

Council agenda – 10 December 2020

Item 18. Motion 3

Spelthorne Borough Council notes with grave concern the budget cuts being forced upon Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) by Surrey County Council's (SCC) Fire Authority which will result in the risk to the public and firefighters soaring to an alarming and unacceptable level.

The budget cuts imposed on SFRS by SCC have resulted in a litany of hazardous consequences for firefighters, and the residents of Spelthorne and Surrey, which include the following:

- Implemented in April 2020, Phase 1 of Making Surrey Safer Plan removed four fire engines from night cover which includes one from Spelthorne's night time cover. Phase 2 which will be executed imminently, will cut a further three night cover fire engines effecting Egham, Banstead and Painshill - this will also have a detrimental effect on Spelthorne as Spelthorne relies on these neighbouring areas for additional cover.
- Phase 2 calls for only 350 operational firefighters, which constitutes a 30% reduction in personnel since 2010.
- On top of that, many firefighters have left the service to transfer to other FRSs as they are no longer willing to work in an environment where their health and safety is endangered or accept a 12 hour shift system imposed without negotiation which has had severe impacts on their work life balance. Others have suffered imposed pay cuts which range from 6% to 26%.
- Whole-time fire engines crew have been reduced from 5 to 4 despite the fact that the safety of people and firefighters will be severely comprised by a fire engine crewed by less than 5 Firefighters.
- SFRS has failed to comply with its own Emergency Response Standard for the last 5 years. With a further cut of 70 firefighters and the removal of 7 fire engines from night cover this year, the possibility of compliance with its Emergency Response Standard in 2020 and beyond is becoming even more remote.

Spelthorne Council is extremely concerned that the cuts imposed by SCC to the SFRS will result in increasing the risk of serious injury and death to residents. SCC owes a duty of care to Spelthorne residents to ensure that their fire service is discharged with optimum safety management, and hence calls on SCC, by writing to the Leader of Surrey County Council, Tim Oliver and the Cabinet Member for Communities, Denise Turner-Stewart to:

1. Reverse the Phase 1 cuts and reinstate the appliance removed from Spelthorne's night cover.
2. Halt the Phase 2 cuts
3. Reinstate a fit for purpose budget, in agreement with the Fire Brigade Union, which will restore an optimum level of safety for the public and firefighters in Surrey.
4. Launch an independent inquiry into the causes that have led to many Firefighters and other staff leaving the service in recent years and advising on how better retention of personnel can be achieved.

Proposed by Cllr Siva

Seconded by Cllr Doerfel