

## Annex 4: Spelthorne Consultation

The consultation commenced on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2013 and closed on 4<sup>th</sup> November. At this time detailed analysis of the feedback is being undertaken, with the intention to present a final proposal to the Fire Authority in December 2013. The final consultation analysis is scheduled for delivery by the 21<sup>st</sup> November.

This consultation is not a referendum – i.e. the outcome of the consultation is not binding. It forms part of the evidence to help Surrey County Council Cabinet make its final decision. Other evidence will include cost-benefit analysis, assessments of other possible options, the requirement on SCC's budget and an Equality Impact Assessment. We aim to be responsive - concerns, questions and comments have been thoroughly read, analysed and where possible responded to / acted upon (i.e. when an additional public meeting was set up). Key concerns have been reviewed to establish what mitigating action can be taken.

There is no minimum sample size limit that the consultation aims for. While high risk groups have been targeted, we are aware that we will not achieve statistically representative cohort of respondents with our survey (both in terms of demographic characteristics or size). Consultations for Fire and Rescue Services across the country typically generate very low response rates.<sup>1</sup>

### Methodology

Before the start of the consultation, we agreed with key stakeholders on how they would like to be kept engaged during the consultation process. All nine protected characteristics, as stipulated in the Equality Act 2010, have been considered in the consultation plan. We sought advice and support from the directorate's Equality and Cohesion Officer. We also followed the good practice developed during the PSP consultation and national and SCC consultation and engagement guidance. As a result, a comprehensive consultation and communications plan was established to target those who are likely to be most affected by the proposals. We used a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods, as well as a wide mix of communication channels to gather the views of our stakeholders.

This included Print, On-line and direct contact:

- Presentation at one police surgery in Ashford, two neighbourhood panels in Staines and Laleham (through Surrey Police)
- Presentations at Runnymede, Elmbridge and Spelthorne Local Committees
- Private briefing to Communities Select Committee
- Three public meetings in Spelthorne
- Attendance at 'Spelthorne Together' Assembly in Sunbury

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<sup>1</sup> Leicestershire IRMP 2009: 0.07% (435 survey responses / population: 649,000); Devon & Somerset Draft Corporate Plan 2013/14: 0.06% (985 survey and email responses / population: 1.7m), <http://www.dsfire.gov.uk/FireAuthority/CalendarOfMeetings/documents/DSFRA10July13Agendaandpapers.pdf>; Kent & Medway FRA IRMP 2011-20: 0.12% (2022 responses / population: 1.7m)

- Presentation at a Shepperton library exhibition
- Presentation at the Empowerment Board North meeting
- On-line survey for residents, businesses, partner agencies, staff and Members (using email invites to ORS panel, Spelthorne mailing list, Business mailing list, EEAG member mailing list)
- Postal questionnaires to care homes, day centres, community centres and VCFS organisations in Spelthorne
- Letters and emails to partner agencies (e.g. Police, NHS, Ambulance, etc), VCFS organisations and County Council, Borough Council and London Borough Members
- Distribution of consultation material through the External Equality Advisory Group, borough councils' community officers' mailing lists and business associations
- Face to face briefings for staff at two workshops in Sunbury and Staines
- Frequent briefs and written communication for staff

Advertisement of our consultation through:

- SCC website and social media outlets, Spelthorne BC website and social media outlets, Members' bulletin (Communicate), local paper (Surrey Herald / Get Surrey), LOSRA website
- Leaflets and posters in libraries, community centres, Citizens Advice Bureaux, schools, churches, GP surgeries, fire stations, youth centres, borough notice boards.

**Key themes** (percentages are as at 22<sup>nd</sup> October and are subject to change through the remainder of the consultation)

- Increase in response times means danger to lives and property (28%)
- Spelthorne has a high risk profile (high deprivation, high density population, several high rise buildings, Thames, motorways with RTCs) (26%)
- General opposition to the proposal, as one engine will not be enough for the area (25%)
- The removal of a fire engine causes serious doubts about the service's resilience for major incidents or at times when the crew is not available (training or other incident) (17%)
- Traffic around Spelthorne will make it difficult for the engine to move / for additional support to come into the area (Sunbury Cross, M25, M3, Thames bridges) (9%)
- This proposal is a pure money saving exercise and consideration for risk and safety have not been taken into account (7%)

- Questions about the response times for the water rescue unit and the crewing thereof (7%)
- Concerns were raised about the modelling of the response times, how they were set and what methodology was used (6%)
- This would be an unfair service reduction (fire engines per population), compared to other wealthier areas of Surrey (5%)
- The actual location is less than ideal, as it is removed from key risk points (3%)
- There might be delay in getting neighbouring support (London stations are closing, other Surrey stations around might be affected by changes) (3%)
- The oil depot and planned building of the Eco Park create considerable industrial risk, which the SFRS should take into account (3%)

These issues will form the basis for the analysis and re-evaluation of the business case.

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