



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (RUNNYMEDE)

SURREY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

26th June 2009

KEY ISSUE

The performance of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in Runnymede for the period 1 April 2008 – 31 March 2009.

This report is for information only.

SUMMARY

Fire and Rescue performance within Runnymede has been positive, and pro-active strategies have resulted in significant reductions in the number of accidental fires attended. There has also been a reduction in number of false alarms caused by automatic fire detection systems. SFRS has seen a significant decrease in the number of malicious hoax calls within Runnymede. There has been a slight increase in the number of deliberate fires. The majority of these fires are either bin fires, rubbish as a result of litter or fly tipping and vehicle fires.

Within the reporting period of there were no fatalities from fires in dwellings within Runnymede and only two recorded fire related injuries.

There were three fatalities on Runnymede roads as a result of road traffic collisions. Two of these incidents were attended by fire crews from within the Borough to assist colleagues from Surrey Police and the South East Coast Ambulance Service, the third involved a pedestrian being hit when stepping onto the carriageway.

SFRS are keen to work with partners to dramatically reduce the level of incidents as detailed within this report. Fire crews within Runnymede continue to work on projects with partner organisations to reduce the number of calls to dwelling fires, arson incidents, automatic fire alarm activation and road traffic collisions.

Preventative strategies also take the form of direct contact public education programmes; the provision of free smoke alarms through home fire risk checks (HFRC) and national safety campaigns.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee is asked to:

- Note the performance of SFRS within Runnymede, and the achievement of personnel at Chertsey and Egham Fire Stations;
- Support the commitment by SFRS to embrace new technology, and work with partners to influence behaviour in the community;
- Recognise that following evaluation of initiatives funding may be requested in order for them to be implemented or continued.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Responsibility for delivering the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Public Safety Plan (PSP) in Runnymede is devolved to the North Area Management Team and the Borough Manager for Runnymede, together with the personnel based at Chertsey and Egham Fire Station.
- 1.2 The framework to achieve this has been through the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Borough Plan for Runnymede 2008 – 2009. Issues specific to the borough such as the building of partnerships with the local authority, police, schools, youth offending team and the identification of incident trends ensure the borough team contribute fully to the specific needs of Runnymede.
- 1.3 Through our prevention and protection work businesses are advised on how best to conform to fire safety legislation. Additionally we undertake safety activities in local schools and the community. The aim is to encourage people to change their behaviour thereby reducing the risk of emergency incidents occurring. However, accidents happen and we need to ensure we are able to respond when required through intervention.
- 1.4 To continuously improve SFRS performance in Runnymede four key projects are being maintained. These are: to reduce the number of calls to dwelling fires, arson incidents, automatic fire alarm activation and road traffic collisions.

2 ANALYSIS AND COMMENTRY

The following comparisons are based on service statistics compared to the same reporting period last year.

- 2.1 SFRS within Runnymede attended 193 calls to all fires, a downward trend of 6% compared to the same period last year. The number of incidents recorded, 193, down from 205, is the second lowest figure within the County. SFRS has utilised local press and community events to inform the public regarding Fire Safety. By establishing effective partnership workings and promoting the Home Fire Risk Check and targeting specific areas of the community we are actively seeking to reduce the number of incidents that occur still further.
- 2.2 During 2008/9 malicious false alarm calls were reduced from 70 down to 24 This, compared to the same reporting period last year, represents a decrease of 66%. In an attempt to reduce this figure still further, Borough personnel will actively support the national hoax call campaign and highlight the potential impact that can result from making hoax calls.
- 2.3 False alarms from Automatic Fire Detection (A.F.D) systems decreased dramatically from 476 down 67% to 159, this is a significant decrease and has resulted in Runnymede going from being one of the highest offenders for unwanted calls, to having the third lowest figures within the County. All incidents continue to be monitored and a "Call Challenge "process will further reduce the number of unwanted fire calls.
- 2.4 The number of deliberate fires, excluding deliberate fires in vehicles, indicates a slight increase by 9%, up from 44 to 48 incidents. Of the 48 recorded deliberate fires, 66% 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 and action taken accordingly. A link has been established with both Chertsey and Egham 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.

- 2.5 Deliberate fires in vehicles increased slightly from 23 incidents, up to 26.
- 2.6 The number of calls to fires in non domestic premises decreased significantly by 53%, down from 28 to 13 incidents.
- 2.7 The number of calls to accidental dwelling fires shows a significant decrease of 41%. This is a reduction from 44 incidents down to 26. Analysis of the data shows that 43% of these incidents were out on arrival. Of the 26 recorded incidents 43% were cooking related, and 12% were electrical related. Hot strikes, an initiative to publicize recent fires in the vicinity of incidents, were undertaken accordingly and HFRC's and 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. A total of 433 HFRC's were completed in the Borough and over 400 smoke detectors were fitted.

Operational Equipment Update

- 2.8 As part of a Service restructure crewing levels within Runnymede have been reduced from 64 to 52 personnel. This has resulted in crewing the Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP), based at Chertsey, in a different way. If the ALP was required at an incident the supporting appliances were sent from other stations within the County. Now however the ALP will be supported by personnel from Chertsey who are fully trained in the operation of the ALP and therefore give additional expertise on the incident ground. It is anticipated that in the near future all personnel at Chertsey will be trained in the operation of this equipment.

High Volume Pumping Equipment.

- 2.9 Training with this equipment continues to be a high priority. The equipment is currently based at Chertsey and consists of 2 Prime Mover vehicles, 1 High Volume Pump Unit (HVP), 1 pod containing 1km of 150mm hose, and 2 pods each containing 1 km of 150mm hose. Each unit also carries various items of ancillary equipment to enable deployment at incidents. It is planned in the near future to relocate the hose carrying units and one prime mover vehicle to Egham Fire Station.
- 2.10 Personnel at both Chertsey and Egham have now received full training on the deployment, operation and make up of all equipment. Training is ongoing throughout the year and we maintain a good working relationship with Thorpe Park which allows us to use their facilities. Other potential sites around the County continue to be identified as training venues, but due to the size of the vehicles and the logistics of deploying the equipment suitable sites are difficult to obtain.
- 2.11 At a local level work has been ongoing this year with the Environment Agency in an attempt to devise a suitable and appropriate action plan incorporating the

use of this equipment in the event of local flooding, and work is ongoing in this area.

- 2.12 Earlier this year Runnymede personnel attended a joint services / inter agency demonstration day at Hawley Lakes in Hampshire, where the practical capabilities of the HVP was supported by short presentations to visiting dignitaries. The equipment and personnel have also been used recently on a joint exercise with Hampshire Fire & Rescue on providing water when dealing with a large scale common fire. The HVP was also deployed recently to provide large amounts of water for fire fighting operations at the large fire at the industrial site in Littleton Lane, Shepperton. This allowed several conventional fire appliances to be released from the incident thus increasing the fire cover around the County.

3 Community Safety Activity

Schools Education Programme

- 3.1 There is an ongoing programme of Fire Safety Education for school children, with classroom-based input in years 2, 5, and 8. Fire-fighters 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 November 2009.

Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award & Firefighter For A Day

- 3.2 In September 2008 SFRS ran a Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award scheme, which was hosted at Egham Fire Station and ran over a 12-week period. This event is run in partnership with the Runnymede Duke of Edinburgh coordinator and attracted students from local schools within Runnymede. The course involves weekly attendance by the students who complete a structured programme of events both theoretical and practical in Fire Safety awareness culminating in an assessment. If successful the students claim the Bronze Award. Despite some initial teething problems with the course all students successfully completed it and we are currently looking at further improvements on how to improve the content and delivery of any subsequent courses.

Firefighter For A Day

- 3.3 This initiative consists of a day structured around raising the awareness of risks and the implications of fire. Practical scenarios are included to run alongside theoretical sessions that allow the students to have hands on experience of firefighting skills. It is important to target appropriate participants for these courses, with the intention of raising aspirations, particularly to vulnerable teenagers. These include those that have been excluded from mainstream education. Borough teams ran this scheme for the first time this year and included one course that comprised totally of Runnymede teenagers within the NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training) category group. Due to the success of these courses it is planned to run more in the coming year.

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.
- 4.2 For the reporting period April 2008 to March 2009, 87 young persons in Surrey were referred onto the scheme from 9 different agencies, resulting in 129 visits being made by trained Firewise advisors. Following initial visits by Firewise advisors, 6 monthly checks are made with parents / carers to check on progress. Current statistics show that 91% say they have not had any incidents since the visit, and 9% say that incidents have become less frequent and far less serious. When parents / carers were asked if they were satisfied with SFRS 95% said they were "Very Satisfied" & 5% said they were "Satisfied"
- 4.3 Within the Borough there are four Firewise Advisors. In this reporting period Runnymede has received seven referrals. Of these seven, two refused contact or did not get back in touch despite repeated messages and letters being sent out. The remaining five young persons received seven visits. Follow up calls indicate that the outcomes have been successful with no repeat incidents.

5 Domestic Fires

- 5.1 Officers continue to work alongside existing partners in generating Home Fire Risk Checks (HFRC's) and fitting smoke detection where required. In addition Borough Teams proactively promote the free HFRC service at all public events attended. It is expected that 400 Home Fire Risk Checks will be undertaken 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 introduced by SFRS 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 Available statistics show a reduction of 67% (477 incidents down to 159 incidents) compared to the same period last year.

7 Road Traffic Collision Reduction

- 7.1 There were three fatalities on Runnymede roads within the reporting period. The locations of these incidents were; Windsor Road Egham, Spinney Hill Ottershaw, and Woodham Lane, Woodham. The Station Manager for Egham Alan Grant represents SFRS at the Runnymede Casualty Reduction Working Group (CRWG). No highway defects or signage issues have been identified as a contributory factor to these incidents.
- 7.2 SFRS continues to actively promote the 'Safe Drive, Stay Alive (SDSA), campaign and personnel from within the Borough are promoting this to the local schools and colleges. To date Salesian, St Georges' College and Strodes College have attended the presentations, which begin again in November 2009. Approximately 500 students from these local schools and colleges attended this year. The member allocation funding of £5000 from county councillors in Runnymede that was agreed on 6 June 2008 contributed to cover the one off

cost of re-recording and updating DVD and related audio visual material to be used at SDSA performances. As a result SFRS will increase the number of SDSA performances in 2009 – 2010. With a more flexible format that the new DVD and materials support, our target audience and particularly those within Runnymede that have been hard to reach can now benefit from this award winning scheme. Likewise the new format will be of greater use to offender rehabilitation initiatives.

- 7.3 SFRS have 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 included the 'Black Cherry Fair' and Englefield Green Fair.

8 Community Room

- 8.1 The Community Room at Chertsey Fire Station is now into its third year of operation and continues to be an extremely useful resource to the Borough, local partners and the Fire Service. With the allocations funding received from Local Committee in 2007, the facility has been offered to many local partners for meetings and training sessions as well as giving SFRS personnel a professional environment in which to educate the local community groups which frequently visit the station.
- 8.2 Regular bookings for the room are now taken from The Youth Justice Service and Age Concern Runnymede who make full use of the facilities on offer.

9 Consultations

- 9.1 SFRS will consult with Members, partners and key stakeholders 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

- 10.1 All other initiatives are carried out within existing budgets of Surrey Fire and Rescue with no additional funding being sought at this time.
- 10.2 Following evaluation of new initiatives funding may be requested in the future in order for effective implementation, maintenance and review.

11. Crime And Disorder Implications

- 11.1 The Area Manager for the North (Les Dodd) represents Surrey Fire and Rescue Service at the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), the Borough Manager (Steve Dean) represents SFRS at the Runnymede Joint Action Group (JAG) ensuring the Service's views and expertise contribute to reducing crime and enhancing safety.
- 11.2 Initiatives and campaigns within Runnymede will continue to contribute to a reduction in crime and disorder, particularly in relation to arson and vehicle crime. The link between abandoned cars and arson is proven and any decrease in the former will influence the latter.
- 11.3 The Borough Manager and Fire Safety officers participate in multi agency visits

within the local authority and Police to licensed premises. This entails advising owners / licensees, or using enforcement powers in the interest of public safety.

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 The report contains information on the various activities undertaken by the Borough Team to reduce the risk from fire and road traffic collision injuries to the residents of Runnymede, including direct contact, public education programs and campaigns.
- 12.2 Fire crews and appliances based at Chertsey and Egham form part of the wider resource required to meet the Fire and Rescue Services Public Safety Plan for Surrey. The number of calls to incidents is not directly in the control of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service. The number of calls is influenced by outside factors, for instance, a long hot summer, changes in scrap prices for vehicles or an individual with an unhealthy interest in fire. Road traffic collisions do not respect borough boundaries; a driver killed or seriously injured in one borough could be from any part of the county.
- 12.3 To address these issues SFRS plan to address performance issues through a balance of prevention, protection and response initiatives that are focussed through the local Borough Plan to meet the identified needs of Runnymede.
- 12.4 The Committee is asked to note the performance of SFRS in Runnymede and to recognise the potential for improved performance offered by the projects that form the 2009/10 Runnymede Borough Plan.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: IRMP, Runnymede Borough Plan, SFRS Website.

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