

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

DATE: 26 MARCH 2013

REPORT OF: MRS KAY HAMMOND, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY

LEAD OFFICER: SARAH MITCHELL, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY RESPONSE COVER LOCATIONS - EPSOM & EWELL AND REIGATE & BANSTEAD



SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

This report details how Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority (SFRA) intend to respond to the removal of the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service fire engine based at Horley Fire Station and 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that:

Cabinet approves the proposals for the improved deployment of single fire engine fire stations running through the boroughs of Epsom & Ewell and Reigate & Banstead, including the delivery of two new fire stations in Salfords and the Burgh Heath area.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To 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.
2. To improve the fire engine response coverage in Surrey. This is measured through modelling analysis and performance data.
3. To improve the fire service provision across Surrey.

DETAILS:

Introduction and Background

1. 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 1 April 2013.

2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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

6. A range of options have been considered which included relocating existing resources or funding additional resources from a range of sources and availability options.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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 15 and 16, tables 1 and 2).

10. A broad consultation has been undertaken with local residents and Elected Members to inform this report and its recommendation.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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

15. 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:

16. 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.
17. 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, all Surrey Local Committees and partner agencies, as well as Surrey Fire and Rescue 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 report.
18. Feedback has been received from around 330 individual respondents and groups using a range of methods. The overall feedback was mixed and of the 253 survey respondents; 41% were supportive, 20% uncertain, 31% unsupportive and 8% had no opinion. Residents from Epsom & Ewell are less supportive (58% object) and people from Reigate & Banstead tend to support the proposal (52% support). Of the staff that responded; 44% were supportive, 22% were uncertain, 25% unsupportive and 9% had no opinion.
19. Concerns about an increase in second fire engine response times, a growth in population (especially in Epsom), overall reduction in fire engines, the accuracy of modelled response times and suitability of new fire stations for operational needs were offered as reasons for being unsupportive. Reasons for support included an improvement of first fire engine response times, fairer distribution of resources and covering previous gaps in provision.

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

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.
22. These concerns have been fully considered and taken into account when finalising the proposals recommended.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

23. 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.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

24. See Section 151 Officer Commentary.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

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. The impact of the Cabinet decision will be reassessed and will form part of Member's planned MTFP refresh in June 2013.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

26. SFRS must comply with the core functions identified in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. These include extinguishing fires in its area and protecting life and property in the event of fires in its area. In order to do so the fire and rescue authority must “secure the provision of the personnel, services and equipment necessary to efficiently meet all normal requirements”, each of which must be taken into account.
27. The DCLG has published in July 2012 a revised Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, providing an overall strategic direction for fire and rescue authorities) which must be complied with by SFRS.
28. There are no specific references in any of these to actual timing within which the fire and rescue authority must respond to a call.
29. The development of the Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority Public Safety Plan (“PSP”) and this subsequent consultation for a period of 8 weeks, extended to 12 weeks, has met the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. Consultation was done by way of an on-line survey, postal questionnaire, presentations at public meetings and email.
30. SFRS’s commitment to the delivery of its duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 as a Category 1 responder are also referred to in the PSP.
31. The Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared by SFRS. Whilst the EIA has been completed by SFRS, it has done so based upon the consultation process described above.
32. The decision by West Sussex Fire and Rescue Authority to stop services at Horley and consultation had by SFRS with communities must be taken into account.
33. In considering this report, the Cabinet must as a matter of law, give due regard to the results of the consultation attached and take these into account when making its final decision.

Equalities and Diversity

34. At the start of the project, an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken to identify the potential impact on people fall within one or more of the protected characteristics (As provided for by the Equality Act 2010) and high risk groups (i.e. age, mental health, disability), which also informed the consultation plan.
35. A full EIA assessed the impact of the proposals on people with protected characteristics and no additional impacts 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. At the same time, due regard has also been given to the duty set out within the Equality Act, namely to eliminate, promote and foster good relations in relation to the protected characteristics. The conclusions from the EIA is that this proposal is in accordance with this.

36. There will be an improvement 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). Other Implications:
37. The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- We will implement the plan by relocating one Reigate fire engine to Horley fire station as an interim arrangement pending the permanent move to a new fire station in Salfords, with a target date of December 2013. An Epsom fire engine will be relocated to a new fire station in the Burgh Heath area, with a target date of summer 2014.
- The Communities Select Committee will oversee implementation of the plan.

Contact Officer:

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Consulted:

Leader, Portfolio Holder, SCC Councillors
SCC Communities Select Committee and Fire and Rescue Advisory Group
Local Committees in Reigate & Banstead and Epsom & Ewell
Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, Reigate & Banstead Borough Council
Parish Council for Sidlow and Salfords, Horley Town Council
Neighbourhood Panels in Horley West, Horley North West, Horley
Local Residents and Care Providers
External Equality Advisory Group
Empowerment Boards East And Mid Surrey
Partners (including South East Coast Ambulance, Surrey Police, NHS, West Sussex
Fire and Rescue Service, London Fire Brigade)
Staff, Representative Bodies and other Internal stakeholders

Annexes:

- 1) Equality Impact Assessment
- 2) Consultation Report and response to consultation

Sources/background papers:

- Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority Public Safety Plan 2011-2020
 - Cabinet Office Consultation Principles
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