



Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

Decision Report

Report reference number: 005-21 Government security classification: Not protectively marked
Title of report: On-Call Conversion Project – Use of Service Reserves
Area of county / stakeholders affected: Day Crewed Stations
Report by: Director of Operations Date of report: 28 January 2021 (submitted 3 March 2021) Enquiries to: Director of Operations

1. Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to seek PFCC approval for the use of Service Reserves to fund posts identified as required to deliver the On-Call Conversion Project.

2. Recommendations

The PFCC is asked to note the contents of this paper and agree the following recommendations: -

- a. Approve the use of Service reserves to support the retention of the On-Call Liaison Team posts as detailed.
- b. Approve the use of Service reserves to support the recruitment of 3 x FTE Training Instructors as detailed.
- c. Approve the use of Service reserves to support the recruitment of 2 x 18mth FTC Recruitment Advisors as detailed.

The total amount of monies being requested from Service Reserves to support all posts is **£589,444**.

3. Benefits of the proposal.

This paper follows on from the Director of Operations paper – On Call Conversion Project (OCCP) Next Steps presented to SLT on 12 January 2021, in which it re-affirmed:

The Service will continue working to achieve the original OCCP Objectives going forward which are stated below for clarity:

Convert Dovercourt, Great Baddow, South Woodham Ferrers and Waltham Abbey Fire Stations to On-Call, meaning:

- *The Service moves away from the Day-Crewed Shift pattern for fire stations.*
- *The Stations will have an appropriate and competent management structure in place.*
- *Number of personnel sufficient to provide adequate availability.*
- *Sufficient drivers and other specialisms (i.e., ICS Competent)*
- *Have station succession plans in place to ensure long-term sustainability of Stations going forward.*

That paper outlined the next steps required to ensure the successful delivery of the OCCP. Specifically, it stated:

Work will be carried out with Director of People, Values and Culture and Director of Corporate Services, both members of the OCCP Board, to understand and increase if necessary, capacity within our recruitment and training. We will look to ring-fence some of that capacity for the activity around converting stations.

Discussions have now taken place with the relevant stakeholders to ascertain the impact on existing resources and business as usual activities as a consequence of delivering the OCCP objectives.

4. Background and proposal

Programme 2020 was a product of the Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2016 to 2020. One of the key aspects of this was a move away from day-crewed stations at Dovercourt, Great Baddow, Great Dunmow, South Woodham Ferrers (SWF) and Waltham Abbey. Great Dunmow was completed in 2017, and Dovercourt transitioned to On-Call in April 2020, albeit still being supported by significant whole-time resources.

In reviewing the Dovercourt transition to On-Call, and after consulting with the Assistant Chief Executive of People, Values and Culture and the Director of Corporate Services, the following additional roles have been identified as required as essential to deliver the project objectives.

On-Call Liaison Officers

The On-Call Liaison Officer (OCLO) Pilot was initiated in June 2019 by the On-Call (OC) Development Programme to:

- Identify and initiate innovative ways of working with and supporting On-Call employees and stations
- Improve workforce communication and engagement; and,

- Support appliance availability and develop engagement with local communities and businesses

The funding was approved by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner as part of investment into the On-Call Development Programme. Since then, the On-Call Liaison Team has become a well-established and highly valued part of the Service and has delivered against the pilot objectives.

Following completion of the pilot, a Closure Report was produced together with an accompanying business case that was submitted to the Service Leadership Team, with a recommendation to establish the roles within the Service structure as 'business as usual'. SLT approved the recommendation but noted that this would result in an increase in establishment and therefore should form part of the budget for financial year 2022/23 as no establishment increase was proposed in the budget for financial year 2021/22. This paper therefore requests that the below posts are funded from reserves in 2021/22:

Role	Salary	On-Cost element	Required Reserves
On-Call Liaison Manager (SM)	£45,183.00	£17,983.00	£63,166.00
On-Call Liaison Officer (WM) x4	£39,383.00	£15,675.00	£220,232.00 (4 Posts)
		Total	£283,398.00

Training Instructors

The Assistant Chief Executive of People, Values and Culture has indicated that, in order to support the delivery of the OCCP, the below is required:

- An additional 10 courses will require 450 instructor days (15 days x 3 instructors x 10 courses).
- 1 x instructor can provide 205 instructor days per year (365 - 104 days weekends - 56 approx. days leave = 205 days).
- 2 instructors will provide 410 days, 3 (inclusive of SM) will provide 615 days.
- Add in CPD, training courses, admin, P1-2 assessments, and we will need 3 instructors.

This paper therefore requests that the below posts are funded from reserves in 2021/22:

Role	Salary	On-Cost element	Required Reserves
Station Manager – Service Training Centre	£45,183.00	£23,088.51	£68,271.51
WM Group Trainers/Day Duty - On-Call x2	£39,383.00	£40,249.42	£119,015.42
		Total	£187,286.93

HR Recruitment Advisors

The current staff establishment for all recruitment across the service, including administration, whole time and On-Call firefighters, technical, operational, and managerial roles is presently delivered by 3 FTE.

To support the On-Call Conversion Project we will need to recruit two additional full time recruitment advisors in the HR Department. The salary for 1FTE is £27,741 - £30,451 plus on-costs. We will need them for up to 18-months on a fixed-term contract. The additional support required will meet the increased demand/load on the team to manage the additional recruitment and on-boarding activity from initial campaign launch, through to administration of the assessment approaches, including on-line assessments, fitness, and interviews, as well as pre-employment checks, medicals, contracts, and induction.

Without this additional resource the Service will not be able to attract and on-board the necessary operational resources to deliver the conversion project within the necessary timescales.

Role	Salary	On-Cost element	Required Reserves
HR Recruitment Advisor FTC 18mths x2	£30,451 per post	assumed 30% £9135.30 per post	£59,379.45 (per 18mth post)
		Total	£118,758.90

5. Alternative options considered and rejected.

It is the considered opinion of the OCCP Board members that these roles are pivotal in realising the objectives of the OCCP. The Service would struggle to deliver the project and/or maintain business as usual in critical areas such as Training and Recruitment without these additional posts.

Consideration was given as to the feasibility of funding these posts from agreed departmental budgets for 2021/22, but it is understood that this has not been deemed possible by those budget holders.

6. Strategic priorities

Programme 2020 was a product of the Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2016 to 2020. One of the key aspects of this was a move away from day-crewed stations at Dovercourt, Great Baddow, Great Dunmow, South Woodham Ferrers (SWF) and Waltham Abbey.

The day-crewing model is established within the Grey Book. Nationally, risks to the Service and individuals around working time and tax liability have emerged since the crewing model was established. The Service has attempted to mitigate these risks by adopting a more flexible approach to crewing. However largely the day-crewed stations have continued to work a two - watch system. In essence, this means that accepting annual leave etc, staff would be working 50% of the time either on station or On-Call.

There are two factors which provide challenge to current working practices on day-crewed stations:

- Individual tax implications: HMRC has previously expressed concern to the Service on the provision of houses, advising that they were being viewed as a benefit in kind. Whilst not acting on this at the time, it was indicated to the Service that this would be something that they may look at more closely in the future, which could lead to a significant tax liability put onto the individuals within Service Housing.
- Matzaks ruling on standby duty – this opens up a challenge to employees providing On-Call cover deemed to be in positive hours. One of the key defences to the Service on this matter is flexibility on being able to book off and on when fulfilling the On-Call element of your contract. Largely this facility does not exist within the day-crewed model.

For these reasons, it remains the intent of the Service to change the status of day-crewed fire stations to on-call stations as the risk of maintaining a day-crewed duty system outweighs the potential risk of moving those stations to on-call.

7. Operational implications

Operationally, ECFRS can meet the Service response standards once the existing day-crewed stations have changed status to On-Call stations. To maintain availability for the converting stations, the additional transitional resources outlined in this paper are requested. This will allow the personnel at the converting stations to develop and retain the full range of skills and competencies required to keep a fire appliance available (BA competent fire-fighter, Officer in Charge and response driver).

8. Financial implications

This paper only concerns itself with those posts that have been identified as required to support project delivery, in which a request is made to fund those posts from Service reserves.

The HR Recruitment Advisors and Training Instructors cost £306,046 and is to be funded from the Innovation and Transformation Earmarked Reserve.

The On Call Liason Officer Team costs £283,398 and is to be funded from the On Call Support Earmarked Reserve. This paper is not an attempt to define all of those costs associated with the OCCP, or to evaluate the continued business justification of the OCCP, as that already has, and will continue to be, scrutinised through monthly project reporting at Strategic Change Board and the approval of project documentation. That project documentation has, and will continue to, define all benefits (and dis-benefits), both cashable and non-cashable that will be realised as a result of the successful implementation of the OCCP.

It is worth noting however, that a very healthy financial justification for this project remains. The below cashable benefits have been identified as part of the project documentation.

- The sale of Service owned houses is expected to realise c. £7.4m
- Savings in cost of fire cover from Day Crewed to On-Call c. £2.3m p.a.

9. Legal implications

Case law has demonstrated that there is a legal imperative to move from our current day crewed systems.

10. Staffing implications

This paper seeks to address the resourcing implications identified to safely deliver the OCCP.

11. Equality and Diversity implications

There are no equality and diversity implications associated specifically with this paper, however in line with Service policy, action plans which impact on our people will be people impact assessed. All action taken following this paper will be in line with our Service policies and procedures around equality, diversity, and inclusion.

12. Risks

This proposal is in itself a control measure in order to mitigate the risk of failing to deliver the OCCP in a meaningful timeframe. This project has been in-flight for a number of years. The additional roles have been identified as a critical requirement to ensure that the project can deliver its objectives.

13. Governance Boards

This paper has secured approval from the OCCP Board and SLT before being submitted for consideration.

14. Background papers

It is considered that all the information to facilitate a decision is contained within this paper.

Decision Process (005-21)

Step 1A - Chief Fire Officer Comments

(The Chief Fire Officer is asked in their capacity as the Head of Paid Service to comment on the proposal.)

.....I agree with the recommendations.....

.....

Sign:  Date.....25/2/21.....

Step 1B – Consultation with representative bodies

(The Chief Fire Officer is to set out the consultation that has been undertaken with the representative bodies)

.....N/A.....

Step 2 - Statutory Officer Review

The report will be reviewed by the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority’s (“the Commissioner’s”) Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer prior to review and sign off by the Commissioner or their Deputy.

Monitoring Officer Sign: 
Print: P. Brent-Isherwood
Date: 16 March 2021

Chief Finance Officer Sign: 
Print:Neil Cross.....
Date: .. 25/2/21

Step 3 - Publication

Is the report for publication? **YES**

If 'NO', please give reasons for non-publication (Where relevant, cite the security classification of the document(s). State 'none' if applicable)

.....N/A.....

If the report is not for publication, the Monitoring Officer will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

Step 4 - Redaction

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

- 1 Of Decision Sheet **NO**
- 2 Of Appendix **NO**

If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

.....N/A.....
...
.....

Date redaction carried out:

If redaction is required, the Chief Finance Officer or the Monitoring Officer are to sign off that redaction has been completed.

Sign: Print:

Date signed:

Step 5 - Decision by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner or Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign:  (PFCC)

Print: Roger Hirst Date signed: 16 March 2021