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Subject	On Call Remediation Plans including Converting Stations Update		
Type of Report	Information		
PFCC Action Point No.	N/A	For Publication	Yes

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 albeit most stations have seen a stabilisation or increase in availability with only 2 pumps seeing a decrease. 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 and Waltham 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 March 2024 the service carried out fewer standby moves than in previous months, alongside this the service has seen increased levels of Day Duty Officers Riding and

Mixed Crewing. 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. The service is cognisant of the financial pressures that exist within the response budget however will continue the direction of travel to ensure that availability is not impacted by continuing to use its resources more effectively.

Key Headlines:

Dovercourt:

Availability has increased for both appliances for the period albeit the second pump continues to be a challenge for the teams. This is due in part to the large number of development firefighters at this station. 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. Dovercourt is a station which has seen increased levels of pace in which firefighters are moving through the phases of development.

Coverage remains on target for the period at 98%.

Canvey Island:

The station has seen a stabilisation in relation to availability for the first appliance in this period and an increase for the second appliance. 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.

Coverage is on target for the period at 98%.

South Woodham:

Availability has increased this month on the back of recent recruitment activity. The work across South Woodham and Great Baddow has meant the local teams have more fluidity in how resources are used across both stations. This is a medium-term measure that will be continually reviewed as recruitment increases. 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 and the ability to demonstrate the success of being stand alone as an on-call station. Availability has dipped for the period despite the recruitment activities this is attributed to officer numbers at the station, and the time it takes to identify and train new officers.

Braintree:

Availability has decreased slightly for the first pump but has increased for the second pump. This is due to the on-going employee relation cases which are expected to be resolved shortly. 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 this has been evidenced by a significant increase in first pump availability from a low of 32% in August.

Coverage is on target for the period at 98%.

Witham:

Availability has increased for the first pump and the second pump remains at 0% this is 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.

Coverage is at 97% for the period which is 1 percentage point below target.

Waltham Abbey:

There has been a marked increase in availability for Waltham Abbey in the period, 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.

Coverage is on target for the period at 98%. Waltham Abbey is a joint strategic station, so this figure is for Waltham Abbey and Loughton.

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	91 +4	5 +5
Canvey	82 no change	6 +2
South Woodham Ferrers	62 +3	
Great Baddow	33 -5	
Braintree	79 -3	5 +4
Witham	73 +14	0 no change
Waltham Abbey	85 +10	

Availability has improved across most stations for the period with a slight decrease at Braintree and Great Baddow for the period. The trend is one of continued improvements and it is expected this will continue.

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. This availability plan is now embedded into BAU and the remaining activities will be continued through those teams.

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. Waltham Abbey is also continuing with embedded officers into the current financial year. This will also not require new funding and will be absorbed into the current response budget.

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.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

None linked 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

Response Strategy Update – Refer to Agenda Item 10.