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communities

Information Note

**Proposed Fire Control
Duty System 2024**

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide information to Fire Control staff, on the proposed new Fire Control Duty System.

1.2 One of the Proposals within the CRMP 2022-2026, states:

SSC38.1: Use the outcomes from the independent resource review to develop options for improving our emergency response cover to meet current and future risks and demands.

1.3 The Senior Head of Operations conducted a Configuration Review that presented various potential configurations for Cleveland Fire Brigade's future. Among the alternatives examined, was a thorough assessment of the Fire Control Duty System, which is currently facing adverse effects attributable to several factors, detailed later in this document.

1.4 Several Design Principles were set for the review. With a focus specifically on the Fire Control Duty System, the following design principles included:

- Legally compliant.
- Flexible, efficient, and effective use of staff.
- Improvements in the use of operational response assets.
- Aligns to the CRMP, Strategic Goals, Outcomes and Service Plans.
- Enables the efficient and effective delivery of the required services and functions.
- Provides delivery assurance and enables the development of sustainable appropriate levels of confidence and trust.
- Maintains assurance and manages risk.

1.5 In 2016, an internal review of Fire Control suggested a reduction in the staffing establishment for the function, recommending a decrease from twenty to sixteen positions. This recommendation was subsequently integrated into the 2018-2022 Community Integrated Risk Management Plan.

'In consideration of the reduced demand profile (5% in 2016/17 and 40% over the last ten years); the average number of incidents being only 22 per day; and only 4% of the fire control operators time being spent on operational incidents: we will reduce the establishment within Fire Control from 20 to 16 fire control operators.'

1.6 The measures put in place in July 2019 led to a decrease in the establishment to 16 positions, with only three Fire Control Operators on duty at any given time, a reduction from the previous four. To enhance resilience, the On-Call staffing model was introduced, and several staff members (equivalent to 3 full-time positions) were appointed as Fire Control Operators.

- 1.7 Although the current duty system is Grey Book compliant, and in line with employment legislation and national terms and conditions of service, since the implementation of the new staffing arrangements difficulties have existed regarding the maintenance of minimum staffing.
- 1.8 Measures taken to address the staffing difficulties have included the re-allocation of Grey Shifts and Blue Tours, the appointment of a sector-competent Fire Control Station Manager in August 2022, additional appointments of On-Call Fire Control Operators and temporary transfers across the four watches. Although improvements have been seen, staffing difficulties have remained under the current model.
- 1.9 The context of any future changes is to ensure that all Brigade duty systems supports the efficient and effective delivery of the CRMP.
- 1.10 The current Fire Control duty system exhibits both strengths and weaknesses. The Configuration Review that has been undertaken measured its performance in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, and impact on people. The review has identified areas within the current Fire Control duty system where inefficiencies exist, leading to a recommendation for necessary changes.
- 1.11 To ensure the most efficient use of resources, all proposals will comply with relevant employment legislation and national terms and conditions of service.
- 1.12 This proposal is subject to consultation between the Brigade (ELT) and the recognised Representative Body (FBU).
- 1.13 An indicative implementation for the proposed duty system is the 1st of January 2024, however, this is subject to consultation and negotiation between ELT and the FBU.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Strategic Lead on the project was the Assistant Chief Fire Officer Director of Community Protection, and the author of the Configuration Review was the Senior Head of Operations (Area Manager).
- 2.2 The approach taken during the Configuration Review included:
- Baseline Review of current position
 - Analysis of alternative staffing model/duty system
 - Analysis of each system against the NFCC Working Patterns Toolkit and Assessment
 - Duty system options
 - Proposal Impact Analysis
- 2.3 Once the review was concluded, CFB's Executive Leadership Team were presented with the proposal. The options were carefully considered and balanced against efficiency, effectiveness, and economy.
- 2.4 An indicative timetable has been included in the review with a predicted implementation date of 1st January 2024. This will be subject to formal consultation and negotiation with the representative body.
- 2.5 The review considered the cost of implementation of each of the options presented in the review, with the recommendations being presented, taking account of the efficiency and effectiveness of the proposal.
- 2.6 This proposal forms one of several recommendations that are a result of the findings from a wide-scale Configuration Review, that was completed against the following objectives:
- To identify a range of options to ensure a more flexible, efficient, and effective use of staff, appliances, and equipment.
 - Deliver improvements in the use of operational response assets.
 - Identify opportunities to invest in additional operational resources.
 - Identify and propose improvements to current emergency response standards and appliance availability.
 - Ensure that existing buildings are used to best effect, including shared facilities and collaboration.

- 2.7 The review was also conducted in line with the principles of the People Strategy, by ensuring that the requirements of any recommended duty system consider the following five essential requirements:
- Support the effective and efficient delivery of our statutory functions, as described in our CRMP 2022/26, and in line with the Brigade's Values.
 - Maintain current response standards, in line with best practice when benchmarked across the Fire and Rescue Service, and to provide an equality of service provision.
 - Be resilient and support the delivery of Business Continuity planning where appropriate, to drive improvements.
 - Maintain or enhance firefighter safety, to have staff safety at its heart.
 - To continue to deliver a service that is both sustainable and affordable.

3. Methodology for the new proposal

- 3.1 The Senior Head of Operations, as part of the Configuration Review, gathered information on both the current Fire Control Duty System and an alternative viable model.
- 3.2 The approach taken included a review of both the current and proposed systems against the NFCC Working Patterns and Toolkit assessment, producing an average total score as a comparator against the six pillars of the toolkit. The six pillars include;
- Competency
 - Efficiency & Effectiveness
 - Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
 - Safety
 - Wellbeing
 - Community Impact
- 3.3 Considerations of the efficiency and effectiveness of each system was considered, along with associated risks, benefits, cost, and implications.
- 3.4 All financial data, information on staffing and performance, was validated by the respective (responsible) departmental functions.

4. Drivers for Change

4.1 Analysis of the current duty system identified several drivers for change:

- Improve staffing challenges due to staff reaching their annualised target early.
- Minimise periods of time when the Fire Control room is under crewed.
- Remove differences between the contracted hours worked/unused by each individual.
- The impact of 11 short notice 'Grey Shifts' on staff.
- To provide flexibility for short notice absences.
- Reduce the cost of additional hours to cover staff shortages.

5. Proposed New Duty System

5.1 The Proposal is to:

Increase the establishment and Introduce a Self-Rostering staffing model into Fire Control.

5.2 *Principles of the proposed duty system*

5.2.1 The broad principles for the Self-Rostering proposed model are set out below, however, additional procedures and details will be developed and published if the duty system proposal is accepted:

- The Establishment for Fire Control will increase by two and include:
 - 1 x Station Manager
 - 2 x Watch Managers
 - 7 x Crew Managers
 - 9 x Firefighters
- Watch Strength will consist of four staff on duty on dayshift and three staff on nightshift, to accommodate the additional work/training performed during the dayshift.
- All shifts will have a minimum of 1 x Crew Manager on duty at any one time.
- The Station Manager and Watch Managers form part of the 'Management Team' who are responsible for the management and supervision of shift allocation, training, and also to provide resilience for pre-planned and shortfall cover.
- Staff will book shifts in advance in quarterly periods and once set, there are no changes without an individual's agreement.
- Annual Leave is booked before availability, so is always guaranteed.
- Reversion of one Annual Leave unit to four PH's, enabling them to be taken flexibly.
- The shift length will mirror the Wholtime Duty System.
- Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Fire Control staff are contracted to work 182.5 shifts over a 12-month period (prior to leave being deducted).
- Training Days will be allocated bi-monthly, off shift, guaranteeing uninterrupted training.

- 5.2.2 The Ridership Factor is 1.27 and a self-rostering, pensionable allowance of 8% is incorporated into the salary for all personnel.
- 5.2.3 Annualised hours would be removed. Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Fire Control staff are contracted to work 182.5 shifts over a twelve-month period (prior to leave being deducted).
- 5.2.4 The start and finish times of each shift will mirror that used in the Wholetime Shift System.
- 5.2.5 Leave is booked before availability, so is always guaranteed.
- 5.2.6 Staff will choose shifts in quarterly periods, utilising the pick group system. Staff will be able to amend shifts where oversubscription has occurred. However, if a shift is not oversubscribed, then staff need to use a personal swap with another staff member to be able to move a shift.
- 5.2.7 Guaranteed shifts off work are available from annual leave, guaranteed rotas, and floating days (PH's).
- 5.2.8 Once the working shifts have been set, there are no changes without the agreement of the individual and the Line Manager.
- 5.2.9 Crewing levels in the Fire Control room will be:
- Day Shift Monday to Friday – A minimum of 3 and maximum of 4 on duty
 - Day Shift Saturday and Sunday – A minimum of 3 and maximum of 4 on duty
 - Night Shifts – A minimum of 3 on duty
- 5.2.10 Supervisory cover will be provided by a minimum of one competent Control Crew Manager.
- 5.2.11 Minimum staffing numbers can be subject to change. For example, due to incident demand, during spate conditions and major incidents.
- 5.2.12 Hours of work and annual leave are calculated pro-rata for part-time employees.
- 5.2.13 The Fire Control Watch Managers will work on a rota basis (to be established), also providing shift cover, if required.
- 5.2.14 The Fire Control Station Manager will align to the Station Manager Flexible Duty System.

6. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

- 6.1 This proposed duty system change has been assessed in accordance with the Brigade's Equality Impact Assessment Procedure.
- 6.2 Equality, diversity, and inclusion is a key issue when considering changes to shift patterns. One of the barriers to the recruitment of some sections of the community is the work patterns expected by Cleveland Fire Brigade.
- 6.3 Cleveland Fire Brigade has a flexible working policy and recognises the importance of helping staff to maintain an effective balance between work and home life. All requests for flexible working will be carefully considered, on an individual basis.