



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE SPELTHORNE

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

11 October 2010

KEY ISSUE

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

This report is for information only.

SUMMARY

Surrey, as a whole, continues to be one of the safest counties in the country. Accordingly the Borough of Spelthorne has contributed to this through significant reductions within most of the categories in which SFRS are measured.

Fire and Rescue performance within Spelthorne has been positive and proactive. strategies have resulted in reductions in the number of accidental fires attended. Also there has been a continued reduction in numbers of false alarms caused by automatic fire detection (AFD) systems (22%).

Due to preventative strategies being put in place to reduce calls to malicious false alarms, Spelthorne has seen a 79% decrease in calls of this nature. However during this reporting period, the number of deliberate fires did increase from 87 to 97. Of these 97 incidents, 27 were due the result of deliberate fires in vehicles, which is an actual reduction of 10% from the previous year.

Unfortunately within the reporting period there has been a fatality from fires in dwellings within Spelthorne (Windermere Avenue, Stanwell) and 3 recorded fire related injuries of which 2 were from the same incident (Windermere Avenue, Stanwell). These types of incidents, whilst extremely regrettable, have actually decreased by 43% on the reporting year 2008/2009 within the Borough.

SFRS are keen to work with partners to dramatically reduce the level of incidents as detailed within this report. Fire crews within Spelthorne continue to work on projects with partner organisations to reduce the number of calls to dwelling fires, incidents of arson, 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.

There were 41 fatalities on Surrey roads within the reporting period. It is pleasing to report there were no fatalities within the Borough of Spelthorne due to road traffic collisions.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Spelthorne Local Committee:

- Note the performance of SFRS within Spelthorne
- Support the achievement of personnel at Staines and Sunbury Fire Stations
- Support the commitment by SFRS to embrace new technology and improved initiatives, to reduce risk further and make Spelthorne safer.
- Endorse SFRS to continue working with partners to influence behaviour in the community.
- Consider further promotion of the SFRS Firewise Scheme with partner agencies and local contacts.
- 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 Spelthorne is devolved to the North Area Management Team and the Borough Manager for Spelthorne, together with the personnel based at Staines and Sunbury fire station.
- 1.2 The framework to achieve this has been through the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Borough Plan for Spelthorne 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 Spelthorne.
- 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 Spelthorne, 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 Spelthorne attended 171 calls to all fires, a downward trend of 65% compared to the same period last year, 261 incidents. 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. SFRS are a major contributor to the successful Spelthorne Arson Reduction Patrol.
- 2.2 During 2009/10, malicious false alarm calls decreased from 28 to 6. This, compared to the same reporting period last year, represents a decrease of 79%.
- 2.3 False alarms from Automatic Fire Detection (AFD) systems decreased from 166 down 22% to 129. This is a significant decrease and has resulted in Spelthorne going from being one of the highest offenders for unwanted calls, to having one of 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. Work to identify the

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'Top Offenders' is being undertaken and appropriate actions, formulated with the Management Teams at these locations, taken to address this.

- 2.4 The number of deliberate fires, excluding deliberate fires in vehicles, indicates an increase of 11%, up from 87 to 97 incidents. There appears to be no identifiable pattern to these incidents but analysis is ongoing to ensure any trends are identified and action taken accordingly. Following all incidents of suspicious/deliberate origin, Crimestoppers 'Arson Awareness' boards are displayed to raise the awareness of the local community. An information pack is supplied to local businesses to provide them with information etc on methods of protecting themselves from the possibility of arson.
- 2.5 Deliberate fires in vehicles decreased from 30 incidents to 27, representing a 10% decrease.
- 2.6 The number of calls to fires in non-domestic premises decreased from 27 to 24, representing an 11% decrease.
- 2.7 The number of calls to accidental dwelling fires shows an increase of 6%. This is an increase of 3 incidents, 48 in comparison to 45 in the previous year. Hot strikes, an initiative to publicise 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 Spelthorne Borough Council housing authority and their contractors A2 Housing and Metropolitan Housing, thus promoting awareness of the HFRC scheme to Local Authority Housing tenants. Work is also ongoing with Age Concern Spelthorne, with several requests for HFRC's being received and undertaken, primarily through the maintenance person referring priority requests. A total of 382 HFRC's were completed in the and over 320 smoke detectors were fitted to residences within the Borough.

Operational Update

- 2.8 Crewing levels with the Borough remain at 52 personnel.
- 2.9 Spelthorne personnel have proactively maintained their skills of service new equipment and vehicles in the event that should an incident occur whereby they would be required, they would be able to assist in its resolution.
- 2.10 Personnel at both Staines and Sunbury maintain a good working relationship with our neighbours (London FRS and Royal Berkshire FRS). Regular cross-border exercises and training takes place to facilitate the possibility of utilising resources at incidents.
- 2.11 Earlier this year, Spelthorne personnel attended a series of High-Rise Building exercises to test their response and resource capabilities within the Sunbury area.

2.12 SFRS are building their water rescue capability to enhance resilience within the Service. As part of this programme all Spelthorne staff have been trained in initial 'Water Awareness' with the objective of progressing to 'Swiftwater Rescue' first responder skills.

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. In the reporting period, 2203 children have been provided with Fire Safety Education. Within Local Education Authority Schools, 924 children were seen within Year 2, 799 within Year 5 and 320 within Year 8. Within Independent Schools 51 children were seen in Year 2 and 65 in Year 8. Visits to Special Educational Needs establishment saw 44 children receive Fire Safety Education. Firefighters from Spelthorne 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, which was hosted at British Airways, Heathrow and where 1099 children attended. This years Spelthorne Junior Citizens will be in October 2010 at British Airways Learning Centre at Heathrow.

Youth Engagement Scheme (YES)

3.2 The Youth Engagement Scheme is a one week, 5 day practical programme (Monday to Friday), based on a fire station, for young people aged 14 – 17. The scheme aims to aid personal development of the young people and address anti-social behaviour in the community, including fire and vehicle related crime. YES is part of an intervention package, which can last up to 3 months and is delivered in partnership with Surrey Youth Justice Service and Educational Welfare Service. The course is accredited by the National Open College Network, which provides three credits towards accessing future post 16 courses, such as the Public Service course. This unit was written by Surrey Youth Justice Service. 36-42 young people per year in North Surrey attend a course at Walton fire station. SFRS is increasing this to 108-126 young people attending one of nine courses in 2009/2010. This year within the borough of Spelthorne there were 25 referrals, with 19 invited to a taster session whereby 16 were offered a place on courses of which 11 graduated.

3.3 Young Fire Fighters Association (YFA)

The YFA is now in its seventh year and is based out of Staines Fire Station in its own purpose built building. It is open to young people between the ages of 12 yrs – 17 yrs and it operates on a Tuesday night, every week in term time. The aim of the YFA is to provide young people

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with a scaled down idea of the life of a Firefighter and to provide these people with the knowledge of safety issues both in the home and within the community. All YFA members are provided with undress uniform and replica firefighting kit, complete with helmet, visor and gloves. There are 4 instructors and approximately 8 regular members.

To continue the effective work that is being carried out under the YFA scheme early consideration for the eligibility of individuals for places will be promoted. The building and resources require upgrading to enable the scheme to be maintained in the future. Work is being carried out to identify further instructors from within SFRS to enable the expertise remains available.

Future places may be identified through a Spelthorne 'firefighter for a day' scheme.

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 9 different agencies, resulting in 58 visits being made by trained Firewise Advisors. 19 of these cases are still classified as 'live'. 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" and 5% said they were "Satisfied"
- 4.3 Within the Borough there are 3 dedicated Firewise Advisors. In this reporting period Spelthorne has received 1 referral. The young person received one visit. Follow up calls (6 monthly) revealed over 90% of those young people receiving educational intervention have not returned to fire-play or firesetting.
- 4.4 The breakdown of Firewise scheme referrals within SFRS is - Parent x 14, Teacher x 16, SFRS x 10, Family Support Worker x 1, Probation Service x 1, Social Services x 5, Police x 10, SYJS x 1, Foster Carer x 1, Other FRS x 1, Relation x 1. Consideration should be made to further promote the scheme within Spelthorne to utilize the full skills of advisors within SFRS.

5 Firefighter for a Day (NEET)

- 5.1 Firefighter for a Day scheme was not achieved in Spelthorne for 2009/10. This was predominantly due to a lack of understanding of the scheme and the potential it could bring from both SFRS and partner agencies.

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- 5.2 The identification of young people within Spelthorne classified as Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) leads to an exciting opportunity of using the Fire Service as a role model to raise aspirations in the future. Working with stakeholders from the local Education Authority, the aim would be to integrate these individuals back into main stream or further education after the challenges that have removed them from this environment.
- 5.3 The Firefighter for a day scheme was historically a one-off experience for an individual and its effects unknown. A Spelthorne scheme would integrate with the YFA programme at Staines Fire Station over a four week period to the effect that young people could continue their involvement with the fire service enabling further mentoring in a move back to education or local employment.

6 Domestic Fires

- 6.2 Borough 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 that personnel will undertake 400 Home Fire Risk Checks within the Borough this year and data shows we are on target to achieve this figure.

7 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 22%. (166 incidents down to 129 incidents) compared to the same period last year.

7 Road Traffic Collision Reduction

- 7.1 There were no reported fatalities on Spelthorne roads within the reporting period.

The Borough Manager represents SFRS at the Spelthorne Casualty Reduction Working Group (CRWG).

- 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. In November 2009 a total of 199 children witnessed SDSA. The following schools/colleges attended: Halliford (40 pupils), Bishop Wand (52), St Paul's Catholic College (96 pupils), Surrey Care Trust (STEPS) Spelthorne (11). This year's presentations utilised the DVD and related audio visual material provided by members funding (£5000 from 2008) to enhance the SDSA

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performances. This more flexible format that the new DVD and materials support has been particularly beneficial for those within Spelthorne, including some that have been hard to reach, accessing 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. Spelthorne personnel have actively contributed to all the Partnership Action Days alongside Surrey Police, VOSA, DVLA and other agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour associated with driving.

8 Community Rooms

- 8.1 The Community Rooms at Staines and Sunbury Fire Station continue to be an extremely useful resource to the Borough, local partners and the Fire Service. With the funding received from Local Committee Members, 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 who frequently visit the station.
- 8.2 Regular bookings for the rooms are now taken from the Youth Justice Service and the Youth Offending Team, 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 Spelthorne 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 North Area Manager Les Dodd on 07968 834550 or Spelthorne Borough Manager Steve Burnell on 07968 832288

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.
- 10.3 The YFA building and resources require upgrading to enable the scheme to be maintained in the future.
- 10.4 To further assist in the introduction of a Spelthorne Firefighter for a Day scheme in respect of NEET young people.

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 Burnell) represents SFRS at the Spelthorne Joint Action Group (JAG) ensuring the Services views and expertise contribute to reducing crime and enhancing safety.
- 12.2 Initiatives and campaigns within Spelthorne 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 with the Local Authority and Police to licensed premises. This entails advising owners/licensees, or using enforcement powers in the interest of public safety.

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 Spelthorne, including direct contact, public education programs and campaigns.
- 13.2 Fire crews and appliances based at Staines and Sunbury 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, seasonal climate variations, 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 manage these issues SFRS plan to address the performance through a balance of prevention, protection and response initiatives that are focussed through the local Borough Plan to meet the identified needs of Spelthorne.

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13.4 The Committee is asked to note the performance of SFRS in Spelthorne and to recognise the potential for improved performance offered by the projects listed above and those further detailed within the 2010/11 Spelthorne Borough Plan.

LEAD OFFICER: Les Dodd – North Area Manager
TEL NUMBER: 07968 834550
E-MAIL: leslie.dodd@surreycc.gov.uk

CONTACT OFFICER: Steve Burnell Spelthorne Borough Manager
TEL NUMBER: 07968 832288
E-MAIL: Steve.burnell@surreycc.gov.uk

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