



SPELTHORNE JOINT COMMITTEE – date 30 November 2020

AGENDA ITEM 7

WRITTEN MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

All of the following were submitted by Cllr Sue Doran.

1. *Could we know the availability of front line appliances within the Borough of Spelthorne for each day shift (07.00 hrs to 19.00 hrs) and each night shift (19.00 hrs to 07.00hrs) from 1st July 2020 to the present day especially in view of the cuts in Fire and Rescue Services to Spelthorne and the increasing numbers of fire crew that are resigning and moving to other areas in particular London.*

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service provide a response service based upon risk and demand at a county level. The Service's approach to measuring performance is consistent with that used by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) which measures the average response times across the county, not by individual area. Therefore, the Service does not measure daily response times in the way requested.

Fire engines are moving around the county using differing fire stations as deployment locations all of the time. The dynamic nature of the response services required, which changes on the basis of risk at any time, means that fire station 'grounds' or areas perceived to be responded to by a given fire engine or fire station, only exist for the purpose of delivering Community Resilience activities.

The average response times over a 24-hour period since Surrey Fire and Rescue Service introduced the first Phase of the Making Surrey Safer Plan on the 1 April 2020 is 7 minutes and 13 seconds, which is within the performance target of a first frontline appliance to critical incidents within 10 minutes.

Average front line appliance availability from 1st April 2020

Weekday Days	Weekend Days	Nights
21	22	21
Minimum is 20	Minimum is 20	Minimum is 16

The average frontline appliance availability has also exceeded the minimum set out in the Making Surrey Safer Plan over a 24-hour period.

2. Could we be told what would happen if an incident happened in Spelthorne when the fire crews and appliances are at an incident outside of Spelthorne? For example, when the recent fire occurred in Woking this required 5/6 fire appliances and crew to attend. This must surely have left other areas without fire appliances and crews and where would the appliance and crew come from if there was an incident in the areas whose crews are outside of their allotted area.

The Service's fire engines are moving around the county using differing fire stations as deployment locations all of the time. They use the Dynamic Cover Tool which allows them to assess risk in the community, brought about by incidents, fire engine movements, etc. and align resources appropriately throughout Surrey. It also allows the Service to move resources based on where risk is, at that moment. Where required, the Service can also request resources from neighbouring fire and rescue services, as part of their mutual aid agreements. Mutual aid is common practice within the emergency services and something that is regularly reciprocated.

We always aim to meet our fire engine availability targets and response times.

3. Under what circumstances would Surrey County Council consider rescinding their 2020 cuts. Would it require residents to lose their lives due to inadequate numbers of appliances and crew? I understand that these cuts were made to cut costs but the Fire Service is supposed to be an "emergency service" ready to respond at all times, which inevitably will mean that some of the time they are not out on a "shout". We are constantly being told that the cuts are possible due to the increase in fire safety education but this does not allow for freaks of nature for which no-one can be educated. How can you prepare for such incidents?

[The Making Surrey Safer plan](#) makes changes that HMICFRS have been clear the Service need to do. The HMICFRS outlined in their initial inspection in 2018 that Surrey Fire and Rescue Service was not efficient enough and was not doing enough prevention and protection activities. As a result, the Service have realigned resources so that they can provide better fire cover during the day when they are busier and focus on preventing incidents from happening in the first place. There was no mandate to make financial cuts – that is not what the plan is about.

The Service looked at response data from the last five years, risk data and local and national statistics to help inform their planning and have built in capacity to ensure they can always deal with emergencies effectively, including simultaneous incidents.

The plan has been scrutinised and assured by the National Fire Chiefs Council, reviewed by HMICFRS, externally verified by Cadcorp (data specialist) and independently given full assurance by Brunel University London. Brunel University London have also given further assurance for Phase 2 separately, in light of recent findings such as the Grenfell Tower enquiry and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Service are confident that they have designed the optimum service model for response, prevention and protection in order to keep people safe.

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