



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (WOKING)

LOCAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON SURREY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE'S ACTIVITIES IN WOKING 31 OCTOBER 2007

KEY ISSUE

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

SUMMARY

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

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Woking) is asked to agree that:

- (i) Although this report is for information only, we recommend that the Committee recognises the achievements of the Fire and Rescue teams of the Woking Borough and support their commitment to embrace new initiatives, to reduce risk and make Woking safer.**

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Woking continues to be one of the safest Boroughs in the County. The figures below show areas of Fire Service activity and relate to the reporting year April 2006 to March 2007. The comparisons are based on Service statistics compared with the previous years total.

- 1.1 The Service attended 379 calls to all fires. This represents an increase of approximately 8%.
- 1.2 Fires in non domestic premises decreased from 27 to 26. This represents a decrease of 4%.
- 1.3 Malicious false alarms attended increased from 34 to 42. This represents an increase of 24%.
- 1.4 False alarms from Automatic Fire Detection systems increased from 269 to 322. This represents an increase of approximately 20% which reflects the position across the Service. The Service is currently implementing its strategy to reduce unwanted Automatic Fire Calls following its recent review.
- 1.5 The number of accidental fires in dwellings were reduced from 60 to 49. This represents a decrease of 18 %.
- 1.6 Deliberate fires in vehicles were reduced from 35 to 29 incidents. This represents a decrease of 17%.
- 1.7 Deliberate fires were reduced from 116 to 91. This represents a decrease of 22%.

To summarise, calls to AFA's and hoax calls have increased but calls to actual fires have significantly decreased.

2 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 The Safe Drive Stay Alive initiative continues to grow in success with a number of schools eager to attend the stage production. In addition to the day shows, an additional show held in the evening is available for all community members. This proved very successful in 2006 and an additional date has been scheduled for November 2007.
- 2.2 The programme for November has now been published for which Woking College, Princes Trust, Motor Industry Training HQ and STEPS have already booked. It is hoped that St John the Baptist Catholic School will follow.

- 2.3 The station ran three Lifecut days. This initiative was pioneered at Woking Fire Station and gives young people, who are most likely to display dangerous driving habits, hands on experience of the road traffic collision rescue techniques used by the fire service. It is aimed to show them the consequences of poor driving. Talks are now in progress through Joint Action Group (JAG) meetings to use this initiative in partnership with the police to offer to groups as a forum to investigate alternatives to perceived anti social behaviour.
- 2.4 Working with Sheerwater Youth Centre a Graffiti Board was created highlighting the dangers of distractions during driving. It is now displayed at the rear entrance of Woking Fire station.

3 Schools' education programme

- 3.1 This is an ongoing programme of fire safety education for schoolchildren with classroom-based input in years 2, 5, and 8. In year 6 additional input comes in the form of the Junior Citizens scheme which is a two-week, multi-agency event.

4 Firewise scheme

- 4.1 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 March 2007 the Borough of Woking had four referrals from schools and parents.

5 Firefighter for a day and Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

- 5.1 This initiative consists of a day structured around raising the awareness of risks and implications of fire. Practical scenarios are included allowing the students to have hands on experience of firefighting skills. To the year end of March 2007 we conducted 7 sessions.

6 Wildfire

- 6.1 The Service continues to work in close partnership with land managers throughout the county with the objective of promoting prevention and intervention assistance in dealing with heath fires.
- 6.2 In addition to the schools program, a presentation has now been developed solely aimed at reducing at wildfires. The intention is for operational crews to deliver the presentation to school assemblies from year 8 pupils onwards.

- 6.3 Work is nearly complete in compiling risk information on the area's vulnerable to Wildfire incidents. Comprehensive fire plans will be created and made available to operational crews via the mobile data platform carried on all front line appliances.
- 6.4 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 fires in heath areas.

7 Domestic Fires

- 7.1 Borough personnel continue to work alongside existing partners in generating Home Fire Risk Checks (HFRC's) and fitting smoke alarms where required. In addition, a groundbreaking new partnership has recently been formed with Help the Aged who have established an office at Woking Fire Station. Following training of volunteers by Woking Firefighters Age Concern organise volunteers to carry out HFRC's amongst the elderly. The Woking Fire crews carried out 460 Home Fire Risk Checks in the Borough during the year and fitted in excess of 400 smoke alarms.
- 7.2 A new initiative to carry out HFRC's using alternative languages has been pioneered by a firefighter from Woking. These are now being successfully offered and carried out amongst the local community.

8 Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA's)

- 8.1 New initiatives recently introduced by the Service are aimed at reducing the number of unwanted fire alarm signals. These measures include top offenders being issued with letters reinforcing recent changes to legislation and their responsibilities. This is further supported by Woking Firefighters gathering information on high-risk premises in the borough.
- 8.2 Red Watch at Woking Fire Station have been given the task of developing a strategy for the effective reduction of malicious AFA's and calls and also to coordinate the station on effective reduction initiatives.

9 CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 The Service will consult with Members, Partners and key stake holders 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. Further information may be attained from the Woking Borough Manager on 01483 772539

10 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

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

11 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 All initiatives are evaluated against Surrey Fire and Rescue Services Equality and Diversity Strategy. Consultation has taken place with Age Concern, the Police, local youth and community groups.

12 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 All activities and recommendations in this report improve community safety

13 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

14 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 The recommendations best deliver the Borough Plan as part of Surrey Fire and Rescues' Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) to reduce the risk from fire and road traffic collision injuries to the residents in the Borough of Woking

15 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 15.1 Performance measured against the Woking Borough Plan will be made available on the services website.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: IRMP, Woking Borough Plan, SFRS Website.

Version No. Date: Time: Initials: No of annexes: