



Communities Select Committee
21 March 2013

**Epsom & Ewell and Reigate & Banstead Emergency Response
Cover Locations**

Purpose of the report: Scrutiny of Policy Development and Review

Cabinet is due to make a decision about changes to the emergency response cover in the boroughs of Epsom & Ewell and Reigate & Banstead on 26 March 2013. The Communities Select Committee is asked to review and endorse the proposals.

Introduction:

1. This report details how Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority (SFRA) intend to improve the deployment of fire engines in order to maintain an effective emergency response in accordance with the Public Safety Plan. SFRA will operate a chain of single fire engine fire stations running through the boroughs of Epsom & Ewell and Reigate & Banstead. There will be two new fire stations in Salfords and Burgh Heath and will provide a more efficient use of resources across the county.

Background:

2. The Public Safety Plan (PSP) outlines 12 outcomes to be achieved by 2020. These include improving the balance of service provision across Surrey and improving the provision and use of property. Since the PSP was approved, West Sussex Fire and Rescue Authority have decided to relocate their fire engine based at Horley to Horsham and terminating their agreement to receive and respond to calls for assistance in the local ceded area with effect from 1st April 2013.
3. Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) provide emergency response cover across the whole of the county and currently have up to 35 fire engines based at 24 fire stations. Two 24 hour fire engines are based each at Epsom and Reigate fire stations, which provide most of the initial response cover for Epsom & Ewell (E&E) and Reigate & Banstead (R&B) borough areas. The remaining thirty one fire engines are based at 22 fire stations across the other nine borough and district areas.

4. Currently the emergency response performance in E&E is, on average, the quickest when compared to the remainder of Surrey and well within the Surrey Response Standard as set out in the PSP. This is primarily due to the relatively small geographic area and presence of a centrally located two fire engine fire station.
5. There are areas of R&B where it has historically been difficult to achieve the Surrey Response Standard, such as Chipstead, and fire engines from Epsom often provide the quickest response to this area.
6. This proposal seeks to provide a more balanced service provision across the E&E and R&B Borough areas, in order to be better positioned to achieve the Surrey Response Standard in addition to addressing the relocation of the West Sussex fire engine from Horley.

Analysis:

7. A range of options have been considered which included relocating *existing* resources or funding *additional* resources from a range of sources and availability options.
8. Each option was evaluated in relation to its impact on emergency response performance, cost, achievability within time and resource constraints as well as anticipated public acceptability and conformity with the principles agreed under the Surrey PSP. This option analysis, linked with the risk profile and from our experience of providing a fire and rescue service, helps to identify the following course of action.
9. The preferred option is to create a chain of single fire engine fire stations running through the boroughs of Epsom & Ewell and Reigate & Banstead.
 - a) Proposal 1: Relocate one fire engine from Reigate fire station to Horley fire station by agreement with West Sussex FRA on an interim basis from April 2013 whilst a more permanent second stage solution is created at a new optimal location in the Salfords area with a target date of the end of 2013.
 - b) Proposal 2: Relocate one fire engine from Epsom fire station to a new optimal fire station location in the Burgh Heath area with a target date of summer 2014.
10. This should result in the first fire engine reaching emergencies more quickly on average than they do now and should minimise the impact on the Surrey Response Standard. The percentage of the population that will be covered within 10 minutes of a fire station will increase, however, the average response times in the borough of Epsom and Ewell will also increase (see paragraphs 16 and 17, tables 1 and 2).
11. We then consulted with local residents and Elected Members.

12. Currently there are two fire engines crewed by staff to provide an immediate response 24 hours a day at Reigate fire station. The proposal is to base one fire engine at Reigate and base a second fire engine at a new location in the Salfords area with a target date of the end of 2013. Whilst the permanent site is established, the plan is to operate an interim fire station at the current Horley Fire Station by agreement with West Sussex from April 2013.
13. Currently there are two fire engines crewed by staff to provide an immediate response 24 hours a day at Epsom fire station. The proposal is to base one fire engine at Epsom and base a second fire engine at a new location in the Burgh Heath area with a target date of summer of 2014. These two fire engines will continue to provide an immediate response 24 hours a day. This proposal was included in the PSP as part of the second phase and will negate the planned change to two fire engines during the day and one at night based at Epsom.
14. The benefits of the proposals would create a more efficient use of resources across the County. R&B residents would receive one fire engine attending incidents on average in about seven and a half minutes which will usually be sufficient resources to deal with the emergency safely and effectively. E&E residents would receive one fire engine attending incidents on average in about six minutes which usually will be sufficient resources to deal with the emergency safely and effectively. For life and property risk incidents, additional resources will be on their way to provide the required support for the first crew attending. The first fire crew to get to the scene of the incident will assess the scale of the emergency and can request more resources should they be required.
15. An independent company (ORH) undertook emergency response modelling to support the PSP and this has proved to be accurate since the introduction of the Surrey Emergency Response Standard. This method has been used once more to support this consultation. The table below shows the impact upon the population and the coverage from base fire station locations in these areas:

Table 1: Population coverage, currently and with proposal

Response standard		Percentage of population 1st fire engine in 10mins	Percentage of population 2nd fire engine in 15mins
Current situation ¹	Surrey	79.9%	86.9%
	E&E	86.7%	100%
	R&B	52.1%	86.4%
Preferred option	Surrey	85.2%	86.8%
	E&E	86.7%	96.8%
	R&B	93.5%	86.4%

¹ Based only on existing SFRS resources

16. Modelled response times to emergency incidents are as follows:

Table 2: Response times, currently and with proposal

Response standard		1st response to all 2+ fire engine incidents		2nd response to all 2+ fire engine incidents		1st response to other emergencies
		Average	%in10mins	Average	%in15mins	% in 16 mins
Current situation	Surrey	07:25s	80.7%	10:03s	90.3%	98.1%
	E&E	05:16s	94.0%	06:12s	96.2%	98.5%
	R&B	08:36s	69.2%	10:21s	90.1%	97.5%
Preferred option ²	Surrey	07:17s	82.5%	10:27s	90.5%	98.3%
	E&E	06:07s	87.1%	11:48s	91.4%	97.7%
	R&B	07:18s	82.7%	10:35s	92.5%	98.8%
Preferred option ³	Surrey	07:20s	82.4%	10:25s	90.7%	98.3%
	E&E	06:03s	87.9%	10:16s	94.6%	97.7%
	R&B	07:32s	83.9%	10:56s	92.3%	98.8%

Consultation:

17. The consultation period was extended by the Cabinet Member from the original 8 weeks to 12 weeks (10 December 2012 to 4 March 2013) to ensure all local residents and Elected Members views were heard and considered. A SCC Equalities and Diversity Policy officer and external advisor have been involved in ensuring that the consultation plan has been fully inclusive.
18. Consultation activities included a widely publicised on-line survey, postal questionnaires, presentations at public meetings, letters and emails to stakeholders from the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector and partner agencies, as well as staff and union consultation. The consultation was publicised in local GP practices, schools, churches, Post Offices, libraries, Citizens Advice Bureaux, community centres, through local media, SCC media and social media. See Annex 2 for the consultation plan.
19. Feedback has been received from around 350 individual respondents and groups using a range of consultation channels and methods. The overall feedback was mixed: 42% were supportive, 20% uncertain, 32% unsupportive and 6% had no opinion. Table 3 below outlines how individual sub-groups responded to the proposals.

² Based on optimal site for Salfords area and potential site at Tadworth Roundabout

³ Based on potential site at Salfords and optimal site in Burgh Heath area

Table 3: merged consultation data

Responder	Yes	Not sure	No	No opinion	Key themes	Total
Staff	38%	22%	34%	6%	Facilities at new locations, reduced resilience of service, cost of proposal, effect of changes to on-call contracts, accuracy of modelling times, cooperation with London Fire Brigade (over-reliance, Vision)	87
Public:	42%	20%	32%	6%	Reduced resilience of service, finding suitable sites (accessibility, noise disturbance), cost of creating new locations, consultation should have been better publicised	253
Public EE	15%	21%	60%	3%	High density area with continuous growth in Epsom, reduced resilience, increased risk and long waiting time for major incidents, growing volume of traffic and accuracy of modelled response times	91
Public RB	61%	19%	13%	7%	Fairer distribution, finding suitable sites, increasing population in Reigate, cost of creating new fire station	152
Partners	25%	25%	50%	0%	Support from NHS Surrey and Borders Partnership	4
SCC staff	100%	0%	0%	0%		6
TOTAL	42%	20%	32%	6%		350*

20. In particular, the formal response from Epsom and Ewell Local Committee included following points:

- a) Consultation should have been better publicised.
- b) Epsom is a growing area with new housing developments and large volume of traffic.
- c) SFRS should seek to continue the arrangements with West Sussex (Horley) instead of acquiring two new stations.
- d) Burgh Heath should be built in addition to existing resources. Reduction in service (i.e. second engine response time) is not desirable.

21. The formal response from Reigate and Banstead Local Committee included:

- a) Members expressed their support in principle for the proposals.
- b) Concerns centred around Members wanting to be consulted on possible site locations, the short time line (summer 2014), the suitability of the location in terms of minimising impact on traffic and accessing a new housing development in Netherne on the Hill. Also, the planned refurbishment of Purley fire station needs to be taken into account.

Conclusions:

22. This report is produced to outline the proposal to be made to Cabinet on 26 March 2013. The proposed course of action will:
 - a) improve the balance of fire service provision across Surrey
 - b) improve the fire engine response coverage in Surrey. This is measured through modelling analysis of performance data
 - c) mitigate the impact of changes at Horley as a result of the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Authority's decision to withdraw their fire engine
23. Overall, the proposal is the most suitable way to provide efficient and effective emergency response cover in the boroughs of Epsom & Ewell and Reigate & Banstead. We hence ask the Communities Select Committee to endorse the proposal.

Financial and value for money implications

24. The costs which are likely to arise have been identified within the Council's medium term financial planning process and the funding will be established as part of the development of the solution.
25. As identified in the 2013-14 budget preparation process, an additional pressure in the order of £125,000 will result in 2013-14, and the SFRS budget has already been adjusted to cover that. The longer-term position is less clear at this stage, due to potential knock-on effects on other aspects of the MTFP. Those impacts are likely to be significant, and will be picked up as part of Member's planned MTFP refresh in June 2013.

Equalities Implications

26. At the start of the project, an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening was undertaken to identify the potential impact on people with protected characteristics and high risk groups (i.e. age, mental health, disability), which also informed the consultation plan.
27. A full EIA assessed the impact of the proposals on people with protected characteristics and no additional actions were identified as existing multi-agency prevention and protection arrangements are in place to reduce the risk from fire incidents and other emergencies, which are targeted to vulnerable groups.
28. There will be an improved balance in emergency response cover, which includes areas with a higher prevalence of vulnerable people who are at risk of harm from fire incidents (see Annex 1).

Risk Management Implications

29. Joint interim arrangements are being put into place with West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that emergency response cover will be in place for the Horley area from 1 April 2013 until the Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority decision can be implemented.

Implications for the Council's Priorities

30. This proposal will contribute towards the council's priority to enable more adults who need support to live independently.

Recommendations:

31. Members are asked to:
- a) Endorse the proposal
 - b) Agree to review implementation plan

Next steps:

- Cabinet meeting 26 March 2013
- If approved, commencement of implementation plan, including relocating one Reigate fire engine to Horley fire station as soon as practicable.
- Agree review mechanism with Communities Select Committee to oversee implementation of plan

Report contact: Ian Thomson, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service
01737 242444; ian.thomson@surreycc.gov.uk

Sources/background papers:

Annex 1 – EIA
Annex 2 – Consultation plan

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