



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
(Surrey Heath)

Surrey Fire & Rescue Service Annual Report

15 July 2010

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 collisions to the residents of Surrey Heath, including direct contact, public education programmes and campaigns.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Surrey Heath Local Committee:

- Recognise the achievements of the Borough Teams at Camberley and Chobham.

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. Surrey Heath continues to be a safe place to live, which is reflected in the following performance figures.
 - There were 140 primary fires in the year April 2009 - March 2010. This represents improved performance on the previous year where there were 167 primary fires in total. There were 136 deliberate secondary fires in Surrey Heath, which although an increase on the previous year represents the spate conditions during the hot periods earlier in the year and the introduction of a new incident recording system which has seen a more accurate and in depth recording of incidents.
 - There have been 25 fires in non residential premises during the last year. Although this is an increase on last year this is still a very low figure overall.
 - The total number of accidental fires in dwellings for the year 2009-10 is 34, an improvement on the previous year's total of 36.
 - Hoax calls appear to be continuing their downward trend with 14 calls this year against the 15 calls received last year. This continues to be monitored and action taken as appropriate.
 - False alarms from Automatic Fire Detection systems decreased again dramatically, this time by over 25%, from 210 in 2008-9 to 156 last year.

ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

2. Road Traffic Casualties

Following additional funding from all eleven boroughs in the last financial year the Service's award-winning Safe Drive Stay Alive event continues to be an unqualified success. The additional funding was 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. There is also now 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 to reduce accidents further.

3. 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.

4. 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. I am pleased to report that, following a difficult period, the new Service off road fire-fighting vehicles (Unimogs) are now in the Service. Training will be commencing shortly 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

5. Calls to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA)

Following on from the introduction of Call Challenge system introduced on 1st 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.

6. Community Safety Works

Surrey Heath continues to be proactive in delivering its community safety messages. Successes last year 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.

7. Youth Engagement Scheme

There have now been four highly successful schemes run in the West Area of Surrey Fire, which includes Surrey Heath. In the three courses last year a total of 20 young people were referred to the scheme, 11 started the course and 8 graduated. Whilst the number being referred has been good for some courses, it was inconsistent last year and there remained some issues around the suitability of the candidates. This improved in the latter part of last year and I look forward to this trend continuing and Surrey Heath receiving good value for their investment in 2010.

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'.

8. Firefighter for a Day

Surrey Heath still plans to introduce this highly successful scheme (a mini 'YES' course) in 2010. The original proposal of March was not viable and it will now take place in this financial year.

CONSULTATION

9. The Service has consulted – where possible face to face and where not electronically - 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. Whilst we deliver the borough plan each year we would like to see as much input as possible from partners to maximise its success

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10. Currently planned initiatives will be met from within existing budgets of Surrey Fire and Rescue. These initiatives have been greatly enhanced however with the purchase of an 'events toolkit', funded by a Surrey Heath member (David Ivison), and we now present a more professional image and deliver a much more powerful message at the events that we attend.

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.

COMMUNITY SAFETY 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.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

14. The Surrey Heath Borough Plan will deliver community risk reduction, partnership working and LAA priorities within the Surrey Heath Area

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

15. Members to be aware of past performance and support the planned initiatives in Surrey Heath over the coming year

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

16. Members asked to support borough plan for 2010-11
 17. Members asked to recognise good performance by Surrey Heath personnel in 2009-10

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:	None