

Communities Select Committee  
21 November 2013

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## **Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Update 2013-16 Action Plan Review**

### **Purpose of the report:** Scrutiny of Policy Development and Review

The second action plan in support of Public Safety Plan implementation has been in place since April 2013. This report provides an overview of progress to date on the items contained within this plan.

### **Introduction:**

1. The Public Safety Plan 2011-20 was designed to be supported by a series of action plans, detailing the specific targets and actions for the current period.
2. The second action plan covers the period between April 2013 and March 2016.
3. This report provides an early progress update against this 3 year action plan.

### **Public Safety Plan Action Plan 2013-16 Update**

#### **Background**

4. The first action plan supporting the PSP concluded in March 2013. A number of the actions were completed, including several that indicated the commencement of projects. There are also a number of items that have been carried forward into the next action plan. A summary of achievements and progress is attached at Annex 1.
5. Several of the items in the first action plan were 'enabling items' to allow more significant changes to be made in the following action plan, notably the development of new Wholetime duty systems.
6. The development of new Wholetime duty systems has commenced but in a different format than was initially proposed. This is due to the property changes prompted by the changes to fire cover delivery in Horley and the changing requirements of the Medium Term Final Plan superseding the original planned activities.

7. The provision of new locations in Spelthorne and Elmbridge for fire stations continues to be critical to the delivery of the savings required as £1.7m annual revenue savings are predicated on their reconfiguration.
8. A summary of activity against the broad Public Safety Plan Action 2013-2016 are set out below.
9. **Surrey Response Standard:** The Surrey Response Standard is being constantly monitored through the existing systems. The system required to improve upon this and provide real time information regarding the status of the Response Standard will be achieved through the implementation of the latest version of the mobilising system. This is planned for delivery in March 2015.
10. **Reform of the On-Call duty system:** Revised contracts and a new availability planning system have been developed in order to increase the availability of on-call crews and pilot schemes are commencing. It is intended that full adoption of this system will be achieved in 2014.
11. **Wholetime duty system changes:** Changes to the Wholetime duty system are required to ensure the workforce is as flexible as possible to enable transformation of the service over time. For example secondary contracts are providing a new flexible means to support maintenance of crewing levels. A pilot scheme is underway in the East area and an extension to this pilot is planned over the coming months. To date that pilot is proving successful but a larger scale pilot will test the system more fully and determine its long term application.
12. A project to implement the day-crewing system at Camberley Fire Station is underway and will be completed during 2014.
13. Additional changes and systems will be examined over the coming months with key stakeholders including representative bodies as the development of a long term workforce development strategy gets underway.
14. **Operational Assurance:** Operational Assurance is becoming embedded within the organisation, with themed operational audits supporting the implementation of the standardised procedures produced by the Collaborative Partnership (a grant funded collaboration between 22 fire and rescue services, hosted by SFRS to develop common policies, procedures and training packages). The collaborative partnership and operational assurance activities will inform future options appraisal with regard to crewing systems.
15. **Increased Use of Volunteers:** SFRS started using volunteers in November 2011 with its first 5 volunteers, all of which remain with the volunteer service to date. Over the past 18 months it has seen this number increase to in excess of 120 active volunteers undertaking Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) and assisting SFRS personnel in other community events. Current plans for further expansion of the use of volunteers are justified by both the interest in volunteering for SFRS (10+ applications per week) and the amount of prevention activity available (for example HFSV) for them both on fire stations and in the communities that they serve.

- 16. Governance review:** As part of an innovative government network, the Public Services Transformation aims to investigate potential closer working across Surrey Police, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, South East Coast Ambulance Service and Surrey County Council Emergency Planning Team. Sussex Police and East and West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services have also agreed to work as part of the project team to explore the potential to extend this aligned approach across Sussex. An outline business case has been completed and forms part of the Public Services Transformation Network papers considered by the Cabinet on 22nd October 2013. The Communities Select Committee was informed of the Emergency Services Collaboration during informal discussions on 26th September 2013 and regular communication is planned throughout the programme of work.
- 17. Fire station locations:** The property element of the Public Safety Plan continues to be the most significant factor in the achievement of the savings required within the Medium Term Financial Plan. There are several ongoing transactions within this item as detailed below.

#### **Epsom & Ewell and Reigate & Banstead**

- 18.** On April 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 the agreement with West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service for the provision of emergency response cover into a ceded area around Horley ceased. From this point Surrey Fire & Rescue Service commenced a transition programme that ensured the appropriate levels of cover were maintained until the 23<sup>rd</sup> April when a fire engine was permanently redeployed from Reigate to Horley.
- 19.** This is a temporary position until the new fire station is provided in the Salfords area. A property has been purchased and the required works are currently ongoing in order to commence operational use from July 2014.
- 20.** The site search for a suitable location in the Burgh Heath area continues, with a number of options being assessed. The temporary closure of Purley Fire Station from June 2014 creates an additional imperative for a solution to be achieved.

#### **Woking**

- 21.** In September 2012, Surrey County Council's Cabinet agreed to form part of the Woking Town Centre development company and consequently agreed to the relocation of the fire station from its current site in Causey Way.
- 22.** Woking fire station is a relatively modern station that occupies a small footprint. This necessitated the building being set over a number of floors, which creates a number of functional and operational issues. The small footprint also limits the area available for practical training and also for car parking. The impact on training is obvious, whilst the limited car parking capacity negates the opportunity to create an 'on-call' unit at the station, which is an option that SFRS would wish to explore.

23. The location of the current fire station is considered to be very close to the optimal operational location, with a corridor of optimal sites which runs along Victoria Way down to Quadrant Court.
24. SFRS have been working with Property Services colleagues and Woking Borough Council to identify alternative locations. Several sites have been identified and assessed for suitability both in terms of location and footprint. This has been achieved through the use of emergency response cover modelling and also by using the Guildford fire station plans as the basis for assessing the suitability of the site footprint/layout.
25. A proposed site has been given provisional approval by Fire and Rescue based upon operational requirements. The new site will be located in Goldsworth Road, near its junction with Church Street West.
26. A planning application is due to be submitted on 25<sup>th</sup> November. Funding discussions are on-going to ensure the project is fully funded within existing budgetary constraints
27. Property Services target date for delivery of a new station is **June 2015**. Detailed planning work and development of the massing arrangements on the upper floors of the new building design has led to the current estimate within the project plan.

#### **Guildford**

Guildford Fire Station is being replaced due to the condition of the existing building. Following preparatory work on the site, the next phase of building development will commence in November 2013. A comprehensive survey including the discovery of archeologically significant items has led to the extension of time needed prior to construction beginning.

Property Services target date for completion: **January 2015**.

#### **Spelthorne**

28. The consultation on the proposals to provide a new, one appliance fire station in the centre of the borough and the subsequent closure of the stations at Sunbury and Staines closed on 4<sup>th</sup> November.
29. At the time of writing this report the consultation had received 455 responses via the questionnaire and hosted three public meetings. An additional event at Shepperton Library was also held on 21<sup>st</sup> October.
30. A number of concerns have been raised by those who took part in the consultation and these concerns will be directly addressed when responding to the consultation feedback and drawing together final proposals and recommendations.

31. The Service intends to present a paper to Cabinet with a final proposal based upon the analysis of the consultation feedback in December. Details of the consultation to date are contained within the annexes to this paper.
32. Should authority to proceed with the proposal be granted by the Cabinet the Property Services target date for completion is **March 2015**.

## Elmbridge

33. The PSP proposals for rationalisation of appliances within the borough of Elmbridge will be progressed during 2014 through public consultation. Currently sites at Walton and Esher provide services for the borough of Elmbridge and the neighbouring areas. The PSP proposed to draw the fire cover provision into one new station in Hersham. No appropriate site to relocate rationalised provision in the Elmbridge area to has been identified. This will require the Service to consider alternative proposals to achieve the outcomes as set out in the PSP and MTFP. These may include utilising existing sites in an alternative manner with different crewing mode.

### **On-Call station adaption**

34. At Godalming, Chobham and Oxted proposals were made to adapt fire stations and accommodate day crewing at these locations. Due to existing revenue constraints this part of the PSP 2020 vision has been planned in the latter stages and therefore capital works have not commenced in these locations until it is more certain when and how these facilities will need to be developed.

### **35. Income generation**

The broad range of activity relating to income generation opportunities being explored was presented to this committee through a separate paper in September 2013. A further paper will be presented in January 2014.

### **36. Review of Response/Call Challenge/Charging**

These items continue to be dependant upon the implementation of the Collaborative Partnership standardised operational procedures and the supporting elements, such as risk assessments, task analysis and training packages. The implementation programme is on schedule, with 25 procedures in place out of a total of 80.

### **37. Provision of Specialist Capability/Contingency Crewing**

The Cabinet paper heard on 23 October 2012 saw agreement for SFRS to commence a one year pilot scheme with a private sector partner for the provision of contingency crewing and specialist rescue capability. The specialist rescue capability became operational on 1 February 2013 and full operating capability since June 2013, with all staff having completed the standard firefighting and rescue training courses (14 weeks) to the required standard.

38. The specialist rescue capability has been used a number of times, at incidents including the requirement for working at height and also sub surface body recovery.

39. The Fire Brigades Union have been involved in a trade dispute with the Department for Communities and Local Government with regards to proposals for the sector pension scheme. As a part of this dispute strike action took place on 25 September 2013 and was proposed for 19 October although this action was postponed.
40. During the 25<sup>th</sup> September action the Service maintained a provision of twelve appliances, delivered in part by the contingency crewing arrangement. This meant that whilst the number of appliances was fewer than the standard weekday minimum provision of 20, each available appliance offered the same capabilities as the standard provision. There were eight operational incidents recorded between 0900 and 1800. Of this number, following call management, 4 received a response (1 car fire, 1 outdoor (grass) fire, 1 Automatic Fire Alarm (false alarm), 1 officer attendance only (advice given). All incidents were resolved effectively.
41. Full evaluation of the pilot scheme will be completed at the resolution of the current industrial action.
42. This evaluation will consider the value for money element of the contract, what the next steps are with regard to the continuation of the contract and the further development of the provision, including the potential to generate income.

#### **Conclusions:**

##### **Financial and value for money implications**

45. The cost and timing assumptions set out above are being taken into account in preparing the proposed 2013-18 Medium Term Financial Plan.

##### **Equalities Implications**

78. The proposed location changes will be subject to staff and public consultation. Equalities Impact assessments are being completed for all proposed changes.

##### **Risk Management Implications**

79. The Medium Term Financial Plan savings are based upon the delivery of the station rationalisations as described. The delivery of these savings on target remain as a risk.
80. The property strategy for SFRS mitigates community risk as it provides improved facilities in more appropriate locations.

#### **Recommendations:**

81. The Communities Select Committee note the progress against the action plan for 2013-16.

#### **Next steps:**

The Communities Select Committee will be kept updated as the proposed actions are implemented.

The aforementioned station location changes will all be subject to public consultation. The Select Committee will be made aware of these consultations prior to their commencement.

Regular reporting against the 2013-16 Action Plan will be delivered through the Programme Management board of SFRS.

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**Annexes:**

**1: PSP Action Plan 2013-16**

**2: PSP Action Plan 2011-13 progress report.**

**3: PSP Summary**

**4: Consultation on changes to fire engine deployment in the borough of Spelthorne**

**5: Public Briefing sheet – Spelthorne Consultation**

**Sources/background papers:**

Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority Public Safety Plan 2011-20

Public Safety Plan Action Plan 2013-16

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