



<b>Classification</b>	<b>Official</b>		
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Performance and Resources Board</b>	<b>Agenda no.</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>		
<b>Report Authors</b>	<b>AM Response – James Palmer</b>		
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Director of Operations – Andy Smith</b>		
<b>Subject</b>	<b>On Call Remediation Plans including Converting Stations Update</b>		
<b>Type of Report</b>	<b>Information</b>		
<b>PFCC Action Point No.</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>For Publication</b>	<b>Yes</b>

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This paper is primarily for information purposes only. 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. This paper also outlines the remediation plans in place for standalone on call strategic stations where availability is below the expected level. Those stations are Braintree, Witham, and Canvey Island.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The report provides an update on the progress of those stations that ECFRS has converted from Day Crewed to On-Call as part of the On-Call conversion project. It also outlines progress and plans at 3 on-call stations that ECFRS has designated as standalone strategic stations where availability is below target.

There has been a variance in availability this period with some increases and some decreases. This demonstrates the flux within on call and that the service direction and aspiration of using their resources more dynamically and effectively is the right approach. Local teams have set out in another paper what the resource requirements are for Dovercourt for the next 12 months. Of note this will require no additional funding and attract no funding requests.

The service continues with the strategic direction of moving people not appliances. This is demonstrated clearly in this paper with an increase in most of the pump availability whilst decreasing the number of standby moves carried out by appliances. For note: In February 2024 the service carried out fewer standby moves than in previous months and furthermore the service has slowed the rate of overspend for on call. This overspend was largely due to the number of standby moves and this slowing of overspend

demonstrates the effectiveness of the availability work and the direction of moving people not appliances.

### **Key Headlines:**

#### Dovercourt:

Availability has increased for the first appliance albeit there has been a drop in second pump availability. Coverage remains on target for the period at 98%, this ensures that the communities of Dovercourt have an appliance available to respond to calls most of the time. Plans are in place to utilise crews from USAR to cover shortfalls at Dovercourt where possible. This has not been able to be used frequently however it remains an option for the station.

Focussed effort on the following key areas, reducing the timelines for the pathways between the phases of competency, increasing recruitment, increasing the number of specialist training courses for the staff.

#### Canvey Island:

The station has seen increased availability for the first appliance in this period. This has been due largely to the work of the teams to ensure the right resources are available at the right time but also utilising existing staff from other stations to maintain availability with no detriment on their station.

Key areas of focus for this period are increasing the speed at which development firefighters can move through the phases and become competent more quickly. An agile workforce is being utilised and the ethos of moving people not appliances is working well at Canvey Island.

#### South Woodham:

Availability has dropped this month despite recent recruitment activity. This is due in part to the lag in skills from recruitment to competent status. The work across South Woodham and Great Baddow has yielded increased availability across both stations. The removal of embedded officers in April will have an impact however the service is confident that the approach being taken will ensure this is minimal.

#### Great Baddow:

Recent recruitment activity has resulted in an increase of numbers. Crews are actively seeking to recruit new joiners by engaging with community and carrying out leaflet drops. Station morale is high with enthusiasm for the 1st April.

#### Braintree:

Availability has decreased across both pumps, this is due to the on-going employee relation cases which are expected to be resolved soon. Recruitment has increased, local managers are prioritising not just numbers but recruiting the right people with the right levels of availability. Key areas of focus are to prioritise attendance at core skills courses, reducing the timelines through the phases, individual targeted availability

reviews. The local managers are confident that long term this will result in sustained increases in availability across both pumps.

Witham:

Availability has dipped for both pumps due largely to key staff being out of the workplace. Recruitment levels remain consistent, and the team have been working tirelessly to increase availability. A key member of staff has been out of work for the period however he is due to return shortly so it is expected that availability will continue to be sustained at this level or increase.

There has been an increase in the level of mixed crewing at this station for the period and increased levels of day duty officers riding.

Waltham Abbey:

There remains a high level of dependency on the embedded officers. This will continue beyond April when the funding is withdrawn however the Southwest Command area will continue to use its teams locally to ensure that the availability at Waltham Abbey is maintained during this transition period. This has been evidenced by a significant increase this month.

### BACKGROUND:

Within the current response strategy ECFRS has designated 12 stations as stand-alone Strategic Stations and an additional 7 pairs of joint strategic stations. This is key to ensuring the service optimises its response times. This paper sets out the progress of all stations highlighted. There have been some improvements for the period and some drops. This shows the variance that exists within the on-call model and is why the service is working hard to move people not appliances and use our resources in a more efficient way in order that the service provided to the public is not impacted.

Station	First Pump Availability % And comparison against previous month	Second Pump Availability % where applicable and comparison against previous month
Dovercourt	87 +4	0 -1
Canvey	82 +7	4 -4
South Woodham Ferrers	59 -16	
Great Baddow	38 -3	
Braintree	82 -7	1 -18
Witham	59 -11	0 -3
Waltham Abbey	74 +15	

Availability has dipped for some stations in this paper albeit they have stabilised from significant increases last month.

Availability has varied across all stations this month and where there are drops these are due to key members of staff being out of the workplace. Most notably at Witham. Dovercourt has had continued improvements this month for the first pump and demonstrates the hard work that is taking place with the crews at that station. A separate paper has been produced to outline the requirements for this station for the next 12-month period. This will ensure that availability improves and ensures there are resources in place to develop the staff. This paper (which has been submitted to SLT under a

separate cover) is cost neutral to the service and will ensure the previous agreements to remove transitional funding can be maintained.

The previously outlined employee relation cases are still on-going, however the teams at both Braintree and Witham have continued to move the remediation plan forward and it is expected these cases will begin to resolve in the short-term leading to increases in availability.

ECFRS has developed a wider availability improvement plan (this is shared in a separate paper). The remediation plans set out in detail which parts of the availability plan are being used specifically at each of these stations.

## **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**

The budgetary impacts of embedded officers for transitional arrangements will cease at the end of the 23/24 financial year. No additional funding has been requested in the budget setting for 24/25. However, Dovercourt will require additional resources for the next 12 months to secure availability. This will be absorbed in the business-as-usual budget for 24/25. This is set out in a previous paper to SLT.

The availability action plan that the ECFRS has developed has led to times when an individual has been moved rather than a whole appliance. This delivers benefits to the service in the form of increased cover at a lower cost. This will be reported on further as the plan develops.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Nothing to note.

## **STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

This paper sets out the plans all the command teams are taking to ensure greater levels of availability at their stations. This is inextricably linked to the Availability Action Plan and the key points from that plan are highlighted in the remediation plans.

## **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**

Future plans for all stations have been set out in previous iterations of this paper.

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AND APPENDICES**

**Dovercourt funding paper.**