



Classification	Official		
Meeting	Performance and Resources Board	Agenda no.	14
Meeting Date	29th September 2023		
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
Dovercourt	Converted	31 March 2020
Waltham Abbey	Converted	31 July 2021
Great Baddow	Converted	31 January 2022
South Woodham Ferrers	Converted	31 July 2022

BACKGROUND – STATION UPDATES

DOVERCOURT

Availability and Coverage

Availability for August 23:

- First Pump: 84%
- Second Pump: 12%

This figure represents an increase from the previous month for both pumps which has increase from 80 and 9% respectively. Whilst individual appliance availability remains a challenge, overall coverage in the area has remained constant 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 August

- 99%

Establishment:

Workforce Progress Report

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 (WT course)	5	12	5	7	6

WT OT Used this Period	Total Cost	Availability of the Appliance this Period (%)
August 2023	88hrs	11P1 – 83.4% 11P2 – 12.2%

	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
0	5	1	1 confirmed for next squad

On call support crew employee engagement activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly one – to –one sessions continue. Discussions continue to be centred around movements of crew in April 2024. • Availability mapping taking place to forecast availability after April 2024. • Training courses have been requested for WT crew that have base posts from April 2024. • Training continues with the on-call to ensure objectives set my SM are achieved.
On-Call employee engagement activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-call applicants in Athena system have been processed and liaison with on-call recruitment team remains good. • 11P2 availability is improving.
On-Call conversion / recruitment activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All applicants in Athena have been processed and successful candidates informed. • Recruitment for Dovercourt remains closed until the current progressed candidates have been processed and we can understand establishment numbers.

Issues / Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apart from 1 the only current drivers available are OIC's • Potential for over-saturation of Phase 1 FF's therefore managers have been asked to ensure Phases 1 and 2 progress is monitored and relevant forward planning for courses is considered. • Some concerns have been raised as to whether the station is ready to lose the WT support crew however, forecasting work is taking place to plan for the future. • Work is on-going with the police and crews to develop more synergistic ways of working.
Key Decisions	N/A

Additional Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crew progress objectives to be completed by April 2024: Phase 1 – Phase 2 = minimum of 3 progressed Phase 2 – Phase 3 = minimum of 2 progressed Drivers = minimum of 1 new driver
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WALTHAM ABBEY

Availability

Availability for August: 29% this has declined from 49% the previous month.

Workforce Progress Report

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	10	2 LTS, (1 Just started WT London – hopeful will return)	2 W/T	8	4	1 WT	1 W/T

ASW Used this Period	ASW Total Cost	Availability of the Appliance this Period (%)
0	0	29% August

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Employee Progress Status	6	2	5 (3 x WT)

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

Issues / Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very high reliance on two embedded managers being available to keep this 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. Availability was lower this period due to both embedded officers being on leave. 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
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	<p>and become drivers, (Current two phase 3's will not undertake driving) It is not going to be an issue that's resolved quickly. Additional driver requested from the command for a temporarily detached to increase availability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • The two wholetime embedded 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 – increase training dates with qualified instructors to decrease time periods. • On-Call ASW requested, • Loss of one FF's (one on current London WT, (currently trying to encourage him to return to on-call) • One FF long term sick - illness may prevent him from returning. Other LTS hopefully will return in October.
<p>Key Decisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both embedded individuals are currently on whole time 2,2, 4 shift as a trial for transparency (from 1st May), with their on - call contract availability their after. (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. • 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 DDOR's & on-call to on-call ASW's.
<p>Additional Information</p>	<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. • SM Waltham Abbey working on a longer term plan post removal of embedded officers from April 24.

GREAT BADDOW

Availability

Availability for August 23: 27 % this has dropped from 45% last month due to annual leave commitments.

SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS

Availability

Availability for July 2023 62 % this is a slight increase on the previous period which was 60%.

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.

Workforce Progress Report (excluding embedded officers)

Station	FTE	Headcount	# off the run (long-term absence, sabbatical, etc).	# OICs	#BA FF	#FF (non-BA)	# FF Drivers	# OIC Drivers
GB	11	10	2	1x T/WM	6	3	4	1
SWF	6	14	0	1 x WM 2 x T/CM	9	2	2	2

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Employee Progress Status 33	3	2	4
Employee Progress Status 32	3	5	6

Predicted Forecast – 31st March 2024

Station	FTE	Headcount	# Employees on the run	# off the run (long-term absence, sabbatical, etc).	# OICs	#BA FF	#FF (non-BA)	# FF Drivers	# OIC Drivers
GB	11	12	12	0	1x WM 1 T/CM	8	433	4	1
SWF	6	14	14	0	1 x WM 2 x CM	12	0	2	2

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
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Employee Progress Status 33	4	2	5
Employee Progress Status 32	2	5	6

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. • Restrictions to increase GB turnout time to improve recruitment due to proximity of Chelmsford. Recently declined 4 applicants outside of the 5-minute turnout time. • 1x Embedded WM recently retired. Advert to recruit is live
Key Decisions	<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 FF's. • 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.
Predicted skills gaps and control measures required	<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 • Consideration to basing the removal of embedded officers on predicted impact to appliance availability. Review the removal of embedded officer numbers before having people in place with the right skills. • Optimise DDOR, On-Call to On-Call ASW's, Mixed Crewing. • Review development pathways and introduce activity-based progression (P1 – P3) as opposed to 'time served'. • 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.

Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local business engagement. • Saturday drop-in sessions, meeting the crews to attract new recruits and build relationships with the local community. • Social media campaigns. Creating more profiles on the firefighters following positive feedback • 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. • Continue to work with Chelmsford Strategic CSP (OneChelmsford) to promote recruitment at both stations. Have spoken to OneChelmsford around possibility of people working from our station during the day however this is difficult as Chelmsford either want them working from their office or home address. • Leaflet the area residential address as one Phase 3 FF joined as a result of a leaflet. • Explore the advertisement board at Vineyards tailored to GB. • Liaise with Performance and Data to look at the turnout times and how far we can be flexible on these. Compile a map to look at target audience.
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Wider Update

- **Representative Body Engagement**

Representative Bodies 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.

- **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.

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 will be commencing soon 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