ESSEX POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
Essex County Fire & Rescue Service

Meeting	Performance and Resources Board	Agenda Item	7
Meeting Date	31 March 2020	**Report Number**	
Report Author:	Portfolio & Programme Manager		
Presented By	Director of Innovation, Risk & Future Development		
Subject	**On-Call Liaison Officer Pilot Update**		
Type of Report:	Information		

On-Call Development Programme – Delivering better for our people.

RECOMMENDATION

Members of the board are asked to note the contents of this paper for information only.

BACKGROUND

The On-Call Liaison Officer (OCLO) Pilot was initiated in June 2019 by the On-Call Development Programme to identify and initiate innovative ways of working with and supporting on-call employees and stations, improve workforce communication and engagement, support appliance availability and develop engagement with local communities and businesses.

Over the past eight months, the OCLO team have identified and developed solutions for new ways of working with and supporting on-call, worked with Station Managers and Watch Managers to develop and deliver work designed to meet individual station needs - including the conversion of the day crew stations to on-call status - and supported delivery of projects and work within the On-Call Development Programme.

The OCLO team have worked with stations to help them increase focus on recruitment promotion and publicity, develop partnerships and engagement with local businesses and employers, whilst also providing operational support at qualified rank to support appliance availability at on-call stations whilst undertaking other elements of the role.

Project Team

Project Manager	Lisa Hart
Project Officer	Laura Taylor
On-Call Liaison Manager	Stephen Osborn
On-Call Liaison Officers	Andrew Clark, Kirk Collins, Daniel Hockley, Kim Polley

Objectives and Benefits Progress Update

1. Increase the number of on-call employees
- Actively involved in supporting on-call employees from application stage through to completing basic training courses.
- Cleared significant backlog of applications and enquiries in Athena, continue to monitor and action, resulting in increase in applications progressing, and reduction in time it takes to progress.

2. Increase engagement with the on-call workforce;
- Regular station visits undertaken – providing key updates / collating FAQs.
- On-Call Development Steering Groups – facilitated by the OCLO team.
- Wholetime/On-Call employee working group established and led by OCLO team.
- Green Book/On-Call employee working group established and led by OCLO team.
- Meetings with all OC Station Manager and Watch Manager to better understand the needs of their stations and crews.
- Supported the first On-Call Celebration Event in 2019.

3. Improve retention
- Discussions with and support for on-call employees who have stated intention to resign, resulting in individuals deciding to stay.
- Advise and support newly appointed Station Managers, who may not have previous involvement or experience of on-call.
- Act as a conduit between employees and departments to ensure enquires are responded to.

4. Improve appliance availability

- Since the pilot started, the OCLO team have enabled the availability of on-call appliances on 132 occasions.
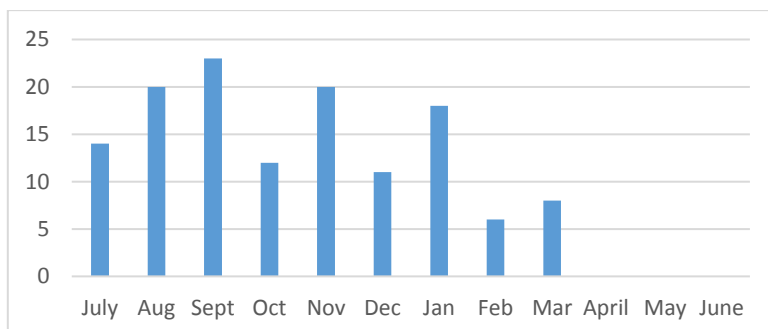
- Ability to provide operational cover depends on the daily plans and priorities. For instance, during OCCP campaign weeks, availability is directed to converting stations.

5. Support business engagement
- OCLOs have visited businesses and employers within response distance of assigned stations.

- Business engagement events was held in local areas, with support of some OC employees.
- Business and employer recognition – celebration event, support and appreciation awards and certificates and meetings with employees of current OC employees.

6. **Improve communication channels, establishing the most effective ways**
   - Weekly update in 60 Second Briefing – highlight important areas of focus and OCLO activity.
   - OCLOs have become an established point of contact for on-call stations and employees.
   - OCLOs promote when and where they will be working from, with an invitation to OC to drop-ins.
   - Acting as a voice for on-call – attend monthly Group Command meetings and are on-call stakeholder representatives for Innovation & Change programme and project teams.

7. **Support and improve public awareness and understanding**
   - Attendance at community events – fire safety advice, IRMP consultation, on-call information.
   - Encouragement and support for stations to increase community event engagement.
   - Regular social media activity – case studies, videos and on-call information.

8. **Support the On-Call Conversion Project**
   - OCLOs assigned to each converting station, supporting the Station Managers as required.
   - Monitoring and actioning applications and enquiries via Athena.
   - Assigned point of contact for new recruits.
   - Assisting recruitment and fitness team with coordination and running of assessment days.
   - Providing operational support at converting stations to assist with availability.

BENEFITS AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

Project Risks / Issues

- Two OCLOs were successful in application to become wholetime firefighters and are due to start wholetime training course in April 2020, meaning they will not be able to complete pilot period.
- One OCLO was absent from work from July 2019 to February 2020, reducing capacity for that period.
- If the Service decide to make the OCLO function permanent following the pilot, due to the current Service policy around movements between on-call and wholetime duty systems, three of the OCLOs will not be eligible to apply for the roles, meaning a loss of the established team, knowledge, experience and relationships with stakeholders. This issue is due to be addressed by the Service Leadership Team in April 2020.
- If the OCLO function is removed at the end of the pilot, this will result in reduction in availability of OC appliances, reduction in engagement with OC employees,

and reduction in capacity and capability for key departments, including operations and the recruitment team.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Project Costs

Role	Salary	On-Cost		Reserves
On-Call Liaison Manager (SM)	39,374	30%	11,812	£51,187
On-Call Liaison Officers (WM) x 4	35,275	30%	10,583	£183,430
				£234,617

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

The On-Call Development Programme aims to develop a duty system that is effective, rewarding and flexible, provide opportunities through a range of development pathways and to appeal to a wider range of people.

The aims of the programme include developing a more accessible, more attractive opportunities and become a role of choice - resulting in a positive impact.

One of the aims of the OCL Pilot Project is to support and encourage access and awareness of the opportunities within on-call to the wider communities.

WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT

Continued full engagement with workforce and key stakeholders continues as detailed in the Project Initiation Document and the On-Call Development Programme Definition Document.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None specific to this report.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None specific to this report.