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Report Authors	AM Response – James Palmer		
Presented By	Director of Operations – Andy Smith		
Subject	Converted Stations Transitional Update		
Type of Report	Information		
PFCC Action Point No.	N/A	For Publication	Yes

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper is for information purposes only, there are no recommendations being made at this stage. Previous day crewed stations have now converted to On-Call status. All stations are now part of the on-going converted station action plan. Performance is being measured and tracked at the Converted Stations Transitional Board.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report provides an update on progress of the four stations that were the On-Call Conversion Project. We have since transitioned and the review of those stations sit with the Converted Stations Transitional Group. We will still provide a monthly update to the board on the progress of each station.

It should be noted this paper provides coverage figures for Dovercourt but not for the other stations. This is because Dovercourt is the only one of the 4 stations that has been designated as a standalone strategic station.

Station	Status	Conversion Date
<i>Dovercourt</i>	<i>Converted</i>	<i>31 March 2020</i>
<i>Waltham Abbey</i>	<i>Converted</i>	<i>31 July 2021</i>
<i>Great Baddow</i>	<i>Converted</i>	<i>31 January 2022</i>
<i>South Woodham Ferrers</i>	<i>Converted</i>	<i>31 July 2022</i>

BACKGROUND – STATION UPDATES

DOVERCOURT

Availability and Coverage

Availability for June 23:

- First Pump: 81 %
- Second Pump: 0%

This figure represents a drop from the previous two months, for May the first pump was 90% available and the second was 5%. Whilst individual appliance availability has fallen, overall coverage in the area has remained consistent due to the services ability to use our resources effectively.

Coverage: This is the % of time ECFRS has an appliance available to respond to fire calls within the local area.

Coverage for June

- 93%

During June there were 23 incidents in the Dovercourt station area. Dovercourt Pump were available and mobilised to 19 of these incidents (83% of incidents).

Of the 4 incidents where Dovercourt pumps were unavailable, the station was covered by additional pumps, and these responded to the incidents.

During June, there were no incidents in the Dovercourt Station area where Dovercourt station was not covered, and all incidents in the Dovercourt Station area were responded to by pumps situated at Dovercourt Station.

Establishment:

FTE (17)	Headcount	# Employees on the run	# off the run (long-term absence, sabbatical, etc).	# OICs	#BA FF	#FF (non-BA)	# FF Drivers	# OIC Drivers
17	17	16	1	5	12	5	7	6

WT OT Used this Period	Total Cost	Availability of the Appliance this Period (%)
June 2023	100hrs	11P1 - 81% 11P2 – 0%

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Employee Progress Status	8	2	7 including WT/OC

# Applications in Athena	# Progressed Applications	# Passed Pre-Fit	# Confirmed for next OC new recruit squad
8	2	1	1 confirmed for next squad

Issues / Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA deficiencies - Regularly riding BA deficient with delays for additional appliances, increased pressure on Officers, increased risk. • Availability of training courses • Only current drivers available are OIC's. • Potential for over-saturation of Phase 1 FF's therefore managers have been asked to progress current phase 1 FF's before recruiting additional. • Reduction in 11P2 availability due to sickness/fitech of others has led to a dip in morale as the crew are unable to get on as many calls. This is being managed and a new shift system is being implemented for WT crew. • Removal of WT support crew will see a large reduction in appliance availability, crew progress objectives have been set to develop on-call crew.
Key Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the current crewing model to better suit the station needs. • New crewing system implemented on 10th July 2023. The new system is 48 hours on and 6 days off.
Additional Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crew progress objectives to be completed by April 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Phase 1 – Phase 2 = minimum of 3 progressed ○ Phase 2 – Phase 3 = minimum of 2 progressed ○ Drivers = minimum of 1 new driver • The above will offer the following forecasted figures with the removal of WT support crew and based on the current crew available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 15 x on-call ○ 4 x OIC ○ 6 x Driver (4 of these OIC) ○ Phase 1 x 5 ○ Phase 2 x 5 ○ Phase 3 x 5

On call support crew employee engagement activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly one – to –one session held. Discussions centred around movements of crew in April 2024. • New shift pattern agreed and implemented from the 10th July 2023. The new pattern is 48 hours on and 6 days off. This ensures that the embedded officers can provide greater levels of on-call cover whilst still being grey book compliant. • Support crew objective set for on-call crew progression. • Additional support offered for SSRP completion.
On-Call employee engagement activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional training in place (Tue & Sun) • PDRPro support sessions continuing and monthly sign off sessions in place. Progress rates continue to rise as a result. • 8 x on-call applicants in the athena system. • 1 x on-call recruit now safe to ride and providing availability. • 1 x OC P1 FF will be on August WT squad. • Prevention and protection activity as arranged by station management team. • New WT shift pattern should see improvement in 11P2 availability therefore offering more potential to ride the appliances and gain experience.
On-Call conversion / recruitment activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Station open day planned for 29th July to further push recruitment. • A number of applicants sitting in the Athena system are being contacted for suitability of station requirements. • Ongoing discussion with Galloper Wind Farm around BCP arrangements but also scoping recruitment in the same manner as Trinity House.

WALTHAM ABBEY

Availability

Availability for June 23: 54% .This represents a slight increase from the previous month of May when availability was 52%.

FTE	Headcount	# Employees on the run	# off the run (long-term absence, sabbatical, etc).	# OICs	#BA FF	#FF (non-BA)	# FF Drivers	# OIC Drivers
10.5	13	11	1 LTS, (1 on WT squad)	2 W/T	6	5	1 WT	1 W/T

ASW Used this Period	ASW Total Cost	Availability of the Appliance this Period (%)
One (from 89)	9 hrs	53.5% June

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Employee Progress Status	7	1	5 (3 x WT)

# Applications in Athena	# Progressed Applications	# Passed Pre-Fit	# Confirmed for next OC new recruit squad
0	0	0	0

Issues / Risks	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High reliance on two managers being available. Outposted from base stations and operating a 2,2,4 shift system aligned to white watch and On-Call contracts, to keep the appliance on the run. These individuals may decide to take posts elsewhere in the service, know their working hours/ pay claims are transparent and in line with service values. • Lack of drivers – Everything is being done to maximise availability by having the right people in the right places, but due to the speed in which people can progress through to Phase 3 and become drivers. • DDORs are requested on a weekly – Challenges exist with the departments being able to release their officers due to high workloads. • Reliance on the wholetime two outposted officers is still critical to the availability being offered by the station. Current data being captured locally suggests that availability would be 0% without these officers and driver support. • The two wholetime officers also carry out on call duties at this station – They need to undertake and provide evidence of correct rest periods within their dual contracts. (Currently trailing 2,2,4 shift system) • Availability training courses - BA/ Mod 2 RTC courses for Phase 1's to speed up progression. • Time frames to train individuals to phase 2 – Training and Development have put on additional courses following investment commands need to prioritise individuals for training.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-Call ASW requested, (None) Policy restrictions prevent this happening as frequently as one would like. Command GMs are working with Rep Bodies to resolve this. • Loss of two FF's (one on current Essex WT squad, another starting with Herts) • One FF long term sick - illness may prevent him from returning.
Key Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both embedded individuals have started a recognised whole time 2,2, 4 shift as a trial for transparency (from 1st May), with their on - call contract availability thereafter. (They have stated they do not wish to undertake a nine-day fortnight, which they were originally taken post under) • To temporarily attach a driver from wholetime station to support availability on a nine-day fortnight system. A driver has been oved from Loughton on a temp basis. • Support embedded officers who also undertake on-call, ensuring they receive clear rest periods that the service can evidence, giving them an improved work life balance – Ensure they work to agreed and recognised WT shifts and on call hours thereafter in line with working time regs. • Continue to utilise additional training to support development of staff. • Continue to request DDORs & on-call to on-call ASWs • Discussions required to assess financial costings of further WT secondments and different ways of working to support appliance availability and training development of on-call, up to March 2024. Options to look at utilising personnel on dual contracts to maximise availability.
Additional Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Figures and data on performance continuing to be managed and captured locally. This is to support any decisions on when to remove embedded officers, allowing the decision to be made at the earliest opportunity, but with the minimum risk to the station and availability. • Local managers developing a long term plan for Waltham Abbey, taking in to account the removal of the embedded officers, and the operating of the station once this has happened. This plan will focus on what can be done over the coming months to ensure availability is maximised once the embedded officers are removed in April 24.

GREAT BADDOW

Availability

Availability for June 2023: 44 %. This is remaining relatively static. For May availability was 47%.

SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS

Availability

Availability for June 2023: 55%. This is a slight decrease on the previous period for May when availability was 62%.

Great Baddow and SWF Establishment:

Establishment is being shown in one area for both Great Baddow and South Woodham Ferrers. This is due to the local management utilising resources across both stations and moving teams around to maximise availability for one or other appliance rather than on occasions having both pumps off the run.

Station	FTE	Headcount	# off the run (long-term absence, sabbatical, etc).	# OICs	#BA FF	#FF (non-BA)	# FF Drivers	# OIC Drivers
GB	11	9	1	1x T/WM	7	2	3	1
SWF	9	12	0	2 x T/CM 1x WM	7	2	1	2

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Employee Progress Status Great Baddow	3	2	4
Employee Progress Status South Woodham Ferrers	0	4	3

Station	# Applications in Athena	# Progressed Applications	# Passed Pre-Fit	# Confirmed for next OC new recruit squad
Great Baddow	3	3	0	0
South Woodham Ferrers.	0	3	3	2

Issues / Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to recruit and develop suitable individuals to perform all roles, particularly crew/watch managers and drivers will create a significant risk to appliance availability, in both the medium and long-term. Although funding has been provided for embedded personnel to carry out such roles until April 2024, there is a foreseen risk that appliance availability and staff morale could be further affected if withdrawn without adequate officers and drivers to replace them. SWF has recently lost 3 firefighters, 2 were successful with W/T application and 1 resigned due to a change in primary employment.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GB has seen 2x firefighter resign due to changes in primary employment. • 1x embedded officer at GB will retire in July plans to backfill are underway.
<p>Key Decisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data will continue to be captured locally to support an evidence-based approach. • Additional On-Call training programme to support development of FFs. • Additional training nights to optimise development. • Currently, Great Baddow & South Woodham Ferrers have a combined the embedded officers of 2x WM, 2x CM and 2x Drivers. A 'buddy' system has been introduced across both stations which enables crews to work across both stations to optimise appliance availability. Both stations will continue to work together post April 2024. • To advertise for the Embedded WM Role in the very near future to replace retiring WM (July 23) • A recruitment campaign to commence in the summer. • Work on-going with local businesses to enhance recruitment opportunities.
<p>Predicted skills gaps and control measures required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWF & GB are recruiting steadily. The challenge is progression through the phases, drivers and officer qualifications to provide adequate availability post April 2024. • Optimise DDOR, On-Call to On-Call ASWs, Mixed Crewing. • All drivers and officers at SWF are either embedded WT staff or work for the service in their primary role – either day work or dual rider, which impacts on availability. • Review development pathways and introduce activity-based progression (P1 – P3) as opposed to 'time served'. • SWF - October 2024 would be the earliest next On-Call driver based on our existing staff This also assumes they complete their pathway in the shortest possible time and immediately get allocated a driving course as soon as they pass. Early 2026 would be the earliest next On-Call OIC based on our existing staff. • Continue workforce succession planning to predict skills gaps and subsequent training requests. • Following the decision to remove embedded officer in April 2024 it is predicted, based on current development pathways, experience and skill sets operational availability will be in region of 27% at Great Baddow and 65% at South Woodham Ferrers. However, with the introduction of the 'buddy' system, improvements to operational availability are foreseeable.
<p>Next Steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturday drop-in sessions, meeting the crews to attract new recruits and build relationships with the local community. • On-line myth busting/ drop-in session to reach out to those in the community who don't have a full awareness on how the OC works and how rewarding it can be. • Continue to promote the 'buddy' system to optimise availability across multiple stations. • Community First Aid sessions at SWF to promote educate the local community and promote the station. • Continue to work with Chelmsford Strategic CSP (Onechelmsford) to promote recruitment at both stations. • Reviewing the restrictions on P2 firefighters driving in blue light conditions • Reviewing the Annual Leave policy pertaining to OC • Revisiting Mixed Crewing Policy as in interim to the Crewing Policy • Dual riders working from home OC station when short of riders and W/T availability is adequate.

Wider Update

- **Rep Body Engagement**

Rep body engagement is taking place through regular updates. The FBU have requested and been provided with additional information around costs incurred by the service to support availability. Command GMs are working with Rep Bodies to agree new ways of working in relation to crewing and leave.

- **Localised Training**

The Service continues 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 will utilise our locations to best support the converting station for this year.

RISKS

Risks are all linked to the station specific sections of this paper.

LINKS TO FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

These are the following links to the FRP:

- **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.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are financial impacts associated with the transitional arrangements at all four stations. The embedded resources funding was approved, and budget secured for 2023-24.

As the transition of all stations has now taken place, any additional support above the current level of staff that is included within the project PID, will need to be sourced from BAU, rather than additional funding found from the project itself. This is managed by the Station Manager / Group Manager responsible for the converted station and monitored by the Converting Stations – Transitional Group – as per below.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Nothing to note.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

A budget paper was approved by SLT, requesting the embedded support need for the 23/24 FY, for each converted station. Considerations will be documented around the embedded support required to ensure officer and driver capabilities at all converted stations. We know these stations have a high number of new personnel who don't have those skill sets currently and without the driver and officer positions – this will impact the appliances being on the run.

Command GMs have produced transitional plans around how each station will work towards no embedded officers from April 24. You will note the number of staff we are processing through recruitment is now being tracked in this paper.

One station is utilising current staff in the command to support the converted station. This is a short term measure and is cost neutral to the service but is seeing benefits.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

The actions being taken will not have a disproportionate impact on individuals with protected characteristics (as defined within the Equality Act 2010), when compared to all other individuals and will not disadvantage people with protected characteristics.

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		

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.

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

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There are none specific to this report.

FUTURE PLANS

The On-Call liaison team has been approved financial and recruitment has concluded for the Station Manager (SM). That SM will report to the Group Manager from the Northwest Command and will run a work stack where tasks across all commands will be allocated. The team have produced a departmental plan for delivery and prioritisation over the next period.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AND APPENDICES