

Cabinet Member for Community Protection

9 March 2021

POSTPONE THE DAYTIME CLOSURE OF CHOBHAM FIRE STATION

“Chobham Fire Station is set to close between 7am and 7pm, Monday to Friday, from 1 December 2020. The Council's Making Surrey Safer plan dates back to 2019 and does not take account of coronavirus. Lockdowns mean families are at home during the day midweek now. This means increased risk of house fires and more fatalities when they occur.

Response times are very important when dealing with house fires, so when a fire engine arrives from a more distant station it may be too late. Weekdays should be treated like weekends or evenings until the pandemic is over.

Please postpone the daytime closure of the fire station until the pandemic is over. This will protect lives and property in Chobham, Windlesham and the surrounding area.”

Submitted by: Mr Richard Wilson
Signatures: 269

Response:

“The priority for Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is keeping Surrey residents safe. Our main objective is to ensure that incidents do not happen in the first place, which the Making Surrey Safer Plan (MSSP) addresses by rebalancing resources. In an emergency however we will always respond to an incident.

SFRS operate a dynamic response model which uses real-time data showing fluctuating levels of risk and incidents across the county. Our 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 provided, 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.

In 2012, SFRS decided that daytime cover was no longer required from Chobham Fire Station based on data and evidence. If a fire engine was required in the area this would come from a neighbouring fire station. Chobham Fire Station has been a nights and weekends on-call unit since 2014. Therefore, there were no operational changes at Chobham Fire Station as a result of the MSSP.

There was a historic issue with misaligned employment contracts and it has taken until recently to ensure these have been aligned to the requirement for Chobham set out in 2014 (i.e. staff on contracts they were unable to fulfil due to the MSSP stating weekends/night only) which has now been rectified. This error impacted not only Chobham station but also Gomshall and Guildford fire stations who had staff on

mixed and day contracts. All of these people have now been issued the correct contracts.

Our performance data shows that we have been exceeding our target of first frontline appliance to critical incidents within 10 minutes and have started to improve even further since the first Phase of the Making Surrey Safer Plan was implemented on 1st April 2020. Our current performance data from 1 April to 31 December 2020 shows that our average response times for first appliance to critical incidents is 7 minutes and 45 seconds, which is well within our response standard. In 2020, we saw a 9.6% decrease in incidents attended in Surrey.

The service is confident that we have designed the optimum plan for the people of Surrey that is fit for the future.”

Ms Denise Turner-Stewart
Cabinet Member for Community Protection
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