



# **Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Annual Report**

## **Local Committee (Woking) 2 November 2006**

### **KEY ISSUE:**

This report outlines the major strands of activity being undertaken within Woking Borough, by the Fire Service teams based at Woking Fire Station.

### **SUMMARY:**

The report contains information on new operational equipment at Woking, provided by the Service. There is also information on the various activities undertaken by the Borough Team to reduce the risk from fire and road traffic to the residents of Woking, including direct contact public education programmes and campaigns.

### **OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Committee is asked to:

Recognise the achievements of the Borough Team in Woking, and support their commitment to embrace new technology and improved initiatives to reduce risk and make Woking safer.

## 1 Introduction and background

1.1 Surrey continues to be one of the safest County's in the country, and the following figures for Woking are relatively low when compared with other fire service areas. The following relates to the reporting year April 2005 to March 2006.

- The Service attended 352 calls to fires; which equalled the previous years total. We have prioritised a reduction in fires for this year and are currently on target.
- Malicious false alarm calls were slightly up from 32 to 34
- False alarms from Automatic Fire Detection systems reduced by approximately 10% from 300 to 269.
- There was an increase in deliberate fires, excluding vehicle fires, from 103 to 116, however, we are on target for a reduction this year.
- Deliberate fires in vehicles rose by one from 34 to 35.

## 2 Analysis and Commentary

2.1 Operational Firefighting – Compressed Air Foam System

Woking have taken receipt of a new Fire Engine, which incorporates a revolutionary new fire fighting system. This is a computer controlled system, which produces a compressed air foam/water mix, which has a superior fire-fighting capability to plain water. There are benefits to the Service and the environment in terms of improved efficiency at knocking down fires, and a reduction in the potential pollution of surrounding waterways from the fire scene water run-off.

2.2 Road Traffic Casualties

Members will be aware of the Safe Drive Stay Alive programme, which the Service is continuing to lead on. Aimed at Surrey's sixth form pupils, in an effort to educate young drivers about their actions and possible consequences whilst they are driving, this is a hard-hitting, scenario-based live stage production, involving participants from the emergency services. Also, and perhaps most poignantly, stories are told by the parent of a young person who lost their life in a road traffic collision and from a person disabled by the actions of a young driver. The production is sponsored by local companies and is totally free of charge to Surrey's schools.

The programme for November this year has just been published and it is anticipated that St John the Baptist School, Gordon School and

Woking College will be sending their sixth form pupils along to this excellent event. In addition to this, Surrey Care Trust (STEPS) and The Princes Trust have also been invited to attend

### 2.3 Age Concern Partnership

Established in September to enable the fire service and Age Concern to work together in carrying out home fire risk checks and to fit Smoke detectors in the homes of the elderly. This Woking initiative is thought to be the first in the country and it is hoped that the service will be expanded with the volunteers going on to signpost WBC and the Police to vulnerable members of the community.

### 2.4 Schools' education programme

This is an ongoing programme of fire safety education for schoolchildren, with classroom-based input in years 2, 5, and 8. From October this year Firefighters from Woking 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. In 2006, to date, the Service delivered safety advice to 871 year 6 pupils in the Woking area.

### 2.5 Firewise scheme

The 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 August 2006 Woking had six referrals, of which three are still active cases.

### 2.6 Youth Engagement Scheme (YES)

This a week of practical fire service activities aimed at young people who, for a variety of reasons, have come to the attention of the Youth Offending Team (YOT). The first of these courses was run at Walton Fire Station in May this year, when 14 young men were referred by the YOT, to take part in a pilot programme. The scheme was judged, by all concerned, to be a great success, and is now an example of best practice, which could be appropriate for other boroughs to use.

### 2.7 Fire Safety Regulatory Reform Order

Sunday 1 October 2006 saw the most significant change to fire safety legislation for over 30 years with the enactment of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. It repeals over 64 other pieces of primary fire safety legislation. Surrey Fire and Rescue Service is responsible for enforcing the Order in the name of Surrey County Council who is the Fire and Rescue Authority and this is now our

primary fire safety legislation.

The responsibility for managing fire risks now lies firmly with the responsible person to mitigate any risk generated by their undertaking. Surrey Fire and Rescue Service can, and will, continue to give advice on fire safety matters but we cannot undertake any risk assessment or contribute to it.

### **3 CONSULTATION**

- 3.1 The Service will consult with Members and Partners to ensure the community safety initiatives in Woking 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. Areas include flooding issues, road traffic casualty statistics and common land fires.

### **4 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 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.

### **5 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 To be effective in all areas of the Woking Community there is a recruitment campaign taking place at the Fire Station on the 25<sup>th</sup> November where interested persons will be able to try out recruitment ability tests. We will publicise the event at the town square on the 18<sup>th</sup> November in addition to publicity in Sheerwater, Maybury and at the Shah Jehan Mosque.
- 5.2 All initiatives campaigns and operational procedures will be subject of an Equality Impact Assessment

### **6 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Initiatives and campaigns within Woking will contribute to a reduction in crime and disorder particularly in relation to arson and vehicle crime.

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