

Annual Report on Surrey Fire and Rescue in Runnymede
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL COMMITTEE IN
RUNNYMEDE

10th September 2004

KEY ISSUE:

This report details the Local Performance of Chertsey and Egham Fire Stations.

SUMMARY:

The attached Performance Indicators (PI's) highlight the aggregated performance of individual Fire Stations strategically positioned within the geographical area of Runnymede.

This report reflects selected Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) the Service is required to report upon annually, set against performance in the previous 2 years. This report reflects the position to the end of the last financial year and, where appropriate, compares Runnymede with the other ten Boroughs in Surrey. The position of Surrey Fire & Rescue Service (The Service) set against National averages is also shown.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Runnymede Local Committee

- (a) Note the performance of the Service within the **Runnymede** Area.
- (b) Support the achievements of the Wholetime Crews at **Chertsey and Egham** Fire Stations.
- (c) Endorse the initiatives by The Service to reduce the hazards of fire in the community, especially those most vulnerable.
- (d) Endorse the initiatives by The Service to undertake collaboration/partnerships that may realise scales of economy or effort and influence behaviour in the Community.
- (e) Recognise that following evaluation of these initiatives further funding may be required in order for them to be successfully implemented.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, on behalf of the fire authority, have produced an Integrated Risk Management Plan (**IRMP**), which examines how we can make communities in Surrey even safer, and is now focusing on correctly balancing resources in the areas of **Prevention, Protection, and Intervention**.

2. Through **prevention** and **protection** we will advise businesses to conform to fire safety legislation and carry out safety activities in local schools and the community. The aim is to encourage people to change their behaviour and reduce the risk of emergency incidents occurring. However, accidents happen and we need to ensure we are able to respond when required through **intervention**.
3. For the first year of the Integrated Risk Management Plan, risk is still going to be quantified by the potential for spread linked to congestion of buildings and occupancy with 6 risk categories: Special, A, B, C, D and Remote Rural. Runnymede consists of 'C' or 'D' risk with attendance times of 10 and 20 minutes respectively.
4. Members will be aware that the current IRMP has resulted in the reduction of one Fire Appliance at Chertsey Fire Station, which was achieved at the beginning of May this year. Although this has resulted in a smaller watch strength, we are now able to crew the Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) immediately, instead of at the expense of the second Fire engine, as was always the case in the past. Additionally, we have increased the skills base at Chertsey to ensure that the ALP is always available.
5. There are no proposed changes to these Intervention resources in next year's IRMP.
6. Presently the location of fire stations and the number of appliances continue to be determined by the requirement to meet the recommended attendance times (in 3 above) crewed, in Runnymede, by whole-time personnel providing an immediate response.
7. In determining the cumulative effectiveness of these arrangements, the Service reports on each confirmed property fire attended, if the fire had been confined to the room of origin.
8. The Service aims to be pro-active in reducing the occurrence of fire in the community, reporting on accidental fires per 10,000 dwellings and associated injuries or fatalities.
9. To achieve this, the Service is employing a number of strategies and initiatives linked to education of the community on preventative measures to the causes of fire and actions to take in the event of one happening.
10. Young people's educational objectives are centred on Early Years Learning activity boxes, school competitions, curriculum input at key stages 1-3 and participation in the Junior Citizens programme. These are complimented by I.T. and other interactive arrangements at suitable venues. For those young individuals who have shown an interest in playing with fire, direct support arrangements are available under the '**Firewise**' scheme.

11. Runnymede has increased its Firewise staff by the addition of one newly trained member, at Chertsey Fire Station, and now has 3 Advisors in the Runnymede team.
12. The Service ensures that owner/occupiers of certain residential and non-residential premises fulfil their statutory obligations as to the risk of fire, and inspect a number of premises. Where necessary the Service will issue a prohibition notice restricting in total or partially the use of such premises until action has been taken to reduce the risk of fire.
13. A small number of such prohibition notices have been served in Runnymede, two of which are currently still in force.
14. The Service is attempting to reduce the frequency of unwanted Automatic Fire Alarm calls through advice on preventative measures to owner/occupiers of premises that have a history of incorrect activation.

ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

15. Runnymede continues to be one of the safest boroughs in one of the safest Counties in terms of Dwelling Fires, with zero deaths and one of the lowest incidences of fire-associated injuries.
16. The two stations have an excellent record in exceeding the requirements for the times and numbers of Fire Engines attending each fire. (BVPIs 145a & 145c). However, our performance in confining dwelling fires to room of origin is less than we would want it to be (BVPI 144c). Other factors influencing this output would include the actions taken by a householder on discovering a fire and, perhaps, their overall approach to home fire safety. This indicates the need for an increase in targeted home fire safety advice activity.
17. The IRMP has seen the instigation of Borough based teams, tasked with dealing with ALL prevention, protection and intervention activity, and I see this as a new opportunity to move forward, with more focussed and information-led campaigns to improve the safety of Runnymede's community.
18. This year has seen the introduction of a Partnership between the Service and: Social Services; Primary Care Trust; and Runnymede Voluntary Services. The purpose is to provide home fire safety advice to the most vulnerable members of the community (primarily lone elderly people) and, where appropriate, supply and fit a smoke alarm. The Service is grateful to Adult and Community Services (Janet Haynes) for the financial support for this venture.
19. The number of false alarms, including malicious calls, (BVPIs 146 & 149) continues to be higher than other boroughs. Your new Team is working with St Peters' Hospital and Holloway College to consider more effective ways of reducing these calls.

20. **Annex A** details the preventative activities undertaken in Runnymede in 03/04. The committee has previously noted more emphasis on protection and prevention in the borough in our annual report in September 03, and has supported this with funding for 13 additional Early Years Learning Boxes, to be distributed to selected schools within the Borough. This brings the total in Runnymede schools to 24.
21. The location and high frequency of incidents where the Service is called to road traffic accidents is influenced by the strategies on road transport both locally and nationally. The Service is able to provide statistics that can complement those identified by the County Council Highways department to identify the location and seriousness of incidents and, if possible, influence any potential improvement.
22. Members of our Runnymede Borough Team sit on the Transport Liaison Group, which considers local road schemes for improving road safety. We are consulted on, and support, traffic calming schemes, whilst ensuring that all parties are aware of the overall effects on emergency attendance times.
23. The Station Manager at Egham, Gary Jeffreys, has maintained a close liaison with the project managers of the M25 works, to ensure that emergency services have quality access to all parts of the scheme.
24. This Community Safety work will be enhanced through working with new partners and our involvement with the Crime and Disorder panels.
25. Arson in Runnymede is among the lowest in Surrey, but we still have an unacceptable number of incidents. We have also suffered two high profile incidents, which have had an impact on the community: St Paul's Church, and the Little Green Lane Post Office.
We have been able to secure some money from the CDRP to commission a supply of boards, which can be displayed at the scene of an arson, in an attempt to gain information, and deter future attacks.
26. **Annex B** lists the performance data for the following Performance Indicators:
- 142i** - Number of calls to fire attended: - total calls (excluding false alarms) per 10,000 population.
- 142ii** - Number of calls to fire attended: - primary fires per 10,000 population.
- 142iii** - Number of calls to fire attended: - accidental fires in dwellings per 10,000 dwellings.
- 143i** - Number of deaths arising from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population.
- 143ii** - Number of injuries (excluding precautionary checks) arising from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population.

144c - Accidental fire in dwellings confined to room of origin in smaller towns and urban residential areas and classified as 'C risk'.

145a - The percentage of fire calls at which the number of appliances met standards of fire cover.

145c - The percentage of fire calls at which the attendance times met standards of fire cover.

146 - Malicious false alarms per 1,000 population.

149 – AFAs per 1000 non-domestics properties.

OPS7 – Road Traffic Collision extrications.

27. The Committee may wish to further support the work of the Service, within Runnymede, in the following ways:

28. Endorsing and supporting all, or any, of the following initiatives to reduce the potential number of fires and their tragic effects within its area:

- (a) That the committee continue to exert influence on local planning arrangements to promote the use of residential and non-residential sprinklers. The service will support members by providing where necessary promotion material on the use of residential sprinklers for housing associations, Housing Directors and other influential group
- (b) Further opportunities exist within the Borough's schools for the provision of additional Early Years Learning Boxes
- (c) To encourage the potential of joint use of resources such as premises where other agencies could utilise the image and social status of the Service to influence behaviour of local residents or groups.
- (d) That the Committee consider financial support for schemes, which have the potential to reduce anti-social behaviour in young persons; in particular the 'Firefighter for a Day' initiative.

CONSULTATION

29. The Committee may wish to consult with the County Council's planning department and District Planning Authority to promote the use of domestic sprinklers.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

30. Because there is no direct funding available to the Service to undertake additional activity within its current budget allocation on statutory obligations, the Committee may need to recognise that additional funding might be required if further options are to be explored.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

31. All of the above initiatives, if successfully implemented, continue to support the principles of sustainable development of the community as a whole.

CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 32. The perception of the Service by certain members of the community as being non-confrontational may offer an opportunity to reduce re-offending or give direction through the use of fire fighters as positive role models.
- 33. Statutory membership of the CDRP allows the Service to contribute in terms of image, initiatives and use of premises to help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 34. The success of any of the above initiatives could have a direct effect on certain groups in the community who will be those most at risk or who come from a background of disenfranchisement and/or under representation.

CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 35. The Committee is asked to note the performance of the Service, recognise the potential offered by implementation of the proposed initiatives and where applicable endorse recommendations A-E

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: Annex A - Local Activity
Annex B - BVPIs 142-149, OPS7**

Annex A

