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Report Authors	AM Response – James Palmer		
Presented By	Director of Operations – Andy Smith		
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 with some stations seeing an increase and others 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. Of note the service target of 98% coverage was met for the month of April and only two of the stations referenced in this paper did not reach that target and they achieved 97% coverage.

The service continues with the strategic direction of moving people not appliances. This is demonstrated clearly in this paper, with an increase in pump availability, whilst decreasing the number of standby moves carried out by appliances. This decrease in standby moves is now consistent and April had the lowest number of standby moves this year.

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 efficiently.

Key Headlines:

Dovercourt:

Availability has increased for the second appliance for the period and has slightly decreased for the first appliance. Recruitment remains strong and there is currently a recruitment freeze in place to allow time to sift the high number of candidates that have already applied.

The challenge remains to progress development firefighters through the phases and the expected length of time to achieve this. Every effort is being made, to ensure that this is managed effectively and efficiently.

Plans are in place to utilise personnel 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 are ongoing in 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 staff. Dovercourt is a station that 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 an increase in availability for both appliances this is due largely to the team balancing resources more effectively to ensure that the right balance of skills and personnel are available 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 at 99% which is one percentage point above target for the period.

South Woodham:

Availability has decreased this month despite successful recruitment activity, this is due to the Easter leave period and a shortage of specialist skills. The local teams are exploring options to ensure this dip in availability doesn't continue and will present

options to the AM Response shortly. 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.

Great Baddow:

The appliance has seen a drop in availability for the period, this is due in part to the Easter leave period and the shortage of key skills across the station specifically officers. Recent recruitment is leading to an increase in numbers. However, the challenge remains, in terms of moving staff through the pathways to competent status. Resources are still being shared with South Woodham Ferrers, which has enabled the service to keep one pump on the run between these two stations, when previously there would have been none.

Braintree:

Availability has increased for both pumps. This is due to the hard work and dedication of the local crews and the willingness to explore new approaches. Recruitment has increased, local managers are prioritising not just numbers but recruiting the right people with the right levels of availability. This is showing an increase despite key members of staff needing to take some time away from the workplace for primary employment commitments.

Worthy of note is that Braintree is the sixth highest performing station in the period, for total number of Home Fire Safety Check Completion.

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 2023.

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

Witham:

Availability has decreased 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. It has been a challenging month for Witham with key members of staff remaining out of the workplace and two additional members of staff resigning. The team are focussing on recruitment and on moving people through the pathways. The situation with the leavers has left a shortage of drivers on station which is being managed.

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 one percentage point below target.

Waltham Abbey:

There has been a marked decrease in availability for Waltham Abbey in the period, there remains a high level of dependency on the embedded officers and they have both had to take some time out of the workplace in this period. The key skill set that is deficient at Waltham Abbey is drivers. The local teams are working hard to resolve this and the command have prioritised some staff at Waltham Abbey over others in the command for these courses.

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	88 -3	8 +3
Canvey	91 +9	15 +9
South Woodham Ferrers	50 -12	
Great Baddow	22 -11	
Braintree	81 +3	81 +8
Witham	62 -11	0 no change
Waltham Abbey	66 -19	

Availability has decreased this month for five pumps, increased for five pumps, with one pump remaining unchanged.

The removal of embedded officers took effect this month and the stations that saw a dip were expected to dip. The teams are working to ensure continued prioritisation on courses and increasing levels of recruitment.

Fluctuating leave continues to impact on availability. Work is continuing to implement a new leave policy, with a view to improve this position.

ECFRS has developed a wider availability improvement plan (which has previously been 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		

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

Response Strategy Update.