



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE RUNNYMEDE

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

5th July 2010

KEY ISSUE

The performance of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in Runnymede for the period 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010.

This report is for information only.

SUMMARY

Runnymede continues to be one of the safest boroughs within the County. Fire and Rescue performance within Runnymede has been positive with pro-active strategies undertaken in an attempt to reduce the number of accidental fires attended and also reduce the numbers of false alarms caused by automatic fire detection systems. SFRS has also 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 or rubbish as a result of litter or fly tipping.

Within the reporting period, there were no fatalities from fires in dwellings within Runnymede and only one recorded fire related injury. This incident was the result of accidental ignition of clothing caused by a candle. The casualty received slight burns to their back and upper leg.

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.

The Local Committee is asked to:

- Note the performance of SFRS within Runnymede
- Support the achievement of personnel at Chertsey and Egham Fire Stations
- Support the commitment by SFRS to embrace new technology and improved initiatives, to reduce risk further and make Runnymede safer.
- Endorse SFRS to continue working 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, maintained 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 2009 – 2010. 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 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 168 calls to all fires, a downward trend of 13% compared to the same period last year. SFRS has utilised local press and community events to inform the public regarding Fire Safety. By establishing effective partnership working and promoting the Home Fire Risk Check. By targeting specific areas of the community we are actively seeking to reduce the number of incidents that occur still further.

Local Committee (Runnymede) 5.7.10

- 2.2 During 2009/10 malicious false alarm calls were reduced from 24 down to 19. This, compared to the same reporting period last year, represents a decrease of 21%. 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 increased from 159 up 10% to 175. Work to address this is ongoing between SFRS and local partners in an attempt to address this. All incidents continue to be monitored and the "Call Challenge" process will further reduce the number of unwanted fire calls. Work to identify the 'Top Offenders' is being undertaken and appropriate actions to address this, formulated in partnership with the Management Teams at these locations.
- 2.4 The number of deliberate fires, excluding deliberate fires in vehicles, indicates an increase of 48%, up from 48 to 71 incidents. Of the 71 recorded deliberate fires, 46% were refuse / bin fires and 21% were undergrowth / woodland fires. Following all incidents of deliberate / suspicious origin, Crimestoppers 'Arson Awareness' boards are displayed in the vicinity to highlight the issue to the local community. There appears to be no identifiable pattern to these incidents but analysis is ongoing to ensure any trends are identified and action taken accordingly. Information packs are supplied to local businesses, with the aim of assisting companies in protecting themselves from the possibility of arson.
- 2.5 Deliberate fires involving all vehicles decreased from 27 incidents to 21, a reduction of 21%.
- 2.6 The number of calls to fires in non-domestic premises increased by eight incidents from 13 to 21.
- 2.7 SFRS have attended 43 calls to accidental dwelling fires within the reporting period. Analysis of the available data shows that the Service confined 81% of these incidents to the room of origin with 47% of these incidents out on arrival and requiring no fire-fighting action. Of the 43-recorded incidents 33% were located within the kitchen area of the property. Of these kitchen related incidents, 79% were out on arrival. Hot strikes, an initiative to publicise recent fires in the vicinity of incidents, are undertaken accordingly and HFRC's and smoke detectors fitted where appropriate. Partnership working previously established with Runnymede Borough Council Housing Authority promotes 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 and undertaken. A total of 379 HFRC's were completed in the Borough with 419 smoke detectors being fitted.

Operational Equipment Update

- 2.8 The alteration of crewing arrangements of the Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) based at Chertsey has proven to be effective at incidents where it has been deployed. Personnel from Chertsey are fully trained in the operation of the ALP and therefore give additional expertise on the incident ground providing additional support to the vehicle and crew.

High Volume Pumping Equipment.

ITEM 8

- 2.9 Training with this equipment continues to be a high priority as this is a National Resource. The resources are now located at the two stations within Runnymede. At Chertsey this consists of 1 Prime-Mover vehicle, 1 High Volume Pump Unit (HVP) - 1 pod containing 1km of 150mm hose. At Egham this consists of 1 Prime-Mover vehicle – 2 pods each containing 1km of 150mm hose. At both locations there is also stored one module containing equipment and materials for mass decontamination in the event of a major incident.
- 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 continue to maintain a good working relationship with Thorpe Park who allow 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. This was enhanced by the SFRS personnel hosting an 'Awareness Day' for staff from the Environment Agency. This incorporated a theoretical session held at Chertsey Fire Station followed by a full practical demonstration held at Thorpe Park. This event was beneficial as the role of both partners in dealing with water related issues were fully explored.
- 2.12 Within this reporting period Runnymede personnel attended a joint services / inter-agency 'Wildfire' exercise at 'Caesar's Camp' and 'Swinley Forest' in Hampshire. This enabled personnel to demonstrate the delivery of large volumes of water over distance to operational personnel in support of dealing with fires in rural/ remote locations. 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. Personnel from within the borough have an active role within the HVP South East Regional Users Group to establish 'Best Practice' working arrangements.
- 2.13 In September 2009 personnel from this area were instrumental in the planning and implementation of a regional exercise held at the Fawley Power Station located in Southampton. This involved resources from throughout the South-East Region working in partnership to supply large volumes of water to deal with a simulated fire involving a bulk storage facility for petroleum products. This event was held over two days with Surrey personnel having a substantial input into the successful conclusion of the event. Positive feedback was forthcoming from all dignitaries regarding the event and the professionalism of all personnel involved.

3 Community Safety Activity Schools Education Programme

- 3.1 This is an ongoing programme of Fire Safety Education for school children, with classroom-based input in years 2, 5 and 8. Fire-fighters from SFRS 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 2010.

Fire-fighter For A Day

- 3.2 This initiative consists of a day structured around raising 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 fire-fighting 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. An event was scheduled for the January 2010 but due to the inclement weather had to be postponed. This has been rearranged for June 2010.

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 2009 to March 2010, 61 young persons in Surrey were referred onto the scheme from 10 different agencies, resulting in 58 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 93% 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 regarding the overall level of service - 89.5 % said they were "Very Satisfied" & 10.5 % said they were "Satisfied".
- 4.3 Within the Borough there are two Firewise Advisors. In this reporting period Runnymede has received six referrals. Of these six, one did not establish contact despite repeated messages and letters being sent out. The remaining five young persons received six visits. Follow up calls indicate that the outcomes have been successful with no repeat incidents.

5 Domestic Fires

- 5.1 SFRS Personnel 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 to undertake 320 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 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.

7 Road Traffic Collision Reduction

- 7.1 Within the 2009 / 10 reporting period, there were 542 casualties from road related incidents within Runnymede. Casualties by road-user type are as

ITEM 8

follows: Car – 224, Pedestrian – 29, Pedal-cycle – 37, Motorcycle – 53, Bus – 2, Goods Vehicle – 5, Other – 1. Casualties occurring on Motorways and Trunk Roads, which are the responsibility of the Highways Agency – 191.

7.2 SFRS continues to actively promote the 'Safe Drive, Stay Alive (SDSA), campaign and SFRS personnel are actively promoting this to the local schools and colleges. This year 940 pupils from Schools/College within Runnymede attended the presentations at SDSA performances. A new DVD and supporting materials have been developed by SFRS to assist in reaching our target audience and particularly those in Runnymede that have been hard to reach. The new format will be of great 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' among other local events.

8 Community Room

8.1 The Community Room at Chertsey Fire Station is now into its fourth year of operation and continues to be an extremely useful resource to the Borough, local partners and the Fire Service. With the funding received from Local Committee Members in 2007, the facility has been offered to many local partners for them to hold 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. Improved I.T. facilities now assist SFRS personnel in delivering various training packages to local community groups.

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 elected 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. Additionally, there may be issues not covered within this report that Members may wish to discuss further. Further information may be obtained from the North Area Manager Les Dodd on 07968 834550 or Runnymede Borough Manager Steve Dean on 07968 834488.

9 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. Equalities And Diversity Implications

11.1 SFRS Diversity Strategy ensures that Surrey Fire and Rescue Service

provide a fair and equitable service, both internally to all of our staff and externally to the communities of Surrey. We value everyone within these audiences, as an individual, whether they are an employee or a service user.

- 11.2 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

12.1 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.

12.2 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.

12.3 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. Examples of this are the Wentworth PGA Tournament and the Royal Holloway 'Summer Ball'.

13. Conclusion And Reasons for Recommendations

13.1 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.

13.2 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.

13.3 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.

13.4 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 forms the 2010/11 Runnymede Borough Plan.

LEAD OFFICER: Les Dodd – North Area Manager
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 07968 834550

E-MAIL: leslie.dodd@surreycc.gov.uk
CONTACT OFFICER: Steve Dean Runnymede Borough Manager
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 07968 834488
E-MAIL: Steve.dean@surreycc.gov.uk
BACKGROUND PAPERS: IRMP, Runnymede Borough Plan, SFRS Website.

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