



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE SPELTHORNE

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

2010 - 2011

KEY ISSUE

The performance of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in Spelthorne for the period 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011.

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 pro-active. 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 systems (8%).

Incidents termed malicious false alarms within Spelthorne have increased from 6 to 16 during this reporting period and the number of deliberate fires excluding deliberate fires in cars has remained constant from 97 to 96. Of the incidents which were as a result of deliberate fires in vehicles, a decrease from 27 to 18 was recorded, which is an actual reduction of 33% from the previous year.

Within the reporting period there have been no fatalities from fires in dwellings within Spelthorne but there were 6 recorded fire related injuries. These types of incidents, whilst extremely regrettable, were in the majority, person(s) overcome by gas, smoke or toxic fumes with the person(s) going to Hospital with the injuries appearing slight.

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 Safety Visits (HFSV) and National Safety Campaigns.

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 2010 – 2011. 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.

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 260 calls to all fires including deliberate fires. Of these incidents, 39 were accidental dwelling fires, of which 90% were confined to the room of origin. 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 Safety Visits 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 20010/11, malicious false alarm calls increased from 6 to 16. This, compared to the same reporting period last year, represents a increase of 10. Ways to target and address this issue is being formulated but there are no trends or patterns which can be identified at this time.
- 2.3 False alarms from Automatic Fire Detection (AFD) systems decreased from 129 down 8% to 118. This is a further decrease and has reinforced the position of Spelthorne in 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 '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 a constant of 96 from last years 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 27 incidents to 18, representing a 33 % decrease which is a positive result.
- 2.6 The number of calls to fires in non-domestic premises remained constant from 24 to 23.

2.7 The number of calls to accidental dwelling fires shows an decrease of 6%. This is a decrease of 3 incidents, 39 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 HFSV'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 HFSV scheme to Local Authority Housing tenants. Work is also ongoing with Age Concern Spelthorne, with several requests for HFSV's being received and undertaken, primarily through the maintenance person referring priority requests. A total of 612 HFSV's were completed and over 750 smoke detectors were fitted to residences within the Borough.

Operational Update

- 2.7 Crewing levels with the Borough remain at 52 personnel.
- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 To ensure skills are maintained, late last year, Spelthorne personnel attended a series of High-Rise Building exercises to test their response and resource capabilities within the Sunbury area.
- 2.11 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 In the reporting period, 2600 children have been provided with Fire Safety Education. Within LA schools, 499 children were seen in Year 2. Classes, 546 within Year 5 classes and 340 within Year 8 classes. Within Independent Schools 51 children were seen in Year 2 and 65 in Year 8. Visits to Special Educational Needs establishment saw 48 children receive Fire Safety Education. 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 2011 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. This year within the Borough of Spelthorne there were 29 referrals, with 20 invited to a taster session whereby 11 attended and were offered a place on courses of which 10 started and 8 completed all 5 days and graduated. 80% graduation rate is similar to Surrey overall rate of 81%.

3.3 Young Fire Fighters Association (YFA)

The YFA has been running for eight years and is based out of Staines Fire Station in its own purpose built building. However, its current status is under review as there are currently no students attending this group. The number of instructors available for overseeing the group has reduced and this has led to a review of its role and the feasibility of it remaining a viable resource for Spelthorne residents.

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 2010 to March 2011, 72 young children or young people in Surrey were referred onto the scheme from 9 different agencies. 11 of these referrals were for children and young people in Spelthorne. Following initial visits by Firewise Advisors, 6 monthly checks are made with parents/carers to check on progress. Current statistics show that 95% say they have not had any incidents since the visit and others 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".

5 Firefighter for a Day (NEET)

5.1 Firefighter for a Day schemes were undertaken in July and November in Spelthorne with twelve, 13 to 15 yr olds attending Staines on each of the days.

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.

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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.

6 Domestic Fires

- 6.2 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 that personnel will undertake 340 Home Fire Safety Visits 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 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 8%. (129 incidents down to 118 incidents) compared to the same period last year.

7 Road Traffic Collision Reduction

- 7.1 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 2010 a total of 11800 young people (306 from schools and colleges located in Spelthorne) attended a performance of SDSA. The following schools/colleges attended: Halliford (50 pupils), Bishopwand (75), Surrey Care Trust (STEPS) Spelthorne (10), NACRO (14), Brooklands College – Asdhford Campus (157). St Pauls Catholic College had booked for the 2nd November but this clashed with another commitment. They could not attend any other dates. The 2010 presentations continued to utilise the new road traffic collision reconstruction DVD to enhance and update the SDSA performances. Members funding (£5000 from 2008) contributed to the production costs of the new films.

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 Clive Whitethread on 07968 834182

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 North (Les Dodd) represents Surrey Fire and Rescue Service at the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), the Borough Manager (Clive Whitethread) 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

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- 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.
- 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 2011/12 Spelthorne Borough Plan.

LEAD OFFICER: Les Dodd – North Area Manager
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 07968 834550
E-MAIL: leslie.dodd@surreycc.gov.uk
CONTACT OFFICER: Clive Whitethread Spelthorne Borough Manager
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 07968 834182
E-MAIL: Clive.whitethread@surreycc.gov.uk
BACKGROUND PAPERS: IRMP, Spelthorne Borough Plan, SFRS Website.