



**REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE  
(RUNNYMEDE)**

**FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT**

**6<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

**KEY ISSUE**

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

**SUMMARY**

This report contains information on the 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, it is recommended 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 2007 to March 2008. The comparisons are based on service statistics compiled over the previous three years.

- 1.1 The Service attended 205 calls to all fires, a downward trend of 43% compared to the same period last year. The number of incidents recorded, 205, down from 359, is the lowest figure within the Service. 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 still further.
- 1.2 During 2006/7 malicious false alarm calls were reduced from 67 down to 54 which, compared to the average over three years, represented a decrease of 28%. However, last year the number of calls rose last year from 54 to 70. In an attempt to reduce this figure, Borough personnel will 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 decreased dramatically from 635 down 25% to 476, however this is still the second highest in Surrey. The Service is currently reviewing its strategy to reduce unwanted Automatic Fire Calls and aims for a 40% reduction for next year.
- 1.4 The number of deliberate fires, excluding deliberate fires in vehicles, decreased by 46%, down from 82 to 44 incidents. Of the 44 recorded deliberate fires, almost 50% were refuse / bin fires of which 37% of these required no action as they were out on arrival. There appears to be no identifiable pattern to these incidents but analysis is ongoing to ensure any trends are identified & action taken accordingly. 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 36 incidents, down to 23, a reduction of more than 30%.
- 1.6 The number of calls to Fires In Non Domestic Premises decreased significantly by 51%, down from 58 to 28 incidents.
- 1.7 The number of calls to Accidental Dwelling Fires remained virtually unchanged at 44 incidents. Analysis of the data shows that 48% of these incidents were out on arrival. Of the 44 recorded incidents 30% were cooking related, and 23% were electrical related. Hot strikes were undertaken at all premises & HFRC's / smoke detectors fitted where appropriate. Partnership working has been established with Runnymede Borough Council housing authority thus promoting awareness of the HFRC scheme to over 3000 local authority housing tenants. Work is also ongoing with Age Concern Runnymede, with several requests for HFRC's being received & undertaken.

## 2 ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

### Operational Equipment Update

#### Improved Firefighting Capability

- 2.1 In August 2007 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 locally and on larger scale incidents as part of a national response. In July 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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 and is once again being hosted at Chertsey Fire Station in the Community Room.

**Duke Of Edinburgh Award and 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 Duke Of Edinburgh coordinator for the Runnymede area.

**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 2007 to March 2008, 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's 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 local personnel.
- 6.2 Royal Holloway College 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 Service's award-winning **Safe Drive Stay Alive** (SDSA) event continues to be an unqualified success. Aimed at young drivers and those who are about to begin learning to drive, the event is a staged production held at Dorking Halls and has so far reached some 28,000 school pupils, college students and young drivers in the county. Using real-life victims of Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs), the production carried a high satisfaction level - almost 100% of all attendees say they will be a safer driver as the result of attending the event. The Service is now seeking to build on this success, expanding the SDSA format to bring variants to each individual borough, as well as re-recording and updating the production material used at the event. This is subject to a separate funding request to the committee, detailed in the appropriate Allocation application and report (Item 16 on this agenda).
- 7.2 In Runnymede last year SFRS attended 59 serious RTC incidents, and the expansion of Safe Drive Stay Alive will be aimed at reducing this local figure. In total 20 young people were killed or seriously injured in 2007.

**8 Community Room**

- 8.1 The Community Room at Chertsey Fire Station is now complete. The room has been refurbished and redecorated with new carpets, tables and chairs. with the funding received from yourselves as the Local Committee. 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 contribute to our aim of making Surrey safer.

**10. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

None.

**11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

## ITEM 12

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