



Meeting	Service Leadership Team	Agenda Item	5b
	Performance & Resources Board		18
Meeting Date	8 June 2021		
	28 June 2021		
Report Author:	On-Call Development Project Manager		
Presented By	Moira Bruin, Director of Operations		
Subject	Quarterly Progress Report - On-Call Conversion Project		
Type of Report:	Information		

SUMMARY

The On-Call Conversion Project (OCCP) successfully converted Dovercourt to On-Call status in April 2020. The progress of this station continues to be closely monitored by the Project Management team. Appliance availability is improving, and workforce levels continue to rise with additional training courses created to support the new recruits which are being run locally.

We expect to retire the day crewing shift system at Waltham Abbey on 31st July 2021, with the last two remaining stations following this date. The project will continue to closely monitor and report on the status of all converting stations up until project closure of March 2022.

BACKGROUND

The OCCP was established in 2017 to manage the conversion of several stations from day crew to On-Call status. In November 2020 there was a change in the project management team, with a new Senior Responsible Owner and Project Manager. Since then, a dynamic review of the project activities has been undertaken resulting in a SLT decision paper 4b of 8/12/2020 and a workshop facilitated by the Director of Operations between Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner on 21/12/2020.

The purpose of the workshop was to set out the way forward for the On-Call Conversion Project (OCCP) to include:

- Confirmation of a review of the original objectives and scope of the project
- Confirmation of a review and refresh of the project governance
- A review, discussion, and agreement on the timelines of the project

This work resulted in a further paper presented to SLT 12 January 2021 by the Director of Operations – On Call Conversion Project (OCCP) Next Steps.

In that paper the project executive articulated the transition milestones that will need to be achieved before the Day Crewed shift system can be retired at a location and the transition to On-Call can commence. These are:

- 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.

PROJECT PROGRESS

On Call Conversion Project (OCCP) Next Steps paper identified the below actions. Progress against these is reported at the Strategic Change Board monthly, but a brief update is detailed next to each action below.

- A refresh of the governance structure of the OCCP - **Complete**
- Station Plans will be completed for each of the converting station clearly setting out the steps to achieving the conversions. - **Complete**
- In recognition of the different associated risk levels, local challenges, and success of recruitment campaigns, the plans may differ between the stations - **Complete**
- In recognition of the time that is required to recruit and develop individuals to OIC/Driver/BA team leader each plan will identify interim transitional arrangements to support the change to On-Call. – **In progress**
- 100% availability cannot be guaranteed at any fully On-Call station. The transition period of support will use whole-time/additional personnel to maintain availability – in line with our agreed risk appetite. – **In progress**
- For the reasons above, each plan can identify – in terms of interim arrangements - additional resources required to ensure all competencies are available to support availability to the agreed level i.e.: The Process will be to cease the day duty system at the stations then introduce a transition period of support from WT before moving fully to the On-Call system. – **In progress**
- We will support these stations in line with the way we support Whole-time stations – for example through Mixed Crewing, Pre-arranged out-duties and Additional Shift Working to On-Call stations or through temporarily attaching whole-time personnel to On-Call stations. – **On-going**
- Communications and engagement to existing colleagues on each station will be increased, not decreased in the run up to the change of status - **Actioned**
- We will continue attraction and recruitment activity for all four stations throughout – but this will have been started prior to March 2021. – **On-going**
- Sufficient basic On-Call recruitment courses will be provided in 2021 - to respond to the demand at each station so that there is no attrition of potential recruits due to excess waiting to access the training. - **Actioned**
- Having in place individual development plans to move Firefighters through to Crew and Watch Managers to ensure a long term ‘succession pipeline’ – **In progress**
- There will be sufficient driving courses allocated in 2021 to ensure that in the long term, there are adequate Fire-fighter drivers. - **Actioned**

- 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. - **Complete**
- To complete the move away from the Day-crewed system and realise the benefits we will need to have converted to On-Call and relocated all current Day-crewed personnel by April 2022 it is likely that some watches/stations may have supernumerary posts. This will allow us to better support the proposals outlined in the action plans to support availability during the transitional period. - **Actioned**
- We will not move away from the day-crewed system at any of the three stations before 31st July 2021. - **Confirmed**
- Property assets associated with the day-crewing system will be disposed of once they become vacant to realise project benefits - **ongoing**

3.1 Station Progress Summary

Station	Current On-Call Crewing No.		Target FTE Crewing No.		Confidence RAG (Target to be achieved by 31/7/21)	Predicted Transition Shortfall		Commentary
Dovercourt	Officers	4	Officers	6		Officers	-	
	Drivers	6	Drivers	14		Drivers	-	
	FF On The Run	19	FF On The Run	23		FF On The Run	-	
	Headcount	21	Headcount	23		Headcount	-	
	FTE	16.25	FTE	12		FTE	-	
Waltham Abbey	Officers	2	Officers	4		Officers	1	Through conversations we are now expecting 2x day-duty to continue in On-Call capacity once station converts. Both are OIC's and Drivers. We currently have 1 applicant waiting to start their training, and the two day-crew mentioned above, giving us a total of 17 personnel in July. The recognised shortfalls in OIC's and drivers will be covered by the budgeted allowance of 2x W/T posts from Aug 1st while on-call are continued to be trained to the required standards.
	Drivers	0	Drivers	6		Drivers	3	
	FF On The Run	10	FF On The Run	18		FF On The Run	1	
	Headcount	14	Headcount	18		Headcount	0	
	FTE	10.5	FTE	13.5		FTE	0.75	
South Woodham Ferrers	Officers	0	Officers	4		Officers	2	Through conversations, we are expecting a minimum of two officers to remain in an on-call capacity post conversion, with a further two FF drivers also expected to remain. Additionally, there is also an expression of interest from a current W/T CM to undertake an on-call position. We also have a further two applicants awaiting a basic course (it is anticipated that this will be in June)
	Drivers	1	Drivers	6		Drivers	2	
	FF On The Run	6	FF On The Run	18		FF On The Run	4	
	Headcount	6	Headcount	18		Headcount	4	
	FTE	5	FTE	12		FTE	3	
Great Baddow	Officers	2	Officers	4		Officers	1	Through conversations, we are expecting one D/C officer to remain post conversion. We also have an embedded CM working a nine-day fortnight, with an expression of interest from another. Additionally, it has been confirmed that the current O/C CM can undertake his primary role from station. There are expressions of interest from two existing D/C FF's (Drivers), with three further applicants awaiting a basic course (it is anticipated that this will be in June)
	Drivers	2	Drivers	6		Drivers	3	
	FF On The Run	9	FF On The Run	14		FF On The Run	0	
	Headcount	9	Headcount	14		Headcount	0	
	FTE	6	FTE	12		FTE	0	

BENEFITS AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

Risks

There are two Risks that require treatment that provide the continued business justification of the OCCP to act as a Control Measure. These are:

- 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 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.

Project Risks & Issues

Below, is the current Risk Register for the OCCP;



Risk Register (current-target) v4

Service Unit: Change

Risk Ref	Risk Event/Description	Category	Nature of Risk	Current Risk Rating	Controlled Risk Rating	Risk Owner	Risk Status	Review Date	Date Last Reviewed	Days Overdue
ONCON0014	There is a risk that the organisation will not be able to train required number of recruits.	Unassigned	Unassigned	12	9	Colette Black	Treat	18/06/2021	18/05/2021	0
ONCON0020	There is a risk that changes in organisational/strategic direction and policies might impact the project.	Unassigned	Unassigned	10	8	Maira Bruin	Tolerate	08/06/2021	08/03/2021	0
ONCON0013	There is a risk that the Service are unable to attract and recruit sufficient number of on-call employees within the required time frames to enable a full conversion from day crew to on-call.	Unassigned	Unassigned	9	9	Karl Edwards	Issue	18/06/2021	18/05/2021	0
ONCON0025	There is a risk that current tolerance levels for allowing members of staff to be available over the working time directive which could have legal implications for the organisations.	Unassigned	Unassigned	9	3	Neil Fenwick	Treat	28/07/2021	28/04/2021	0
ONCON0015	There is a risk that the project will not be achieved as a phased approach due to insufficient number of employees and appropriate experience to support transition.	Unassigned	Unassigned	9	6	Neil Fenwick	Treat	18/06/2021	18/05/2021	0
ONCON0021	There is a risk that there will be insufficient internal resources to deliver the project without overly impacting BAU activity	Unassigned	Unassigned	6	6	Matthew Stalker	Treat	20/06/2021	20/04/2021	0

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Risk Register (current-target) v4

Service Unit: Change

Risk Ref	Risk Event/Description	Category	Nature of Risk	Current Risk Rating	Controlled Risk Rating	Risk Owner	Risk Status	Review Date	Date Last Reviewed	Days Overdue
ONCON0018	There is a risk that changes in funding will impact project delivery.	Unassigned	Emergency Response	6	6	Matthew Stalker	Treat	18/06/2021	18/05/2021	0

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Benefits Realisation

The project team is currently undertaking a full benefit realisation review.

Benefits Description	SRO	Benefit Owner(s) (Business Change Manager)	Benefit Type	ECFRS Strategic Goal	Baseline Value	Observable Outcomes	Attribution																
Increased availability of OC appliances - <i>valid only at Dovercourt? Or for all stations post when we started recruitment?</i>	Director of Innovation, Risk & Future Development	Director of Operations	Non-financial	Service Lead	HR Workforce data - On call station averages for each year - speak to Lucy Clayton	Increase of on call appliances being available at converting stations	Where will we see it? Who will provide it? Increase number of on-call employees Improved wider service delivery.																
Increased on-call employees	Director of Innovation, Risk & Future Development	Director of Corporate services	Non-financial	Service Lead	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Joiners</th> <th>Leavers</th> <th>NET</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>17/18</td> <td>38</td> <td>6</td> <td>32</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18/19</td> <td>12</td> <td>9</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>19/20</td> <td>16</td> <td>9</td> <td>7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Joiners	Leavers	NET	17/18	38	6	32	18/19	12	9	3	19/20	16	9	7	Increase number of on-call employees at converting stations.	Number of OC employees at converting stations. Annual workforce report from Workforce Analytics Lead.
	Joiners	Leavers	NET																				
17/18	38	6	32																				
18/19	12	9	3																				
19/20	16	9	7																				
Increased diversity within the service	Director of Innovation, Risk & Future Development	Director of People Values and Culture	Non-financial	Community Focused	<p>HR workforce data</p> <p>Question on work force diversity from last staff survey -</p> <p>The following table presents the Service's headline diversity metrics as at 31 Dec 2019, no other baseline figures available</p> <p>Gender% that are female - 1.6%</p> <p>Majority Age Band - 25-35</p> <p>%LGB 1.2%</p> <p>%Ethnic Minority - 2.3%</p> <p>% Disability</p>	Increase diversity at the converting stations.	Converting stations to on-call increases the Services opportunity to improve diversity across the Service. Year end diversity statistics																
Reduction in firefighter salaries	Director of Innovation, Risk & Future Development	Director of Operations	Financial	Financially Sustainable	<p>1,100,000</p> <p>2,500,000</p> <p>Finance Data</p>	Cost of wholetime firefighters for the service will reduce as stations convert to on-call	Conversion of 2nd pump at Clacton station W/T to O/C Conversion of DC stations to O/C stations. Savings based on Services medium-term financial strategy.																
Sale of day crew houses	Director of Innovation, Risk & Future Development	Director of Operations	Financial	Financially Sustainable	<p>6,250,000</p> <p>937,500</p> <p>3,125,000</p> <p>2,187,500</p> <p>Finance</p> <p>Property Services Data</p>	Number of service owned properties will reduce	Selling DC houses will release funds (£6.25m / 20 houses = £313k) 3 x vacant properties sold June-Sept 2018. Tranche 1 - £3.75m - 10 houses vacance (8x31/03/20 & 4 x 31/07/20) Tranche 2 - £2.3m - 2nd tranche - 7 houses vacant (31/03/2021).																

OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

No options are presented for consideration as part of this paper. The OCCP currently has a Green RAG Project Status and expects to deliver its primary objectives by the agreed project date **31st July 2022**. This paper provides an update only.

Station Updates

- **Waltham Abbey** – We are still on track to retire the day crewed shift system at Waltham Abbey on the **31st July 2021**. There are currently 10 On-Call FFs On-The-Run (OTR) at Waltham Abbey. We have a new recruit's course which commenced on the 10th May at Waltham Abbey, and there are a further 5 individuals from the Station area due to attend this course. There are still more applications being processed, with future assessment days planned.
- **Great Baddow** – We currently have a date agreed of no later than **31st January 2022**. There are currently 9 On-Call FFs OTR at Great Baddow. We have an embedded Crew Manager working a nine-day fortnight, with an expression of interest from another. Additionally, it has been confirmed that the current O/C CM can undertake his primary role from station. There are expressions of interest from two existing D/C FF's (Drivers), with three further applicants awaiting a basic course (it is anticipated that this will be in June).

- **South Woodham** – We will be converting between **1st January 2022 - 31st July 2022**. There are currently 6 On-Call FFs OTR at South Woodham Ferrers. Through conversations, we are expecting a minimum of two officers to remain in an On-Call capacity post conversion, with a further two FF drivers also expected to remain. Additionally, there is also an expression of interest from a current W/T CM to undertake an On-Call position.

Continual reviews will be taking place regarding the final two stations to be converted and their conversion dates. Once their operational On-Call crewing levels suggest that conversion will not adversely affect the current operational response standards at that location, the project can confirm their readiness to convert and the dates. The current On-Call crewing levels at both Great Baddow and South Woodham Ferrers, suggest that both stations are on track to convert within the agreed project timescales.

Project Update

- As a result of the positive changes which have been made to the recruitment and on-boarding process for On-Call, we have seen an increase in the number of new recruits. This has led to an increase from 6 courses per year to 12. Each course will have between 8 and 12 recruits and so far, this year we have already trained 45 new On Call recruits.
- The Service are offering more localised training courses for recruits (including basic/initial course). This also reassures the public that their local fire stations being used to train Firefighters who support their local communities.
- We propose that additional driving and incident command courses are given priority for the converting stations by the Operational Training department.
- We are targeting recruitment through our social media channels and utilising our OCLO team. Additionally, the Station Manager for Great Baddow and South Woodham Ferrers has a meeting next week with the OCLO team to set up campaigns like what has just been achieved at Canvey. The plan is for a targeted summer campaign across both these stations to culminate in a basic training squad to be held at one of the stations in the autumn.
- We are currently analysing the transitional arrangements around the crewing levels from W/T that are needed at each station. This will form part of the local station transition plans.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The below additional roles have been identified as critical to the successful delivery of the OCCP. A separate paper requesting that these posts are funded from Service Reserves in the next Financial Year has already been submitted and agreed by the PFCC.

- On-Call Liaison Manager
- On-Call Liaison Officers x4
- Watch Manager Training Instructors x2
- HR Recruitment Advisor x2

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

There will be additional costs to those detailed above as part of the transition arrangements for each Station. These are in the process of being forecasted and will form part of each Station's Transition Plan.

It is worth noting, 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.

1.1. Sale of Day Crew Housing Update

	Total Forecast Value £	Value sold To Date £	Value Left to Sell £
Tranche 1 Properties	£4.1m	£1.4m	£2.7m
Tranche 2 Properties	£1.4m	£0	£1.4m
Tranche 3 Properties	£1.9m	£0	£1.9m
Totals	£7.4m	£1.4m	£6m

1.2. Conversion of Day Crewed Update*

Day Crewed Stations	Budgeted Conversion Date	2021-22 Budgeted Costs £	Projected Conversion Date	Var from Budgeted Conversion Date (Nos of months)	Projected Var in costs Increase/(reduction) £	Anticipated monthly costs for delay in conversion
Waltham Abbey	30th June 2021	£145,833	31st July 2021	1 month	£15,938	£15,938
Great Baddow	30th September 2021	£239,261	31st January 2022	4 months	£94,168	£23,542
South Woodham Ferrers	31st December 2021	£309,892	1st January 2022	0 months	£0	£23,540
TOTAL		£694,986			£110,106	

* The table above shows the dates that the finance team have budgeted for and the projected variance in costs from a financial perspective due to the date adjustments. The planned conversion dates for the stations are detailed in section 5.1.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no equality and diversity implications associated specifically with this paper.

<i>Race</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Religion or belief</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Sex</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Gender reassignment</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Age</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Pregnancy & maternity</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Disability</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Marriage and Civil Partnership</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Sexual orientation</i>	<i>No</i>		

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.

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.

Station Managers had 1-2-1 discussions with all affected Day Crewed staff in December to re-affirm the Service's intention to retire the day crewed shift system. Regular follow up meetings now occur.

All affected staff have also been written to thanking them for their on-going support to the project and detailing their personal circumstances and options before them.

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

We will be focussing greater emphasis on communication with On-Call members of the converting stations to ensure that they feel part of the conversion journey.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Case law has demonstrated that there is a legal imperative to move from our current Day crewed systems (see section 5.1).

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There are none specific to this report.