



Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

## Decision Report

**Please ensure all sections below are completed**

**Report reference number:** 02-22

**Government security classification:** Not protectively marked

**Title of report:**

**On-Call Conversion Project – Funding for the Transitional Arrangements**

**Area of county / stakeholders affected:** Converting stations within scope of the project - Dovercourt, Waltham Abbey, Great Baddow and South Woodham Ferrers

**Report by:** Neil Fenwick, Area Manager - Assistant Director PPR Delivery

**Date of report:** 07/02/22

**Enquiries to:** Neil Fenwick, Area Manager - Assistant Director PPR Delivery

### 1. Purpose of the report

The On-Call Conversion Project Board are seeking approval for funding for financial year 2022/23, to support our transitional movements from the Day Crewed stations changing to an On-Call duty system. To support the availability of the stations during these transitional periods, we are recommending additional supporting resources in place for a duration of 12months.

### 2. Recommendations

Throughout the process of the conversion project, it has become more apparent that all of our converting stations, regardless of the location they fall within the county, require a supporting element whilst they transition from Day Crew to On-Call. When we switch over the duty systems at these stations, availability of the appliances remains our focus. In order to maintain and achieve this, while each new On-Call firefighter develops through each phase, we must add in transitional support for a duration of time in order for those On-Call employees to upskill and develop.

We are asking the PFCC for approval of the following resources at each converting station. Please note that Clacton are not included on the table as the resources we have in place will come to an end in March 2022.

The cost of the transitional resources in financial year 2022/23 is £565,015 and will be funded from the Innovation and Transformation Earmarked Reserve. This is in line with the amount included within the 2022/23 budget that was approved by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on 3 February 2022.

Station	Conversion Date	Additional Interim Resources Required			Total Resource Required	Required Until	Post Conversion Availability Target
		WM	CM	FF Driver/s			
Dovercourt	31/03/2021	1	1	3	5	01/04/2023	90%
Waltham Abbey	31/07/2021	0	1	1	2	01/04/2023	90%
Great Baddow	31/01/2022	1	0	1	2	01/04/2023	90%
South Woodham Ferrers	31/07/2022	1	0	2	3	01/04/2023	90%

The table above is on a station-by-station basis with a focus on the current and future status of all new On-Call employees. We have considered the numbers that are currently at station, and what stage they will be at the point of conversion. This should allow for those individuals that are in phase 2-3 the time to develop and be on any specific training plus identify those that can be drivers and officers in the future.

### 3. Benefits of the proposal

If we opt for no additional support at the converting stations, this will lead to the availability of that station dropping significantly post conversion. All these stations don't have / will not have officer and driver capabilities at the point of conversion therefore the station will automatically be off the run. The Service could look at other alternatives such as out duties at those stations, however this would be frequently needed and the cost on that option would be significantly greater over the 12month period.

### 4. Background and proposal

To ensure that our converting stations have the sufficient cover post converting from Day Crewed to On-Call status, we require additional supporting roles at each station. This will upskill the new personnel at the stations as well as maintaining the station cover for that area.

#### Dovercourt

- The On-Call Conversion Project (OCCP) successfully converted Dovercourt to On-Call status in April 2020. Appliance availability is improving; however, the recent departure of the On-Call watch manager and O/C firefighters means our workforce levels continue to be a focus. With our transitional support staff currently in post at the station, this has enabled us to maintain the availability of the pump, while recruitment is a key activity. The progress of this station continues to be closely monitored by the Project Management team. At this time, we are maintaining the levels of transitional staff at 1 WM, 1 CM and 3 FF – this will complement the large numbers of Phase 1 FF. It is foreseen that this number will be reviewed mid-term (October 2022) through the board.
- There is the likelihood that there will be a need to maintain a revised transitional crewing arrangement in 2023 – 24 due to the large numbers of Phase 1 FF at the station who won't be eligible to drive or be an officer.

### **Waltham Abbey**

- The OCCP successfully converted Waltham Abbey to On-Call status in July 2021. The availability at the station has seen a few periods of high availability since the switch over. We have 2 additional wholetime support colleagues in the station who are providing both officer and driver capabilities along with maintaining the availability of the appliance remaining on the run. They are able to provide the support and experience to the still fairly new team of On-Call colleagues, ensuring they are in a good position to run the station.
- The station currently has 11 phase 3 and 6 phase 1 O/C employees totalling a headcount of 17. Recruitment activity is now forming part of business as usual (BAU). The need to maintain the 2 transitional support personnel at the station is projected to be needed for 2022-23 only.

### **Great Baddow**

- The Station has converted on 1<sup>st</sup> February. The station has 14 On-Call firefighters. The majority of these are within phase 1, therefore the officer and driver capabilities have been reduced going into the conversion.
- An agreed transition period of 12 months from the conversion date of 31 January 2022 → 31 January 2023 was made by the OCCP Board and during this time, the agreed approach has been to recruit additional resources to support the station for a period of 12 months. This is to allow the time for us to upskill the current personnel at station, and to support the appliance availability during this time.
- The agreed roles identified were: 1 X WM, 1 X CM Driver and 1X FF driver working a 9-day fortnight shift pattern. 2 x FTE are being funded by the agreed project costs as agreed with Finance, 1 x FTE is being funded locally by the Station. The need to maintain the 2 transitional support personnel at the station is projected to be needed for 2022-23 only.

### **South Woodham Ferrers**

- The station will convert no later than 31 July 2022. There are currently 7 On-Call firefighters, mainly within phase 1. There are currently no officer or driver O/C personnel. The OCCP Board approved additional resources to support the station for a period of 12 months. This is to allow the time for us to upskill the current personnel at station, recruitment activities and to support the appliance availability during this time.
- The agreed roles identified were: 1 X WM and 2 X FF driver working a 9-day fortnight shift pattern. All three roles are being funded by the agreed project costs as agreed with Finance.
- There is the likelihood that there will be a need to maintain a revised transitional crewing arrangement in 2023 – 24 due to the large numbers of phase 1 FF at the station who won't be eligible to drive or be an officer.

## **5. Alternative options considered and rejected**

Alternative options if we do not progress with our recommendation are as follows:

1. Should we convert without the planned additional resource - the Service could look at ASW (Additional Shift Work) and out-duty options, however this would come with a cost and would need to be a long-term arrangement to maintain availability at those stations until the required management structure and qualified personnel were competent.

## 6. Strategic priorities

**Prevention, Protection & Response** – The recruitment of O/C to the converting stations, directly supports our station availability and meeting our response standards as detailed in our Response Strategy. We need to maintain the prevention, protection, and response that the day crewed stations have held and carry this through to the new duty system.

**Be transparent, Open, and Accessible** – the project team undertakes numerous steps to engage and consult with all affected personnel within scope of the project. This includes current day crew and O/C employees existing and new. We continue to be accessible throughout this project journey.

**Promote a positive culture in the workplace** – We remain true to this undertaken the recruitment of new O/C colleagues into the service and working with our day crewed employees.

## 7. Operational implications

By placing the embedded support resources at our converting stations, means the service are moving people from other stations, and there will be a shortfall from where those people are being moved from. The positive impact this has operationally by doing this, is that the converting stations will be on the run, better availability around the county and there are better development opportunities for the O/C employees to maintain and upskill their knowledge.

## 8. Financial implications

The total costs of the additional resources in 2022/23 that are required for the conversion of the day crew stations is £565,015. These are reflected in the table below.

Station	Conversion Date	Additional Interim Resources Required			Total Resource Required	Required Until	Resource Required for Financial Year 2022-23			
		WM	CM	FF Driver/s			Watch Manager	Crew Manager	Fire Fighter	Total costs £
Dovercourt	31/03/2021	1	1	3	5	01/04/2023	£59,108	£52,837	£142,920	£254,865
Waltham Abbey	31/07/2021	0	1	1	2	01/04/2023	-	£52,837	£47,640	£100,477
Great Baddow	31/01/2022	1	0	1	2	01/04/2023	£59,108	-	£47,640	£106,748
South Woodham Ferrers	31/07/2022	1	0	2	3	01/04/2023	£39,405	-	£63,520	£102,925
							<b>£157,621</b>	<b>£105,674</b>	<b>£301,720</b>	<b>£565,015</b>

The costs include total pay costs (i.e., Base salary costs and all on costs such and Employers National Insurance and Pension Costs), are based upon the pay assumptions included within 2022/23 budget.

These costs are to be funded from the Innovation and Transformation Earmarked Reserve and are in line with the costs included within the 2022/23 budget which was approved by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on 3 February 2022.

## 9. Legal implications

In making this recommendation, the team has been cognisant of developing case law including a ruling from the European Court of Justice regarding the working time of a volunteer firefighter, Matzak.

## 10. Staffing implications

As per point 7 above.

## 11. Equality and Diversity implications

We have considered whether individuals with protected characteristics will be disadvantaged as a consequence of the actions being taken. Due regard has also been given to whether there is impact on each of the following protected groups as defined within the Equality Act 2010:

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

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

The fundamental risks associated with this decision sheet will have the following impact if funding is not agreed:

- Availability will decline at the stations as there will be absent embedded positions supporting the newly formed O/C crews.
- Availability decline could pose possible risks to the local communities.
- Continued development support will be missing for the O/C Crews.
- O/C colleagues will lack the development, skill set and experience that the embedded support staff offer.
- Stations will remain off the run if there are no officer and/or driver positions available amongst the new O/C crews.
- Stations off the run, will impact the wider county for fire cover.

## 13. Governance Boards

The content of this decision sheet has been agreed by the below board for onward approval by PFCC.

- On-Call Conversion Board Meeting, 17 February 2022 – decision sheet agreed by board members.

## 14. Background papers


Nothing to note.

**Decision Process (002-22)**

**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 support this recommendation.....



Sign: .....

.....

Date:..21/3/22.....

**Step 1B – Consultation with representative bodies**

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

Consultation talks place at regular monthly meetings between the project team and with the FBU, FRSA and FOA, chaired by AM Operational Policy and Change.

**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: ..Darren Horsman - Deputy MO

Date: .10.5.2022.....

Chief Finance Officer

Sign: .....

Print: .....Neil Cross...

Date: . . . . 15/3/2022 . . .

**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)

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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:

.....  
.....

Date redaction carried out: .....

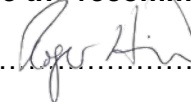
If redaction is required, the Chief Finance Officer or the Monitoring Officer are to sign off that redaction has been completed.

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: 11 May 2022