

## **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 can 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 of 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 average nationally will require additional funding on the frontline service. To bring Surrey's Emergency Response Times into the top 25% nationally 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 34<sup>th</sup> on speed of response to dwelling fires in 2006. The data shown of the next few pages is taken from CIPFA and CLG covering the years 1996 to 2006. Up to date response times have not yet been made available nationally but the average response time's data for all emergency calls for the current year (2009/10) for is available in Surrey which also shown in this chapter.

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 10 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
<b>Surrey</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>7.08</b>	<b>6.15</b>	<b>34</b>
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

Section 1: Emergency Response Times

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 this 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 that 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
<b>Surrey</b>	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 of fire authorities which are 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?

**Bearing in mind Surrey is predominantly WT crewed, this shows that Surrey has a serious and fundamental problem in achieving good response times.**

In 2009/10 the average Response Time in Surrey was;

WT 9.31 minutes

RDS 12.2 minutes

Source: SF&RS

Undoubtedly Surrey’s ranking on response times of 34<sup>th</sup> out of 46 English fire authorities in 2006 has slipped dramatically since.

**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 does.

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?**

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 that means; i.e. the “Top 25%” of what? Family Group? All councils in England? The world? SCC have still not clarified this standard.

For SF&RS to be included in the top 25% of England’s fire services on 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 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 aren't present at the scene of an emergency we can't save lives or mitigate the loss to property; as the ENTEC (referred to earlier) 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's performance against that 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 2006, Surrey introduced its new emergency response standard to replace the national standard it had previously measured their response times performance against.

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

**“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”**
- 

**The data shown in this chapter shows that SF&RS have failed to achieve their Emergency Response Standard**

**The IRMP's are subject to all stakeholder consultation including the public. This Emergency Response Standard was agreed by the county council but the public are not been made aware that SCC have failed to achieve it.**

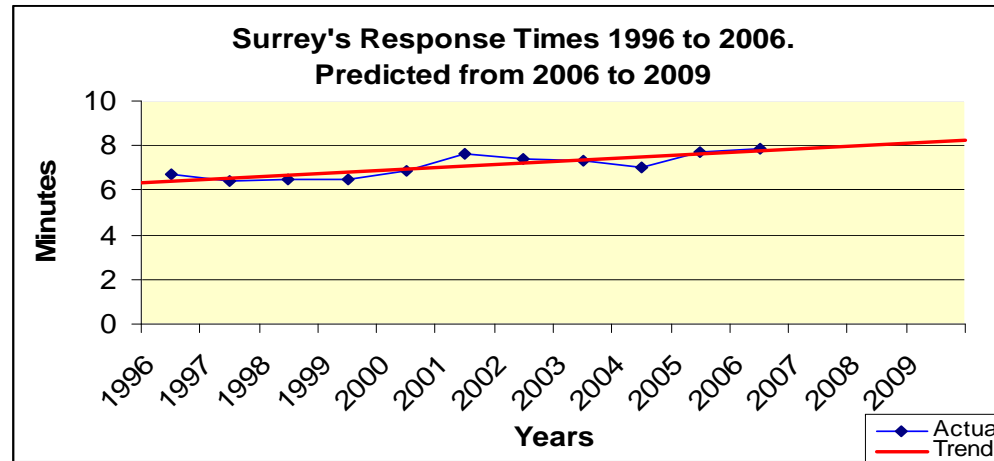
This Surrey Emergency Response Standard is a local one and one that should have a performance indicator set up to report the fire service's compliance with it. Further more, the county council should have this performance indicator in the public domain as it was introduced in consultation with the public though the

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IRMP. SCC is not being transparent in its performance 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 an aspiration.

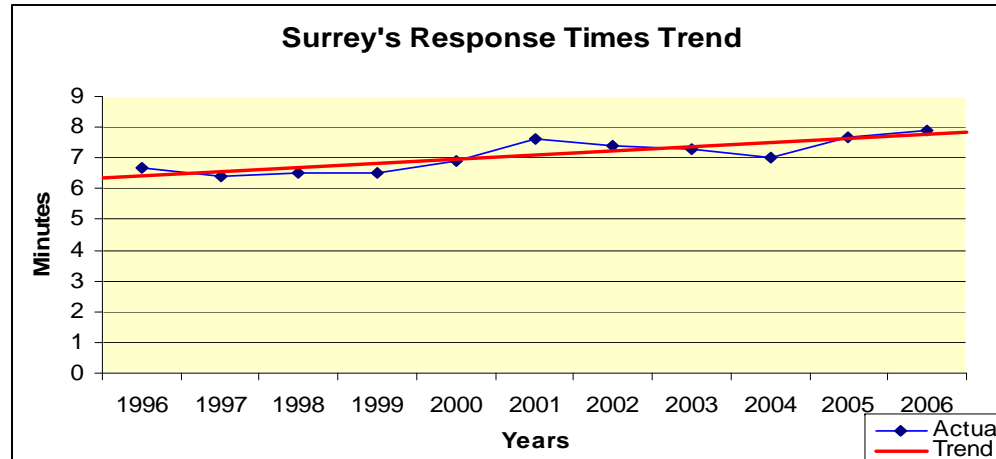


11 years worth average response time of data has been plotted on this graph and a trend line added which is has been extrapolated to show the predicated response times up to the year 2010.

**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.**

**As you will see further on, the drastic improvements to response times have not been made in fact the revise has happened.**



**SF&RS's average response times in Q1 and Q2 of 2009/10, for WT crews was 9.31 minutes and 12.20 minutes for RDS crews. This means that in 2009, the RDS crews were on average unable to meet Surrey's second appliance Response Standard, let alone the first and WT crews were not achieving the first appliance standard either. 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.”

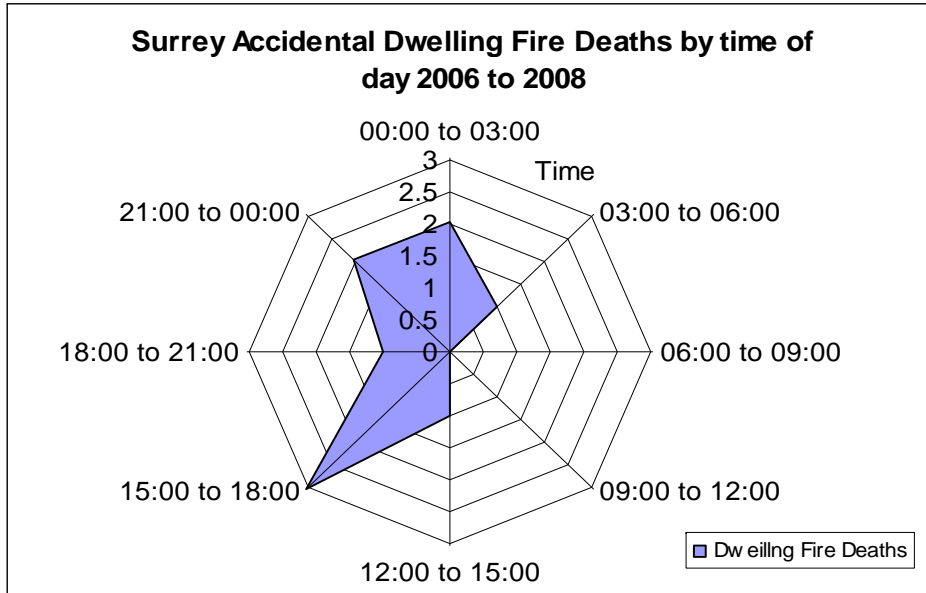
#### **Proposal 2**

“To recruit higher levels of retained fire fighters to provide extra ensure there is **no reduction in emergency response at times of lower demand.**”

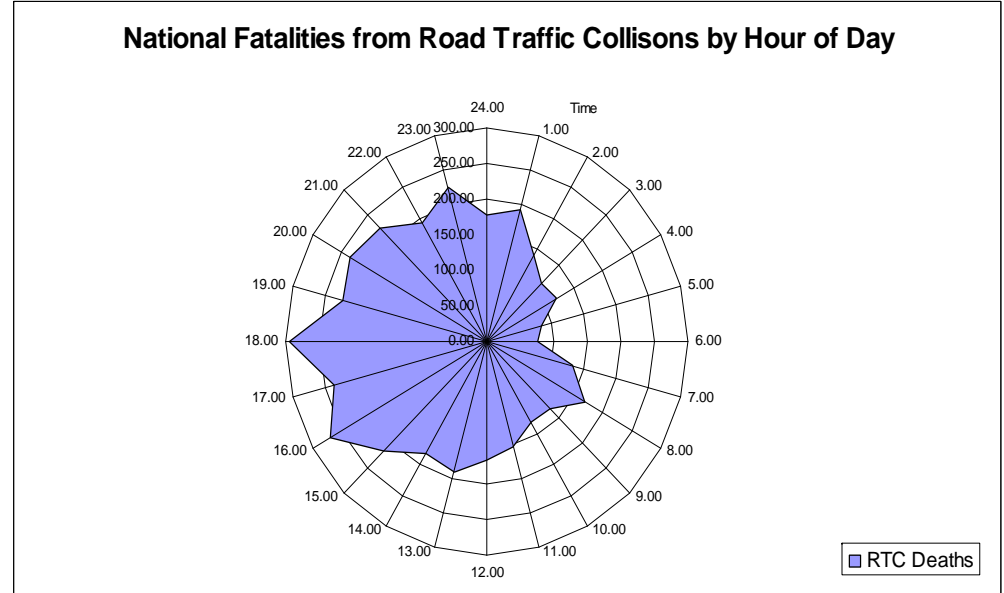
Well although the wording doesn't make sense, we can interpret what it was meant to say.

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

This is a vague statement with no data provided to substantiate or clarify it. Daylight is 4am to 22pm 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 emergency incidents 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

Proposal 1 also states;; **and fewer whole time shifts** when incidents are lower.

Put these 2 proposals together and the end result is SF&RS are trying to achieve less WT crews at night but more RDS.

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

#### Likelihood and Severity

To meet its statutory core functions in terms of response to emergency incident 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 analysing this 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 does occur.

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e.g. 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 in twelve months 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 a greater risk 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 at all as it was thought that an the likelihood was 1 emergency incident every 150 years. This example really shows how important it is to assess Severity.**

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 attend emergency incidents as well as special risks like tunnels. The likelihood of dwelling fire anywhere in Surrey at night carries a significant risk but due to the fact that it is nighttime, when most people are asleep, the severity is 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.

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 fire at night than is less days; the severity is far higher.

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

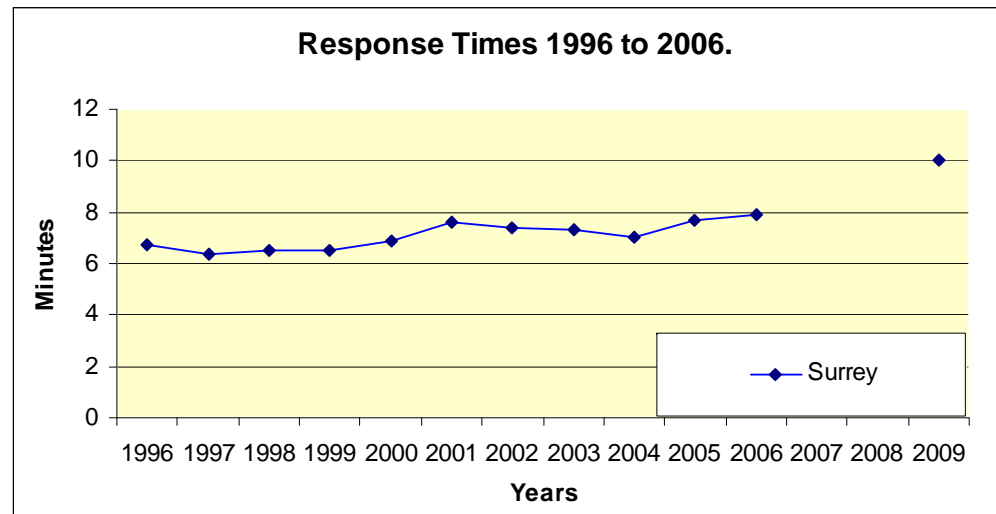
**Remember the Surrey Emergency Response standard states 75% of the population will receive an initial attendance within 8 minutes.**

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The graph below shows the Surrey Response Times plotted since 1996. Is it any coincidence that they got severely worse from the year 2004 when the actions from the IRMP's have started being implemented?

The jump from 2006 to 2009 is nothing short of frightening.



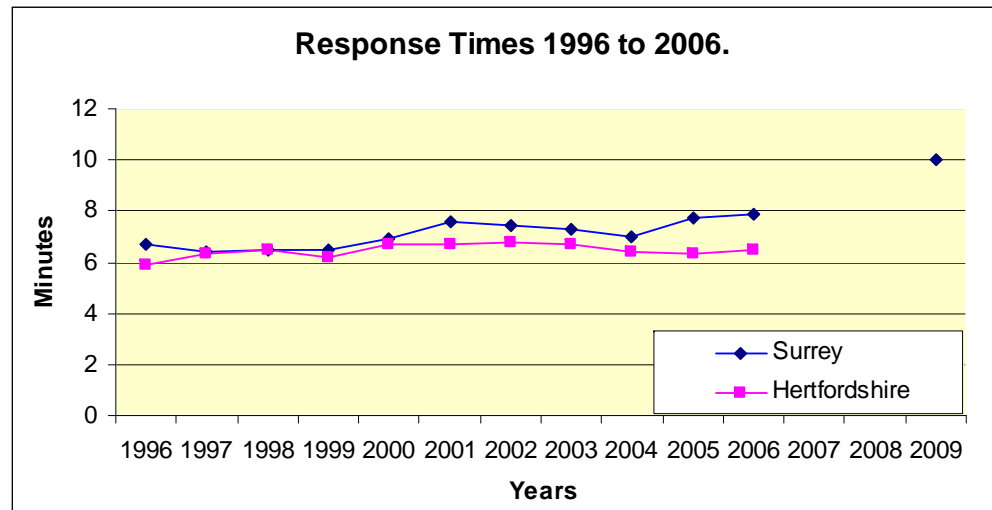
Note. The Response Times data in Surrey has not been made available for the years 2007 and 2008 yet; hence the gap. The average response time for 2009 is an estimate of 10 minutes based on the confirmed average response of the WT and RDS; 9.31 and 12.2 minutes respectively.

**All of these problems are easily rectified but they will require innovative solutions and additional funding on the frontline service to do so. Cutting frontline the frontline service further will obviously compound this problem and have catastrophic 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 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. The only response time data available for the 2 FA's after 2006 is Surrey's 2009 value.



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. As the more recent response times for Hertfordshire are not yet available it is not possible to show the current comparison but as we have shown previously that Surrey's response times have deteriorated massively over the last 3 years. Based on the above data it is unlikely that Hertfordshire's response times have done so. **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 addition 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 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 the emergency response planning and are achieving a Response Times 32% faster than Surrey.

Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMP's) were brought 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 as other FA's have done.**

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.

Undoubtedly the traffic levels in Surrey are high in comparison to the national average but other counties manage the risks posed by higher traffic levels than Surrey and achieve better response times.

**High traffic levels aren't the reason why response times are so bad in Surrey; it's because SF&RS doesn't manage the risk posed by high traffic levels and do not address all the other problems previously and below.**

Clearly the 2009 Response Times are far worse than the previous graphs predicted which could only have happened if Response Times were deteriorating even faster than the prediction shown on the previous graphs.

**So what has happened in the last 2 years to cause such a dramatic deterioration in Surrey's historic poor performance?**

### **Why are Surrey's Response Times so bad?**

Could it be because since the introduction of IRMP's in 2004, Surrey has imposed the following cuts in its frontline service?

1. In the 2004;
  - 2 x WT crewed pumps were downgraded to RDS crewing at nights and weekends; Walton and Haslemere
  - 1x WT pump was cut altogether; 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 been cut by over 20% 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 far that WT crewed pumps are being taken off the run to allow for 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 FBU), was removed meaning that there is insufficient crew numbers to crew both the ALP's and pumps simultaneously. This resulted in point 3. It also has resulted in a number of incidents which require an ALP to be hampered whilst delays are involved in London providing one as Surrey can't.

All of the previous have led to:

**25% of all Surrey's pumps are unavailable to take emergency calls due to lack of crew, on average every weekday causing delayed response times as the available crews have to cover a much larger area incurring far longer travel distances. It also means that in an area 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 where there are no crews available.**

**Woking, Guildford, Camberley, Epsom or Reigate have had 2 crews placed there based as a result of a risk analysis of those areas warranting that level of cover. To reduce that level of cover is gambling with public safety.**

All of these points listed on the previous page 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.

The FBU in Surrey opposed every one of the initiatives above and predicted their negative impacts on service at the time of the IRMP's.

Despite the FBU's objections, predictions and warnings;  
All of the Surrey 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*
- *This could be related to the longer response times.*

**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 Monitor<sup>1</sup>) 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.*

*It should be noted that the FSEC estimation includes a multiplication factor of 2<sup>2</sup> to represent consequential loss, ie the insured loss (as quoted in Table 22) is doubled to account for uninsured and other consequential societal losses. Thus, the ABI values need to be doubled to be compared with the FSEC estimation. In addition, the ABI covers about 80 per cent of claims. Therefore, the values need to be increased by 20 per cent.*

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

<sup>1</sup> [www.communities.gov.uk/fire/researchandstatistics/firestatistics/firestatisticsmonitors/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire/researchandstatistics/firestatistics/firestatisticsmonitors/)

<sup>1</sup> The factor of two is a “best” estimate that may be superseded by an ongoing study being completed by the Fire Protection Association

*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 “outputs” performance are not affected by “inputs” performance.....**

## **Response Times Summary**

ENTECC 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 have become based on what the service can afford to deliver rather than what service it 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.