

Item 8

**Surrey Fire and Rescue Service  
Annual Report**

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S  
LOCAL COMMITTEE (SURREY HEATH)**

**10<sup>th</sup> July 2008**

**KEY ISSUE:**

This report outlines the major strands of activity being undertaken within Surrey Heath by the Fire Service teams based at Camberley and Chobham Fire Stations.

**SUMMARY:**

The report contains information on the various activities undertaken by the Borough Team to reduce the risk from fire and road traffic to the residents of Surrey Heath, including direct contact public education programmes and campaigns.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Surrey Heath Local Committee

- 1 Recognise the achievements of the Borough Teams at Camberley and Chobham.
- 2 Support the achievement of the Retained duty personnel at Chobham Fire Station and acknowledge the availability offered by employers who release staff, and those who are self-employed

**Contact Details**

Accountable Officer:	Name	Simon Moore
	Job title	Area Manager, West Area

Responsible Officer:	Name	Martin Goad
	Job title	Borough Manager

**INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 1 Surrey Heath continues to be a safe place to live, which is reflected in the following performance figures, these figures relate to the reporting year April 2007 to March 2008.
  - The Service attended 338 calls to fires; this represents a decrease of approximately 16% on the previous year's total of 403.
  - Fires in non domestic premises decreased by 33% from 30 to 20.
  - The number of accidental fires in dwellings increased from 34 to 37. This represent an increase of 8%. The Service is currently undertaking a data

quality check on the number of accidental dwelling fires. This figure is only a provisional end of year figure.

- Malicious false alarms attended were up approximately 22% from 22 to 27. Although this would appear to be a significant increase, this figure is in line with the 4 year average (27).
  - False alarms from Automatic Fire Detection (AFD) systems decreased by 19% from 336 to 272. This reflects the position across the Service. Since the introduction of the AFD policy the Service has seen a significant reduction in the number of AFDs (approximately 40% reduction across the Service).
  - There was an increase of 7% in deliberate fires, excluding vehicle fires, from 122 to 130. This figure remains slightly below the 4 year average (131).
  - Deliberate fires in vehicles decreased by 49% from 43 to 22.
- 2 In the last two years 16 people have died in Surrey as a result of fire, 11 of these were as a result of an accidental fire in a dwelling. The underlying reasons why these people did not escape from their properties has been the subject of a joint review with HM Coroner. Each of these people could be classed for one reason or another as a vulnerable adult, with either mental health and or mobility issues mixed in many cases with excess alcohol.

Whilst none of these incidents occurred in Surrey Heath they indicate a worrying trend that will inform the Service's efforts in the year ahead.

## **ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY**

### **Road Traffic Casualties**

- 3 The Service's award-winning Safe Drive Stay Alive event continues to be an unqualified success. Aimed at young drivers and those who are about to begin learning to drive, the event is a staged production held at Dorking Halls and has so far reached some 28,000 school pupils, college students and young drivers in the county.

Using real-life victims of RTCs, the production carried a high satisfaction level - almost 100% of all attendees say they will be a safer driver as the result of attending the event.

The Service is now seeking to build on this success, expanding the SDSA format to bring variants to each individual borough, as well as re-recording and updating the production material used at the event. This is subject to a separate funding request to the committee, detailed in the appropriate Allocation request form.

In the last year 39 people were killed or seriously injured in RTC incidents in the Borough of Surrey Heath, and the expansion of Safe Drive will be aimed at reducing this local figure. RTC levels are also detailed in the Funding Request Form.

### **Schools' education programme**

- 4 This is an ongoing programme of fire safety education for school children, with classroom-based input in years 2, 5, and 8. Firefighters from Camberley 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

#### **Firewise scheme**

- 5 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. In the year to end of May 2007 Surrey Heath had 7 referrals

#### **Firefighter for 2day**

- 6 Support from the Local Committee has allowed us to expand our interaction with Young people of the Surrey Heath Community.. The initiative consists of two days structured around raising the awareness of risks and implications of fire. Practical scenarios are included allowing the students to have hands on experience not only in pumping water but also Road Traffic Collision extrications. The first of these activities was run during the month of August 07 at Camberley Fire Station and was attended by 10 young people identified as suitable by the Youth Development Team

#### **Wildfire**

- 7 The Service continues to work in close partnership with land managers throughout the county, with the objective of promoting prevention and intervention assistance  
Work is on going to enhance risk information of area's vulnerable to this type of incident. Creating comprehensive fire plans to be available to operational crews via the mobile data platform carried on all front line appliances.  
The Service is currently reviewing the provision of off-road vehicles with the aim to improve the provision of fire fighting equipment for dealing with wildfires. 4 purpose built off road vehicles (Unimog) have been purchased by the service to enhance our wildfire capability, in conjunction with the services wildfire strategy, one Unimog will be based at Camberley, they aim to be in service summer 2008 onwards.

#### **Calls to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA)**

- 8 As of January 1, 2008, the Service introduced a Call Challenge system when dealing with AFAs at commercial premises, to gather additional information to ensure the appropriate response is sent.  
The service had traditionally provided an emergency response (generally one appliance) to all fire alarms from all businesses in the county. However, for every 200 responses the service sends out, only one results in any fire being put out by our staff – the vast majority are false alarms. Furthermore there are occasions when this automatic response - one appliance from the nearest location – is not adequate and there is subsequently a delay while additional appliances are mobilised for genuine fires. These statistics left us in no doubt that the previous procedure is detrimental to both the businesses we work with and to life-critical incidents elsewhere in the county. The changes are aimed at providing a more appropriate response to business alarms, while minimising the risk associated with attending non-emergency alarms which prevent fire crews from attending other incidents.  
This has led to reduction of 40% in the number of false alarms attended at commercial premises.

## **CONSULTATION**

- 9 The Service will consult with Members and Partners to ensure the community safety initiatives in Surrey Heath continue to target priority areas and contribute to our aim of making Surrey safer

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10 The Service is now seeking to build on this success, expanding the SDSA format to bring variants to each individual borough, as well as re-recording and updating the production material used at the event. This is subject to a separate funding request to the committee, detailed in the appropriate Allocation request form.

All other initiatives are carried out within existing budgets of Surrey Fire and Rescue with no additional funding being sought at this time.

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 11 All Surrey Fire and Rescue Service activity continues to support the principles of sustainable development, particularly in relation to road safety, common land fires and pollution.

## **CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 12 Initiatives and campaigns within Surrey Heath will contribute to a reduction in crime and disorder particularly in relation to arson and vehicle crime.

## **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 13 All initiatives, campaigns and operational procedures will be subject of an Equality Impact Assessment. There are no equality implications directly related to this report.

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<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Number of Annexes:</b>	<b>None</b>