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| Meeting | Performance and Resources Board | Agenda Item | 8 |
| Meeting Date | 31 March 2020 | Report Number | |
| Report Author: | Portfolio & Programme Manager | | |
| Presented By | Director of Innovation, Risk & Future Development | | |
| Subject | On-Call Conversion Project – Progress Report | | |
| Type of Report: | Information | | |

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

2. BACKGROUND

The On-Call Conversion Project was established in 2018 to manage the conversion of a number of stations from day crew to on-call status. Clacton's second appliance converted from wholetime to on-call status in 2019, and Dovercourt, Waltham Abbey, Great Baddow, and South Woodham Ferrers continue in transition phase.

The project is scheduled to run until October 2021 by which point it is planned that all stations within the scope of the project will have transitioned to on-call status. This will depend on the Services ability to recruit and retain on-call employees.

3. STATION PROGRESS

Progress Summary

| | Headcount at 31/09/19 | Current Headcount | Required Headcount | *** New Applicants | Leavers FY 19/20 | Leavers FY 18/19 | OICs |
|---------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Clacton | 18 | 17 | 18* | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Dovercourt | 18 | 16 | 23** | 8 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| SWF | 3 | 5 | 18* | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Waltham Abbey | 10 | 13 | 18* | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Great Baddow | 5 | 6 | 18* | 9 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | 54 | 57 | 95 | 38 | 5 | 7 | 7 |

It is worth noting that the 'required headcount' figure is higher than that of an established on-call station. It was agreed to increase the headcount during the project to provide more resilience and in recognition that turnover may be higher in the short term.

* Single appliance stations budgeted headcount of 14

** Two appliance stations budgeted headcount of 18

*** 'New Applicants' are at various stages of process and not guaranteed to progress to appointment.

DOVERCOURT has progressed well over the past six months and is due to convert to on-call on 1st April 2020. In order to support the transition and ensure the availability of both appliances the station is being supported by day duty personnel.

The station currently has 16 on-call employees with eight applications in progress.

WALTHAM ABBEY has seen positive recruitment numbers thanks to the two campaigns, however the station is losing two OC firefighters as a result of the Essex wholetime recruitment process and an additional one as a result of the Hertfordshire campaign. As a result of this the anticipated conversion date is now February 2021.

The station currently has 13 on-call personnel with 13 applications in progress.

SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS recruitment continues to be slow, however additional day duty firefighters are being recruited to support with the transition to on-call. The earliest conversion date for the station is October 2021.

The station currently has five on-call personnel with six applications in progress.

GREAT BADDOW'S latest recruitment campaign yielded strong results with 11 registrations of interest, and engagement from both watches was described as exceptional. The earliest conversion date for the station is October 2021.

The station currently has six on-call firefighters and nine applications in progress.

4. OCCP RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGNS

The On-Call Development Programme initiated a targeted campaign to raise community awareness of on-call opportunities and help drive recruitment at the converting stations. To date there have been two campaigns run; the first in September 2019 and the second in Jan/Feb 2020.

Prior to the campaign weeks recruitment of on-call employees at converting stations over the previous 12 months had been slower than expected. The purpose of the campaign was to widely publicise on-call opportunities, as well draw people to the stations to encourage interaction and engagement with the local communities and provide an opportunity to find out more about becoming an on-call firefighter in a supportive environment.

A number of complementary approaches were used leading up to and during the campaign months, including;

- Targeted social media campaigns.
- OCLO videos promoting the events, campaigns and opportunities.
- Information booklets – tailored to each station and delivered to all addresses within response area.
- OCLO engagement with local companies and employers.
- OCLO and local on-call employee attendance at community events.
- On-call firefighter case studies – specific to each station.

Each converting station was assigned a week. During that week, the On-Call Liaison team, project team, and recruitment team worked from that station to ensure there were people available at all time to meet visitors and provide information and

guidance about the roles and the duty system. The fitness team also attended station events and provided support and guidance to interested candidates.

During the month there were varying levels of engagement - station based and within the community - attendance and activity. The team found that the most well attended days were those that started later and went in to the evening.

Between the first campaign and the second, there has been a noticeable increase in interest shown from people in enquiring about joining the converting stations, showing that raising the profile of the stations has been effective. Outside of campaign periods social media activity and leaflet drops have continued to have a positive effect.

Following a successful campaign and debrief session - gathering views from Station Managers, OCLOs, and the Communications Team - it has been agreed by the On-Call Conversion Board that the campaign approach will continue on a three-monthly basis, followed by reviews.

5. BENEFITS AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

Risks & Issues

Station Manager and Station Support

On-Call Liaison Officers (OCLO) are key in supporting the conversions. They are the consistent point of contact for enquiries and applications, and are a vital support to the Station Managers and Group Manager who otherwise report a lack of capacity to deliver against project requirements. All Station Managers for converting stations have reported they would be unable to sustain the current level of activity without OCLO support.

Targeted Promotion and Recruitment Campaigns

OCLOs are key in the coordination and delivery of the targeted campaign weeks. Without the OCLOs support, the stations and departments required and involved to deliver campaigns would be unable to continue with this approach.

On-Call Liaison Officer Pilot

The OCLO Pilot is due to end June 2020. A project evaluation, recommendations and closure report is currently being drafted for submission to the programme board 26/03/2020. It is likely to have an adverse effect on the conversions if the OCLO support is ended.

Recruitment of On-Call Employees

The Service's ability to recruit on-call employees will need to continue at the current level and higher in some cases in order to complete of the conversion of the remaining stations.

Proactive engagement of Station Managers

In order to fully support the conversions, it is essential that the Station Managers have the capability and capacity to provide the level of support and engagement. This includes leadership at the converting stations and encouragement of new on-call recruits coming in to the stations.

Proactive and positive engagement of existing day crew and on-call employees

In order to fully support the conversions, it is essential that current day crew and on-call employees are actively and positively engaged. This includes engaging with and encouraging interested candidates, supporting promotion activities and campaigns, and supporting the training and development of new recruits. All employees at all converting stations have recently confirmed their commitment to Station Managers.

Public and community assurance

During the October 2019 campaigns, there was considerable concern reported from the local community and businesses. The January 2020 campaign experienced lower levels, but some concern and misunderstandings still exist. It is vital that the Service continue engagement on a local level with communities to help address concerns and remain aware of local campaigns to stop the conversions.

Wholetime Recruitment

On-call employees successfully appointed to wholetime posts may result in reduction in numbers at converting stations.

Benefits Realisation – Service Owned Properties

Below is the benefits realisation plan related to the sale of Service owned properties. The Project Board will make a decision regarding which properties can be released for sale at the 18th March 2020 board meeting.

| SALES for FY 19/20 | | | | Benefits Realisation | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|---|----------------------|-----------------|
| VACANT PROPERTIES | | | | | | | Status |
| Station | Est. Value | Props to Sell | BR | <i>FY 17/18</i> | <i>Converted Clacton - Salary Savings</i> | <i>1,100,000</i> | |
| Dovercourt | 170000 | 2 | 340,000 | | <i>Sold 2 x Dovercourt</i> | <i>330,000</i> | |
| Waltham Abbey | 320000 | 1 | 320,000 | | <i>1 x Waltham Abbey</i> | <i>335,000</i> | |
| Great Baddow | 330000 | 5 | 1,650,000 | | | | |
| South Woodham Ferrers | 310000 | 2 | 620,000 | | | | |
| | | 10 | 2,930,000 | | | | |
| | | | | | <i>FY 18/19</i> | 1,765,000 | Complete |
| | | | | <i>FY 19/20</i> | Sale of VACANT properties | 2,930,000.00 | |
| | | | | | <i>FY 20/21</i> | 2,930,000.00 | Forecast |
| SALES for FY 20/21 | | | | | | | |
| OCCUPIED PROPERTIES | | | | <i>FY 20/21</i> | Sale of OCCUPIED properties | 1,890,000.00 | |
| Station | Est. Value | Props to Sell | BR | | <i>16 x DC Relocate - Salary Savings</i> | <i>600,000.00</i> | |
| Waltham Abbey | 320000 | 3 | 960,000 | | | | |
| Great Baddow | 330000 | 0 | - | | | | |
| South Woodham Ferrers | 310000 | 3 | 930,000 | | | | |
| | | 6 | 1,890,000 | | | | |
| | | | | <i>FY 21/22</i> | Sale of OCCUPIED properties | 2,580,000.00 | |
| | | | | | <i>17 x DC Relocate - Salary Savings</i> | <i>600,000.00</i> | |
| | | | | | <i>FY 21/22</i> | 3,180,000.00 | Forecast |
| SALES for FY 21/22 | | | | | | | |
| OCCUPIED PROPERTIES | | | | | TOTAL BENEFITS REALISATION | 10,365,000.00 | |
| Station | Est. Value | Props to Sell | BR | | | | |
| Waltham Abbey | 320000 | 4 | 1,280,000 | | | | |
| Great Baddow | 330000 | 3 | 990,000 | | | | |
| South Woodham Ferrers | 310000 | 1 | 310,000 | | | | |
| | | 8 | 2,580,000 | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | 24 | 7,400,000 | | | | |

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Planned financial benefits linked to the sale of day crew houses will be delayed in some cases due to the requirement for continued day crew employee support during the transition period.

Agreed additional funding for agreed day crew posts remaining for extended transition period at Great Baddow, South Woodham Ferrers and Waltham Abbey.

Agreed funding for day duty roles at Dovercourt for an initial 12-month period: Station Manager, Watch Manager, Crew Manager and two firefighter-drivers to support the daytime availability of both appliances. These posts are not eligible for Service housing or rental allowance.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None specific to this report.

8. WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT

Key stakeholders continue to be involved in the project.

Station Managers and Group Managers of converting stations are invited to attend monthly meetings to discuss plans, progress and issues. It is the responsibility of the Station Managers to regularly meeting with, engage with and disseminate information to the day crew and on-call employees by the station managers.

On-Call Liaison Officers and Project Team continue to engagement with key stakeholder, ensuring the appropriate information is provided in the right way, to the right people, at the right time.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None specific to this report.

10. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None specific to this report.