

## **THE CHANGING FACE OF THE FIRE SERVICE**

In 2013 two decisions were made: Surrey County Council reviewed the siting of some of its fire stations and the London Fire Service decided to close Purley Fire Station in the summer of 2014 and move the engines to Mitcham for two years to allow Purley to be rebuilt and upgraded. The loss of Purley, however temporary, created a major problem. Epsom and Sutton were now the nearest engines to our part of the borough and the Chipstead area was outside the eight minute standard response time. Burgh Heath was put forward as the ideal site but there was no land available.

Between October 2013 and January 2014 Surrey County Council held a public consultation on the siting of a fire engine in the near empty police station in Banstead which would allow the standard response time of eight minutes within a three mile radius to a fire. Public meetings were held and the decision that was reached was that a fire engine should be brought up from Epsom so that response times could be guaranteed. One of the reasons given it was felt that this move would provide an opportunity to work with Blue light partners and other agencies to collocate to further integrate service provision and share information to generate efficiencies through shared spaces and networking.

Move forward to 2019, SCC held a consultation which decided that the Banstead fire station should be closed at night as part of its *Making Surrey Safer* programme in which seven county fire engines were removed from service at night as part of a move towards better prevention. At night, even with blue lights flashing, Epsom or Sutton Fire Engines would find it difficult to get to Banstead in eight minutes. Purley might take longer. The fact is that an elderly resident lost their life in a night time house fire in Holly Lane East last month. It took the fire engine fourteen minutes to arrive.

**PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU ALL HAVE WORKING FIRE ALARMS AS THESE CAN SAVE LIVES**