



Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

Decision Report

Report reference number: 044-22
Government security classification: Not protectively marked
Title of report: Breathing Apparatus Instructors
Area of county / stakeholders affected: Service wide
Report by: Colette Black, Director of People Services
Date of report: 30/11/22
Enquiries to: Colette Black, Director of People Services

1. Purpose of the report

To seek approval for the funding of three Breathing Apparatus Instructors for an initial one-year period followed by a second year if evidence from the strategic workforce plan (SWP) supports the need. The SWP suggests the roles will no longer be required after that.

2. Recommendations

Approval is sought for the funding of three Breathing Apparatus (BA) Instructors from operational training reserves for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

	Item	Budget request
3	Breathing Apparatus Instructors - Year one	£197,093.70
	Year two	£201,035.57
	Funding for two years – 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025 Total	£398,129.27

3. Benefits of the proposal

This links to ongoing delivery of our Operational Training Plan.

4. Background and proposal

An increase of three BA Instructors is recommended to address the following challenges and opportunities:

a) Alignment to National Operational Guidance (N.O.G.) and National Operational Standards (N.O.S.)

BA has been an ongoing process for the past three years due to the complexities of the subject and the many other areas it feeds into. By adopting the proposal below for the re-mapping of the course we can better meet the requirements of N.O.G and N.O.S as far as is practicable for the service.

b) Increase in course failure rates

There is currently a shortfall of 10 hours teaching time per course (120 teaching hours available, course run time is 130 hours and 15 minutes). This may be linked to increased failure rates of the course. The current course offers little time for students to practice what they have learnt before asking them to demonstrate the skill. In order to deliver the syllabus, long days are physically and mentally demanding. Re-structuring the course enables the required teaching hours with suitable rest periods.

c) Increased squad sizes

Increasing squad sizes to a maximum of 18 allows us to meet the demands of the Strategic Workforce Plan. Adding additional students causes logistical challenges due to instructor capacity for live fire wears within certain time frames and creates gaps in the training planner where other risk critical training will not be available due to venue capacity and availability of instructors.

d) Increased recruitment resulting in increased demand for BA courses

An increase in demand of 102 courses (see appendix 1). The options analysis below includes consideration of:

- Limitations in live fire wears
- Offering full entitlement to annual leave
- Capacity for CPD (required to maintain sector competence).
- Sickness cover
- Other significant projects

e) Utilising other venues to meet the demand

An additional three BA instructors would allow a fourth venue to be utilised in parallel with other venues to meet demand.

5. Alternative options considered and rejected

Option 1 – Do nothing (not recommended)

- Continue to deliver the current 2021/22 course requirements with no increase to meet 2023/24 predictions.
- Maintain current establishment of nine BA Instructors across three venues and STC current staffing levels.
- Maintain wholetime squad numbers at 12.

Course requirements comparison table	2022	2023/2024
BA Combined BA Initial & Fire behaviour, PPV & GTS (WT) - Possible 3	3	2
Breathing Apparatus Combined BA Initial & Fire behaviour (OC)	9	12
BA Guideline course - On Call only - follows initial	10	12
PPV Training - Offensive On Call	7	9
BA Gas Tight Suit / Decon Training Initial (certain On Call)	2	2
Breathing Apparatus Development and Assessment Sessions - Including spares	138	140
DIM officers BA familiarization	3	3
L1 Initial Incident Command - 3 day Wed to Fri	5	5
CM to WM Incident Command - 3 day (Thur wk1, Mon-Tue wk2)	8	5
Day work D&A	5	5
IIC Catch-up (5 random days - Oct, Nov, Dec)	0	5
Breathing Apparatus Initial - On Call pre course assessment (Eve)	16	18
Breathing Apparatus Initial - On Call version pre course (Sat)	7	12
BA Transferee/Conversion - (1xSTC, 3xL&D)	1	3
Key	Achievable	Not Achievable

Considerations for option 1:

- Does not allow for uplift to meet the requirements of the three-year training prediction for 2023/24, specifically for BA On-Call courses including all additional support courses such as PPV, Guidelines and GTS (where required).
- Does not allow for CPD for instructors to maintain sector competence.
- Does not allow for full annual leave entitlement of Instructors.
- Does not account for support required for apprenticeship and EPA days.
- Does not account for recruitment assessment days.
- Does not account for any increase or decrease in course design requirements coming from N.O.G and fire standards.
- Does not allow for any additional training for changes in operational equipment / location or procedures.
- Limited flexibility to cover absence without impact on course delivery.
- Currently training requirements are being met using additional contract hours.

Option 2 (not recommended)

- Increase BA instructors by three.
- Phased increase of wholetime squad sizes of one Conversion followed by one squad of 12 and one squad of 18.

Course requirements comparison table	2022	2023/2024
BA Combined BA Initial & Fire behaviour, PPV & GTS (WT) - Possible 3	3	2
Breathing Apparatus Combined BA Initial & Fire behaviour (OC)	9	12
BA Guideline course - On Call only - follows initial	10	12
PPV Training - Offensive On Call	7	9
BA Gas Tight Suit / Decon Training Initial (certain On Call)	2	2
Breathing Apparatus Development and Assessment Sessions - Including spares	138	140
DIM officers BA familiarization	3	3
L1 Initial Incident Command - 3 day Wed to Fri	5	*5
CM to WM Incident Command - 3 day (Thur wk1, Mon-Tue wk2)	8	*5
Day work D&A	5	5
IIC Catch-up (5 random days - Oct, Nov, Dec)	0	5
Breathing Apparatus Initial - On Call pre course assessment (Eve)	16	18
Breathing Apparatus Initial - On Call version pre course (Sat)	7	12
BA Transferee/Conversion - (1xSTC, 3xL&D)	1	3
	Key	Not Achievable

* Indicates this can be achieved if the course format is changed. This is due to venue capacity.

Considerations for option 2:

- This will allow for an increase in most course requirements in line with the three-year predicted plan but will be limited due to venue capacity (with courses in their current format).
- This will give an uplift on On-Call BA Initial Courses and support courses such as PPV, Guidelines and GTS (where required).
- This will allow for additional course requirements placed on the department based on alignment to N.O.G.
- This will allow support to be given to recruitment and apprenticeship days.
- This will allow for Instructor CPD.
- This will allow the BA department to meet annual leave entitlements.
- Allows some flexibility for absence without impacting on training delivery.
- Will increase utilisation of venues, primarily WTC that requires a lot of maintenance to keep it on the run but will have less capacity to call this essential work out.
- Increasing the Instructor establishment will take time to implement due to recruitment processes and attainment of qualifications and competencies.

Option 3 (recommended option)

Uplift of 3 BA instructors with a roll out of a conversion course followed by two squads of 18. Open an additional training venue (potentially Harlow) to ease pressure on other venues (WTC) to allow full compliance with predicted training needs.

- Increase BA instructors by three.
- Increase of wholetime squad sizes of one Conversion followed by two squads of 18.
- Open an additional training venue (potentially Harlow) to ease pressure on other venues to allow full compliance with predicted training needs and course design.

Course requirements comparison table	2022	2023/2024
BA Combined BA Initial & Fire behaviour, PPV & GTS (WT) - Possible 3	3	2
Breathing Apparatus Combined BA Initial & Fire behaviour (OC)	9	12
BA Guideline course - On Call only - follows initial	10	12
PPV Training - Offensive On Call	7	9
BA Gas Tight Suit / Decon Training Initial (certain On Call)	2	2
Breathing Apparatus Development and Assessment Sessions - Including spares	138	140
DIM officers BA familiarization	3	3
L1 Initial Incident Command - 3 day Wed to Fri	5	5
CM to WM Incident Command - 3 day (Thur wk1, Mon-Tue wk2)	8	8
Day work D&A	5	5
IIC Catch-up (5 random days - Oct, Nov, Dec)	0	5
Breathing Apparatus Initial - On Call pre course assessment (Eve)	16	18
Breathing Apparatus Initial - On Call version pre course (Sat)	7	12
BA Transferee/Conversion - (1xSTC, 3xL&D)	1	3
	Key	Not Achievable

Considerations for option 3:

This will meet all the considerations of Option 2 above plus:

- This will give flexibility to meet all the predicted training needs for 2023/24.
- Increasing the Instructor establishment will take time to implement due to recruitment processes and attainment of qualifications and competencies.
- This will relieve pressure on WTC allowing for scheduled maintenance so as not to impact on training delivery.
- By reducing pressure on WTC, it will allow more flexibility in course design.

6. Strategic priorities

This proposal is an enabler for the commitment we make in the Fire and Rescue Plan to have 'a safe and diverse workforce who we enable to perform well in a supportive culture underpinned by excellent training'.

7. Operational implications

By meeting the demands for training courses, the additional posts enable the service to meet its commitments in the Strategic Workforce Plan and the Operational Training Plan.

8. Financial implications

The costs (including on-costs) of three BA Instructors are shown in the table below:

	Item	Budget request
3	Breathing Apparatus Instructors - Year one	£197,093.70
	Year two	£201,035.57
	Funding for 2 years - 1April 2023 to 31 March 2025 – Total	£398,129.27

The requirement is to fund these roles for a period of up to two years, from the operational training reserve. The costs for 2023/24 are based upon the pay assumptions presented in the 2023/24 budget at the December 2022 Strategic Board.

9. Legal implications

None associated with this decision sheet.

10. Staffing implications

The proposal recommends an additional three BA Instructors.

There is currently an impact on staff not being able to take their leave, working longer days and not undertaking CPD (see considerations for option 1) which this proposal mitigates.

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	N	Religion or belief	N
Sex	N	Gender reassignment	N
Age	N	Pregnancy & maternity	N
Disability	N	Marriage and Civil Partnership	N
Sexual orientation	N		

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

12. Risks

This proposal is a control measure for SRR150020 and SRR150014:

SRR150020 - Due to a lack of operational training there is a risk that colleagues do not have the appropriate skills to fulfil their role (in line with the Health and Safety at Work etc Act) resulting in serious injury or loss of life.

SRR 1500014 - There is a risk that, through action or non-action by the service, there is a fatality of a member of staff or the public

13. Governance Boards

The Service Leadership Team considered this funding request at its meeting on 9 August 2022, and agreed the recommendation to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for approval.

14. Background papers

Appendix 1 – Increase in course demand.

Decision Process (044-22)

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:.....1/12/22.....

Step 1B – Consultation with representative bodies

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

This proposal does not require consultation.

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 December 2022

Chief Finance Officer

Sign:



.....

Print:Neil Cross.....

Date: .. 1/12/22

Step 3 - Publication

Is the report for publication? **YES/NO**

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

None

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:

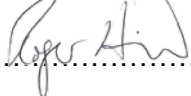
If redaction is required, the Chief Finance Officer or the Monitoring Officer are to sign off that redaction has been completed.

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 / ~~DPFCC~~)

Print: ROGER.HIRST..... Date signed: 21 December 2022

I do not agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: (PFCC / DPFCC)

Print: Date signed:

Appendix 1 – Increase in course demand

