

AGENDA ITEM:

REPORT TO:	MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETING
DATE:	18TH MARCH 2010
REPORT NO.	CFO/044/10
REPORTING OFFICER:	ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
CONTACT OFFICER:	AREA MANAGER STEPHENS, EXT 4315
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	TIME AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT:	CREWING OF FIRE APPLIANCES

THERE ARE NO APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

Purpose of Report

1. To advise Members that the Service is continuing to meet its exceptionally high response standards and the outcomes of the most recent analysis in relation to the dynamic reserve which determines that the reserve can be extended from 4 to 6 appliances.

Recommendation

2. That Members note the contents of this report and agree to the extension of the dynamic reserve from 4 to 6 appliances subject to a review after 9 months.

Introduction & Background

3. The operational staffing position is reported as a standing agenda item to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT). This report includes the number of occasions on which appliances are used on the dynamic reserve.
4. The staffing model approved by Members and contained within report CFO/215/09 assumes a figure of 3% for sickness absence. This is achieved with the help of the extensive rehabilitation and occupational health services available to personnel. A number of people, however, return to work following injury/sickness who are not yet fully fit for operational duties. It is impossible to predict exactly how many people would be in this position at any one time, which is why the use of voluntary overtime is so useful to cover for these 'unplanned shortfalls' in staffing.

5. A ban on voluntary overtime has for all intents and purposes been in place since late 2009 although this has only been formalised since 12th January 2010 when notification was received from the General Secretary of the FBU following a ballot of the Merseyside membership.
6. Absence levels are being managed flexibly by the Time and Resource Management (TRM) Department to ensure that appliance availability is such that the Authority continues to meet its exceptionally high response standards.
7. One of the flexible staffing methods available to TRM is the use of the Dynamic Reserve contained within the Operational Staffing Policy approved by Members in July 2006 (CFO/145/06). At present up to 4 appliances can be placed on the Dynamic Reserve on any shift however the most recent analysis by the independent data and mobilisation analysis consultants indicates that this number can be increased to 6 without any adverse impact on performance.
8. Members are therefore requested to approve that TRM may utilise up to 6 appliances on the Dynamic Reserve should the need arise. It is considered that this will only be used in exceptional circumstances. In any event and subject to the approval of Members this would be reviewed after 9 months.
9. At the time of writing the Service has 9 Firefighters in training on a 40 week course. These individuals will be available for the purposes of staffing in the late autumn. In addition the Service is in the process of undertaking a recruitment campaign for 20 Retained Firefighters following approval from Members in November 2009 (CFO/285/09).
10. Members should be reassured that the combination of measures outlined above will ensure that the high standards of operational response performance are maintained over the coming year.

Equality & Diversity Implications

11. None contained within this report.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

12. None contained within this report.

Health & Safety and Environmental Implications

13. None contained within this report.

Contribution to Achieving the Vision:

“To Make Merseyside a Safer, Stronger, Healthier Community”

14. Application of the Operational Staffing Policy by TRM will ensure that the high standards of emergency response to the Merseyside community are maintained.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/145/06 Policy Review as a Result of the Operational Assessment of Service Delivery

CFO/215/09 Outcomes of Consultation following a Review of Firefighter Posts within the Resource and Resilience Team

CFO/285/09 Retained Firefighters