

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No 7

MEETING: 14 DECEMBER 2020

SUBJECT: IMPROVEMENT OF OPERATIONAL RESPONSE AND RESILIENCE - UPDATE

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE (THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY) THE FINANCE DIRECTOR AND THE PERSONNEL ADVISOR TO THE AUTHORITY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report seeks to provide Fire Authority Members with an update on the availability and staffing implications following the re-introduction of a second appliance at West Denton fire station and the associated crewing, an additional 4 Crew Managers and 12 Firefighters, and the primary staffing of the Aerial Ladder Platform at Marley Park fire station with an additional 4 Crew Managers and 8 Firefighters, pilots undertaken ahead of a full review of the Services Integrated Risk Management Plan [IRMP].
- 1.2 Staffing levels across the service have been affected by the re-introduction of a Category 02 appliance at West Denton fire station and ALP at Marley Park fire station being primary staffed as part of the pilot.
- 1.3 Watches have temporarily reduced in staffing numbers as a result of individuals agreeing to temporary moves across stations to support deficiencies.
- 1.4 There has been agreement for 10 temporary moves to support the availability of the appliances.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members agreed to an increase in Service Delivery establishment allowing for additional resilience in operational response by the reintroduction of a Category 02 appliance at West Denton fire station (*Min.24/2020 refers*), and the primary staffing of an Aerial Ladder Platform [ALP] at Marley Park fire station (*Min.23/2020 refers*).
- 2.2 West Denton fire station also dual staffs the Services Incident Command Unit which responds to incidents in excess of 5 pumps and provides additional command and control at these incidents. Due to the number of staff required to crew the Incident Command Unit, this additional resilience was provided by the crew on the one pump at Gosforth fire station.
- 2.3 Gosforth fire station also dual staffs an ALP. By increasing the number of appliances at West Denton this provides the additional resilience not only for operational response but

also for the Incident Command Unit with a knock on effect of greater availability of the ALP at Gosforth fire station.

- 2.4 Gosforth fire station will continue to maintain their skills and competence in relation to the Incident Command Unit which in turn will provide greater resilience across the Service.
- 2.5 The Category 02 appliance at West Denton fire station provides greater resilience and direct response in relation to speed and weight of attack at Gosforth fire station and Swalwell fire station which are one pump stations.
- 2.6 The ALPs are dual staffed by a crew taken from a pumping appliance. Due to this they are only dispatched for identified premises in Tyne and Wear on request from the Incident Commander or if a pre-determined criteria is met upon receipt of information taken by fire control.
- 2.7 Following significant National Incidents involving fires in tall buildings, it would support community and firefighter safety to have an ALP readily available at all times and reduce the risk that the crew which would staff the appliance are already in attendance at an incident.
- 2.8 The role of Service Delivery managers is to ensure the availability of operational appliances as agreed in the IRMP. The day to day monitoring of Service Delivery staffing levels is undertaken by the Staffing Team based in Control SHQ.
- 2.9 To date we have achieved full availability for both category 02 appliance at West Denton fire station and ALP at Marley Park fire station since their reintroduction, the only caveat to this has been Extended days for the Category 02 appliance at West Denton fire station and mechanical defect for the ALP at Marley Park fire station which put them off the run.

3 Category 02 appliance at West Denton fire station

- 3.1 The Category 02 appliance at West Denton fire station was re-introduced on 1 November 2020 and has been fully operational since. The Category 02 appliance at West Denton fire station will cover the category 01 appliance at Gosforth fire station when it is Gosforth fire station's turn for Extended days.
- 3.2 As a result of Category 02 appliance at West Denton fire station being re-introduced a number of temporary moves have been agreed to support:
 - 1 on West Denton fire station Red/Watch
 - 3 on West Denton fire station White/Watch
 - 2 on West Denton fire station Blue/Watch
 - 2 on West Denton fire station Green/Watch

4 ALP AT MARLEY PARK FIRE STATION

- 4.1 ALP at Marley Park fire station was primary staffed from 09:00hrs on 4 November 2020 and has been fully operational since.
- 4.2 As a result of the ALP at Marley Park fire station being primary staffed a number of temporary moves have been agreed to support:
- 0 on Marley Park fire station Red/Watch
 - 0 on Marley Park fire station White/Watch
 - 1 on Marley Park fire station Blue/Watch
 - 1 on Marley Park fire station Green/Watch

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The current staffing levels are currently not having a negative impact on appliance availability and the overtime budget in order to ensure minimum staffing levels are maintained. Staffing levels are holding up quite well during the Covid 19 pandemic. Although staffing levels are holding, due to current staffing levels if E days were not in place staffing levels on dayshifts would reduce by 8 often meaning a large overtime requirement. Absences through Covid 19 are being closely monitored. Should the Service suffer a large amount of absence through Covid 19, there are degradation policies in place to manage staffing levels.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial implications in respect of this report.

7 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

8 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Where current operational staffing deficiencies are not covered with swap a shift, overtime by existing operational personnel is being utilised to maintain appliance availability although this is starting to prove more difficult to maintain. The degradation policy sets out how we will attempt to cover staffing deficiencies should overtime lists become exhausted. Personnel moving watches have stayed on the same shift pattern reducing disruption and impact on a personal level.
- 8.2 Service Delivery strive to balance staffing across the service and through the balancing of staffing levels on each shift where possible, it is likely that we will always be able to provide a full shift of personnel.

- 8.3 The Service Delivery Operational Standards team work closely with the Staffing Team to constantly manage operational staffing levels to ensure all appliances are available.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The Authority is recommended to:
- a) Endorse the contents of this report
 - b) Receive further reports as appropriate.
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Minutes of the Meeting of the Fire Authority held on 12 October 2020