



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
(RUNNYMEDE)**

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

17 September 2012

KEY ISSUE

The performance of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in Runnymede for the period April 2011 – 31 March 2012.

This report is for information only.

SUMMARY

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. Also a decrease 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 two recorded fire related injuries.

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 Safety Visits (HFSV) and national safety campaigns.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Runnymede Local Committee:

- Support and recognise the achievements of the borough teams within Runnymede Borough and support their commitment to improve initiatives to reduce risk and make Runnymede Borough safer through the delivery of the borough plan
- 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.
- Note the targets and initiatives set within the Runnymede borough plan for 2012/13 and support the Fire and Rescue Service in the delivery of this plan.

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 West Area Command Management Team, together with the personnel based at Chertsey and Egham Fire Stations.
- 1.2 The framework to achieve this has been through the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Borough Plan for Runnymede 2011 – 2012. 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

- 2.1 SFRS within Runnymede attended 116 primary fires within the last year. Although primary and accidental fires have increased marginally, deliberate primary fires have decreased by 58% in the same period. 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 Safety Visits. (formally known as Home Fire Risk Checks) By targeting specific areas of the community we are actively seeking to reduce the number of incidents that occur still further.
- 2.2 During 2011/12 malicious false alarm calls were reduced from 26 down to 16. This compared to the same reporting period last year. 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 from 167 to 164. Work to address this is ongoing between SFRS and local partners in an attempt to maintain the decreasing trend. 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 a decrease of 29%, down from 63 to 45 incidents. Of the 45 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, the aim of which is to assist the companies in protecting themselves from the possibility of arson.
- 2.5 Deliberate fires involving all vehicles has remained the same at 11 vehicles for two years running.
- 2.6 The number of calls to fires in non-domestic premises increased by 2 incidents from 15 to 17.
- 2.7 Partnership working previously with Runnymede Borough Council Housing Authority promotes awareness of the HFSV scheme to over 3000 Local Authority housing tenants. Work is also ongoing with Age Concern Runnymede, with several requests for HFSV's being received and undertaken. A total of 252 HFSV's were completed in the Borough with over 57% of all visits attended reaching the vulnerable of Runnymede.

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.

- 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 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, this project continues to progress. This was enhanced by the Borough 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 Runnymede personnel have demonstrated 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 Berkshire for 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.

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 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.

Fire-fighter For A Day

- 3.2 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 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.

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 2011 to March 2012, 51 young persons in Surrey were referred onto the scheme from 10 different agencies, resulting in 50 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.

4.3 Within the Borough there are two Firewise Advisors. In this reporting period Runnymede has received four referrals. Follow up calls indicate that the outcomes have been successful with no repeat incidents.

5 Domestic Fires

5.1 Borough Personnel continue to work alongside existing partners in generating Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV's) and fitting smoke detection where required. In addition Borough Teams proactively promote the free HFSV service at all public events attended. It is expected to undertake 340 Home Fire Safety Visits 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 2011 / 12 reporting period, there were 552 casualties from road related incidents within Runnymede. We continue with our partners to actively target RTC's in borough and this area will continue to be a priority for our borough plan.

7.2 SFRS continues to actively promote the 'Safe Drive, Stay Alive (SDSA), campaign and personnel from within the Borough are actively promoting this to the local schools and colleges. Within this reporting period over 900 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 within Runnymede that have been hard to reach. 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' among other local events.

8 Community Room

8.1 The Community Room at Chertsey Fire Station is now into its fifth 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 able to be offered to many Local partners for them to hold meetings and training sessions as well as giving Borough personnel a professional environment in which to educate the Local Community groups, which frequently visit the station. Improved I.T. facilities now assist borough 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 UK 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. Additionally, there may be issues not covered within this report that Members may wish to discuss further. Further information may be attained from the West Area Command Area Manager Alan Clark on 07968 834561

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. 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 West Area Command (Alan Clark) represents Surrey Fire and Rescue Service at the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), 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.

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 Runnymede Borough Plan.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: Public.SafetyPlan, Runnymede Borough Plan, SFRS Website.