

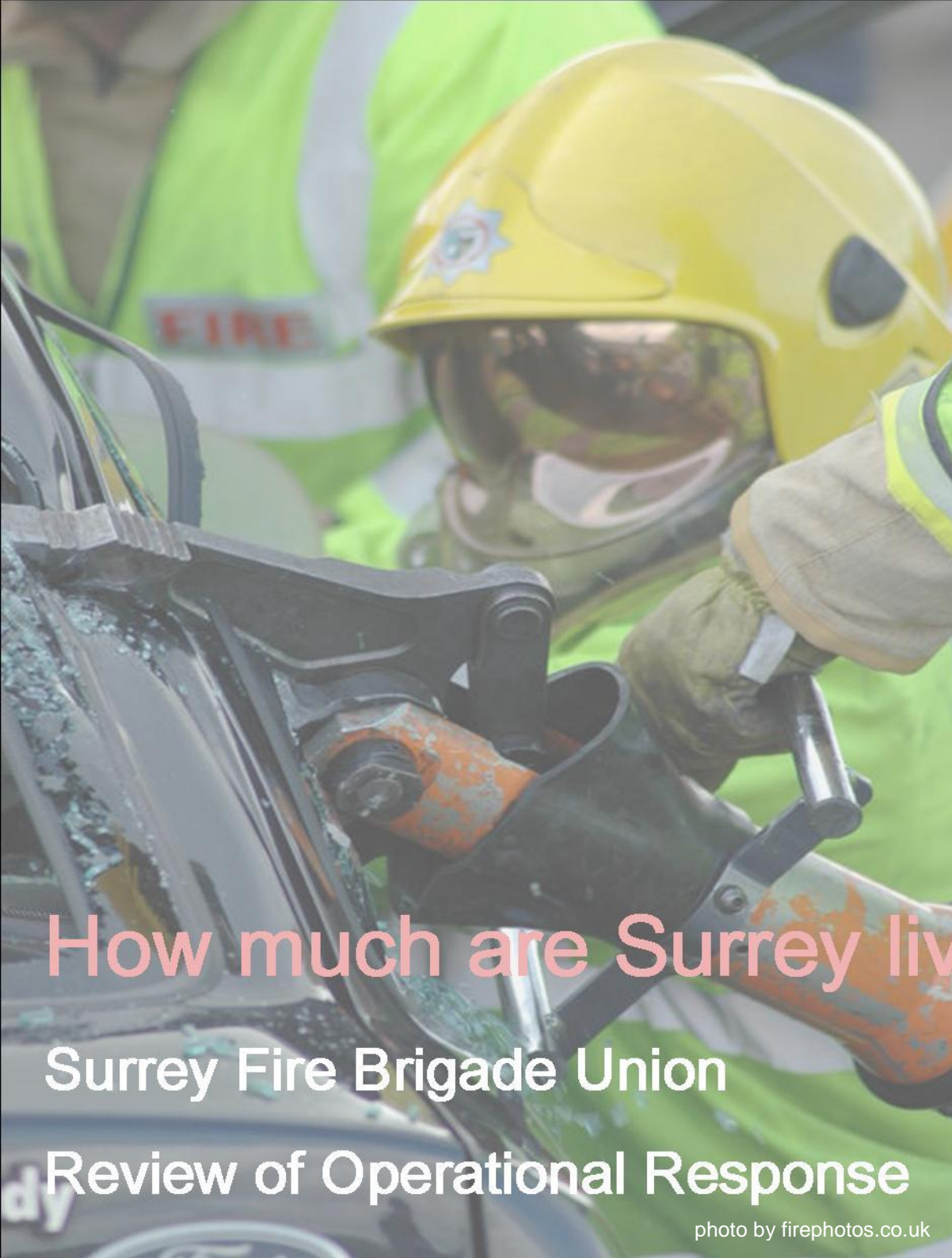


How much are Surrey lives worth?

Surrey Fire Brigade Union

Review of Operational Response





Introduction

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photo by firephotos.co.uk



Introduction

The Core Functions of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SF&RS) are clearly stated within the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004.

The focus of these core functions is not surprisingly based on the obligation of fire and rescue authorities to save and protect life and property and mitigate the risks of damage caused primarily by fires and road traffic incidents (RTC's). Other core functions of a fire and rescue service fall under the Fire Services National Framework Document 2008 to 20011 and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The fire and rescue authorities have an obligation to make provision for supplying the necessary resources to meet these core objectives.

There are 2 distinct methods of saving and protecting life and property and mitigate the risks of damage caused by fires and other emergencies;

1. Prevention

Prevention is always better than cure. Through targeted community based initiatives it is hoped that the likelihood of fires and other emergencies occurring in the first place can be reduced. However, only in a utopian world could we expect prevention to be so effective that no emergency incidents will occur.

2. Intervention

In the real world, when emergency situations occur, the safety net of an effective emergency response is vital and irreplaceable. When the worst does happen the public expect the fire and emergency service to come to their aid promptly and to work effectively to save life and property.

Getting the right balance of allocating resources between Prevention and Intervention is not an exact science. If a fire authority overemphasises the importance of prevention work by committing too many resources to it, then it invariably has a negative impact on the service's ability to respond to emergency calls. It is appreciated that endless resources are not available. Resources are always less than we would ideally like to achieve for the best performance in both Prevention and Intervention. The right balance between Prevention and Intervention needs to be found.

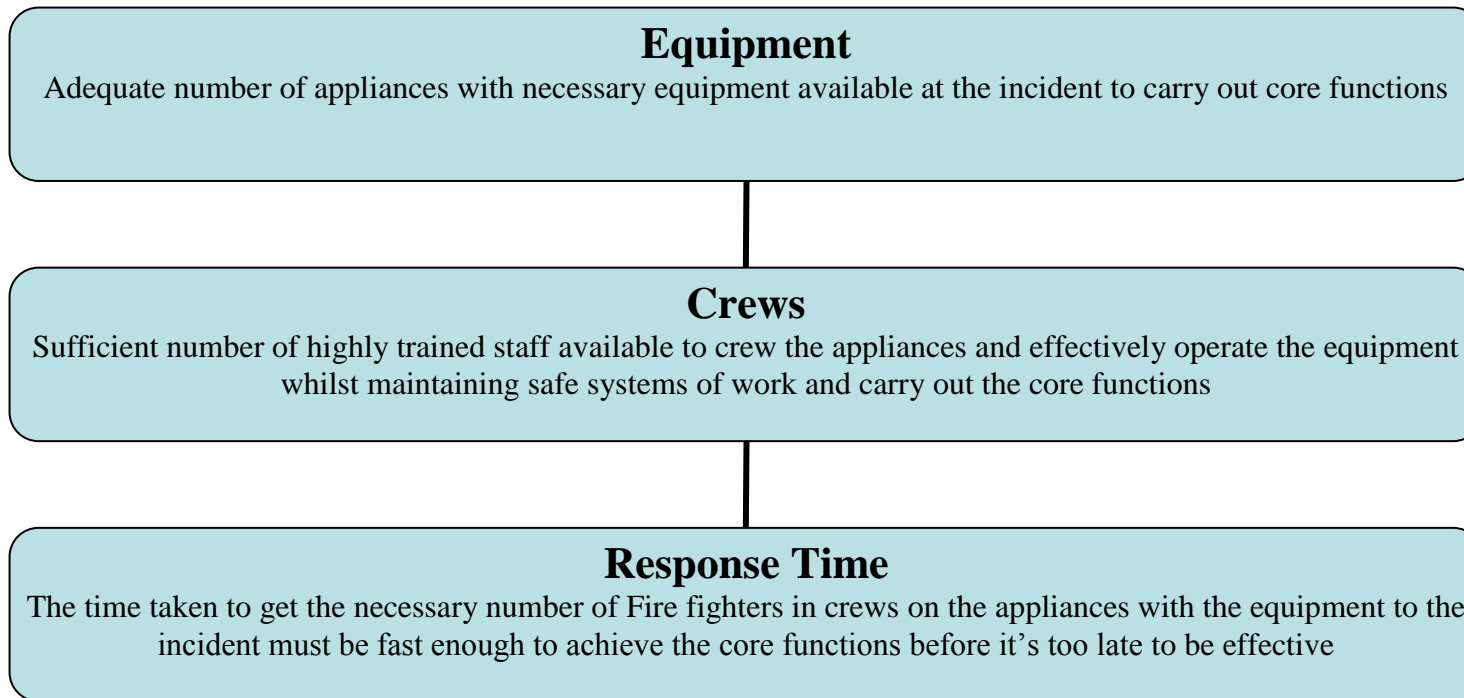
Because Prevention is unable to stop all emergency situations from arising there will always be a need for an effective emergency response. No matter how much prevention work is undertaken; there will always be accidents and unforeseen circumstances which lead to emergency situations, and there will always be those vulnerable people in our society that are unable to heed the prevention advice.

So what does this mean in reality?

Intervention is irreplaceable and must be effective as emergency incidents will always occur as they always have.

There are 3 vital requirements for effective intervention and SF&RS must achieve all 3, or its compliance with its legal core functions will fail. If any one of these requirements is not met; effective intervention will fail as the other 2 cannot compensate.

The following page shows these 3 vital requirements and the remainder of this document looks at SF&RS's performance in these areas in more detail. Remember, that although smoke alarms may provide early warning of fires, they do not extinguish fires or rescue the occupants. There is no way of measuring the effectiveness of community safety initiatives in any form to know if they really are saving any lives but we know emergency response does.



Surrey County Council must ensure all 3 requirements are met in order to meet its legal core functions.

On the next page this is explored further in relation to dwelling fires but the same principles apply to all emergency incidents that carry a risk to life and property.

Below are 2 realistic examples using a dwelling fire scenario which SF&RS crews face regularly?

1. If the necessary appliances are based close to the incident but there are insufficient staff available to crew them, SF&RS will be forced to respond with crews and appliances from further away causing slower response times. The longer the response time the greater the likelihood of death, injury and property damage from the fire.
2. If the appliances arrive at the incident in good time but they are under crewed, crews are forced under service policy governed by Health and Safety legislation not to commit to internal fire fighting or rescues until the correct number of fire fighters arrive. This means that the ability of SF&RS to meet its legal core functions is dependant on the response times of the correct number of crew rather than the time it takes for the first appliance to arrive at the incident. To attend with insufficient crew to tackle the incident is “Attending to Defend” rather than achieving statutory core functions.

“Attend to defend” does not meet legal core functions

If the emergency crews consist of an inadequate number of fire fighters (FF's) to carry out the core functions whilst maintaining safe systems of work, they are forced to defend rather than rescue and mitigate the damage caused by emergency incidents. Having the right number of staff employed to ensure there are enough FF's available to adequately crew the appliances, is fundamental to the service achieving its legal core functions.

**Surrey's Establishment, Crewing and 'Attend to Defend' policy will be discussed in
Section 2: Establishment and Crewing Levels**

If the time it takes to arrive at an emergency incident with the correct number of fire fighters to carry out the core functions is too slow; the core functions will not be achieved. Damage may well have already reached irretrievable levels and lives may already have been lost.

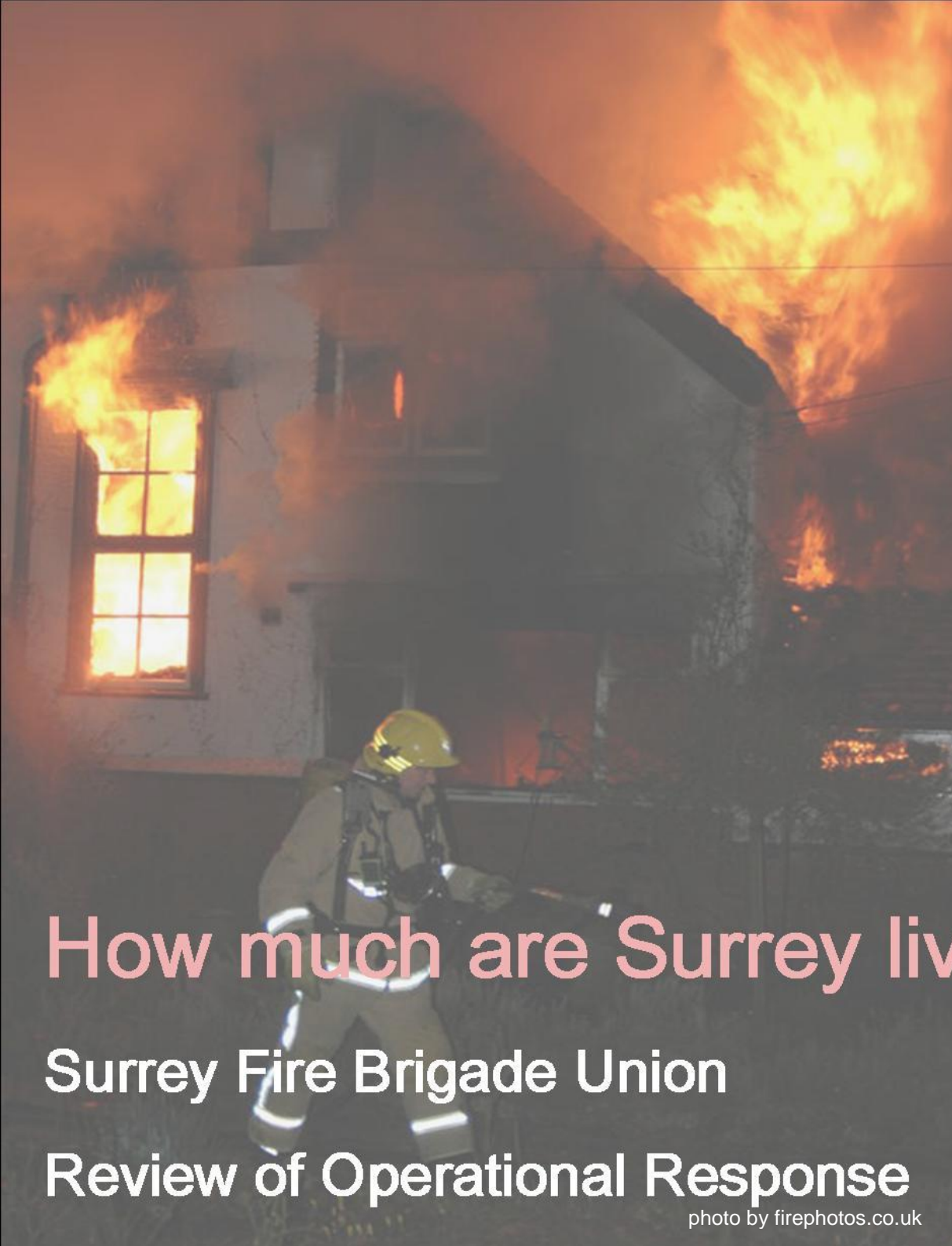
**Surrey's Emergency Response Times will be discussed in
Section 1: Emergency Response Times**

Having the right equipment available to be mobilised to emergency incidents is as vital as the other 2 requirements. It is the FBU's opinion that the equipment held in Surrey is of a good standard, but the availability of the appliances carrying that equipment is not.

**It all comes down to financial constraints
Section 3: Cost**

**But surely these are all "inputs"; we should only be concerned with "outputs"; shouldn't we?
For those who would rather start with the outputs;
Summary.**





Section 1

Response Times

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Emergency Response Times

The importance of a rapid response time to emergency incidents can not be emphasised enough. Put in the most basic of terms, no matter how highly trained the emergency crews are, how good the equipment they use is or how good the service procedures that these crews employ at an emergency incident; if they do not get to the incident in time to save life, property and possessions; they won't.

**Minutes and seconds are precious in an emergency situation.
Delays in emergency response times make the difference between us rescuing casualties or recovering bodies.**

The ENTEC study (commissioned by the Home Office in 1999) showed the average number of deaths that occur in dwelling fires if the Response Times are between 11 and 15 minutes are 50% greater, than if Response Times of 5 to 10 minutes are achieved.

The economic impact of fires is immense and rising.

The less of a property we save; the higher the insurance costs.

The more re-building that is required following a fire; the longer the period a family is homeless or a business loses income.

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service currently has one of the slowest emergency response times in England.

Source: CLG Review of Fire and Rescue Service Response Times

The residents, businesses and commuters in Surrey deserve far better emergency response time than those that are currently being achieved. Response times in Surrey have worsened rapidly over the last few years but the service currently has no plans in place which will improve them. However, the service is planning changes which will worsen the emergency response times still further due to budget cuts being imposed by Surrey County Council (SCC).

Should Surrey Fire and Rescue Service provide a service with the aim of saving life, property and possessions or simply a service to clear up the mess after all has been lost?

To bring Surrey's Emergency Response Times in line with the national average will require additional funding on the frontline service.

Surrey County Council appears to have taken the decision on behalf of the public that it should provide a cheap inadequate service which ironically will cost the public far more in financial terms through insurance premiums, lost business, lost wages, lost jobs and uninsured losses.

Response Times Data

Surrey compared to the other Fire Authorities

Nationally, of the 46 Fire Authorities in England, Surrey ranked 34th (bottom 25%) on speed of response to dwelling fires in 2006. The data shown over the next few pages is taken from CIPFA and CLG covering the years 1996 to 2006. This time period is the latest available from CLG to make national comparisons from.

Another way of comparing Surrey's response time is below; comparing Surrey to the other Fire Authorities (FA's) within its Family Group which the Public Value Review has set out to do.

Surrey's 11 year average is the worst in the group with no sign of improvement at the end of 2006 as the table shows an 11 year worsening trend. The slowest times for each year are highlighted. Surrey had the slowest average response times for 6 out of the 11 years shown.

Family Group 4 Fire Service's	Comparison of proportion of RDS to WT to Response Times for F.A. Family Group 4												Ratio of WT to RDS FF's	2006 response time ranking
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Average		
Derbyshire	6.4	6.1	6.4	6.1	6.3	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.7	6.7	7	6.45	0.92	20
Kent	6.1	6.4	6.6	6.8	6.4	6.3	6.2	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.2	6.35	0.99	11
Staffordshire	6.2	6.5	6.3	6.5	6.7	6.8	6.8	6.9	7.5	7.4	8.2	6.89	1.04	35
Hampshire	5.3	6	6.1	6.5	6.4	6.5	6.2	6.7	6.8	6.9	6.7	6.37	1.17	18
Nottinghamshire	5.7	5.4	5.1	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.5	5.7	5.6	5.9	5.7	5.55	1.00	5
Humberside	5.2	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.2	5	5	5.2	5.3	5.5	5.7	5.27	2.11	4
Lancashire	4.7	4.9	4.9	4.9	5.1	5.3	5.7	6	6	6	6.2	5.43	2.17	10
Hertfordshire	5.9	6.3	6.5	6.2	6.7	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.4	6.3	6.5	6.45	2.20	16
Cheshire	6.2	6.1	6	6.2	6.1	6.7	6.2	6.4	6.6	6.7	7.3	6.41	2.35	25
Essex	6.6	6.4	6.1	6.4	6.2	6.8	6.5	6.2	6.6	6.8	7.6	6.56	2.57	29
Leicestershire	5.5	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.8	6.1	5.9	6.3	7.2	5.98	2.62	22
Avon	5.5	5.2	5.2	5.6	5.5	5.8	6.2	6.1	6.7	7	6.9	5.97	3.39	19
Surrey	6.7	6.4	6.5	6.5	6.9	7.6	7.4	7.3	7	7.7	7.9	7.08	6.15	34
Cleveland	4.6	4.7	4.4	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.6	4.8	4.7	5	5.1	4.73	7.20	1

Source: Response Times from CLG and Staffing figures from CIPFA

The vast majority of fire service's use Whole-Time (WT) and Retained Duty System (RDS) FF's to crew their appliances. The RDS is a substantially cheaper system but it delivers slower response times than the WT system. If the balance between WT and RDS is right, then a fire service can deliver a cost effective service affording a good level of fire and emergency cover as the 2 crewing systems can compliment each other. But if an excessively high proportion of RDS are used the average response times for the county will be greater. Surrey is currently predominately WT crewed and as a result it should be achieving good average response times. It should also be achieving average response times considerably better than fire service's that employ a higher proportion of RDS crewing. The table below highlights that this is simply not the case.

Fire service	Comparison of proportion of RDS to WT FF's by Fire Service's Nationally with closest Response Times ranking to Surrey												Ratio of WT to RDS FF's	2006 response time ranking
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Average		
Norfolk	8.2	7.5	7.3	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.2	7.2	6.8	7.9	7.7	7.54	0.47	31
Suffolk	7.8	8	7.6	8.6	7.6	7.7	8.6	8.4	8.2	8.7	8.5	8.15	0.51	40
Cumbria	6.4	5.5	6.4	6.7	7	7.2	7.4	7.1	7.9	7.7	7.7	7.00	0.53	30
Cambridgeshire	7.3	7.3	7	7.5	8.1	7.6	7.8	8.2	7.9	8	8.4	7.74	0.59	39
Oxfordshire	7.6	7.3	7.3	7.6	7.4	7.8	7.6	7.9	7.9	8.5	8.3	7.75	0.61	36
Gloucestershire	8.2	7.2	7.6	7.9	7.9	8.3	8.3	8	7.6	8.2	8.3	7.95	0.69	37
North Yorkshire	6.5	6.8	6.9	6.7	6.5	7.1	7	6.7	7.5	7.3	7.8	6.98	0.88	32
Hereford and Worcester	7.2	7.2	7.4	7.2	7.1	7.6	7.8	6.8	7	7.8	7.8	7.35	0.94	33
Staffordshire	6.2	6.5	6.3	6.5	6.7	6.8	6.8	6.9	7.5	7.4	8.2	6.89	1.04	35
Buckinghamshire	7.1	7.4	7.1	7.3	7.1	7.3	7.4	7.3	7.3	7.9	8.4	7.42	1.58	38
Essex	6.6	6.4	6.1	6.4	6.2	6.8	6.5	6.2	6.6	6.8	7.6	6.56	2.57	29
Surrey	6.7	6.4	6.5	6.5	6.9	7.6	7.4	7.3	7	7.7	7.9	7.08	6.15	34

At present Surrey's average response times are comparable with some of the slowest fire authorities, which predominantly use RDS crewed appliances. On paper, the balance between WT and RDS crews in Surrey looks good and should be able to provide a good level of service at a reasonable cost, so why are the response times so bad?

Surrey has a serious and fundamental problem in achieving good response times

All of this data can be found in the CLG Review of Fire and Rescue Service response times released in February 2009; **Fire Research Series 1/2009**.

Imagine how much worse Surrey's response times would be if it increased the proportion of RDS to WT crewing.

The table below compares the response times between FA's that have a similar proportion of RDS to WT FF's as Surrey .

Fire service	Comparison of Response Times by Fire Service's Nationally with closest proportion of RDS to WT as Surrey												Ratio of WT to RDS FF's	2006 response time ranking
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Average		
Cleveland	4.6	4.7	4.4	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.6	4.8	4.7	5	5.1	4.73	7.20	1
Tyne and Wear	4.9	4.8	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.9	4.9	5	5.1	4.80	28.20	2
Greater London	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9	4.9	5.1	5.3	5.4	4.84	0.00	3
West Midlands	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.9	4.9	4.9	5	5.2	5.6	5.7	5.9	5.08	144.25	6
Merseyside	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.8	5	5	5.1	5.4	5.4	5.6	5.9	5.14	24.52	7
Greater Manchester	4.6	4.7	4.6	5.1	5.8	5.7	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.8	6.2	5.36	76.50	9
West Yorkshire	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.5	6	5.6	5.9	6.2	6	6.1	6.3	5.81	6.58	12
South Yorkshire	6.1	6.2	6.2	6	6.1	6.4	6	6	6.1	6.1	6.4	6.15	19.90	13
Avon	5.5	5.2	5.2	5.6	5.5	5.8	6.2	6.1	6.7	7	6.9	5.97	3.39	19
Leicestershire	5.5	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.8	6.1	5.9	6.3	7.2	5.98	2.62	22
Berkshire	6.1	6.6	5.9	5.9	6	6.8	6.2	6.2	7.2	6.8	7.2	6.45	3.29	23
Surrey	6.7	6.4	6.5	6.5	6.9	7.6	7.4	7.3	7	7.7	7.9	7.08	6.15	34

The existing problem with achieving good average response times in Surrey needs to be addressed urgently. Surrey should not consider making changes which would make these times worse. Increasing the proportion of RDS to WT crewing would undoubtedly cause further deterioration. But as the tables show, other FA's have achieved far better results with a similar WT/RDS balance. Why can't Surrey?

Compared in terms of proportion of WT to RDS crewing, Surrey's performance is the worst nationally by a considerable margin.

SCC has defined their objectives as being in the top 25% for performance and the bottom 25% for cost. SCC has called this a "Word Class" standard. No-one really knows what this means; i.e. the "Top 25%" of what? Family Group? All the councils in England? The world? SCC has still not clarified this standard.

For SF&RS to be included in the top 25% of England's fire services for Emergency Response Times, its average response time in 2006 would have needed to be less than 6.3 minutes, which is 1.3 minutes faster than Surrey's actual performance in that year.

SCC cannot meet its World Class objective on emergency response times. On the data shown so far, Surrey is in the bottom 25% nationally and the bottom 15% in its Family Group. Compared in terms of proportion of WT to RDS crewing, its performance is the worst nationally by a considerable margin.

SF&RS recognise the importance of achieving good response times. Although response times are not a measure of ultimate performance of a fire service; all fire service's (and all other emergency service's) recognise that their ability to meet the legal core functions is heavily reliant on the ability of the service to respond in good time. In the simplest terms; if we're not present at the scene of an emergency we can't save lives or mitigate the loss to property; as the ENTEC report proved. So maintaining strong performance on the inputs is equally as important as measuring ultimate outputs.

Until 2004, all fire authorities used the national response standard; 1985 Standards of Fire Cover. Fire authorities would monitor measure and report their response time performance against the national standard.

However, in 2004 with the introduction of Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMP's), individual fire authorities were afforded the option of introducing local standards of fire and emergency cover to tailor the service to meet their local risks as opposed to using a national standard. In reality, emergency response standards have been set to what can be achieved with a smaller budget rather than what should be achieved to improve service.

In 2006, Surrey introduced its New Emergency Response standard to replace the National Standard; a Standard it had previously measured its Response Time Performance against. The standard set out below is slower than the National Standards of Fire Cover.

SF&RS's Emergency Response Standard introduced in the 2006 IRMP stated a response standard for all emergency calls thus;

“We will deliver a Surrey Standard for response, through the flexible and effective allocation of resources across the county, to all incidents we attend.

- 75% of Surrey's population will receive an initial appliance within eight minutes.
- Where necessary, 75% of Surrey's population will receive two appliances or equivalent within 12 minutes.
- Reach 100% of Surrey's population with an initial appliance within 18 minutes.

It is our aim to improve the Surrey Standard for response by 2010 to achieve the following:

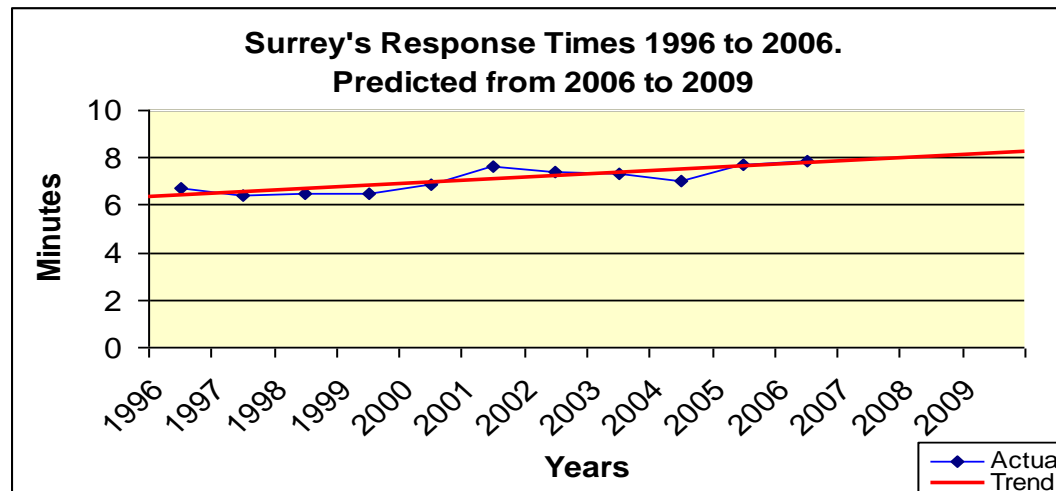
- 80% of Surrey's population will receive an initial appliance within eight minutes”

A question which has never been answered is what 75% of the population actually means. Most fire authorities have set a standard based on a percentage of the calls they attend.

**The data shown in this chapter shows that SF&RS have failed to achieve their Emergency Response Standard
The public are not being made aware that SCC have failed to achieve it.**

The Surrey Emergency Response Standard is a local one and one that should have a performance indicator set up to report the fire service's compliance with it. Further more, the County Council should have this performance indicator in the public domain as it was introduced in consultation with the public through the IRMP. SCC is not being transparent by not reporting this poor performance. In the 2006 IRMP the public were told “**WE WILL**” but they haven't been told “**WE DIDN'T**” at anytime since. To only report areas of good performance is totally misleading the public's perception of the fire service.

The following graph shows Surrey's Response Times trend over the same 11 year period as the previous tables with a trend line predicting what average response time Surrey would be achieving in 2009. Notice the first statement in the SF&RS Emergency Response Standard is a “**WILL**” not a target or aspiration.



11 years worth of average response time data has been plotted on this graph and a trend line added which has been extrapolated to show the predicted response times up to the year 2010.

The prediction based on the 11 years data is that Surrey would achieve an average Response Time of just over 8 minutes in 2009.

Why did they introduce the Surrey Response Standard shown previously with this data showing in likelihood that it would be unachievable in 2007 unless drastic changes were made? This raises serious concerns about SF&RS's ability to collate, monitor and review performance data as well as their ability to improve poor performance.

Yet Surrey's 2008 to 2011 IRMP states;

Proposal 1

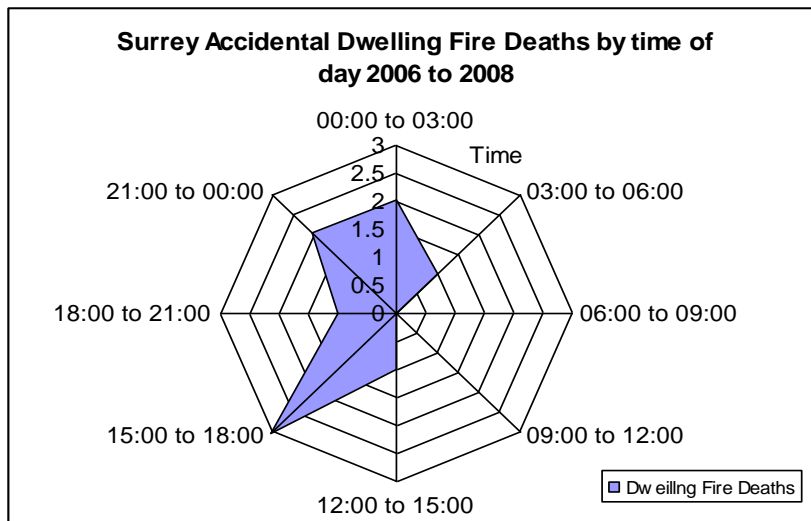
“To review the crewing arrangements of Surrey fire stations to ensure we have more emergency responses available when incidents are most frequent (daylight hours), **and fewer whole time shifts** when incidents are lower.”

“Proposal 2

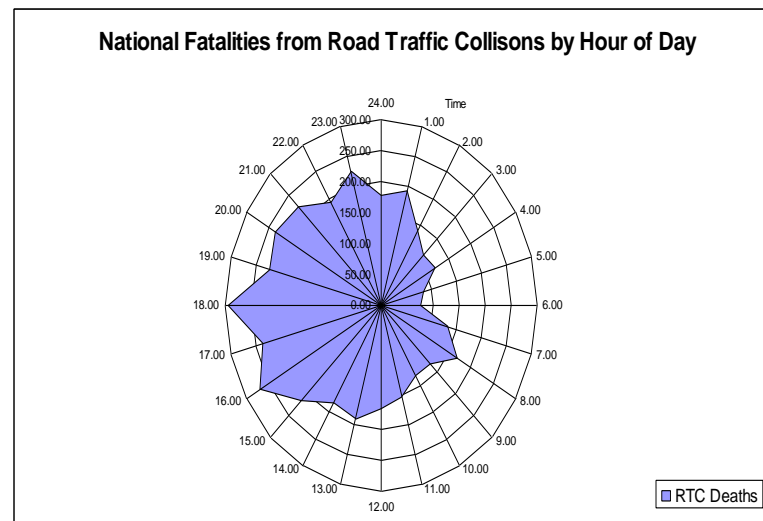
“To recruit higher levels of retained fire fighters to provide extra ensure there is **no reduction in emergency response at times of lower demand.**”
Well although the wording doesn't make sense, we can interpret what it was meant to say.

Proposal 1 States; emergency incidents are most frequent in (daylight hours)

This is a vague statement with no data provided to substantiate or clarify it. Daylight is 4am to 10pm for part of the year but it's also 8am to 5pm at others. Frequency or likelihood is not the only consideration. Likelihood must be considered alongside severity. Although there is a likelihood of more emergency incidents occurring during the day; the severity of the night time emergencies carries a greater likelihood of the incident resulting in fatalities as shown on the next page. This one sided approach to risk management is also covered in relation to crewing in Chapter 2.



Source: SF&RS Fatal Fires 2006-2008 Report



Source: Department of Transport 2009

As previously shown a greater proportion of RDS crewing will lead to even slower response times.

Further proposals currently being considered are to remove 6 WT crews at night and move them to days. This will mean that the majority of night time cover is supplied by the RDS crews which will increase the response times further.

Likelihood and Severity

To meet its statutory core functions in terms of response to emergency incidents the fire service must identify the risks in its area and put in place the necessary resources (human and physical), equipment and procedures to save life and mitigate the damage to property etc in the event of an emergency occurring. In analyzing the risks posed the two key factors which should jointly determine the action are: likelihood and severity. Likelihood would be assessed on how often it would be realistically expected that an emergency incident may occur. Severity would assess how damaging the impact would be when that emergency incident occurs

When the Channel Tunnel was built the Likelihood of a major incident occurring was deemed very small (1 incident every 150 years). But the severity of such an incident occurring was considered extremely high due to the amount of lives at risk and the associated problems the tunnel posed in terms of rescues. It was deemed necessary to have 24/7 fire and emergency cover at both ends of the tunnel and specialist equipment available in the event of such an emergency occurring. In reality the Channel Tunnel has had two major fires within twelve months of each other and has recently suffered another major evacuation that left passengers trapped in their vehicles for up to eleven hours. Although the likelihood has proved to be greater than was first thought, the resources put in place to deal with such an incident have prevented the severity reaching an unacceptable level.

If the risk had of been assessed purely on Likelihood, chances are no additional emergency cover would have been put in place as it was thought that the likelihood was 1 emergency incident every 150 years.

The Mont Blanc Tunnel fire is another example on the 24th March 1999; a truck fire spread to 35 other vehicles, creating intense heat and toxic fumes that killed 39 people. Fire duration = 53 hours. The likelihood was low but the severity was catastrophic.

Exactly the same principles must apply to commonly attended emergency incidents as well as special risks like tunnels. The likelihood of a dwelling fire anywhere in Surrey at night carries a significant risk. Due to the fact that it is nighttime, when most people are asleep, the severity will be much higher than during the day. If Surrey had less fire crews available at night then the response times would be slower which then increases the severity even more.



These examples show how important it is to assess Severity

Surrey unfortunately is placing all its eggs in one basket by basing its fire and emergency cover on Likelihood without considering properly the Severity of fires and other emergencies like Road Traffic Collisions (RTC's). To reduce WT crewed emergency night cover in Surrey is judging the risk solely by the fact that less fires, for example, occur at night. But if Surrey considered the Severity of fires they would see that majority of deaths occurring in fires are at night rather than in the day. Hence, although the likelihood of a fire at night is less than during the day; the severity and consequences are far higher.

The 2 examples above relate to tunnels but exactly the same principle is true of every type of emergency.

In the summer of 2011 the Hindhead tunnel is due to open which will be the longest inland tunnel in mainland UK.

Fire and emergency cover for this tunnel is currently about 15 minutes away at night from both ends. There are no current plans to improve this response time.

Emergency Cover based purely on likelihood could have catastrophic consequences for the residents of Surrey.

Remember the Surrey Emergency Response standard states 75% of the population will receive an initial attendance within 8 minutes.

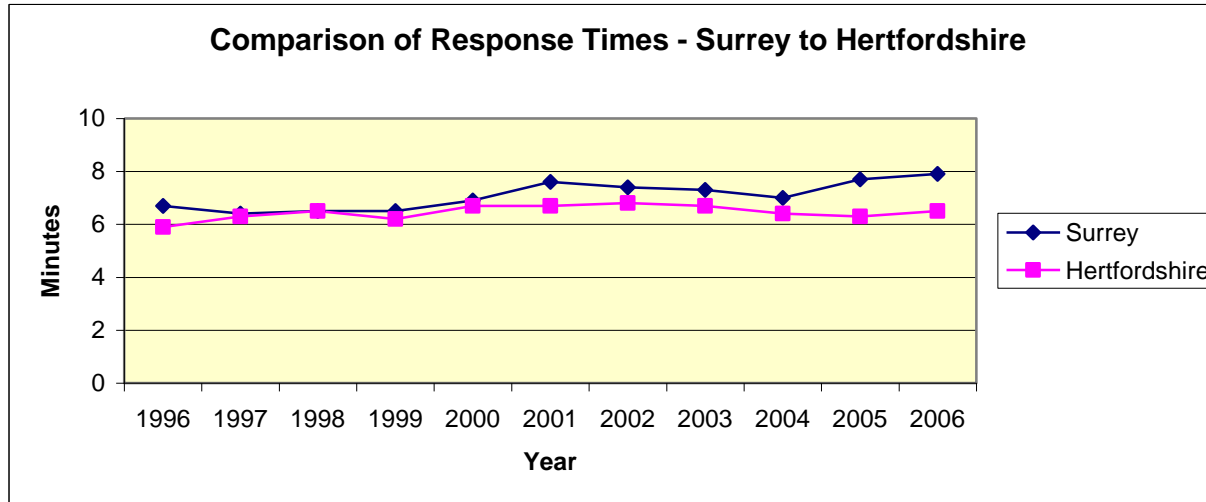
All of these problems are easily rectified but they will require innovative solutions and additional funding to frontline services.

Cutting frontline services further will obviously compound this problem and have dire consequences for the public.



Surrey Compared to Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire is a county which is very similar to Surrey in size, population and population density, road network, proximity to London and London airports and a similar fire and rescue service in terms of make up of uniformed staff. It makes sense to use Hertfordshire as closest match to Surrey for reference. The graph below shows the Response Times for both counties compared.



Up to the year 2004, the counties virtually mirror each others Response Times with Hertfordshire achieving marginally better times than Surrey. It also shows that whilst Hertfordshire have maintained very similar response times for the whole 11 year period; Surrey's have risen substantially since the introduction of IRMP's in 2004.

What has caused this huge year on year detriment to Surrey's average response times since 2004?

Surrey has an increasing population and has been targeted by the government to provide a substantial number of additional dwellings over the coming years. This added to the fact that Surrey is a county with several through routes e.g. London, the South, Dover ports/channel tunnel, international airports etc; all point to the fact that Surrey's traffic levels will continue to rise and probably at a faster rate than many other counties. The number of households increased by 11.3% between 1991 and 2001 and Surrey's car ownership in 2007 was 25% higher than the national average.

These increasing traffic levels can only lead to slower response times in Surrey unless the risk is addressed properly.

Traffic Levels

SF&RS management and Surrey County Council blame these poor Emergency Response Times on the high traffic levels in Surrey. This is not an argument backed up by data. Although it is logical to assume the relatively high volumes of traffic will detrimentally affect response times, the data shown previously shows that other factors play a much larger role.

All of the Fire Authorities which have higher traffic levels than Surrey are achieving faster Response Times than Surrey.

The table on the following page shows the 46 Fire Authorities Response Times sorted in by the volume of traffic in their area.

If the traffic levels in Surrey were the sole reason why SF&RS's response times are so bad then we would expect to see the FA's with the highest levels of traffic achieving the slowest response times. This is clearly not the case.

The Family Group 4 of FA's in which SF&RS is grouped with is highlighted in yellow.

Notice how the only FA in Family Group 4 with a worse response standard than Surrey has substantially lower traffic levels than Surrey. Again this dispels Surrey's argument that traffic levels are the sole reason why its response times are so bad.

Surrey's traffic levels are in the highest 25% of all England's FA's. Surrey should plan its service to compensate for these traffic levels as other FA's clearly do.

London has by far the highest traffic levels in England, well over twice the volume of Surrey but they have compensated for that in their emergency response planning and are achieving a Response Time 32% faster than Surrey.

Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMP's) were begun in 2004. The basic purpose of these IRMP's was to allow the FA's to tailor the service they offer to cater to the risks within their area, rather than following a prescriptive national standard of response planning.

If SF&RS truly believe that traffic levels are the reason why response times are so poor in Surrey, then it must plan its service to compensate for that fixed risk through the IRMP process as it would any other risk. Other FA's have done this and as a result are able to achieve far better response times than Surrey.

SF&RS have not addressed the risk posed by traffic levels in their IRMP's

Response Times and Traffic Levels Compared							
Ranking		Traffic Levels	Response Times	Ranking		Traffic Levels	Response Times
1	Cleveland	3,883	5.1	24	Northumberland	2,716	7.3
2	Tyne and Wear	7,950	5.1	25	Dorset	5,486	7.3
3	Greater London	33,041	5.4	26	Northamptonshire	8,434	7.3
4	Humberside	4,550	5.7	27	Cheshire	12,244	7.3
5	Nottinghamshire	8,421	5.7	28	Durham	5,628	7.4
6	East Sussex	5,857	5.9	29	Essex	16,046	7.6
7	Merseyside	8,051	5.9	30	Cumbria	5,620	7.7
8	West Midlands	16,915	5.9	31	Norfolk	8,268	7.7
9	Lancashire	12,661	6.2	32	Hereford and Worcester	8,644	7.8
10	Kent	15,963	6.2	33	North Yorkshire	9,533	7.8
11	Greater Manchester	18,470	6.2	34	Surrey	14,151	7.9
12	West Yorkshire	15,818	6.3	35	Staffordshire	10,739	8.2
13	Warwickshire	8,916	6.4	36	Oxfordshire	7,547	8.3
14	South Yorkshire	10,051	6.4	37	Gloucestershire	9,845	8.3
15	Bedfordshire	4,883	6.5	38	Buckinghamshire	8,701	8.4
16	Hertfordshire	11,353	6.5	39	Cambridgeshire	8,919	8.4
17	Devon	9,677	6.7	40	Suffolk	6,031	8.5
18	Hampshire	17,853	6.7	41	West Sussex	7,664	8.6
19	Avon	2,180	6.9	42	Somerset	9,424	8.6
20	Derbyshire	9,212	7	43	Shropshire	4,393	8.7
21	Isle of Wight	675	7.1	44	Lincolnshire	8,432	8.8
22	Berkshire	8,800	7.2	45	Wiltshire	7,224	9.1
23	Leicestershire	9,309	7.2	46	Cornwall	4,566	10.1

Traffic Levels expressed = million vehicles/km.

Family Group 4 FA's highlighted in yellow.

Surrey cannot use High Levels of traffic as an excuse. It is their inability to manage the risk they pose that causes the problem.

Why are Surrey's Response Times so bad?

Since the introduction of IRMP's in 2004, Surrey has imposed the following cuts in its frontline service?

1. In 2004;
 - 2 x WT crewed pumps were downgraded to RDS crewing at nights and weekends; Walton and Haslemere
 - 1x WT pump was cut; Chertsey
2. In 2005 to 2006 a new WT crewing system was introduced which cut the number of WT frontline staff considerably
3. In 2008 a further 12 WT frontline staff were cut
4. WT frontline establishment has been cut by over 16% between the years 2000 and 2009, with the majority of these cuts imposed since 2004
5. RDS establishment has been allowed to dwindle to less than 50% of that required to crew the pumps 24/7 causing a massive rise in pumps being unavailable. Working Time Directive legislation introduced to the fire service in 2004 reduced the maximum number of hours RDS fire fighters could be available each week. Surrey to date has still not increased the RDS establishment to account for this impact.
6. Previously there was a sufficient numbers of WT to allow no loss of pump availability whilst training was carried out. Presently, WT Crew numbers have been cut so deep that WT crewed pumps are being taken off the run to allow training to take place.
7. In 2008 the dedicated crewing of the Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALP's) which came in through the 2004 IRMP (an improvement in service supported by the FBU) was removed, meaning the loss of 12 FF's resulting in insufficient crew numbers to crew both the ALP's and pumps simultaneously. As a result, a number of incidents which required an ALP have been seriously compromised whilst awaiting an ALP from London Fire Brigade to attend. So Surrey has 2 ALP's but when they are needed, there is often no-one available to crew them.

All of these points have had devastating effects on Surrey's Response Times and therefore its ability to save public lives and property.

All of these initiatives have been brought in through Surrey's IRMP process which is supposed to bring about improvements in service.

25% of Surrey's pumps are unavailable to take emergency calls due to lack of crew, most weekdays. Resulting in Delayed response times as available crews have to cover a much larger area incurring far longer travel distances.

In areas where 2 crews are available on paper, e.g. Woking, Guildford, Camberley, Epsom or Reigate; in reality 1 of these crews is often elsewhere in the county covering crewing shortfalls.

Woking, Guildford, Camberley, Epsom and Reigate have 2 crews placed there as a result of a risk analysis.

To reduce the level of cover is gambling with public safety in these areas.

Despite the FBU's objections, predictions and warnings; All of Surrey's IRMP's containing the proposals for these cuts were agreed by Surrey County Council.

Is the FBU the only professional body with this view?

Review of Fire and Rescue Service response times

(Source: CLG, February 2009)

4.3.3 Conclusion on Loss of life in Other Buildings

Thus, the assessment suggested that between 1996 and 2006:

- There was a fall in the number of fires with persons reported
- The reported number of Other Buildings fire fatalities has increased

4.4.2 Association of British Insurers data

The ABI were asked for data on the value of commercial property fire claims. They provided data for the UK. As the ABI account for about 80 per cent of insurers, their data represents the majority of claims. Their data (supplied by personal communication) is shown below in Table 22. The table gives the ABI cost of commercial property claims per year (£m), the number of Other Building fires in England (sourced from the 2006 Q4 Communities and Local Government Fire Safety Monitor¹) and the result of dividing the ABI loss by the number of fires to give an average loss per fire. Thus, the average loss is £12,453 in 1996 and £27,153 by 2006.

Table 22: ABI commercial property claims cost, number of FDR1 fires and average loss calculation											
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
ABI fire loss (£m)	484	492	602	579	521	679	799	707	486	765	744
Fires in Other Buildings	38,865	36,858	34,592	36,258	34,380	36,024	34,024	34,835	31,440	29,375	27,400
Average Loss per fire (£)	12,453	13,349	17,403	15,969	15,154	18,849	23,483	20,296	15,458	26,043	27,153

The table indicated that the average loss per fire has more than doubled between 1996 and 2006.

If the ABI losses are doubled and then increased by 20 per cent (to reflect non-ABI claims) the average annual loss between 1996 and 1998 is £1,262m and £1,569m between 2004 and 2006. Thus, the estimated cost of fire (including consequential loss) was estimated to have risen by £307m per year. This was far higher than the £85m estimated that could be attributed to increased response times using the FSEC model relationships.

Finally, a correlation of the loss per fire with Other Buildings response times gave an r value of 0.76, which is a strong correlation, indicating that **the average loss per fire has risen at the same time as response times.**



**Likelihood of fire has decreased
Severity of loss from fires has increased**

And it's not just a financial loss in Surrey.

Back to Emergency Response Times

And for anyone that believes ultimate “output” performance is not affected by “inputs” performance.....

Response Times Summary

ENTEC have proven the likelihood of death arising from dwelling fires increases as response with slower response times.

Surrey’s response times were in the worst 25% of all England’s fire authorities in 2006 and are undoubtedly much worse now.

The trend in fire deaths has been a downward one nationally for several years but Surrey’s 5 year trend is an upward one.

The economic costs resulting from fires have been rising for the last few years and Surrey’s residents will undoubtedly bear the additional insurance costs.

SF&RS must stop using high traffic levels as an excuse for providing appalling response times and improve the frontline service to compensate for the risk posed by them, like any other risk.

SF&RS Fatal Fires 2006-2008 shows;

24 fire deaths occurred in Surrey

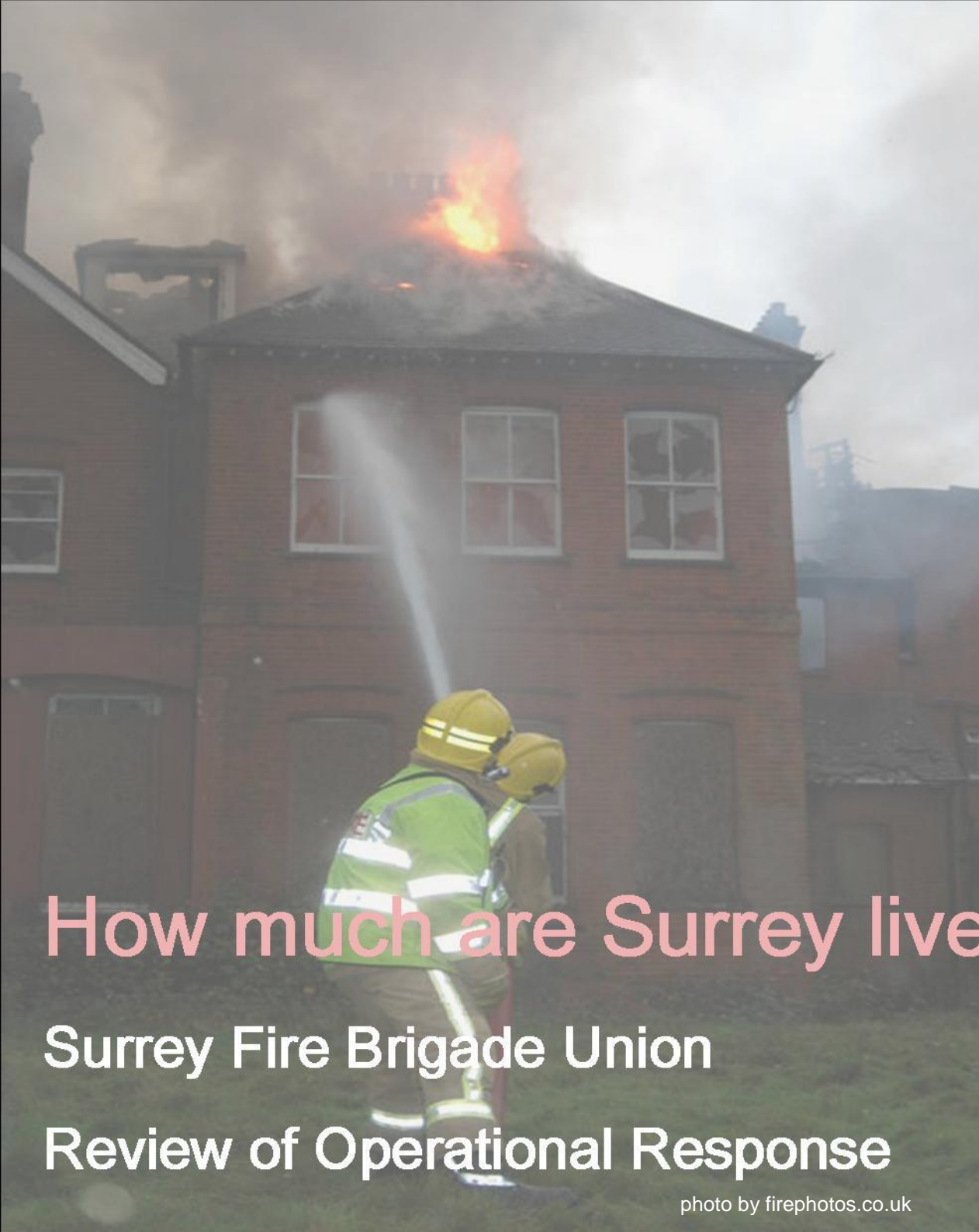
60% of the Accidental Dwelling Fire Deaths occurred 6pm and 6am when the service is currently looking to downgrade emergency cover

Unless Surrey address the fundamental problems causing these appalling response times they will get worse and so will the impacts on Surrey’s residents and businesses.

Surrey’s IRMP’s are based on what the service can afford to deliver rather than what the service should deliver.

This was never the intention of IRMP’s.

SF&RS must be adequately funded to address the severity of risk not just the likelihood. Until it can do so, emergency response times will continue to rise as will the risk to the public.



Section 2

Establishment and crewing levels

How much are Surrey lives worth ?

Surrey Fire Brigade Union

Review of Operational Response

photo by firephotos.co.uk



Establishment and Crewing Levels

Since 2000, there has been a massive cut in the number of frontline Firefighters by SCC. The worst of these cuts have occurred following the introduction of the IRMP's which started in 2004.

SF&RS is inadequately staffed on the frontline to deliver an adequate service to the public

Between 2000 and 2009, SF&RS has suffered massive reductions on frontline crewing, far in excess of the National average.

Surrey Whole-time FireFighter posts	-16.35%	(3 times the national average)	National average	-5.35%
Surrey Retained Duty System crewing posts	-27.08%	(nearly twice the national average)	National average	-15.35%

Source: CIPFA

Out of the 44 Fire Authorities in England, Surrey has cut the second highest percentage of WT FireFighter posts. Only Merseyside has cut more.

Devon & Somerset excluded from comparison.

The number of personnel forming the crews on these pumps is vital to carry out effective, safe and efficient work and rescues at emergency incidents.

The introduction of the IRMP's has brought cuts to frontline establishment levels. As a consequence minimum crewing level targets are not being met at many stations.

Public and fire fighters lives are being put at risk 25% of Surrey's pumps not available to respond to emergency calls every week due to lack of crew

Frontline funding is insufficient to adequately crew the pumps that are available

SF&RS has been cut too far

The job we do is dangerous. But with well planned and risk assessed procedures to train to and work with at emergency incidents, these risks can be brought down to an acceptable level. Standard minimum crewing levels should be maintained for a minimum of 75% at the majority of stations and 90% for 3 others. This is SF&RS's standard, the FBU believe the minimum crewing levels should be 5 FF's on all pumps across the county, 100% of the time.

Why should the public and frontline crews be subject to differing levels of risk simply based on postcode?

In generic terms, a crew of 4 is insufficient to carry out our statutory core functions of saving life and mitigating loss to property. Crews of 4 do not have enough FF's to comply with Health and Safety regulations. This forces crews to take a "defensive" approach to dealing with these emergencies. The defensive approach means that the crews cannot enter a property fire to rescue a casualty as the use of Breathing Apparatus requires a minimum of 5 FF's. Similarly; for a crew of 4 to extricate a casualty from an RTC or extinguish a vehicle fire on a highway the road would have to be closed as the risks posed by the flow of traffic are too high. Whereas a crew of 5 could carry out this work, as 1 FF can be detailed to traffic control which is sufficient to bring down the risk to an acceptable level.

Crews of 4 find themselves arriving at incidents which require a minimum of 5 and are faced with a moral dilemma; should they give in to public expectation and rescue knowing they are putting themselves in unacceptable risk?; or wait until further resources arrive (this can be up to half an hour in the south of Surrey)?

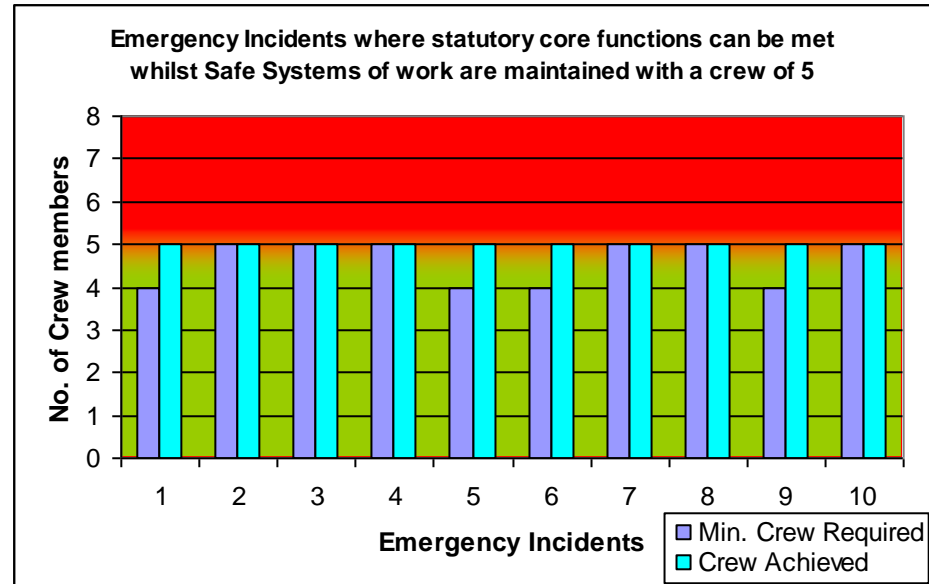
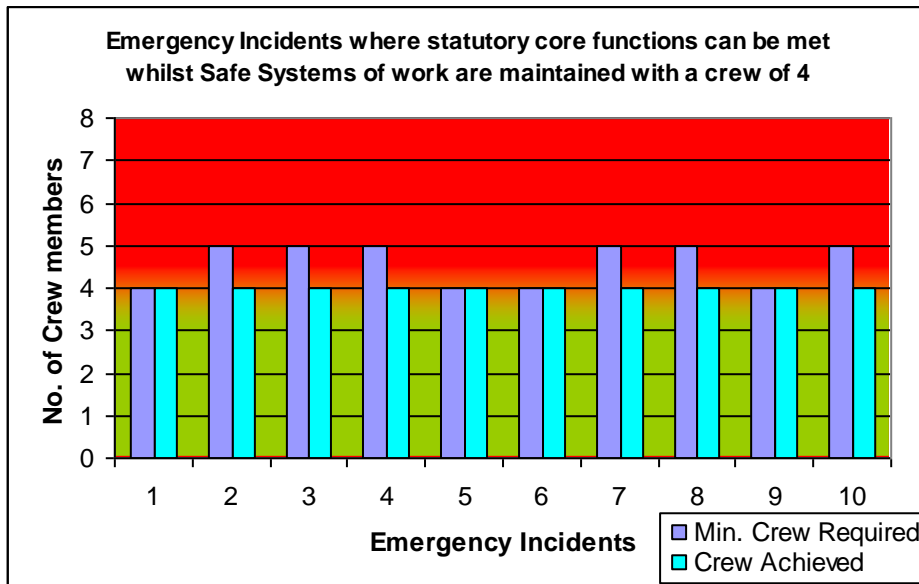
Do they put themselves in a situation which they know would be unsafe when the public's expectation is that they will actively engage in carrying out rescues and fighting fires? Put yourself in a frontline firefighters situation; could you realistically tell a mother standing outside her burning house that because you have only got a crew of 4 that you cannot rescue her child from the building until the backup fire engine, expected in another 10 minutes arrives?

The following page shows 2 illustrations to highlight how under crewing affects a crew's ability to carry out its core functions safely. They also highlight the pressure on the crew to work outside of safe systems of work. In both illustrations the necessary crewing for 10 emergency calls is shown. The background colour shows the range of safe working. The crews should not work in the Red area. Some of the calls can be effectively and safely dealt with by a crew of 4 (remaining in the Green) whilst others require 5. Crews shouldn't feel forced to work in the Red due to public expectation but they often do as a result of under crewing.

If crews always work within safe systems of work;

In the first illustration, statutory core functions could only be addressed at 40% of the emergency incidents shown.

In the second illustration, statutory core functions could be addressed on all the emergency incidents shown.



This is totally unacceptable and carries real potential for catastrophic consequences for the public and fire fighters alike.

Under crewing is forcing an Attend to Defend policy which risks the lives of the public and emergency crews unnecessarily.

“Attend to Defend” does not fulfil the statutory requirements as stated in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. As a result Surrey County Council is leaving itself open to legal and civil action.

WT Crewing Levels

Surrey's minimum crewing levels have failed to be achieved for the last 3 years. Below is the number of stations which failed to achieve their crewing minimums. These are minimum levels so no station should fail to achieve these levels.

2007	47% of Surrey's stations failed to achieve Surrey's minimum crewing levels
2008	33% of Surrey's stations failed to achieve Surrey's minimum crewing levels
2009	33% of Surrey's stations failed to achieve Surrey's minimum crewing levels

Source: SF&RS

But the figures listed above do not take account of crews moved to other locations to cover pumps off the run due to essential crew training, so the real failure rate is higher still.

If we applied the FBU recommendation for crewing; then every station over the past 3 years would have failed to achieve minimum crewing.

Many incident types require more than 1 crew to be dealt with effectively and safely, but if the first crew in attendance is a crew of 4, for the vast majority of these calls effective work cannot begin without waiting for backup. The initial minutes after the first crew arrive are crucial in terms of saving life and mitigating loss to property. If crews defend during that time the overall losses at the incident is likely to be far more severe.

But if it's possible to put the risk to lives to one side for a moment and look at the statutory core function of the fire service; crews of 4 are causing the "Attend to Defend" policy to be employed on daily basis. With an "Attend to Defend" policy is Surrey actually meeting its statutory obligations?

Is SCC achieving its legal core functions as defined within the Fire and Rescue Service's Act 2004?

Section 7 Firefighting

(1) A fire and rescue authority must make provision for the purpose of –

- (a) extinguishing fires in its area, and*
- (b) protecting life and property in the event of fires in its area.*

(2) in making provision under subsection (1) a fire and rescue authority must in particular –

- (a) secure the provision of the personnel, services and equipment necessary efficiently to meet all normal requirements;*
- (b) secure the provision of training for personnel;*
- (c) make arrangements for dealing with calls for help and for summoning personnel;*
- (d) make arrangements for obtaining information needed for the purpose mentioned in subsection (1);*
- (e) make arrangements for ensuring that reasonable steps are taken to prevent or limit damage to property resulting from action taken for the purpose mentioned in subsection (1)*

Ridership Factor

The ridership factor was used by every fire service in the UK to calculate how many operational FF's the service should employ at each fire station, based on standard crewing levels needed to maintain 24/7 emergency cover. e.g. for a standard crew of 5 to be maintained 24 hours a day. The service would need to multiply 5 by the ridership factor which was accepted nationwide as 1.47 at 2 pump stations and 1.4 at 1 pump ones. This factor was calculated by taking into account the predictable unavailability of FF's over an average year. Losses from operational crewing incurred from sickness, attending training courses, holidays etc were all used in the equation to calculate the ridership factor.

Since the IRMP's were introduced in 2004, a few FA's like Surrey reduced their ridership factor.

Ironically, with the additional responsibilities, workload and training requirements put on the fire service nationally since 2004; the ridership factor should be higher than the original 1.47 to account for this additional loss to operational crewing.

Surrey was 1 of only 4 that had reduced its ridership factor below 1.4

In a recent FBU survey of ridership factors across all UK fire services', 38 returned a result. Of those 38 fire service's Surrey was 1 of only 4 that had reduced its ridership factor below 1.4. Surrey's current ridership factor is only 1.4 at 2 stations; for all the others it's less and varies from station to station. This may not sound like a huge reduction but in reality this is why Surrey cannot maintain standard crewing levels. This reduction in ridership factor is the reason why 36 FF posts have been cut from Surrey since 2005, in addition to the another 61 FF posts cut through reducing fire and emergency cover over the last 10 years. Add the additional losses from crewing mentioned earlier and this is the main reason why crews of 5 cannot be maintained.

RDS Crewing Levels

The RDS crewing levels are very likely worse than the WT in Surrey but despite many requests, SF&RS have failed to provide the FBU with RDS crewing data.

However, we do have the RDS establishment data, which as shown at the start of this section has reduced by over 22% since the year 2000.

This loss in establishment is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of the ability of the RDS crews to provide 24/7 emergency cover.

Prior to 2004, RDS establishment was based on the number of crew members needed to provide standard crewing of their appliances for 168 hours a week multiplied by the ridership factor to give the overall station total.

In 2004, Working Time Directive rules were applied to the RDS staff nationally. This rule change enforced a maximum of 120 hours cover for RDS personnel. This should have led to the establishment calculations being recalculated to take account of this loss of availability. The current establishment for the RDS in Surrey should be 40% higher than the figure set before 2004. This recalculation did not happen. As a result the RDS establishment figure is nearly 30% short but the actual number of RDS employed is less than 50%.

The single most damaging problem to RDS establishment is that it has been allowed to dwindle. Although an establishment figure is present on paper, in reality the actual number of RDS employed has steadily dropped over the past few years.

Surrey has a poor record at recruiting potential RDS staff, who are traditionally harder to engage than prospective WT recruits. Some neighbouring fire and rescue services use radio advertising and even pay incentives to employers to release their personnel to attend emergency incidents. Surrey doesn't use these initiatives and does not even set aside a budget to recruit RDS FF's.

The final contributing problem to the RDS establishment is that in the 2004 IRMP 2 existing WT fire engines at nights and weekends were replaced by RDS cover. This additional burden on the RDS establishment led to the establishment on those 2 stations being increased. But it wasn't increased on the pre 2004 calculations. This has led to further under establishment at these stations.

All 4 of these problems have culminated in the current RDS establishment problems. The number of RDS personnel employed in Surrey is less than half of that required to provide 24/7 emergency cover on the 13 RDS fire engines.

Don't assume because you have a Fire Station near your home that there will be anyone available to respond from it when you need them.

How does this affect the service we provide?

Availability of emergency appliances

Availability is expressed as a percentage of the day, week or year the appliance was available to respond to emergency calls.

Despite requests on many, many occasions, we have been unable to obtain appliance availability from SF&RS. We have been constantly requesting this data for well over a year and also raised our requests with the SCC, but we have still not been provided this data. This is by no means the only performance data we have been denied over the last 14 months.

“..on any given weekday approximately 25% of all Surrey's fire engines will not be available to respond to emergency incidents due to lack of crew”

We do know from our own research that on any given weekday approximately 25% of all Surrey's fire engines will not be available to respond to emergency incidents due to lack of crew. We do not know how many are unavailable on nights and weekends but we do know that it's rare that they are all available.

We also know that there are often appliances unavailable during the day time due to essential training taking place without enough fire fighters to crew the pumps simultaneously. But we cannot obtain data to quantify this.

Frankly, we are not surprised this data is being kept secret.

We also know that since 2008 the Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALP's) at Chertsey and Guildford are no longer available at the same time as the fire engines as the dedicated crewing for them was cut from Chertsey (Guildford didn't even have dedicated crewing before then due to under establishment). This has led to London having to support Surrey with ALP's whilst Surrey's ALPs sit idle at the station. The crew that once manned the ALP now has to crew the fire engine at the incident. It really defeats the object of having ALP's in the first place if no-one is available to crew them.

As you travel around Surrey you could be forgiven for assuming it has a good level of fire and rescue cover as you drive past the fire stations. But in reality, many Stations do not have personnel to crew the appliances on show.

The majority of emergency incidents we attend which could result in injury or death e.g. Dwelling fires and Road Traffic Collisions, require more than 1 pump to carry out an effective and safe rescue and to mitigate damage to property. With so many pumps off the run, the vital backup for the initial crew is coming from further and further away; resulting in delays in the crew effectively tackling the incident and rescuing casualties.

A loss of a pump somewhere in the county has a knock on to others which have to attend incidents in that area as well as their own. This obviously causes longer response times due to greater travel distances but it also means that the pumps are not where they are supposed to be providing cover. e.g. Woking has 2 pumps because the level of risk there warrants them but if one of them is covering somewhere else in the county, Woking is under resourced.



For much of the time, the only thing the Surrey fire stations can provide is a false sense of security

Establishment and Crewing levels Summary

An “attend to defend” policy does little more than tick a box to show that an emergency crew was in attendance by recording an emergency response time. It’s ineffective and dangerous.

Surrey council tax payers should expect more for their money

Surrey Fire Fighters lives should not be further compromised due to SCC’s under crewing forced upon them by under funding cuts

WT establishment has been cut through the IRMP process to dangerously inadequate levels over the past few years; far in excess of other fire and rescue services.

RDS establishment has been allowed to dwindle to the lowest level ever which is causing large areas of Surrey to have no local fire and emergency cover for a substantial part of every week.

The latest proposals from SF&RS is to cut the RDS cover at all stations during the day and **partially** replace it with WT crews removed from night cover at some stations. This merely moves the problem from one location and time of day to another; rather than addressing the fundamental problem of the under establishment in the RDS.

e.g. Guildford loses fire cover at night (when 2/3 of all fire deaths occur) to provide day cover at Godalming.

This is a classic case of robbing Peter to pay Paul.

The problem of under crewing caused by underfunding is not being solved; it’s merely been moved.

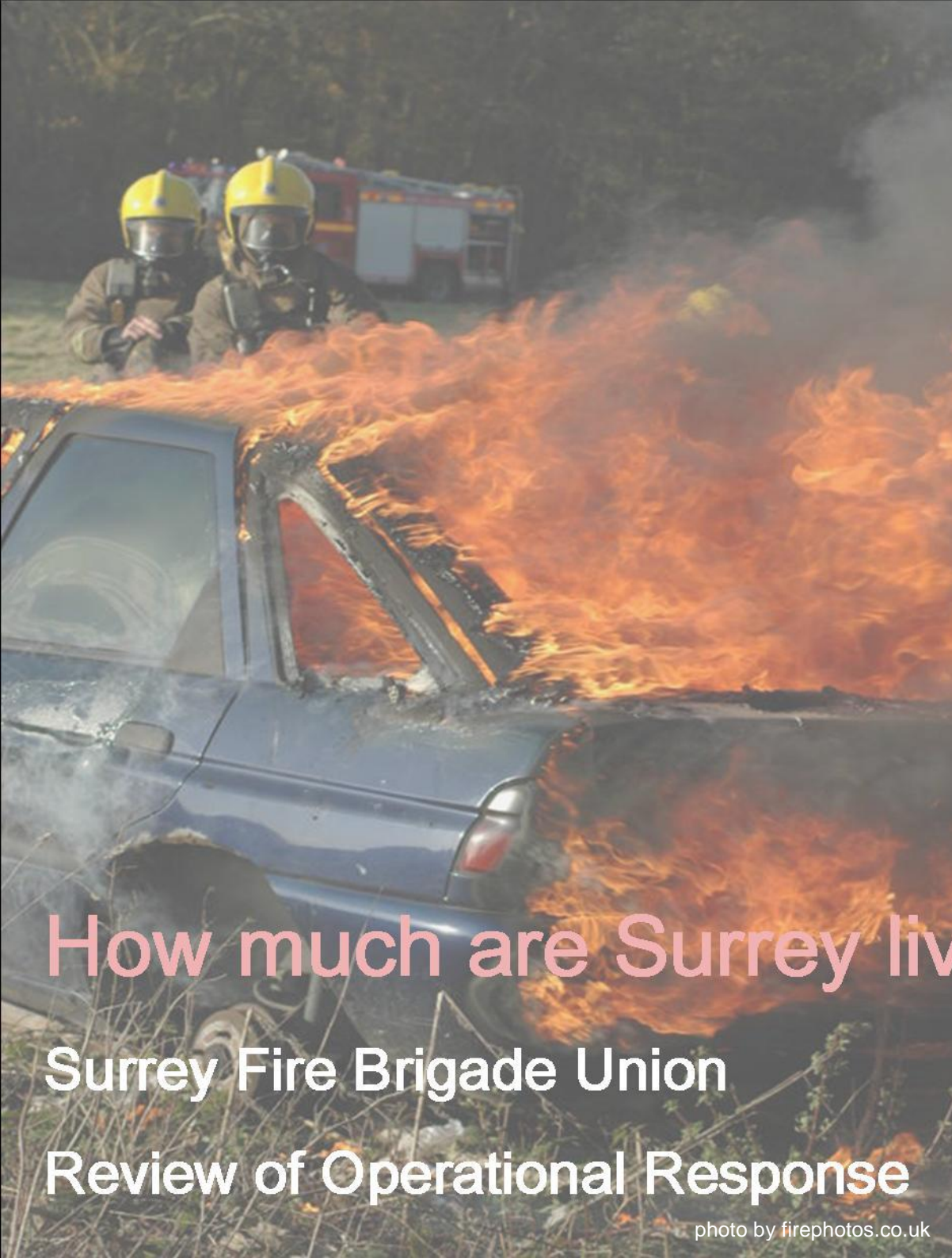
With a small amount of additional funding and innovative recruitment initiatives the RDS stations could provide effective fire and rescue cover, preventing the need to cut WT night cover at Guildford, Camberley, Woking, Epsom, Reigate and ?

Surely it would be better to have these RDS crewed stations crewed adequately during the day and leave other areas night cover in tact?

e.g. Maintain both WT crews at Guildford at night and crew Godalming adequately during the day.

Surely it would be better to staff all fire engines with a crew of 5 to allow both effective statutory core functions to be addressed whilst safe systems of work are maintained?

SF&RS must stop continuously reconfiguring its fire & emergency service to meet budgetary constraints, which is having detrimental affects on the service it provides. SF&RS must set appropriate levels of cover throughout the Surrey borders that are fair and equitable to all our communities ensuring adequate budgets meet those requirements that our residents expect.



Section 3 Cost

How much are Surrey lives worth ?

Surrey Fire Brigade Union

Review of Operational Response

photo by firephotos.co.uk



It all comes down to cost

Surrey County Council (SCC) wants to cut the SF&RS's budget by £2.5m over the next 4 years. This produces a total 4 year saving for the average Council Tax Band D paying household of less than 10p per week.

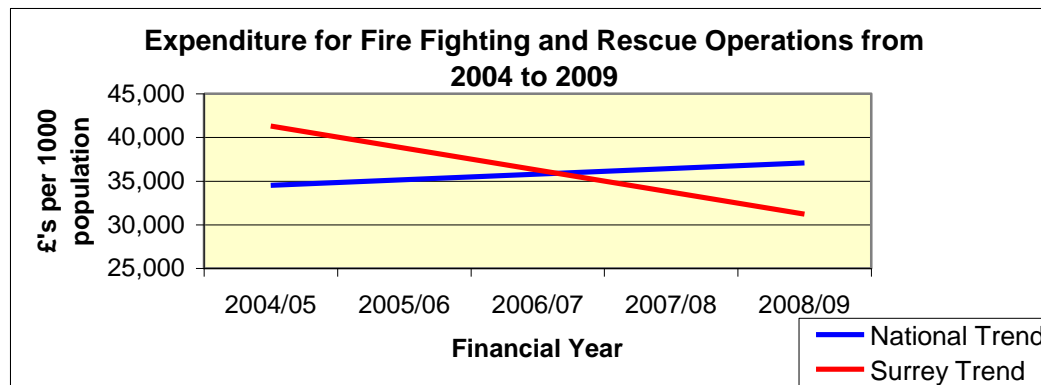
But with the response times and establishment already causing massive problems it's likely that households will pay out more than that in rising insurance premiums levied through fire damage alone. The cost of getting it wrong could be very expensive for the county council.

e.g. Hampshire County Council were forced to pay out £20m in compensation following a civil claim in 1997.

"If you think it's expensive to hire a professional to do the job, wait until you hire an amateur." Red Adair

SF&RS has made substantial efficiency savings over the last few years and has received high praise from Surrey County Council for doing so. But the service is now suffering as a result of these cuts in funding which have gone beyond efficiency savings. Investment in the front line service is needed now to prevent further detriment.

Of the 43 Fire Authorities in England, Surrey has suffered the largest funding reduction for “Expenditure for Fire Fighting and Rescue Operations from 2004 to 2009”.

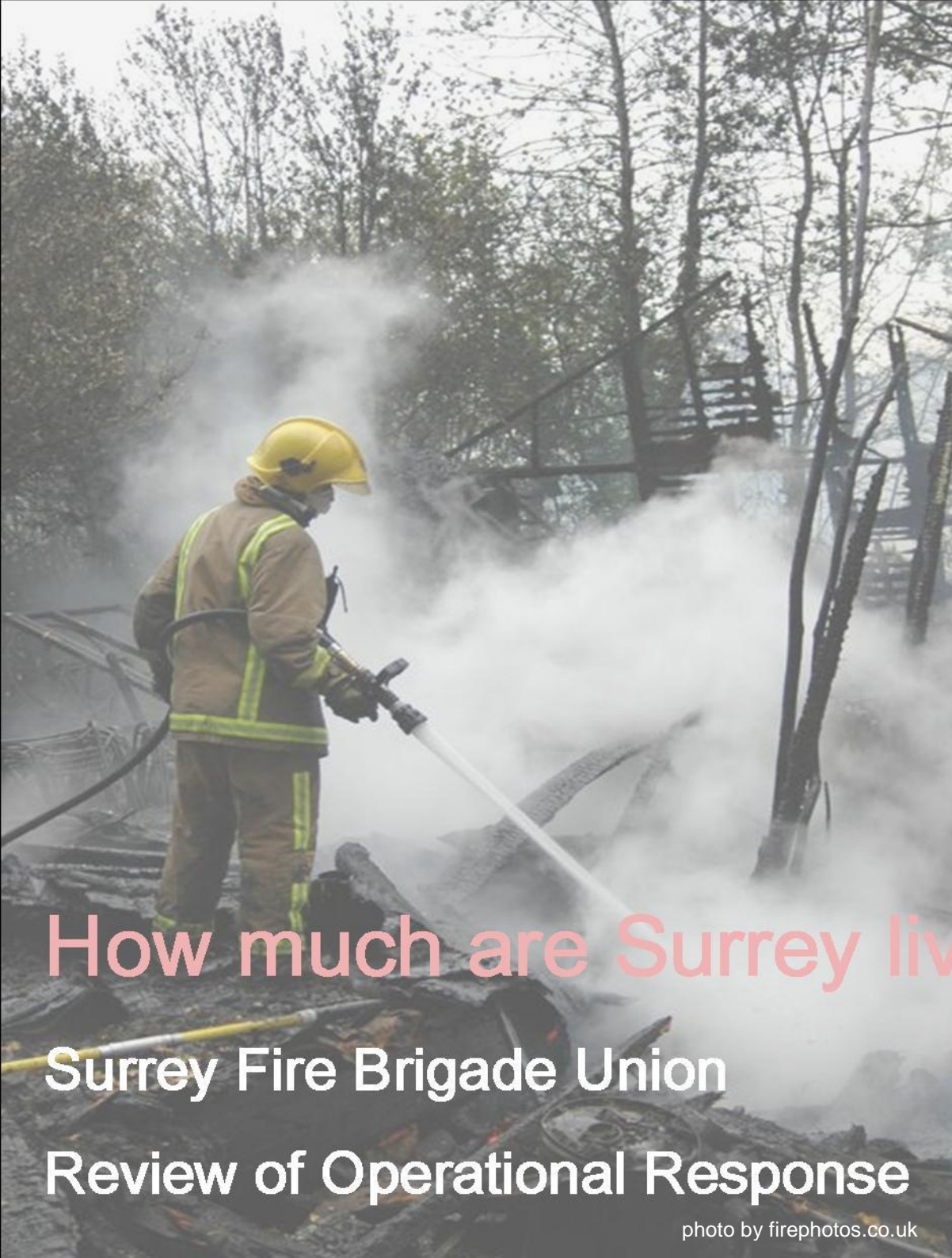


Devon & Somerset excluded from comparison

Source: CIPFA

The service and FBU have the knowledge and the innovative ideas to continue to provide an effective and efficient service but without investment the only option is cuts in service which the FBU will play no part in.

The FBU think this is a choice the Surrey's residents and businesses should make given all the facts rather than the elected councillors from behind closed doors.



Summary

How much are Surrey lives worth ?

Surrey Fire Brigade Union

Review of Operational Response

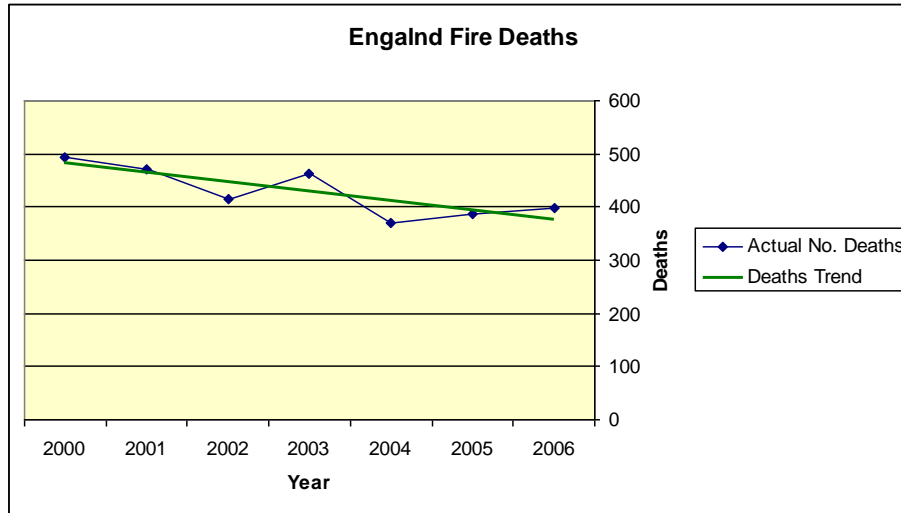
photo by firephotos.co.uk



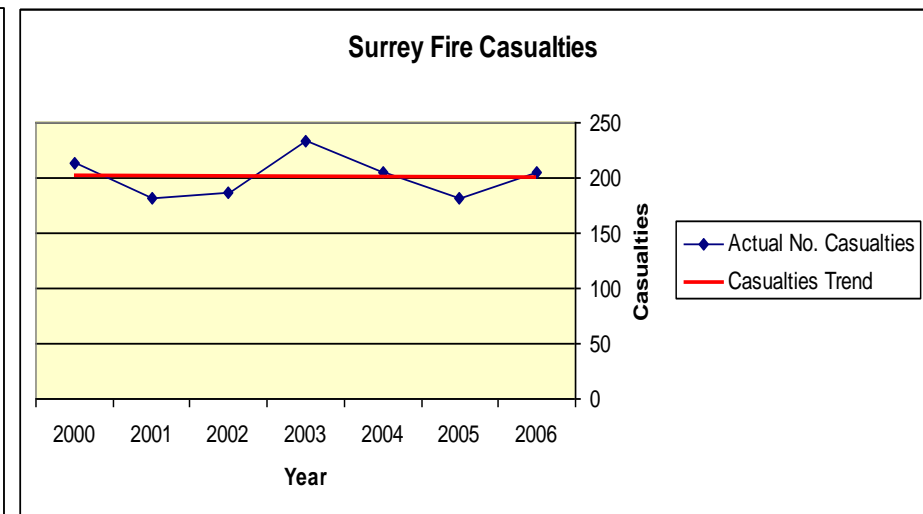
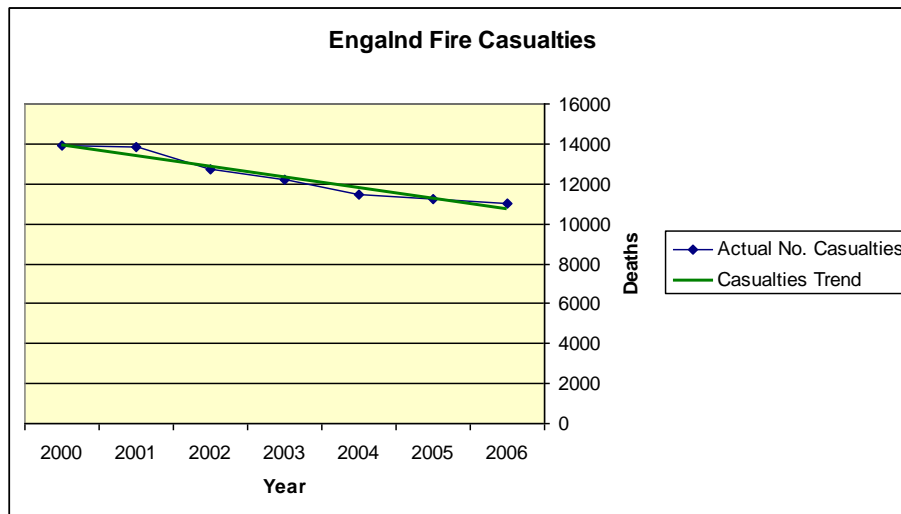
Summary

Surrey has suffered 16 fire deaths over the 2 years 2006 to 2008.
Below is the most recent data available for National comparison from 2000 to 2006.

Source: CLG



The number of annual fire deaths in a county are always erratic but a 7 year trend cannot and should not be ignored



The affects of poor response times and under crewing which are 2 of the 3 vital criteria to achieve statutory core functions can be measured in the Best Value performance indicator; 'Fires Confined to Room of Origin'. Clearly if the response is too slow or the crews are under establishment and have to wait for support before commencing fire fighting, the fire spread is likely to be greater.

The Audit Commission's Performance Information Profile for Fire and Rescue Authorities 2009;

As shown previously in Section 1: Response Times and Section 2: Establishment and Crewing Levels, the main reason for this poor output is that the inputs are not being maintained. There is no hope of improving the outputs unless the inputs are substantially improved.

Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority is ranked 48th out of 48 Fire Authorities!

Proportion of performance indicators that have improved in the last year

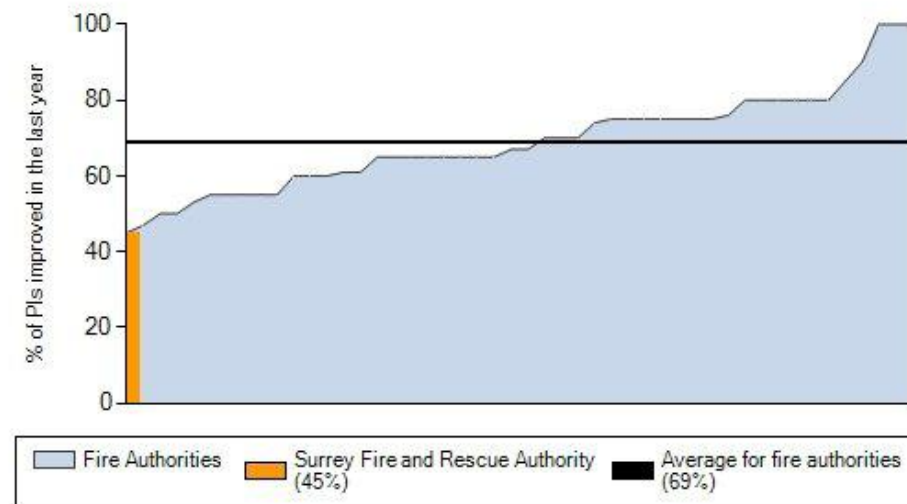


Chart Summary

- Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority is ranked 48th out of 48 (Fire Authorities for which data is available) for % of PIs improved in the last year.
- Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority have 45 % of Performance Indicators improved in the last year which is below the average for fire authorities (69%).

In the Audit Commissions' Organisational Assessment of SF&RS (December 2009), Surrey scored just 2 out of 4 on "Use of Resources".

(2 is defined as; "An organisation which meets only minimum requirements. Performs adequately.")

Source: Audit Commission 2009

Emergency Response Times

By comparing response times nationally without applying weighting for proportion of WT to RDS crews, Surrey ranks 36th out of 46 fire authorities. If the WT to RDS proportional weighting is applied;

Surrey's emergency response times are the worst nationally by a considerable margin.

Source: CIPFA and CLG

Establishment and Crewing

Surrey's WT establishment has been reduced by 3 times the National average over the last decade.

During the same times period the RDS establishment has dropped by nearly over twice the National average.

On any given weekday, during office hours; 25% of Surrey's pumps are unavailable due to lack of crew.

Source: CIPFA

Fire Fighter Safety

Surrey's performance in Fire Fighter safety is of extreme concern

The table below shows the 10 FA's that have reported the highest number of injuries per FF's at fires. The total number of FA's that returned the necessary data in each year for this comparison is shown at the bottom of each column.

Surrey is highlighted in Yellow for easy reference.

2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Humberside	Nottinghamshire	Cambridgeshire	South Yorkshire	Warwickshire
East Sussex	Essex	Staffordshire	Tyne & Wear	West Midlands
Staffordshire	Cambridgeshire	West Midlands	Kent	West Sussex
Hertfordshire	Hertfordshire	South Yorkshire	East Sussex	Tyne & Wear
Derbyshire	West Midlands	Suffolk	Essex	Staffordshire
Surrey	Staffordshire	Northamptonshire	Bedfordshire & Luton	Essex
West Midlands	Northamptonshire	Cleveland	Warwickshire	Surrey
Northamptonshire	East Sussex	East Sussex	Hertfordshire	East Sussex
Merseyside	Surrey	Surrey	Northamptonshire	Northamptonshire
Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester
43	45	45	44	40

Source: CLG

Unfortunately the high number of injuries at fires is not the most worrying part of this data. The correlation between number of injuries received and deaths is recognised in research carried out by the Health and Safety Executive.

The FA's shown highlighted in Blue are ones which have suffered at least one fire fighter death at a fire during the 5 years shown. The only FA that has suffered FF deaths in this period which does not appear in the bottom 10 is London. Surrey's average injury performance over these years is worse than any of the FA's that have suffered deaths.

The FBU in Surrey have challenged SF&RS many times in recent years on FF safety. We have stated on many occasions that the only factor which has prevented a fire fighter death in Surrey so far is pure luck. The data clearly indicates our luck will soon run out unless substantial improvements are made to the safety of operational crews. The FBU believe that under crewing and inadequate training are the main underlying causes for these alarming results.

In the last 6 years 14 Fire Fighters have died attending fires in the UK

Eight FF's died performing their duty in 2007, the worst year for FF deaths for 30 years.

13 FF's were killed at fires between 2003 and 2007. However, for almost seven years prior to that period there were no FF deaths at fires.

In the last 20 years of the last century, the trend in FF fatalities was down. Then the number of deaths started to rise sharply.

Why?

Reasons include: not enough training; not enough risk assessment or control measures; not enough frontline FF's to maintain safe systems of work.

The lessons of previous tragedies must be learned, if they are not to be repeated.

The Fire Brigades Union has published a report, "In the Line of Duty", to identify the ways we can improve FF's' safety.

Source: FBU/CLG

Surrey's emergency response performance is far from average let alone "World Class".

Surrey's emergency response performance is far from average let alone "World Class". Further cuts will cause further deterioration. Investment and innovative ideas are required. In the latest Audit Commission report into SF&RS; Organisational Assessment December 2009, contains the following statement which sums up everything you have read in this document;

"While the Service has the vision and capability to further improve, its budget limitations will reduce its capacity to deliver."

Without investment on the frontline, Surrey's emergency response will continue to suffer as will the public and Fire Fighters.