



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE**  
(Surrey Heath)

**Surrey Fire & Rescue Service annual report - AMENDED**

**15 October 2009**

**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 Confirm Cllr Chris Pitt as the fire service champion

**Contact Details**

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**INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

Surrey Heath continues to be a safe place to live, which is reflected in the following performance figures.

- There were 86 primary fires and 115 secondary fires in Surrey Heath in the 6 months to the end of September. The Service attended 191 calls to fires compared to last years total of 259. The main reasons for the increase are the spate conditions during the hot periods earlier in the year and the introduction of a new Incident recording system. Once data has been ratified I anticipate a slight overall increase in the total fires for the reportable year.

- There have been 13 fires in non residential premises in the first six months of the year. Although this is almost equal to the entire number for last year this is still a very low figure.
- The total number of accidental fires in dwellings for the reportable period is 19, compared with a full year figure of 36 for 2008-9.
- Hoax calls appear to be continuing their downward trend with 4 calls in the first six months of the year against 15 calls last year.
- False alarms from Automatic Fire Detection systems decreased by 23% from 272 to 210 last year. In the first six months of this year there have been 76 calls to automatic fire alarms, continuing this downward trend. (see 4 below)
- Due to new recording systems provided to the Service this year there are still some validation issues relating to figures that are being produced. As a result the figures for deliberate fires are currently undergoing validation and are not available for this report. All figures are therefore provided subject to subsequent amendment.

## **ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY**

### **1. Road Traffic Casualties**

Following additional funding from all eleven Boroughs in this financial year the Service's award-winning Safe Drive Stay Alive event continues to be an unqualified success. The additional funding has been used to update the film which accompanies the event. In addition these films have been tailored to meet the needs of specific groups including the Armed Services, University Undergraduates and Corporate Business. In addition there is a follow up film aimed at presentation six months after the original showing. Personnel from Camberley fire station have also teamed up with colleagues from Surrey Police to present the pass plus scheme aimed at young people who are approaching driving age or who have recently passed their driving tests at reducing this local figure. RTC levels are also detailed in the Funding Request Form.

### **2. Schools' education programme**

This is an ongoing programme of fire safety education for school children, with classroom-based input in years 2, 5, and 8. This is backed up by the education carried out by station personnel both at local schools and at the fire station.

### **3. Wildfire**

Comprehensive fire plans have been produced on Chobham Common, Lightwater Country Park and Frimley Fuel Allotments and are available to operational crews via the mobile data platform carried on all front line appliances. Following the Service review of off road fire-fighting capabilities and the subsequent purchase of 4 purpose built off road vehicles (Unimogs), training has been completed for the personnel at Farnham fire station and training has been commenced for the personnel at Camberley fire station.

This represents a significant step forward in making Surrey Heath safer from the effects of wildfire. The improved equipment, tactics and training will see

less disruption, damage to the environment and a quicker recovery to normality for all.

**4. Calls to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA)**

Following on from the introduction of Call Challenge system introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008 for dealing with AFA's at commercial premises calls to this type of incident continue to decline. When operational crews do attend such incidents they will discuss with the owners/occupiers methods for reducing such calls in the future. All such incidents are monitored and persistent activations at any particular premise are dealt with in an escalating process culminating if necessary in enforcement action.

**5. Community Safety Works**

Surrey Heath continues to be proactive in delivering its community safety messages. Recent successes have included targeted partnership campaigns in both the Old Dean and Bagshot areas and have seen over 150 home fire risk checks carried out amongst some of the most vulnerable groups in the borough.

**6. Youth Engagement Scheme**

There have now been two highly successful schemes run in the West Area of Surrey Fire, which includes Surrey Heath. In total 7 young people have been referred to the scheme and 2 have started the course and graduated. Whilst the number being referred is good there are some issues around the suitability of the candidates and this is something that needs to be investigated and improved upon.

The effect that YES has on young people though is not in doubt – with two thirds either not offending at all or offending much less and at a lower 'tariff'.

**7. Firefighter for a Day**

Surrey Heath plans to introduce this highly successful scheme (a mini 'YES' course) in March next year and make it a regular feature from then on.

**CONSULTATION**

The Service has and 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**

Currently planned initiatives will be met from within existing budgets of Surrey Fire and Rescue. These initiatives could be greatly enhanced and deliver a much more powerful message however with some additional community safety equipment – a bid for which has been placed before the committee.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

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**

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**

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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**BACKGROUND PAPERS:** None