

**TO:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**FROM:** Area Commander Operational Response – Stuart Smith

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## **UPDATE ON THE EXPANSION OF CREWS OF THREE APPLIANCE MOBILISATIONS TO ALL INCIDENT TYPES**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the work undertaken by Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) in relation to the expansion of crew of three mobilisations to all incident types and the associated colleague and representative body engagement.

### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 The committee is asked to note the contents of this report and specifically the work the service has undertaken with all stakeholders (colleagues, representative bodies and communities) that were affected by this new way of working.

### **3. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 3.1 An equality impact assessment was completed and consulted on with key stakeholders and can be found via the following link:

[On-call Crewing Equality Impact Assessment](#)

### **4. Background**

- 4.1 CFRS has mobilised crews of three appliances for over 20 years to small animal rescues and fires in the open such as bin, grass and rubbish fires. Crews of three on-call appliances are mobilised when they are the quickest appliance, meaning they are significantly quicker to reach the incident. Any crews of three mobilisation is supported by the nearest fully crewed appliance.
- 4.2 In 2017, CFRS started the process of exploring the expansion of crews of three mobilisations to all incident types in order to;
- Provide a quicker response to the public in our rural communities,
  - Initiate safe systems of work for oncoming appliances,
  - Utilise trained colleagues that were providing valuable availability but not being utilised.
- 4.3 At this point key stakeholders were engaged with and notified of our intentions. This work was paused during the pandemic and focus was given to other conflicting

priorities; the expansion of co-responding, station relocation from Papworth to Cambourne, removal of 13.5m ladders, an additional on-call recruits course and a review of the on-call recruitment process, including the addition of new recruitment initiatives.

- 4.4 As Combined Fire Control handles emergency calls and mobilises appliances for Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, we ensured the alignment of new mobilising procedures with Suffolk. Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has been mobilising crews of three appliances since 2019, so we were able to engage with them about their policies and procedures to ensure our processes were the same. This also helps the ICCS and Mobilising Project implementation when writing the crewing rules for mobilising fire appliances for both counties.

## **5. Engagement**

- 5.1 The project workstream for the expansion of crews of three mobilisations re-started in January 2022, continuing from the initial engagement we had started when the project was first launched. Crews of three availability data was reviewed post pandemic as part of the on-call minimum crewing review within project workstream P138 and an options appraisal was created and shared with all stakeholders in July 2022.
- 5.2 An options appraisal scoring meeting on 1 August 2022 was attended by stakeholders and the final recommendation was approved by the Programme Board on 13 September 2022.
- 5.3 Colleague engagement regarding implementation of crews of three mobilisation changes started on 19 September 2022 and continued through to implementation and will continue now it is live.
- 5.4 Both representative bodies (Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and Fire and Rescue Services Association (FRSA)) were notified in January 2022 of on-call workstreams under project P138 of which the review of on-call minimum crewing formed one of the five workstreams and have been consulted with on a regular basis over the last twelve months.
- 5.5 We engaged with the public via an online survey about the implementation of crews of three appliances and received a good number of responses. The majority were in favour of the change (Appendix 1 refers).
- 5.6 Through the engagement and consultation process, CFRS created an on-call crewing policy, guidance document and crews of three mobilisation risk assessment to support the expansion of crews of three mobilisations. All of these were shared with colleagues and representative bodies and published centrally on our on-call SharePoint page with a list of frequently asked questions and answers raised by colleagues.

## **6. Training**

- 6.1 Colleagues raised through consultation that incident commanders would like the opportunity to familiarise themselves with some incident command scenarios incorporating crews of three appliance mobilisations.
- 6.2 CFRS training team facilitated seven training sessions in December 2022, providing morning, afternoon and evening sessions. Thirteen colleagues attended two training sessions, with five sessions having to be cancelled due to lack of uptake. Additional

sessions have been offered both centrally at our training facility and locally at our stations. Currently, no expressions of interest have been received.

## **7. Feedback and Concerns**

- 7.1 As of 31 December 2022, CFRS employed 252 on-call colleagues across 23 stations, of which 201 were sole on-call colleagues and 51 were wholetime on-call colleagues with dual contracts.
- 7.2 In total, we have received two resignations sighting the expansion of crews of three mobilisations as one of the primary factors for leaving, both of which were wholetime colleagues with dual contracts, and we have received a total of nine letters from colleagues stating that they will be complying with the change in crewing mobilisation under duress, eight of which were from wholetime on-call colleagues with dual contracts. CFRS will continue to engage with these individuals about their concerns.
- 7.3 The common concern raised by colleagues was regarding mobilisation to 'persons reported' house fires and the moral pressure to act. In response to this, CFRS interrogated our incident data to identify the risk that this presented. It was identified that over a ten year period from 2012 to 2022 a crew of three appliance would have only been mobilised on two occasions to a 'persons reported' house fire, of which both incidents were recorded as a false alarm with no use of breathing apparatus. The data over the ten year period also identified that the average time for a fully crewed appliance to arrive on scene following the arrival of the first appliance was 4 minutes, 9 seconds.
- 7.4 Further concerns were raised by our wholetime on-call colleagues that the mobilisation of crews of three appliances would be expanded over time to incorporate our wholetime appliances. CFRS have reaffirmed the position that this is not a crewing model that will be introduced on wholetime appliances. CFRS have continued to provide assurance that our preferred crewing model is for every appliance to be crewed with four or more riders with sufficient skill sets; this commitment has been captured within our on-call crewing policy.
- 7.5 On 4 January 2023, CFRS received a 'failure to agree' letter from the FBU in relation to the on-call crewing policy.

## **8. Operational Response**

- 8.1 Since the expansion of crews of three mobilisations to all incident types on 1 January 2023, CFRS has provided 200 hours of additional operational cover to rural communities across 20 out of 24 stations. During this period, CFRS has mobilised crews of three appliances to five incidents, of which the average time for the second appliance in attendance was 2 minutes, 21 seconds after the first fire appliance had arrived.
- 8.2 The benefits already being realised are;
- 200 hours additional availability across most of our on-call fire stations within the first week since 1 January 2023 meaning a crew of three appliance can be mobilised, where it couldn't previously,
  - Five incidents attended by on-call appliances that were crews of three, allowing on-call firefighters to be remunerated and attend incidents they previously wouldn't have,

- One of the incidents allowed a stop message to be received and other resources attending to be made available for redeployment quicker than if the crews of three appliance had not attended.
- Other incidents have seen the arrival of the crews of three pump second to the scene and therefore a greater number of personnel attended the incident quicker than if a crews of three pump wasn't mobilised.

## **9. Ongoing Monitoring and Reporting**

- 9.1 CFRS operational assurance plan has been updated to reflect changes to mobilisations with specific questions added to our reporting process to capture any notable practice and lessons learnt.
- 9.2 It was agreed with the FBU that the performance monitoring of crews of three mobilisations would form part of our FBU Duty System meetings to ensure continual review.
- 9.3 At the operational excellence quarterly meeting, data will be shared and reviewed about the performance of crews of three mobilisations. This will then form part of the quarterly strategic report that is shared at the Chief Officers Advisory Group meeting and forms part of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) performance report that will come to members at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 9.4 CFRS will also monitor the impact mobilisations have on our recruitment and retention of On-Call firefighters.
- 9.5 A full review will be completed in April 2024 to ensure a full year's data is captured in line with Home Office data reports of March 2023 to April 2024.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **Source Documents**

IRMP

[IRMP 2020-2024](#)

IRMP Action Plan

[IRMP Action Plan 2020-2024](#)

UKFRS National Operational Guidance

[Speed and Weight of Intervention](#)

UKFRS National Operational Guidance

[Operational Guidance Incident Command](#)

CFRS Supporting documents:

[On-call Crewing Options Appraisal](#)

[On-call Minimum Crewing Review – Information Hub and FAQs](#)

[On-call Crewing Policy](#)

[On-call Crewing Guidance](#)

[On-call Crewing Risk Assessment](#)

TRaCS PowerPoint Training Presentation

[Guidance for attending incidents when Crew Deficient](#)

Internal Consultation, Engagement and Training Session Timeline

[Consultation and Engagement Sessions](#)

CD Availability and Incidents Attended (Week 1)

[Availability and Incident log](#)

Compliance Under Duress Letter (FBU Template)

[CO3 Duress Letter](#)

FBU Letter - Failure to Agree

[FTA Letter Crews of 3 – 04.01.23](#)

### **Available From**

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