

**Cabinet Member of the Month: Kevin Deanus, Cabinet Member - Fire & Rescue and Resilience****Surrey Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS):****Safe and Well Visit end of year performance and Fire Safety Audits end of year performance:**

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) staff delivered 6,710 Safe and Well Visits to vulnerable residents in the 2024/25 performance year, this represents a 66% improvement in the last two years, and our highest return to date. Approximately 84% of these have been delivered to our most vulnerable residents. Our operational crews have also delivered 777 operational risk visits, exceeding our target of 687. Our Business Safety (Fire Safety) teams have completed 1650 fire safety audits, which exceeds our 1600 target.

Furthermore, the follow-up Internal Audit of the SFRS Business Safety team has delivered a 'Substantial Assurance' outcome. Key areas of improvement include:

- The target for inspections has been reviewed in line with the Relative Risk Rating, utilising the National Fire Chiefs Council National Risk Methodology. This has been updated in the revised Protection Team Plan for 2025/26, which states that there should be a minimum of ten inspections per inspector, per month, based on the priorities laid out in the RBIP. This target was exceeded in Q4 2024/25.
- The Enforcement and Prosecution Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been revised and provides clarity around timescales for the follow-up of notices. A robust monitoring process is in place to ensure compliance with timescales following inspections
- Fire Safety Managers now allocate audits to Inspectors using the new Prevent & Protect system. This ensures high-risk properties are prioritised, regardless of location.

**HAAS Alert Rollout:** Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) has implemented Safety Cloud® by HAAS Alert, a digital alerting system designed to improve road safety for our crews and the public. This technology is currently running on most of our fire engines, two of our height vehicles and officer cars.

Safety Cloud is artificial technology that enables real-time digital alerts to be sent to motorists when our emergency vehicles are responding to incidents. These alerts provide additional warning time, complementing traditional lights and sirens, helping drivers make safer decisions and reducing the risk of collisions. SFRS has introduced this system through a partnership with [HAAS Alert and Questar UK](#), a leading predictive vehicle health company. This collaboration ensures our fleet benefits from the latest safety technology. advancements in road.

**New fire engines:** As a result of £7m of investment into our fleet we are introducing nine new fire engines to the service this year. The first two are already being used for training and by Salfords Fire Station, the next two are to head to Fordbridge and Camberley fire stations this month. Then, Painshill, Egham, Walton, Chertsey, Reigate and Dorking will welcome one each later this year.



## Emergency Planning:

2025 has already seen the team lead on a number of incidents and support the planning of key events and works to local/ national infrastructure.

**Godstone Sinkhole:** In the early hours of 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025, the EMRT was notified by Surrey Police of a sinkhole on the A25 in Godstone. Approximately 30 properties were evacuated, and as the complexity of the situation became more apparent, 700 properties, including Godstone Fire Station, a care home, and a National Highways Operational Centre, were without water; there was also a risk of losing gas to 1000 properties, and concerns about some residents remaining in situ.



To manage the multi-agency response, a Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) was established and a major incident was declared. A Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) was also set up, initially chaired by Surrey Police, before Surrey County Council (SCC) took the lead. The main priorities of both the TCG and SCG focused on reducing further impacts to the local area, ensuring the welfare of residents and managing the impact on utilities. EMRT colleagues worked closely with Tandridge District Council to establish an Information Centre and SCC Comms & Engagement to ensure consistent messaging, with the incident attracting significant media attention.

The incident moved into Recovery from 20<sup>th</sup> February, led by Tandridge District Council, with a Technical Working Group and Welfare group supporting the ongoing needs of those impacted and overseeing the ongoing recovery effort. EMRT officers were recognised in the role they played in supporting and leading the response and will feed into a full debrief of the incident.

**M25 closures:** As part of National Highways work to upgrade the M25 / A3 Wisley Interchange, National Highways implemented a number of full junction weekend road closures of this part of the M25 in October and November 2024 and January and March 2025. The scheme is due to complete in Spring 2026 and the EMRT continue to provide a key role in supporting the multi-agency approach and command and control structures in place to ensure a smooth operation. EMRT officers have worked closely with Comms & Engagement to share the latest information with colleagues and have worked with service leads to ensure minimal disruption to SCC service provision.

## Military Covenant:

Surrey County Council proudly re-signed the Armed Forces Covenant in December 2024 reinforcing its enduring commitment to ensuring fair treatment for all members of the Armed Forces community. The Covenant was re-signed by the Chair of the County Council and Col David Kenny OBE – Commander of Army HQSE during a special ceremony witnessed by Full Council underscoring Surrey’s longstanding support for its military community.

As part of our commitment to supporting this community, Surrey County Council led a key piece of work looking at their needs through a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) of the Armed Forces community in Surrey. The JSNA is a way of understanding the population cohort and their key health and wellbeing needs, with a particular focus on education, employment, healthcare and housing provision. The Armed Forces community includes serving members, reservists, ex-service and veterans and their families and has explored the challenges faced and further work that the system can do to support these challenges. It has also, provided the opportunity to focus on the positive impact that life in the Armed Forces can bring and highlight the range of specific services available to the community to support them both during their time in Service as well as after. One such support mechanism is the Forces Connect App which connect users to local and national organisations offering support across a broad range of areas.

Thanks to an upgrade during the year, this now available both as a mobile app and via [www.forcesconnect.co.uk](http://www.forcesconnect.co.uk). Wide promotion of Forces Connect has continued and the app is now accessible through Defence Gateway and MODNet to Service Personnel and is advertised on every self-service kiosk within Surrey libraries.



In order to ensure we are able to effectively support the Armed Forces community county, district and borough councillors and staff have been trained under the highly successful Armed Forces Awareness Training provided by Surrey County Council with staff trained to date totalling 6,250. All will now ask the all important question - “did you or your partner serve in the British Armed Forces?” when supporting residents.

The annual Surrey Armed Forces Covenant Conference was held in March 2025 at the Army Training Centre (Pirbright). Over 160 delegates from across the county attended. The JSNA was a key topic for the conference where we heard about the key issues as well as support available. Two Service children gave very personal accounts of what it was like growing up with a parent serving in the Army which really brought to life why the Armed Forces Covenant was important. The 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Victory in Europe Day on 8 May and Victory in Japan Day on 15 August was recognised through listening to some letters from 1945 read by Dame Penelope Keith DBE DL, ahead of celebrations taking place across the county during the summer.



## Trading Standards:

**Using disruption as a means to tackle criminality:** During 2024 the Trading Standards Service has started to make greater use of disruptive tactics to tackle criminality rather than only using the investigate/prosecute approach. The joint Service has been developing measures of impact of this disruptive work and conservatively estimate this financial impact at over £2.4 million for the 24-25 year. This is in addition to over £4.3 million saved for residents as the result of Trading Standards interventions.

**Support from the Department of Health and Social Care for Tobacco and Vapes enforcement:** The Department of Health and Social Care have agreed to fund two new apprentices in Trading Standards from April 2025 as part of the funding announced linked to changes in tobacco and vapes legislation. Across England around 80 apprentice posts are being supported through this route. The unusual move sees DHSC commit 4 years of funding for the posts, putting an investment in the Trading Standards Service which will

assist it to deliver the growing enforcement requirements of the new legislation and start to tackle the shortage of qualified Trading Standards Officers.

**Court outcomes – Using the Proceeds of Crime Act:** After years of delays in the court service, during 2024 Trading Standards have started to see cases reach trial and get outcomes. In March, a home improvement fraudster investigated by Trading Standards and sentenced to 30 months custody in 2023 was ordered to pay £369,324 as part of confiscation proceedings. This was what he was deemed to have benefited from his crimes. This is in addition to compensation of £155,000 that he had already paid to the known victims. As well as discouraging crime by ensuring it doesn't pay, the Service will also receive a proportion of this money which will be used to fund further financial investigations under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

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**Coroner's Service:**

The Surrey Coroner's Service carries out sensitive and complex work to investigate unnatural and unexplained deaths, as well as supporting bereaved families. Over the last year, the service has received over 3,000 referrals. Work has continued to streamline operational processes and continually improve performance, which has been having a positive impact. For example, the service is now consistently allocating cases to a dedicated Coroner's Officer within 2 days of a referral being received and contact is then made with families on the same day in most cases. This is leading to a much-improved experience for loved ones at what is an extremely difficult and emotive time for them. As part of our commitment to safeguarding the dignity of the deceased and improving the post-mortem process, work is now underway to deliver a digital post-mortem service in the county. This will provide the capability for post-mortems to be carried out using a CT Scanner, reducing the number of invasive procedures required. It is anticipated that this service will be up and running by the end of the year.