



Surrey Fire & Rescue Service Performance within Woking

Local Committee for Woking 14 October 2004

KEY ISSUE:

The Performance of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service in the Local Committee for Woking Area.

SUMMARY:

The attached Performance Indicators (PI's) highlight the aggregated performance of the fire stations, and in particular Woking Fire Station, which serve the geographical area of Woking Borough.

This report reflects selected Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) the Service is required to report upon annually and is composite of the previous 3 years.

This reporting reflects the position in the financial year 2003/2004.

There is also, where appropriate, an indication of comparison with overall County performance and the national position of Surrey Fire & Rescue Service (The Service).

The Committee is asked to note that the Service operates on a County basis for provision of the Service with day-to-day management devolved to teams aligned to borough council areas.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked to:

- (a) Note the performance of The Service within the Woking Borough Area
- (b) Endorse the initiatives by The Service to reduce risk in the community, especially to the most vulnerable groups.
- (c) Endorse the initiatives by The Service to undertake collaboration/partnerships that may realise scales of economy or effort and influence behaviour in the Community.
- (d) Recognise that following evaluation of these initiatives further funding may be required in order for them to be successfully implemented.

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Until this year the County Council's statutory duties as a fire authority were discharged through Surrey Fire & Rescue Service under the Fire Services Act 1947. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, which was given Royal Assent on 22nd July 2004, repeals this out of date legislation and will give the fire and rescue services duties and powers that more reflect the role of the service today when enacted.
- 1.2. The new legislation places on a statutory footing, the other activities that the Service have taken on over the last 50 years that were outside of the scope of 1947 Act. These go beyond firefighting and include rescue from road traffic accidents, responding to serious environmental disasters and the new terrorist threat.
- 1.3. The Standards of Fire Cover under the repealed legislation risk was quantified by the potential for spread linked to congestion of buildings and occupancy with 6 risk categories: Special, A, B, C, D and Remote Rural.
- 1.4. The Service has developed an Integrated Risk Management Plan (Year 1 IRMP) as required by the Office of Deputy Prime Minister. It was decided that currently the Standards of Fire Cover would continue to be used while a suitable fire risk management model has been tailored to the needs of Surrey.
- 1.5. The main commercial centre of Woking is currently classified as 'B' risk requiring the attendance of 2 pumps, 1 within 5 minutes and the second within 8 minutes. The remainder of Woking Borough is determined as being either 'C' or 'D' risk with attendance of one pump within 10 and 20 minutes respectively.
- 1.6. Presently the location of fire stations and the number of appliances are both determined by the requirement to meet these recommended attendance times crewed by whole-time and retained personnel providing a response to an incident.
- 1.7. In determining the collaborative effectiveness of these standards, the Service reports on each confirmed property fire attended, and in particular, if the fire had been confined to, or has spread from, the room of origin.
- 1.8. The Service aims to be pro-active in reducing the occurrence of fire in the community reporting on the occurrence of accidental fires per 10,000 dwellings and associated injuries or fatalities. To achieve this, the Service is employing a number of strategies and initiatives linked to education of the community on preventative measures to the cause of fire and actions to take in the event of a fire occurring. These include: -
 - Youth educational objectives centred on nursery activity boxes, school competitions, curriculum input at key stages 1-3 and participation in the

junior citizens programme. These are complimented by IT and other interactive arrangements at suitable venues.

- For young people who have shown an unhealthy interest in playing with fire, the service has a direct intervention scheme available known as the 'Firewise' scheme. Where a young person has given a cause for concern, they can be referred to the service. Specially trained advisors are then assigned to work with the young person reduce the risk to both themselves and those around them.
 - The owner/occupiers of premises where persons are employed to work have statutory obligations to managing the risk of fire in their premises. The service inspects a sample of premises each year to ensure that these obligations are met. The Service will advise the responsible person on the adequacy of their risk assessment. Where necessary they can issue an enforcement notice to ensure compliance. Under extreme circumstances a prohibition notice can be issued, restricting in total or partially the use of such premises, until action has been taken to reduce the risk to occupants from fire.
 - The Service continues to work with the owner/occupiers of premises that have a history of incorrect activation to reduce the frequency of unwanted Automatic Fire Alarm calls through advice on preventative measures.
- 1.9. The performance of Woking Borough compared to that of each Local Committee area is shown in the reporting template showing comparison with the Surrey, and where applicable, the national average.
- 1.10. The Committee will be aware of the industrial dispute linked to pay and conditions for uniformed members of the Service and the requirement for this to be linked to modernisation and reform. The dispute has now been brought to a conclusion (September 2004). Whilst this is outside the reporting period, it is worthwhile stating the combination of Borough Management and more flexible working practices should see improvement in effectiveness in the future.

2. Analysis and commentary of indicators (Annex 1)

2.1 [142i](#) - Number of calls to fire attended: - total calls (excluding false alarms per 10,000 population.

[142ii](#) - Number of calls to fire attended: - primary fires per 10,000 population.

[142iii](#) - Number of calls to fire attended: - accidental fires in dwellings per 10,000 dwellings.

[143i](#) - Number of deaths arising from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population.

[143ii](#) - Number of injuries (excluding precautionary checks) arising from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population.

[144b](#) - Accidental fire in dwellings confined to room of origin in smaller cities/larger towns and classified as 'B risk'.

[144c](#) - Accidental fire in dwellings confined to room of origin in smaller towns and urban residential areas and classified as 'C risk'.

[144d](#) - Accidental fire in dwellings confined to room of origin in rural village areas and classified as 'D risk'.

[145a](#) - The percentage of fire calls at which the number of appliances met standards of fire cover.

[145b](#) - The percentage of fire calls at which the number of riders met standards of fire cover.

[145c](#) - The percentage of fire calls at which the attendance times met standards of fire cover.

[146](#) - Malicious false alarms per 1,000 population.

[149](#) – Automatic False Alarms per 1,000 non-domestic properties by Local Committee Area

[Ops7](#) - Number of special services that were road traffic accident incidents

3. The Committee are asked to note the following:

- 3.1 The Service fulfils the responsibilities of the Fire Authority on a countywide basis with the day-to-day management devolved to a borough based management team in line with the borough council areas. The strategies to reduce the risk to community safety are co-ordinated and developed, within the local station that will promote targets and plans for their individual community and Local Committee area.
- 3.2 Where wholetime cover is provided, it is on a two-shift basis per 24hrs. The whole time establishment is managed on a shift-by-shift basis ensuring personnel are employed at stations against a target of 9 at two-pump stations and 5 at a one-pump station.
- 3.3 Where retained cover is provided, as is the case in Chobham, it is on a composite individual cover basis to provide continuous availability for the station throughout the 24hr period (whilst Chobham is in Surrey Heath it is one of the nearest supporting stations to Woking). Retained personnel are employed, during the hours that they are available, so that between them they can provide 24hr total cover for their station. This is becoming more difficult to achieve especially during the daytime period where local employers are becoming reluctant to release personnel, and where self-employed retained members work outside the area. However it is recognised that recommendations in the SCC Best Value Review of Fire Cover in Surrey identified that local communities need to be engaged in ensuring the recruitment, retention and availability of retained personnel. This is still applicable and should be encouraged where appropriate.
- 3.4 The location and high frequency of incidents where the Service is called to road traffic accidents is influenced by the strategies on road transport both locally and nationally. The Service is able to provide statistics that can complement those identified by the County Council Highways Department to identify the location and seriousness of incidents, and if possible influence any potential improvement.
- 3.5 As advised the new statutory arrangements allow the Fire Authority to make changes to the strategic disposition of the existing location of fire stations or the establishment arrangements within Surrey. Any changes proposed will be highlighted in each new annual Integrated Risk Management Plan. This will be available for consultation between 1st November and 31st January. Following the consultation process the agreed IRMP will be implemented in the April and during the following year.

4. Options

4.1 The Committee is requested to continue to endorse and support all, or any, of the following initiatives to reduce the potential number of fires and their tragic effects within its area:

- (a) That the committee continue to exert influence on local planning arrangements to promote the use of residential and non-residential sprinklers. The service will support Members by providing where necessary promotion material on the use of residential sprinklers for housing associations, Housing Directors and other influential groups.
- (b) Support the arrangements following the funding of smoke detectors for those within the local community who have been identified as vulnerable persons who have not yet had the opportunity of purchasing or fitting this potential life saving device.
 - ***Woking has funded 500 ten-year smoke detectors. A programme of fitting detectors targeting the elderly and disabled members of the community has been implemented. To enhance its effectiveness, partnerships with members of the SHAPE (Successful Healthy Active Positive & Energised) committee are currently being developed.***
- (c) Continue to encourage other agencies within the local team arrangements to advise the Service of any fire safety problems through their day-to-day contact with the community. (e.g. home care assistants etc)
 - ***Partnership schemes and training are being offered to care professionals who work with the elderly and disabled in the borough to identify those at risk from fire through the SHAPE committee***
- (d) Support the local joint arrangements that reduce the crime of arson relating to abandoned cars and commercial premises requiring the attendance of the Service.
 - ***The Fire Service now has full time officer seconded to the Youth Offending Team. He is having direct influence on the young people he is working with, both in fire related and road safety issues, reflecting the wider arena within which the service now has a statutory role.***
 - ***New Fire Investigation & Arson Control Officer to coordinate highly visible investigations of fires and the use of the conspicuous Arson Task Force vehicle within the borough.***
 - ***Partnerships are being developed within the Woking business community to help them reduce their vulnerability to arson attacks. In***

particular appropriate management of waste in commercial premises is being promoted.

- (e) Continue to support youth educational objectives within the nursery and schools network, inclusive of parents to endorse fire safety messages.
 - ***The training costs of a Firewise Advisor working locally has been funded by the Local Committee.***
 - ***The Safer Working Partnership has funded 35 Early Years Learning Boxes. These will be provided to nursery schools within the borough as soon as they are delivered (Expected September 04).***
- (f) To encourage the potential of joint use of resources such as premises where other agencies could utilise the image and social status of the Service to influence behaviour of local residents or groups.
- (g) To encourage fuller networking between departments reporting to this committee to encourage social cohesion.

5. Consultations

- 5.1 The Committee may wish to consult with the County Council's planning department and District Planning Authority to promote the use of domestic sprinklers.
- 5.2 The Committee may wish to consult with Borough/District about linking with the Service on the issue of abandoned cars and the link to arson.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 These are the provision of smoke detectors to identified vulnerable groups, sponsored equipment or other arrangements. However, as previously raised at this committee because there is no direct funding available to the Service to undertake additional activity within its current budget allocation on statutory obligations, the Committee may need to recognise that additional funding might be required if further options are to be explored.

7. Sustainable development implications

- 7.1 All of the above initiatives, if successfully implemented, continue to support the principles of sustainable development of the community as a whole.

8. Crime and disorder implications

- 8.1 The link between abandoned cars and arson is proven and any decrease in the former will influence the latter.
- 8.2 The perception of the Service by certain members of the community as being a positive role model may offer an opportunity to reduce re-offending or give direction through the use of fire fighters as positive role models.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 The success of any of the above initiatives could have a direct effect on certain groups in the community who will be those most at risk or who come from a background of disenfranchisement and/or under representation.

10. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 10.1 The Committee is asked to note the performance of the Service, recognise the potential offered by implementation of the proposed initiatives and where applicable endorse recommendations (a) – (d).

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: BVPI's 142-146

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Initials:CF

No of Annexes:1