

Consultation Report

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1. Context

This report summarises the findings of the public consultation on the [Making Surrey Safer Plan 2020 – 2023 that was undertaken from 4 March 2019 – 26 May 2019](#).

The [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#) requires that all Fire and Rescue Authorities produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan which considers all the fire and rescue related risks that could affect our communities. This is contained in the Making Surrey Safer Plan and associated appendices. We want to develop a wide reaching approach to managing risk, not just in the home and workplace but in every place where we can influence behaviour and encourage a safer attitude and environment, whilst still ensuring we respond to emergencies well.

This consultation explored the three proposals contained within the draft plan:

- To spend more time on business and community safety to help prevent emergencies occurring in the first place
- To maintain the number of fire stations in Surrey and change how some of them are crewed
- To recover costs from some non-emergencies to re-invest in SFRS

This evidence will support Surrey County Council's Cabinet in deciding how to proceed in relation to the proposals.

This consultation report should be read alongside the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) which has been reviewed and updated following the consultation period.

2. Methodology

The service used a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods, as well as a comprehensive mix of communication channels to gather the views of our residents, staff, partners and stakeholders (see Appendix 1 for details).

3. Analysis

The consultation received feedback from over 1,800 individuals and groups, through the consultation survey, letters and face to face engagement events.

3.1 Survey – quantitative responses

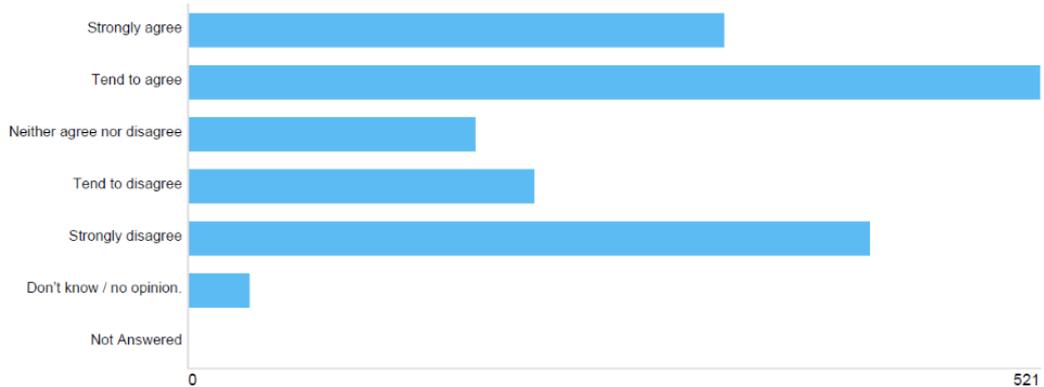
- There were 1687 responses to the survey compared to 600 responses on our previous IRMP consultation. This represents 0.14% of the Surrey population, which is estimated to be 1, 185, 300 (*The Office for National Statistics (ONS)*).

- The EIA identifies potential impacts for the elderly, young people, people with disabilities and mental health conditions and for carers. Therefore, the analysis will focus on responses from people with these particular protected characteristics

Question 4

Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that SFRS should adopt a risk based approach and focus resources where they are needed, and when they are needed?

Risk based approach



Response	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	327	19.38%
Tend to agree	521	30.88%
Neither agree nor disagree	175	10.37%
Tend to disagree	211	12.51%
Strongly disagree	416	24.66%
Don't know / no opinion.	37	2.19%

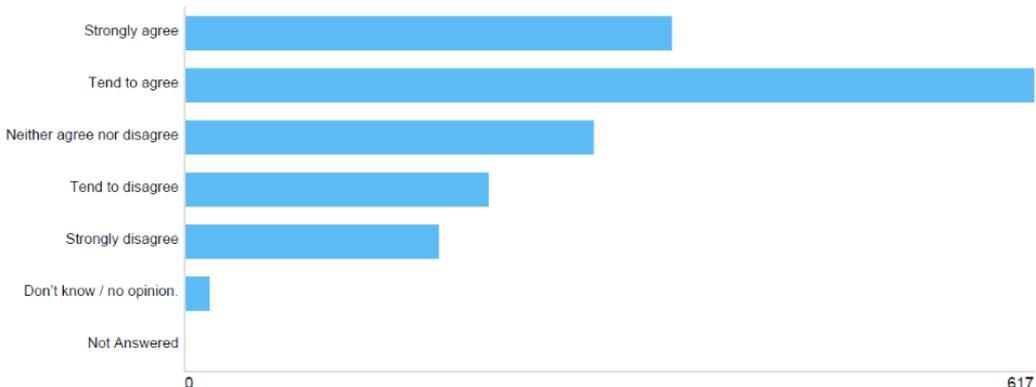
A small majority of respondents showed support for this proposal with 50.3% either strongly agreeing or tending to agree.

In the 65+ age group who we know are more vulnerable to fire death and injury, this figure is slightly higher with 59.3% of respondents in this age group either strongly agreeing or tending to agree with the proposal.

Question 5

Question 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree that SFRS should spend more time on community and business safety to help prevent incidents occurring in the first place?

More time preventing incidents occurring



Response	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	353	20.92%
Tend to agree	617	36.57%
Neither agree nor disagree	296	17.55%
Tend to disagree	220	13.04%
Strongly disagree	184	10.91%
Don't know / no opinion.	17	1.01%

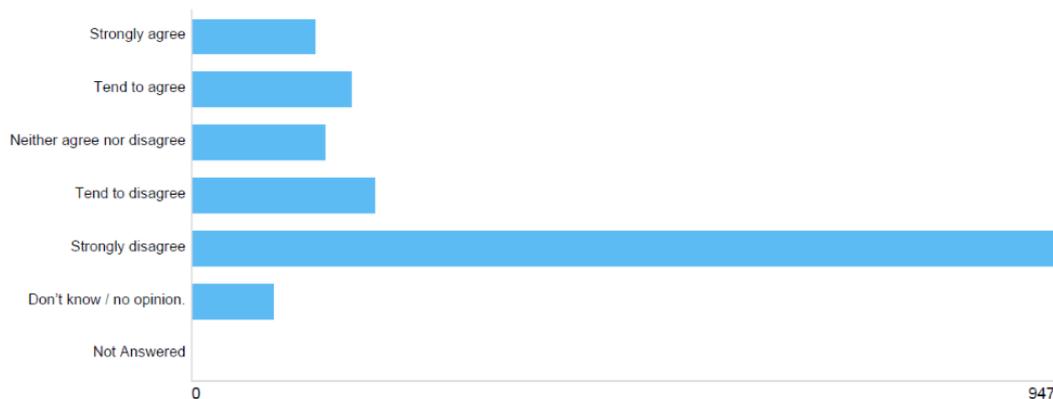
A majority of respondents agreed with this proposal with 57% either strongly agreeing or tending to agree.

This figure was higher (64%) amongst respondents who said they were limited a little or limited a lot by a disability or mental health condition. This correlates with the EIA which identified positive impacts for groups including the elderly and those with a disability, by increasing business and community safety activities including targeted safe and well visits.

Question 6

Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree with SFRS maintaining the number of fire stations and fire engines in Surrey but changing how Banstead, Camberley, Egham, Fordbridge, Guildford, Haslemere, Painshill, Walton and Woking are crewed at night?

Changing crewing at some fire stations



Response	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	134	7.94%
Tend to agree	174	10.31%
Neither agree nor disagree	145	8.60%
Tend to disagree	199	11.80%
Strongly disagree	947	56.14%
Don't know / no opinion.	88	5.22%

The majority of respondents disagree with this proposal with 56% strongly disagreeing and 12% tending to disagree.

This opinion was also expressed widely in responses to the free text question (see section 3.2) and in other responses including letters, staff briefings and community meetings.

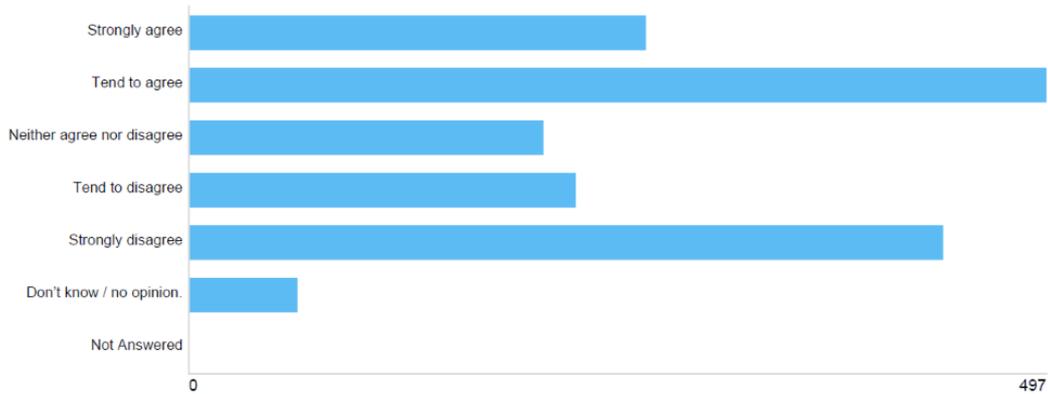
Young people - were more divided in their opinions in relation to this question. Of those aged 16-24, 28% supported these proposals, 28% neither agreed nor

disagreed and 41% didn't agree, however this group only represent 5.16% of respondents who completed the survey.

Question 7

Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree with increasing the catchment area for on-call firefighters to aid recruitment?

Increasing catchment area for on-call firefighters



More respondents agreed than disagreed with this proposal with 45.11% either tending to agree or strongly agreeing with it.

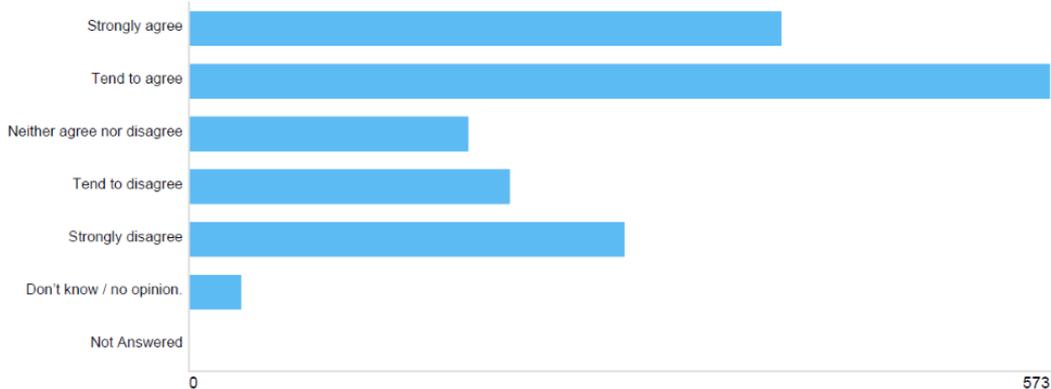
The majority of younger people (aged 16-29) and people aged 50 and over agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal whereas those aged between 30 and 49 years old tended to disagree.

Overall, 68.61% who were in agreement were women, compared to 31.39% for men.

Question 8

Question 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the service recovers costs from some non-emergencies to re-invest in SFRS?

Recovering costs to re-invest in SFRS



Response	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	393	23.30%
Tend to agree	573	33.97%
Neither agree nor disagree	185	10.97%
Tend to disagree	213	12.63%
Strongly disagree	289	17.13%
Don't know / no opinion.	34	2.02%

The majority of respondents agree with this proposal with 57.27% either strongly agreeing or tending to agree. This appears to be slightly contradictory with the qualitative feedback which shows a feeling against charging for services, particularly animal rescue.

There were very low levels of disagreement amongst those who have a disability or mental health condition and those that care for others.

3.2 Survey - qualitative responses

Respondents were asked if they had any further comments on the draft plan. Of all the responses, 1053 (62%) of respondents chose to comment. The key themes that arose were:

- **Reductions in staff and appliances**

This was the strongest theme to emerge in the qualitative feedback with 449 (26%) people expressing concerns. This correlates with the answer to the quantitative question (Q6) which showed disagreement for changing fire cover.

Respondents felt they would be less safe due to waiting longer for fire engines to arrive. Some commented that the current level of fire cover should remain and others felt firefighters would be at risk if there were fewer of them.

- **Reducing the night time response**

23% of people who answered the survey, raised concerns about reducing the number of fire engines and firefighters, specifically at night. Many respondents felt that most fires happen at night and that lives would be more at risk due to people sleeping. Others were concerned about areas where night cover would come from neighbouring fire stations. This theme links to the above and was regularly referenced at staff briefings, on social media, in letters and at community engagement meetings.

Respondents often agreed with doing more business and community safety but felt that this was at the expense of emergency cover.

- **Charging for services**

232 (13%) people made comments about charging for services, particularly animal rescue, making this the third strongest theme to arise from the survey.

People felt that their animals may be at risk and they would be unable to help them which could lead to animals dying.

There was however widespread support in the qualitative comments for charging for other services, particularly false alarms and hoax calls. The response to question eight also highlighted support for this proposal.

- **Perception that the changes are about cost cutting**

8% of people who completed this question felt that the proposed changes were about cost cutting.

Respondents frequently shared their opinions that the plan was about making savings for Surrey County Council.

Other lesser mentioned themes (by less than 8% of respondents) were:

- Agreement with realigning resources
- Agreement with improving prevention activity
- Agreement with expanding catchment areas
- Detrimental effect on airport/motorway cover
- The effect of less resources to deal with new buildings and infrastructure
- Concern about staff welfare and morale
- Disliked how the survey was worded
- Proposals appear to be misleading
- Colour coding in document not accessible for colour blind people
- Concerns about increasing catchment areas for Dunsfold and Gomshall

- Consideration should be given to reducing senior positions
- Increasing staff training
- Fordbridge fire station
- Improving cover in rural areas
- Governance of the fire and rescue service.

3.3 Letters

There were nine postal responses to the consultation from district, borough and parish councils which have been reviewed. Key themes emerging from these are in line with those in the survey feedback and summarised as follows:

- Acknowledging the need to review SFRS
- Agreement with risk-based approach and more prevention activity
- The need to consider response for nearby major rail and road networks
- Rising population and housing growth
- Perception that the proposals are about cost cutting
- Disagreement with reductions in day and night response cover
- Concerns about crewing levels
- Concerns about 'empty' fire stations
- Concerns about vulnerable people being more at risk if the proposals are implemented
- The need to align with district and borough plans
- Disagreement that there were more questions in the survey about the respondents than the proposals

3.4 Engagement meetings

Officers received good feedback from these meetings and identified ways of working in the future to benefit residents, especially the most vulnerable.

Vision Action Group

Members asked questions which included queries about Esher fire station, the validity of the draft plan and how the service works with vulnerable groups. No specific feedback on the proposals was given from the group at the meeting.

Long Term Neurological Conditions Community Group

Concerns were raised by the group that the proposed increase in response times will affect those with restricted mobility who cannot self-rescue if alerted by a smoke alarm.

Members of the group asked questions about savings and also highlighted the value of the service working with others including housing providers and landlords to consider fire safety for vulnerable residents.

East Disability Empowerment network

Members of the group asked questions about the methods of accessing the prevention services and which department to contact. A concern was expressed about adherence to national response time definitions. The risk based, locally oriented approach was explained. The group also asked for information about progress with the co-responding initiatives allowing firefighters to utilise their many skills to assist elderly people.

Haslemere Lunch Club

Club members valued the presentation. One of the members wrote to the organiser to say: "The presentation about making Surrey safer was well received by the members. They would welcome other presentations in the future."

Local Committee meetings

All local and joint committees were offered face to face briefings. Officers attended informal (private) meetings with Mole Valley, Reigate & Banstead and Elmbridge Local Committees to give an overview of the consultation and take questions. Individual comments were noted.

3.5 Colleague feedback

Members of fire and rescue staff were given the opportunity to attend a face to face briefing, led by the Senior Leadership Team. The feedback from these sessions is summarised as follows:

- Concerns about reducing the number of fire engines and firefighters, specifically at night
- Some people raised concerns about adequate resources for high rise fires
- Charging for animal rescue was raised by some individuals as a concern
- Some disliked the wording of the survey
- Questions regarding shift patterns, staff safety and data were raised regularly.

Surrey's Fire Brigades Union (FBU) submitted a response to the consultation via email. The full response is available on the Surrey FBU [website](#).

3.6 Other

There have been 96 contacts via the survey email. These have consisted of questions, concerns and comments from councillors, staff and residents. Requests for information have been honoured.

3.7 About You questions

To make sure we provide services equally and fairly we asked our survey participants to answer some questions about themselves. Answering was optional and the information gathered is held in the strictest confidence at the individual participant level and is only summarised in aggregate in this report.

- **Age:**

92% of respondents answered this question. The majority of respondents who completed the question belong to 40 - 44 and 50 - 54 age groups.

We know that people over 65 are at higher risk of fire death and injuries. Approximately 14% of people from this age group answered this question.

We also know that young people are at most risk of deaths and injuries from road traffic collisions. 5% of respondents were aged 16 - 24.

- **Disability:**

Mobility issues and mental health issues are known to be fire risk factors. Of the 1558 people that answered the question about health problems and disability, 253 respondents (16%) said that they had a condition that either limited them a lot or a little.

- **Gender:**

54% of survey participants who answered the gender question were female and 30% were male. 8 (0.4742%) respondents said their gender was different from the gender assigned to them at birth.

- **Ethnicity:**

76% of people who answered this question identified their ethnic group as British, English, Northern Irish, Scottish or Welsh. 18.3% of people preferred not to say or didn't answer this question.

- **Religion:**

The majority of respondents who answered this question (44%) stated their religion as Christian, followed by 37% who declared no religion.

- **Sexual orientation:**

1.7% of the people completing the equalities questions defined themselves as bisexual. 12% preferred not to say and 70% selected heterosexual/straight.

- **Pregnancy and maternity leave:**

1.7% of respondents said they were pregnant or on maternity leave.

- **Marital or same-sex status:**

The majority of people (799) who answered this question gave their status as married, followed by 16% who preferred not to say. 0.65% are in a registered same-sex civil partnership.

4 Key findings

Amongst the individuals and groups (0.14% of the Surrey population) who responded to the consultation:

- The majority of people agree with adopting a risk-based approach
- Most people agree with the proposal to spend more time on prevention and protection activities (Business and Community Safety)
- The majority of people disagree with the proposal to change how some fire stations are crewed
- Most people agree with recovering costs from some incidents and to re-invest in SFRS. However, charging for animal rescues was less favoured
- Most people agree with expanding the recruitment area for On-Call firefighters to aid recruitment

5 Next steps

This consultation report will be included as evidence in the paper outlining the proposals to Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee on 19 September 2019 and submitted for decision at Surrey County Council's Cabinet on 24 September 2019. If the proposals are approved, a delivery plan will be implemented, and the actions outlined in the Equality Impact Assessment will be considered.

Appendix 1 – communication activities

Direct contact:

- 37 face to face briefings offered to all SFRS staff at fire stations were attended by 371 members of staff.
- Briefing for SCC Chairman's Group meeting
- Presentations/briefings for Elmbridge, Mole Valley and Reigate & Banstead informal local committees
- Presentation at Surrey Police Independent Advisory Group meeting
- Member workshop
- Briefing and Q&A for the Vision Action Group
- Briefing and Q&A for Long Term Neurological Conditions Community Group
- Briefing and Q&A for the East Disability Empowerment network
- Briefing and Q&A for the Haslemere Lunch Club
- Information shared (by email) with all members of the Surrey Equality Group, Faith Groups, Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum and Sight for Surrey
- Information shared by Catalyst (drug and alcohol service)
- Information shared by Surrey Youth Cabinet (via social media)
- Regular member briefings and FAQs
- Emails to staff

Print:

- Full and summary versions of the draft plan and questionnaires distributed to libraries, district and borough offices, SCC's contact centre and members of the public (on request)
- Emails to approximately 200 stakeholders, including other emergency services (e.g. Police, NHS, Ambulance and other fire and rescue services), Surrey MPs, borough and county councillors, district and borough council leaders & chief executives, parish councils, business groups, Surrey Coalition of Disabled People members and other partners
- Posters issued to fire stations, libraries, district and boroughs, colleges, community centres, churches, resident associations and parish councils

- Postcards issued to libraries and district and boroughs
- Roadside banners at Reigate, Guildford, Camberley, Woking, Walton, Painshill, Sunbury and Egham fire stations
- Articles in newsletters including Surrey Matters, e-brief, Issues Monitor and Communicate.
- Newspaper advertising
- Media – the proposals featured in many items of media during the consultation period, including BBC Surrey radio, Eagle Radio, the Surrey Advertiser and the Herald series. Media work included media releases, a video and radio interviews

Online:

- Standard and accessible formats (easy read, audio, screen reader and large print from May 2019) of the draft plan/summary document
- On-line consultation survey
- Regular social media promotion on SFRS Twitter and Facebook and SCC Surrey Matters account
- Online advertising, Facebook promoted posts and messenger scrolling text banner.

Appendix 2 – survey questions

- To what extent do you agree or disagree that SFRS should adopt a risk based approach and focus resources where they are needed, and when they are needed?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree that SFRS should spend more time on community and business safety to help prevent incidents occurring in the first place?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree with SFRS maintaining the number of fire stations and fire engines in Surrey but changing how Banstead, Camberley, Egham, Fordbridge, Guildford, Haslemere, Painshill, Walton and Woking are crewed at night?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree with increasing the catchment area for on-call firefighters to aid recruitment?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree that the service recovers costs from some non-emergencies to re-invest in SFRS?
- Do you have any further comments on the draft Making Surrey Safer plan

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