, such as emergency call handling.
- Increasing sponsorship for non statutory activity, such as our Youth Engagement Scheme.

For further information on this proposal, see page 56 of the draft PSP)

Proposal 10: To review governance arrangements.

There are four different models for the governance of fire and rescue services, one of which is through a County Council, as is the case in Surrey. The Fire Minister has indicated that efficiencies may be gained from reviewing arrangements with other Services, which range from greater collaboration to amalgamation. The Service intends to continue exploring the potential for efficiencies to ensure that the most appropriate and cost effective approach is in place for Surrey. This proposal will be influenced by the outcome of the Communities and Local Government Fire Futures review.

For further information on this proposal, see page 58 of the draft PSP)

Proposal 11: To review the provision and use of property.

The Service has 24 sites within the County, which are located based on historical circumstances. Much work has been undertaken to consolidate building stock but this is not financially viable in the current economic climate. However, options to improve the location, facilities and use of fire stations as well as partner organisation premises will be pursued where appropriate. This includes exploring the potential to support community resilience and volunteering.

For further information on this proposal, see page 65 of the draft PSP)

Proposal 12: To maximise community fire safety activity.

Community fire safety work is a statutory duty for the Fire Authority, which is available to everyone within Surrey. Although the aim is for everyone to receive this advice, the Service intends to specifically target those who are most vulnerable.

For further information on this proposal, see page 26 of the draft PSP)

Proposal 13: To continue to provide road safety advice for young drivers.

Although not a statutory duty for fire and rescue services, the Service has the lead role in providing road safety advice to 17 to 24 year old car drivers. This is to support Surrey's Road Safety Board strategy, and is delivered primarily through Safe Drive, Stay Alive. Due to the success of this programme, the Service intends to continue this area of work through achieving sustainable finance.

For further information on this proposal, see page 28 of the draft PSP)

- 3.2 The Public Safety Plan sets a clear vision for the delivery of the fire and rescue service in Surrey. It addresses a number of the issues that have been identified in previous plans relating to improving the balance of service for the county and also achieving an appropriate match of resources to risk and demand. The plan also addresses the relevant issues from the Public Value Review completed in June 2010.
- 3.3 This is an integrated draft plan and the proposals are therefore interdependent; the benefits will only be achieved if accepted as a whole package. Although financial savings could be achieved by the independent closure of fire stations, this would not provide the ability to manage community risk effectively.
- 3.4 After the statutory consultation period of 12 weeks, the content of the draft plan will be reviewed and a revised Public Safety Plan will be presented to the Cabinet for consideration in Spring 2011.

4 CONSULTATIONS

4.1 Over the past eight months, extensive engagement has been undertaken with the groups identified below to formulate the draft plan:

- The Fire and Rescue Advisory Group
- The Safer and Stronger Communities Select Committee
- The Members Public Safety Plan Reference Group
- Staff engagement sessions
- Fire Brigade's Union representatives
- Public focus group
- Neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services.

4.2 The consultation for the draft plan commenced on 9th December 2010 and will close at 1200hrs on 4th March 2011. The formal Local Committee meetings that are scheduled after this date will be acknowledged and feedback from them will be accepted as part of the formal consultation.

4.3 The consultation has included staff forums, public meetings (through local committees, a stakeholder seminar and a questionnaire).

5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The plan is designed to meet the financial requirements of the medium term financial plan, achieving savings of £2.7m by 2014. It is, therefore, within the revenue budget.

5.2 However following the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), Government have indicated that further savings from fire and rescue services will be needed and that these should be back loaded to 2013/14 onwards. The draft Public Safety Plan is designed to be flexible and provides the scope to identify areas where additional savings could be achieved.

5.3 The plan focuses on providing an efficient and effective service, matching resources to risk and predicted demand.

6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the draft plan. This assessment is a scoping document that examines the potential impact on a high level basis. During the consultation phase and the development of the final plan, equalities impact assessments will be undertaken for each of the proposals.

6.2 The impact assessment considers the impact on the public and staff. For the public the draft plan proposals include the improvement in 'community risk management' which means developing the Service's understanding of the risks facing the different communities and groups

within Surrey and the most effective way of minimising these risks. This includes improving partnerships and developing communication strategies to enable the effective delivery of safety education.

- 6.3 The draft plan also indicates the requirement to change the working practices of groups of staff. The potential positive/negative impacts have been identified and will be addressed through consultation and any subsequent negotiation required. The draft plan does not have definitive proposals for shift patterns as these will be explored further with staff and their representative bodies during the consultation phase.
- 6.4 This EIA is going to be used as an additional improvement tool that will ensure we deliver the Service's Commitment to Equalities: 'Ensuring the most vulnerable of our residents are protected'

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications.

8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The Local Committee is asked to consider the Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority draft Public Safety Plan 2011-2020 and provide comment by 4th March 2011.

9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 To ensure that the consultation process has provided an opportunity for the public to hear from officers and the member(s) responsible for the plan within a public forum.
- 9.2 To ensure that this opportunity has been provided in each borough and district.

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 10.1 Once the consultation period has closed, all feedback received will be considered within a review of the draft plan. A final plan, with revisions where appropriate, will be submitted to the Cabinet of Surrey County Council, as the Fire Authority, for approval to proceed to the implementation stage. This decision will be taken in April/May 2011.

LEAD OFFICER: Russell Pearson, Chief Fire Officer
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01737-242444
E-MAIL: russell.pearson@surreycc.gov.uk
CONTACT OFFICER: Gavin Watts, Area Manager
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 07968-834580
E-MAIL: gavin.watts@surreycc.gov.uk
BACKGROUND PAPERS: Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority Draft Public Safety Plan

Version No. Date: Time: Initials: No of annexes: