



**REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
(RUNNYMEDE)**

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

5 OCTOBER 2007

KEY ISSUE

This report outlines the major strands of activity being undertaken within Runnymede by the Fire Service teams based at Chertsey and Egham Fire Stations. The report is for **information only**.

SUMMARY

This report contains information on new operational equipment at Chertsey, provided by the Service and Central Government.

There is also information on the various activities undertaken by the Borough Team to reduce the risk from Fire and Road Traffic Collisions to the residents of Runnymede. These take the form of direct contact public education programmes and campaigns.

Although this report is for information only, we recommend that the Committee recognises the achievements of the Borough Teams at Chertsey and Egham, and supports their commitment to embrace new technology and improved initiatives, to reduce risk and make Runnymede safer.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Runnymede continues to be one of the safest boroughs in the County. The figures below show areas of Fire Service activity and relate to the reporting year April 2006 to March 2007. The comparisons are based on service statistics compiled over the previous three years.

- 1.1 The Service attended 359 calls to all fires. Compared to the average over the previous three years this represents an increase of approximately 11%. In recognition of this the Service has utilised local press and events to inform the public regarding Fire Safety. By promoting the Home Fire Risk Check and targeting specific areas of activity we are actively seeking to reduce the number of incidents that occur. In the first quarter of this reporting year Runnymede are showing a significant reduction in the number of calls to all fires.
- 1.2 Malicious false alarm calls were reduced from 67 to 54. Compared to the average over the previous three years this represents a decrease of 28%. In an attempt to reduce this figure further, Borough personnel actively support the National hoax call campaign and highlight the potential impact that can result from making hoax calls.
- 1.3 False alarms from Automatic Fire Detection (A.F.D) systems increased from 619 to 635. Compared to the average over the previous three years this represents an increase of approximately 2%. This increase reflects the position across the Service. The Service is currently reviewing its strategy to reduce unwanted Automatic Fire Calls. Local partnership working with principal offenders has identified areas of good practice and the implementation of a filtering system for specific premises is close to implementation.
- 1.4 The number of deliberate fires, excluding deliberate fires in vehicles, increased from 64 to 82 incidents. Compared to the average over the previous three years this represents an increase of 16%. The majority of these incidents were areas of grassland & single rubbish bin fires spread across the Borough. A link has been established with Runnymede Chamber of Commerce to assist in information being passed to local businesses, the aim of which is to assist the companies in protecting themselves from the possibility of arson.
- 1.5 Deliberate fires in vehicles decreased from 39 to 36 incidents. Compared to the average over the previous three years this represents a decrease of 5%.

2 ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

Operational Equipment Update

Improved Firefighting Capability

- 2.1 In August this year Chertsey took delivery of their new fire appliance. This appliance enables the firefighters to extinguish fires using a compressed air / foam mixture which has superior fire fighting capability to plain water. The system is computer controlled and all firefighters within the Borough have received training in how to operate the new equipment.
- 2.2 The benefits of the new system are improved efficiency in achieving a rapid knock down of fires, and a reduction in potential pollution from the water run off from the fire scene as the amount of water / foam mixture required to extinguish a fire is considerably less than using water alone.

High Volume Pumping Equipment

- 2.3 The New Dimensions equipment based at Chertsey has been deployed several times this year, both locally and on larger scale incidents as part of a national response. In July this year personnel from Runnymede were mobilised as part of a national response to assist with the devastating floods in South Yorkshire.
- 2.4 The crews and equipment were mobilised on June 30th and spent four days in South Yorkshire working alongside crews from all areas of the Country in an attempt to pump floodwater away from the affected towns and villages. With the equipment fully deployed it was possible to pump many thousand litres of water per hour over several kilometres, throughout the day and night to relieve the flooding in affected areas. The crews and equipment have also been deployed to Gloucestershire and Kent to assist in flooding situations.
- 2.5 At a local level the equipment has been used to supply large quantities of water at a serious fire in the Guildford area and more recently used to pump large amounts of floodwater away from properties in Surrey Heath. Work is ongoing in developing plans for dealing with flooding issues throughout the County.
- 2.6 Training with this equipment continues to be a high priority and although based at Chertsey, the staff at Egham have now received training in how to operate the equipment. Training throughout the year is ongoing and we continue to develop our partnership working with Thorpe Park who allow us to use the facilities there.

3 Community Safety Activity

Schools Education Programme

- 3.1 This is an ongoing programme of Fire Safety Education for schoolchildren, with classroom-based input in years 2, 5, and 8. Firefighters from Runnymede will be joining the Schools' Education Officer, on an ad hoc basis, to promote an increase in the use of smoke alarms in children's bedrooms. In year 6, additional input comes in the form of the Junior Citizens scheme, which is a two-week, multi-agency event & is once again being hosted at Chertsey Fire Station.

Duke Of Edinburgh Award & Scouts

- 3.2 The Service piloted a new Scouts Fire Badge scheme earlier this year and Borough personnel were actively involved in running the 3-week course, which was held at Chertsey. Feedback received indicated that the scheme was seen as a complete success & further courses are expected to be run throughout the year. In September the Service will run a Duke Of Edinburgh Bronze Award scheme, which will be hosted at Egham and will run over a 12-week period. This event is run in partnership with the Runnymede Duke Of Edinburgh coordinator.

4 Firewise scheme

- 4.1 This scheme is aimed at young people who have displayed an unhealthy interest in fire, which has led or could lead to deliberate fire setting. It has been running for many years with great success. Within the Borough there are four Firewise Advisors. In this reporting period Runnymede has received seven referrals.

5 Domestic Fires

- 5.1 In the reporting year April 2006 to March 2007, the Fire Service attended fifty residential dwelling fires. No deaths from fires in dwellings occurred within the Borough.
- 5.2 Borough Personnel continue to work alongside existing partners in generating Home Fire Risk Checks and fitting smoke detection where required. In addition new partnerships have recently been formed with Help the Aged, The Falls Team and Runnymede Housing Department. It is expected to undertake 400 Home Fire Risk Checks within the Borough this year and data shows we are on target to achieve this figure.

6 Automatic Fire Alarms: Reduction in number of calls

- 6.1 New initiatives recently introduced by the Service are aimed at reducing the number of unwanted fire alarm signals. These measures include top offenders being issued letters reinforcing recent changes to legislation and their responsibilities. This is then further supported with data gathering inspections by Borough Personnel.
- 6.2 Royal Holloway University and St Peters' Hospital continue to be among the highest contributors towards unwanted fire alarm signals in Runnymede. By developing partnerships at both locations, local current operating systems are being modified in an attempt to reduce the number of calls.

7 Road Traffic Collision Reduction

- 7.1 The Fire Service continues to actively promote the 'Safe Drive, Stay Alive, campaign and personnel from within the Borough are actively promoting this to the local schools and colleges. To date, Salesians and St Georges' College have attended the production and Stroudes College will be attending one of the presentations, which commence in November. Jubilee High were invited to attend last year but did not respond. Due to the high numbers already booked for this year, the Service has decided to invite sixth form colleges only.
- 7.2 As part of the on-going initiative to reduce road traffic collisions a presentation is being put together by Borough Personnel to present to local youth clubs. This will involve inviting the group to the Fire Stations to view a power-point presentation and take an active part in a road traffic collision simulation either as a casualty or part of the operational crew. This project is due to be piloted towards the end of the year.
- 7.3 The Service has taken an active role in raising awareness of the consequences of driving at speed and under the influence of drink or drugs by supporting National Campaigns and at a local level giving through practical demonstrations and safety advice to members of the public. Events attended this year include the 'Black Cherry Fair' and Englefield Green Fair.

8 Community Room

- 8.1 The Community Room at Chertsey Fire Station is nearing the final stages of completion. The room has been refurbished and redecorated with new carpets, tables and chairs. With the funding received from the Local Committee, the order for the I.T. equipment and associated software is due to be placed within the next couple of weeks. It is expected that all equipment and facilities will be in place and fully operational by the end of November. This will allow Borough Personnel to educate local groups in a more professional environment & provide a facility for local organisations / partnership groups to use.

9. CONSULTATIONS

The Service will consult with members and partners to ensure the Community Safety initiatives in Runnymede continue to target priority areas and to contribute to our aim of making Surrey safer.

10. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

None.

11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

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

12. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

Initiatives and campaigns within Runnymede will continue to contribute to a reduction in crime and disorder, particularly in relation to arson and vehicle crime.

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Background papers:	None
Annexes:	None