



Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

## Decision Report

**Please ensure all sections below are completed**

**Report reference number:** 054-22

**Government security classification** Not protectively marked

**Title of report:**

**Funding for the Transitional Arrangements at the newly converted stations.**

**Area of county / stakeholders affected:** Converted stations of the On-Call Conversion Project - Dovercourt, Waltham Abbey, Great Baddow and South Woodham Ferrers – Priority Stations.

**Report by :** Laura Taylor

**Date of report:** 1/11/22

**Enquiries to:** Chris Parker, Director of Operations

### 1. Purpose of the report

The On-Call Conversion Project (OCCP) will close on 30 September 2022, after a six-year conversion process which has retired the day crewing model at five stations within Essex. To maintain skill sets and availability at the newly converted stations, we are seeking approval for funding for financial year 2023-24, to support our transitional movements as these become standalone stations working an On-Call (O/C) Duty system. We want to best support the availability of the stations during these transitional periods; therefore, we are recommending extending the current embedded resources in place for a further 12 months.

### 2. Recommendations

We are recommending the extension of embedded resources at the converting stations for a further 12 months for financial year 2023-24. This proposal has been developed on a station-by-station basis with a focus on the current and future status of all new O/C employees. We have considered the numbers of firefighters currently at each station, and what phase of development they are each at and how their skills and experience will develop year on year. This has enabled us to predict the skill sets that will be available at what point in the future, particularly those that will be eligible to be drivers and officers in the future.

This recommendation will allow for those individuals to get the management support and required development time. We also anticipate that the introduction of the Resource Management Unit and Workforce Management System, will enable us greater flexibility and efficiency in supporting converted station, by enabling us to move staff in a more structured way. (Due to be fully implemented by April 23).

The total cost for 2023-24 is £444,857 and this will be funded from the Innovation and Transformation Reserve.

The current development of a full transitional plan (due for completion in Nov 23) will ensure that we are able to remove all additional support from stations by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. If our transition plan identifies the ability to remove support at an earlier opportunity, this will be actioned, which in turn will further reduce the staffing cost identified in this proposal.

### **3. Benefits of the proposal**

If the additional support at the converting stations is removed, this will lead to the availability of those stations dropping significantly. These stations don't have / will not have for some time, officer, and driver capabilities, which, would mean the stations are automatically taken off the run and not be able to respond to incidents. 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 12-month period.

The proposal provides additional assurance that these stations will have the required positions that can guarantee cover and will be able to respond to incidents. It offers development support and guidance to the O/C establishment and the much-required management level at the stations. It will allow our newly converted stations the chance to maintain availability and being on the run as much as possible, which will create a positive culture within the station.

We know and understand the risks and gaps that each station has and will continue to have over the next three years. We are trying to eliminate those risks now, in order to support the conversion transition and ensure all stations are set up with the correct capabilities for it to have the chance to develop and mature as an O/C station. We need to invest in these stations and address these issues now otherwise, as lessons learned have shown us, these stations could still have the same issues four years down the line.

### **4. Background and proposal**

The OCCP has successfully retired five Day Crewed duty systems, converting these to O/C status. These stations have and continue to carry a high level of public interest, and we want to ensure that these stations are supported within the transition period. Each station has a large volume of new O/C personnel, many of whom are yet to be up skilled in the way that we require an O/C Station to be set up to respond, as we would need them to. This is mainly down to the lack of officer and driver capabilities.

Throughout the process of the conversion project along with lessons learnt from the current and previously converted stations, it has become clear that all our converting stations, regardless of the location they fall within the county, will require a supporting element whilst they transition to O/C, as the crews are new and therefore unskilled to that of the required set up.

Availability of the appliances remain a priority and is crucial in the transitional set up of an O/C station. To maintain and achieve this, while each new O/C firefighter develops through each phase, we must add in transitional support for a duration of time in order for those stations to

respond to incidents plus also develop our O/C colleagues with the experienced level of support.

The table below shows the current additional embedded resource at each station, and to which point the current funding ends. The current additional resources was approved within the *Decision Sheet - On-Call Conversion Project – Funding for the Transitional Arrangements 2022-23* – report reference number 02-22.

**Table 1. Current approved embedded resource and date funding will end.**

Station	Station Conversion Date	Additional Interim Resources Required			Total Resource on station	Current Embedded Resource end date
		Watch Manager (WM)	Crew Manager (CM)	FF Driver/s		
Dovercourt	31/03/2020	1	1	3	5	01/04/2023
Waltham Abbey	31/07/2021	0	1	1	2	01/04/2023
Great Baddow	31/01/2022	1	0	1	2	01/04/2023
S. Woodham Ferrers	31/07/2022	1	0	2	3	01/04/2023

To ensure that our converting stations have the sufficient cover and skill sets at each station, we require the extension of additional supporting roles at each station to maintain those skill sets and gaps that we don't currently have within the new establishment.

### Dovercourt

O/C Headcount	Current O/C Establishment			CURRENT Additional WT Embedded Resources until April 2023			PROPOSED Additional WT Embedded Resources for FY 2023-24		
	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	WM	CM	FF Driver	WM	CM	FF Driver
22	10	6	6	1	1	3	1	1	-

- The On-Call Conversion Project (OCCP) successfully converted Dovercourt to O/C status in April 2020. With our transitional support staff currently in post at the station, this has enabled them to maintain the availability of the pump.
- There has been a high level of interest from the local council and community and this needs to be considered when we consider the reduction of the embedded support.
- The earliest point at which the current phase 2 personnel will move into phase 3 will be February 2024, at which point they will be eligible to undertake officer / driver training should they wish to.
- The station has maintained the embedded support since the conversion date in 2020, and with the high number of phase 3s that are at the station, there is no need to maintain the current level of embedded support. Removing four positions will empower those within the current officer and driver levels. This would be reviewed October 2023.

### Waltham Abbey

O/C Headcount	Current O/C Establishment			CURRENT Additional WT Embedded Resources until April 2023			PROPOSED Additional WT Embedded Resources for FY 2023-24		
	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	WM	CM	FF Driver	WM	CM	FF Driver
15	8	-	7	1	1	-	0	0	0

- Waltham Abbey converted to O/C status in July 2021. Whilst there is a high number of O/C employees, the embedded support at the station has enabled the availability of the station to be high, providing those officer and driver positions.
- The station has a high number of phase 3 O/C employees with 3 of these being able to provide the officer skills.
- One phase three is moving out of county shortly and therefore we will lose a driver by the end of 2022.
- There is a high number of phase 1 and it is anticipated that they will not reach phase 3 and eligible for officer / driver training until at the earliest, July 2024
- There is no initial need to maintain the embedded support post April 2023. However, removing these will pose a risk to availability of the station as the current embedded staff provide a good level of cover during the periods that are low on availability.

### Great Baddow

O/C Headcount	Current O/C Establishment			CURRENT Additional WT Embedded Resources until April 2023			PROPOSED Additional WT Embedded Resources for FY 2023-24		
	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	WM	CM	FF Driver	WM	CM	FF Driver
10	5	2	3	1	1	-	2	-	-

- The Station converted on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022. Officer and driver skills have been dependant on the embedded support that are at the station whilst the O/C establishment progress through their development phases.
- By the end of 2022 there will be a total of 4 drivers at the station, but no officers. The current embedded WM will retire early 2023.
- January 2024 is the earliest point at which our current phase 2 personnel can move into the phase 3 space to be eligible to be an officer / driver.
- In order to support the O/C establishment and development of those individuals there needs to be two officers embedded at the station for the medium term.

### South Woodham Ferrers

O/C Headcount	Current O/C Establishment			CURRENT Additional WT Embedded Resources until April 2023			PROPOSED Additional WT Embedded Resources for FY 2023-24		
	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	WM	CM	FF Driver	WM	CM	FF Driver
8	4	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1

- The station is the most recent station to have converted and this was completed on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022.
- There has been and continues to be a community interest with this station converting to O/C and we are looking to continue support to maintain availability post conversion.
- In the current phase 3 establishment there is one officer and one firefighter completing a driver qualification in late October 22. Therefore, there will be 1 officer and 1 driver by the end of 2022.
- There is a need to maintain the transitional crewing arrangement for 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 until the end of 2024. Increasing the embedded resource with an extra Crew Manager / Driver.

In order to provide an overview of the current O/C establishment and the future movements of those currently, please see a prediction map below that shows year-on-year movements of those within each phase and who might reach the point of being eligible for officer and driver

qualifications. This indicates the progress the current O/C establishment will make if they all remain at the stations. This will not include new joiners. This will reflect any known leavers such as retirements – if known.

Current <u>On-Call</u> Establishment as of August 2022				FY 2022-23 April - March					BY 23	FY 2023-24 April - March					BY 24	FY 2024-25 April - March					BY 25				
STATION		Headcount	OIC	Drivers	O/C Movements			P3s WHO & IS		Total	O/C Movements			P3s WHO & IS		Total	O/C Movements			P3s WHO & IS		Total			
					P1	P2	P3	OIC	DRV	O	D	P1	P2	P3	OIC	DRV	O	D	P1	P2	P3	OIC	DRV	O	D
Dovercourt (2 Pumps)		22	4	6	9	5	8	4	6	4	7	0	9	12	4	8	4	8	0	0	21	4	10	4	10
Waltham Abbey		15	4	3	3	5	7	4	3	3	5	0	8	7	3	5	3	5	0	4	11	3	7	3	7
Great Baddow		10	0	3	5	2	3	0	3	0	3	5	1	4	1	3	1	3	0	1	9	2	3	2	3
S. Woodham Ferrers		8	1	0	4	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	4	3	1	3	1	3	0	1	7	3	5	3	5

## 5. Alternative options considered

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

- Option 1** - We do nothing. The current embedded support will be in place until the approved dates of 31 March 2023, at such time, these positions will automatically end at each station (apart from South Woodham Ferrers which will be 31 July 2023). The stations will be stand alone with the current O/C establishment. Most of these stations won't have or have limited skill sets of officers and driver capabilities within that O/C establishment. These stations will keep to the training plan and over time the O/C will develop these skill sets. Availability will be low if the appliances don't have the required skill sets to go to incidents. A risk would be retention of the current establishment and the lack of station management to ensure these development needs and met.
- Option 2** - Once the embedded resources are removed on 31 March 2023, the Service will use Additional Shift Working (ASW), Out-Duty and Day Duty Officers Riding (DDOR) options to support the resources at the converting stations and filling the officer and driver gaps that they will have. This will come at a higher 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. Availability will be unpredictable based on the demand for ASW, DDORs being shared county wide with all other stations.

## 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 embedded support 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 by undertaking the recruitment of new O/C colleagues and supporting them to work with our wholtime embedded support employees.

## 7. Operational implications

The following table provides an overview of the current crewing numbers at the stations. It illustrates what crewing numbers an O/C station requires to function and respond as an O/C

station, along with identifying the shortfall that the stations find themselves currently at. I've indicated the current crewing levels along with what's required.

Status	Station	CURRENT On-Call Crewing No. @ September 22		Standard O/C Station FTE Crewing No. (reasonable resources for availability)		Transition Shortfall for the next 12months		Confidence RAG
<b>ALL CONVERTED</b>	<b>South Woodham Ferrers</b>	Headcount	8	Headcount	14	Headcount	6	
		FTE %	6	FTE %	12	FTE %	6	
		FF on the Run	8	FF on the Run	14	FF on the Run	6	
		Officers	1	Officers	4	Officers	3	
		Drivers	1	Drivers	6	Drivers	5	
		Officer availability per wk (combined)	40 Hours		0	-	-	-
	<b>Great Baddow</b>	Headcount	10	Headcount	14	Headcount	4	
		FTE %	7.5	FTE %	12	FTE %	4.5	
		FF on the Run	10	FF on the Run	14	FF on the Run	4	
		Officers	0	Officers	4	Officers	4	
		Drivers	3	Drivers	6	Drivers	3	
		Officer availability per wk (combined)	0 Hours			-	-	-
	<b>Waltham Abbey</b>	Headcount	15	Headcount	14	Headcount	-1	
		FTE %	11.25	FTE %	12	FTE %	0.75	
		FF on the Run	15	FF on the Run	14	FF on the Run	-1	
		Officers	3	Officers	4	Officers	1	
		Drivers	4	Drivers	6	Drivers	2	
		Officer availability per wk (combined)	320 Hours			-	-	-
	<b>Dovercourt</b>	Headcount	23	Headcount	24	Headcount	1	
		FTE %	17.25	FTE %	18	FTE %	0.75	
FF on the Run		23	FF on the Run	23	FF on the Run	0		
Officers		4	Officers	6	Officers	2		
Drivers		6	Drivers	14	Drivers	8		
Officer availability per wk (combined)		236 Hours			-	-	-	

By placing the embedded support resources at our converting stations, the service is moving people from other stations, and there will be a shortfall from where those individuals are moving from. The positive impact this has operationally, is that the converting stations will be on the run, better availability around the county and better development opportunities for the O/C employees to maintain and upskill their knowledge. Our converting stations form part of our key stations within the county, therefore maintaining good availability in these areas is a priority. Our O/C colleagues will feel valued, and if they have the opportunity to be able to respond to calls, this will positively maintain retention at those stations.

The statistics above are a live picture of what our stations look like versus what they need to have to enable them to operate at a required level.

## 8. Financial implications

The cost of the transitional resources in financial year 2022/23 was £565,015 and has been 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. This is reflected below:-

### FY 2022-23

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 On-Call Conversion Board (SLT membership) agreed that the embedded support should be for a duration of 12 months from the point of conversion – therefore as South Woodham Ferrers were the final station to convert on 31 July 2022, support would be required until the 31 July 2023. It was acknowledged that this fell outside the previously agreed funding.

Since the agreement for the embedded support was approved, South Woodham Ferrers additional support positions changed from what was set out in the table above, to the following:

- South Woodham Ferrers: 1 X WM, 1 X CM, 1 X FF driver – this meant a change to the above costings in the table.
  - Original cost for SWF = £154,388
  - Updates cost to reflect the actual positions = £159,585

This added a total of £5,197 to the costs of that financial year – ending at the end of March 2023.

N.B the costs are based on financial years only. The 12 month date from point of conversion will not affect the proposed extended support costs as these are from April 2023 – March 2024.

The proposed extension of the additional embedded support costings for 2023/24 are indicated in the table below. This will cover the costs for the 12 months, from April 2023. There will be review points incorporated into this and carried out by the Converting Stations Transitional Group. Please note that not all stations require the embedded support or the current number of posts.

### FY 2023-24

Station	Required until	Additional Interim Resources Required			Total resources required	Resource costing for Financial Year 2023-24			
		WM	CM	FF Drv		Watch Manager	Crew Manager	Fire Fighter	Total Cost £
Dovercourt	31/03/2024	1	1	0	2	£60,169	£53,908	-	£114,077
Waltham Abbey	31/03/2024	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	£0
Great Baddow	31/03/2024	1	1	0	2	£60,169	£53,908	-	£114,077
South Woodham Ferrers	31/03/2024	1	2	1	4	£60,169	£107,815	£48,719	£216,703
						<b>£180,507</b>	<b>£215,631</b>	<b>£48,719</b>	<b>£444,857</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 2023/24 budget.

The total cost for 2023-24 is £444,857 and this will be funded from the Innovation and Transformation Reserve.

As you can see from the table above, there is a reduction of embedded staff at Dovercourt, taking it from five to two. There is a removal completely from Waltham Abbey. Continuing with two embedded support positions at Great Baddow, however changing that skill set from a firefighter driver to a crew manager / driver. Increasing the establishment at South Woodham Ferrers from three to four by including an additional crew manager driver.

## 9. Legal implications

Nothing to note.

## 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

As the project is soon to be closing, the risks of the project itself are minimal. Risks for post closure remain as the following:

- Availability at converting stations – there is a risk that if there are limited O/C numbers and/or officer and driver positions, at the converting stations, responding and being available for incidents remains a risk. Therefore, ensuring that there are sufficient skill sets and resources at each station is key.
- Political interest – there is a risk that if availability drops at these stations there will be political concerns raised within the communities. There is a high local community interest within these areas especially Dovercourt and South Woodham Ferrers.
- Retention of the current O/C colleagues. There is a risk that we could lose our current O/C personnel if the station lacks the skill sets that enable the station to be on the run. We currently have O/C colleagues who are progressing throughout the stages and to lose them at this point will effectively be pushing the station back in terms of skills and development.
- Recruitment of new O/C colleagues. There is a risk that we will need to remain focused on recruitment to ensure that if retention decreases the recruitment activity increases.
- Development of the O/C establishment – there is a risk that if this is not monitored this can affect the above. We understand that there are a high number of new O/C personnel



– all requiring that development. We need to ensure that there are appropriate management levels at each watch in order for this to sustain.

**13. Governance Boards**

- On-Call Conversion Board meeting 23 August 2022.

**14. Background papers**

*Decision Sheet - On-Call Conversion Project – Funding for the Transitional Arrangements 2022-23 – report reference number 02-22.*

**Decision Process (054-22)**

**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: ...14 /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)

Consultation takes place at regular monthly meetings between the project team and with the FBU, FRSA and FOA with AM Neil Fenwick chairing

**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 Monitoring Officer.....

Date: .....21/12/2022.....

Chief Finance Officer

Sign: ...  .....

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

Date: .. 14/12/22 .....

**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)

**Background papers not for publication.**

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 / ~~DPFCC~~)

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

I do not agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: ..... (PFCC / DPFCC)

Print: .....      Date signed: .....