



Meeting	Performance and Resources Board	Agenda Item No.	9
Meeting Date	28 April 2022		
Report Authors:	Hannah Wakeman, Head of Portfolio, Governance & Assurance		
Presented By	Chris Parker, Director of Operations		
Subject	On-Call Development Programme – Programme Update		
Type of Report:	Information		
Action Point No.	N/A	For Publication	Yes

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The On-Call Development Programme is at a pivotal time currently. We concluded and closed the second tranche of programme activity in January 2022 and have been scoping what the future of On-Call looks like in terms of change activity, working with the Portfolio, Governance and Assurance function to understand what that looks like in terms of governance and next steps.

The next Programme Board is scheduled for Friday 6 May 2022, at which we will be deciding on the scope and governance for the programme moving forward. The assumption currently, for the purpose of informing P&R Board today, is that we will be initiating several On-Call projects of work and closing and disbanding the programme as it currently exists. The intention behind this is for these new projects to fall under their appropriate strategies and consequently spaces in the Service's Portfolio of Change; most likely these will be the People Strategy and the Response Strategy. These projects will have clear timeframes of an 18–24-month period, aligning to the next CRMP period for our On-Call response elements. They will also have clear direction with a new Project Sponsor(s), the key Sponsor at this stage being our new Director of Operations.

Following the 6 May 2022 Programme Board, we will be taking the recommendation and decision to the Service's Portfolio Management Board on Friday 20 May 2022 for final decision.

BACKGROUND

On-Call Firefighters are a vital part of the UK's Fire and Rescue Service and provide an effective, efficient service that gives emergency cover to more than 90% of the UK. The dedication and commitment of On-Call Firefighters is incontestable.

Due to the changing landscape of our towns and villages, the reduction of local commerce and industry and increasingly transient populations, recruiting enough On-Call

Firefighters to keep these stations operational, especially during daytime hours, has become increasingly difficult for Fire and Rescue Services nationally.

The Service wants to change the way it supports and operates On-Call, including introducing innovative solutions to the challenge of daytime availability at some On-Call stations and working approaches that are achievable, flexible and support a sustainable work/life balance.

The Service also wants to continue to work with our On-Call colleagues, listening to what effects them on a day-to-day basis and ensuring that the focus of the programme aligns to what will make a real impact to them.

The Service have started this work through the On-Call Programme for the past 24 months now, and we want to continue to invest in our On-Call and ensure that we have clear project scope and focus for what we want to deliver and by when.

OPTIONS & ANALYSIS

No options are presented for consideration as part of this paper. This paper provides an update only.

PROGRAMME PROGRESS

The second tranche of the programme was concluded and closed in January 2022, the key deliverables during this last tranche were as follows:

- The implementation of a refined on-boarding process for On-Call reducing the time to hire from 9m + to 3m.
- Introduction of monthly on-boarding meetings to review all touch points in the process for On-Call colleagues.
- Work between our OCLOs and our On-Call Managers to provide flexibility within the current contractual arrangements. This work, however, will continue into the On-Call project(s) being scoped currently for 2022-2024.
- Substantiation of O/C colleagues in temporary positions for 24m or more, with 44 colleagues substantiated or put onto a development.

A lot of work has been underway by our On-Call Liaison Officers (OCLO):

- Management of assessment days – The team continue with the organising and assisting with the On-Call assessment days which continue to take place twice a month. The team have been helping arrange candidate medicals, DBS checks and pre-employment forms.
- Supporting and scheduling of training - Working with the training dept to arrange the On-Call basic training courses.
- Supporting our converting stations - Continuing to support the converting stations looking at ways the team can help with the conversion at Great Baddow and South Woodham Ferrers.
- Working with our Media team– Working with the Corporate Comms team to organise media events the converting stations and other targeted O/C stations.
- Leading our On-Call Steering Groups – The team are planning the first set of Steering Groups for the new year, provisionally planned for February time.
- Supporting the On-Call Programme - Continuing to work with and support the On-Call Programme team, attending meetings and progressing actions.

RISK AND MITIGATIONS

Benefits

The programme benefits were reviewed as part of the tranche 2 closure process in January 2022 and have been included here for reference.

Original Programme Benefits	Jan-22 Progress Update	Realisation Status & Expectation Date
1. Improve On-Call staff engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Higher number of employees/stations are attending the steering groups. Only four O/C stations were unrepresented at the last round of steering groups. 	Realised
2. Ensure competence & safety of our people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ OCLO team are supporting additional training and taking recruits to training. ✓ The OCLO team are also improving competence/supporting completion of PDR Pro. 	Realised
3. Reduce On-Call vacancies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Started with a backlog of 300 people in Jul-19: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 200 engaged/100 rejected - 120 completing process. ✓ Recruited 98 new recruits in 2021 ✓ Jun-20 → Jun-21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FTE 395.5 → 405.8 = 11.3 increase - Headcount 499 → 514 = 15 increase 	Realised
4. Increase employee retention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Attrition rate avg 66pa past 3 years – no significant change. ✓ Dec 2019 – Sep 2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 122 unplanned leavers Unplanned turnover avg 24% Retention avg 76% x. OCLOs working with HR as current figure are inconclusive. 	Realisation expected 2-4 years +
5. Increase availability of OC appliances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We have seen a general decline compared to last year's availability for O./C. ▪ There are several assumptions for this, the key one being impact of lockdown/ease of restrictions and returns to primary employment. 	Not realised
6. Improve workforce diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 81 female applicants for O/C in 2021 ✓ 10 females have joined since August 2020 ✓ National avg 5% females, we had a 10% female recruitment % in 2021 A number are in process i.e., progressing fitness ✓ High number of female applicants for O/C → good engagement. 	On-going

7. Improve wider service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase in O/C personnel improves other functions – more available to do other activities i.e., fire calls, technical fire safety inspections, community engagement etc. ✓ Offers improved resilience for Service. 	Realised
8. Reduce On-Call station / officer administration requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Deliverables raised i.e., Appraisals. ✓ Steering Groups provide a forum for raising issues for Service to take away and look at & feed into programme. 	Realised

LINKS TO FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

The two key alignments to our Fire & Rescue Plan, which will also be a focus for our scoping work for the On-Call Projects for 2022-2024 are as follows:

- Make best use of our resources
- prevention, protection, and response.

The links with our 2021/2022 Annual Plan were as follows:

- Streamline on-boarding process
- Reduce number of temporary positions
- Reduce hour contracts
- Complete the valuing On-Call project

The On-Call activity for 2022/2023 does not fall under the Annual Plan, but rather the Portfolio of Change for 2022/2023 which includes the scoping work currently underway for the On-Call Projects.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are financial implications associated with this programme which have been scoped out and monitored under the governance of the On-call development programme board where an update is given by a member of the finance team as part of the standing agenda.

Further scoping work for the next phase of the programme will include a scoping out of further financial implications.

There are no financial updates for this reporting period and none associated with this paper.

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.

Is this decision anticipated to have an impact on any of the following protected groups as defined within the Equality Act 2010:

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

The Core Code of Ethics Fire Standard has been fully considered and incorporated into the proposals outlined in this paper.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The Programme seeks to find ways to continually improve and further strengthen and build on existing engagement.

The Steering Groups remain a very strong platform for communicating with our On-Call colleagues led by the OCLO team. The last set of Steering Groups took place in February 2022 and are on a quarterly basis. These will continue to be a key engagement route with our On-Call colleagues.

The immediate programme team meet between fortnightly and monthly, depending on diaries, and have these working days at O/C stations providing visibility and engagement with O/C colleagues. This has proved very effective in building a team and having open discussions and problem solving. These have continued as part of the Conversion Project Team and OCLO team since tranche 2 of the programme closed.

We continue to run monthly on-boarding meetings with the following dept's/key stakeholders involved in the recruitment and on-boarding process for On-Call:

- Programme/project teams
- OCLO team
- Recruitment
- Technical Services
- Occupational Health
- Training
- Fitness
- Comms

This allows us to continually review the recruitment process for On-Call and ensure we engage with all the touchpoints, providing the opportunity to discuss any issues or anticipated constraints. These are already proving effective and when recently asked for feedback, they were described as very valuable and important so we will continue with these. These have been handed over to HR/Recruitment to lead moving forward following the closure of tranche 2 of the programme.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

ECFRS are ensuring that they work closely with the Procurement, Finance and HR (employment legislation) teams to ensure that all legislation is being adhered to.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None linked to this report.

FUTURE PLANS

The plans of the programme will form the basis of any future reporting on converting stations, once a decision is made on the future state of the On-Call Duty System, which will be agreed at the On-Call Programme Board meeting on 6 May 2022 and the Portfolio Management Board on 20 May 2022.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AND APPENDICES

None.