



Surrey Fire and Rescue Service
Responses to questions raised at the Surrey County Council Annual General Meeting, 21 May 2024

(Q3) Jonathan Essex noting residents' concerns which included a major house fire on 12 May 2024 in Banstead, asked how Banstead Fire Station and its large Surrey Police owned setting could not be made fit for purpose. In the meantime, asked that the Council accepts the lease extension until 2026 offered by Surrey Police, enabling a consideration of the alternative options and any details shared in the supplementary response be shared on the consultation website.

Response:

We will continue to maintain an ongoing dialogue with our Police colleagues. The consultation ends on the 6 September 2024, and we will then undertake a comprehensive review of all responses received during the consultation. SFRS will not be making any decisions before the consultation closes. This is an important part of our consultation process to ensure that we are listening and acting upon feedback where appropriate. Please be assured that any decisions made following the review will be communicated appropriately.

Banstead Fire Station is not fit for purpose. Our scoping work has shown that Banstead is not the right location for this fire station. Whyteleafe is the best location to provide optimum fire and rescue cover for Surrey as a whole – this is based on risk and demand across our county. However, an appropriate site within Whyteleafe cannot be found the next best location is Godstone Fire Station, having ruled out Epsom and Reigate Fire Stations. SFRS provides a service for Surrey ensuring that the whole county is protected, not only for individual areas that have fire stations located there.

Our crews need a fire station that enables them to ensure that any contamination from incidents is dealt with appropriately. A temporary solution is in place at Banstead Fire Station, but this does not provide sufficient space for dirty and clean areas to be segregated. There is no location outside for a proper drill yard for crews to train. This means that crews are already taken away from the Banstead area regularly for training and exercises.

We will arrange for these questions and answers to be published alongside the consultation supporting information.

Robert Evans OBE referred to the response to part d) paragraph 2 that the crews and equipment were moving, and the services minimum availability of fire engines would not change. Asked whether the Cabinet Member was aware that a similar assurance was given in Spelthorne that despite the closure of two fire stations and reopening of another, the fire cover would not change; that cover reduced at night. Sought assurance that the fire cover provision would not change for Banstead and that there were no further closures of fire stations or reductions in service to come.



Response:

SFRS's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) is set out for 2025-30. Our plan is based on having 20 fire engines available in the day and 16 at night. This is the same planned availability as we have today, and it will not change under the proposals within this CRMP.

There are no other fire stations closures in the pipeline as part of SFRS's CRMP 2025-2030 proposals. If there were any other changes to fire cover being considered at this time we would be consulting on these changes alongside the existing proposals. SFRS reviews risk and demand every year within the Community Risk Profile (CRP) which is made publicly available on the Surrey County Council website.

Rebecca Paul thanked the Cabinet Member for meeting with her and Councillor Luke Bennett last week to discuss their concerns around the proposed closure of Banstead Fire Station. As provided in the response regarding Banstead Village, requested the response times before and after the proposals to be provided for Tadworth, Walton, Kingswood, Burgh Heath, Chipstead and Woodmansterne.

Response:

The response times before and after the proposals are detailed below.

- Lower Kingswood, Tadworth, Walton: current average response time = 9 minutes 7 seconds. New average response time: 10 minutes 5 seconds.
- Chipstead, Kingswood, Woodmanstern: current average response time = 9 minutes 3 seconds. New average response time: 10 minutes 7 seconds.

These figures are based on the Banstead proposed move and no other changes. The data is a modelled average.

The proposed move of the fire engine from Banstead Fire Station to Godstone Fire Station means that average response times countywide for the first fire engine are modelled to be 5 seconds longer for critical incidents and 2 seconds longer for other emergencies when compared to the current configuration. However, the modelling of that move alone is predicted to bring some faster average response times for critical incidents (10 seconds quicker) and other emergencies (12 seconds quicker) in the Tandridge area, and for other emergencies (10 seconds quicker) in the Guildford area.

At a ward level, Warlingham East and Chelsham and Farleigh would be quicker by 53 seconds for critical incidents and 94 seconds for other emergencies. The equivalent for Warlingham West being 98 seconds and 136 seconds.

Steven McCormick noted concern in the reduction in the number of appliances available at Epsom Fire Station, as an appliance was moved from there to Banstead Fire Station. Regarding the proposed closure of Banstead Fire Station, asked whether Epsom Fire Station would revert to two appliances, if not he asked what the



plan was to provide Epsom and Ewell with adequate coverage and how that would be done.

Response:

The risk and incident demand in Epsom does not require a second fire engine. The proposal to relocate a fire engine from Banstead Fire Station to Godstone Fire Station is driven by the need to better balance resources based on risk. The Tandridge district, which currently has the lowest average response attendance times, will see improvements as a result of this change of location. Based on risk and incident demand data this fire engine would be better placed elsewhere than at Epsom Fire Station.

The cover in Epsom will not be changing, the current arrangements provide the appropriate level of fire cover. There is currently a 24/7 fire engine at Epsom Fire Station which matches the risk and incident demand within that area. However, we respond using the quickest and most appropriate fire and rescue resource, which may include other Fire and Rescue partners.

Luke Bennett regarding the proposals to close Banstead Fire Station, asked whether it was a proper consultation, and if not what the key objectives of that consultation process were.

Response:

SFRS is committed to being clear and transparent. We value feedback and encourage open dialogue. The key objectives of the consultation process are to understand the views of the public, gather insights, and make informed decisions that best serve our community.

We have aligned our consultation to the Local Government Associations 'Gunning Principles':

- **Proposals are still at a formative stage:**
Final decisions have not yet been made, or pre-determined, by the decision makers.
The only change that has been made is that Banstead Fire Station must close because the lease ends and the owners would like it back during this CRMP period to dispose of the property.
- **There is sufficient information to give 'intelligent consideration':**
The information provided must relate to the consultation and must be available, accessible, and easily interpretable for consultees to provide an informed response.
- **There is adequate time for consideration and response:**
There must be sufficient opportunity for consultees to participate in the consultation.
- **'Conscientious consideration' must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made:**



Decision-makers should be able to provide evidence that they took consultation responses into account.

We worked with The Consultation Institute (TCI) who have scrutinised our preparations for consultation and provided us with a Certificate of Readiness for Consultation.

Banstead Fire Station has to close due to a lease ending and plans for the property to be disposed of. It is also not fit for purpose for our crews and not in the right location for Surrey. It would be misleading of SFRS to offer residents a chance to 'strongly agree' or 'strongly disagree' with the relocation of Banstead Fire Station.

SFRS is committed to analysing and reviewing what respondents have said to achieve the best outcomes for communities. Insights from the consultation will help inform our decision making. We will report back on the final proposals and seek cabinet approval in January 2025.

Tim Hall (Vice-Chair) noted that it would be helpful if Members could have a better explanation of the mapping and why Whyteleafe was the preferred location. Asked the Cabinet Member whether there could be a Member Development Session to explain the mapping and how the motorway links in.

Response:

A Members Development Session will be held on 29 July 2024. Meanwhile, Chief Fire Officer Dan Quin discussed the M25 during a Radio Jackie interview regarding the CRMP.

Jan Mason recalled that Epsom used to have three pumps, now it only had one. Noted the building of more houses and heavy traffic loads in the borough, sought to ensure that the provision in place for Epsom Fire Station was sufficient. Asked why she had not been informed of the proposals.

Response:

An opportunity was given to all members to have an overview of the proposals prior to the consultation going live. The presentation slides were also shared ahead of the virtual meeting which took place on 22 April 2024. A recording is available to watch for those members who were unable to attend.

All residents, those working in, travelling through or visitors of Surrey were also offered their opportunity to provide their views of SFRS and risk in Surrey via our Community Survey which ran at the beginning of 2023, results of which can be found on Surrey County Council's website. This feedback also helped inform the CRMP. Concerns about wildfires, night-time fire cover and points raised about supporting the ambulance service – these are all examples of big topics within the Community Survey responses that are mentioned within our CRMP proposals.



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