

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE		
DATE:	27 JULY 2023	REPORT NO:	CFO/036/23
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, PHIL GARRIGAN		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, PHIL GARRIGAN	REPORT AUTHOR:	MIKE PILKINGTON
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM AREA MANAGER BEN RYDER		
TITLE OF REPORT:	OPERATIONAL RESPONSE STRUCTURAL CHANGES		
APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A	EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the revised Operational Response Structure implemented as part of the budget setting process for 2023/24.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members note the revised Operational Response Structure, which sees 20 additional supervisory manager roles, established.

Introduction and Background

3. In 2020, following a successful 18-month pilot, the Authority re-introduced the Crew Manager role. This role had been removed in 2013 in order to deliver necessary savings required as a result of the central government austerity programme.
4. The pilot had clearly shown the wider range of benefits that the role provided particularly in ensuring sufficient, attractive development opportunities where available for staff to progress in order to meet predicted organisational staffing needs.
5. IRMP Supplement 2019-21 outlined the Authority's reinvestment into Operational Response provision including how the Crew Manager role would be established at key locations, whilst also being facilitated elsewhere on a temporary basis as part of developmental pathways.
6. Since reintroduction over 200 staff have utilised the Crew Manager development pathway to progress through the organisation with most current operational Watch Managers alongside numerous Senior Managers having progressed via this pathway.

7. As part of IRMP 2021-24 the Authority has established 43 Crew Manager posts across key and multi pump locations (12 stations) as follows:
 - **WT 224:** 4 CM Per station @ 14, 16, 21, 26, 30, 33, 42, 43
 - **Hybrid:** 3 CM Per station @ 10, 25, 50
 - **LLAR:** 2 CM per station @ 32
8. From listening to our staff (Staff Network's Watch Managers Forum, Female Firefighters Forum, Principal Officer talks), it was clear that the Crew Manager development pathway was widely popular, particularly with the option to develop temporarily at their current location. However, the established position of CM roles being allocated to key locations limited the options for permanent appointment particular of duty systems such as Low Level Activity & Risk (LLAR), Search & Rescue Team (SRT) and Day Crewed Whole-time Retained (DCWTR). In addition the current approach created a potential bottleneck with 50 CM roles (inc those established on days) being available for 404 Firefighters to develop into 118 Watch Manager roles.
9. Therefore, taking this into account as part of the Budget Strategy day on 19th January 2023 the Chief Fire Officer set out his vision to further invest into Operational Response including the outline proposal to establish a further 20 Crew Manager roles (in place of existing FF roles) subject to the Authority approving the revised Medium term financial plan.
10. The Medium Term Financial Plan was approved at the Authority Budget meeting on 23rd February 2023 and as a result Operational Response and People & Organisational Development commenced work to determine the optimum locations to establish these new Crew Manager roles. Key to the decision making process was ensuring operational effectiveness, improving resilience and providing enhanced developmental pathways.
11. The revised structure implemented meets the requirements set whilst also going some way to alleviate any potential bottleneck. The new structure sees the Crew Manager role established at each of the 10 stations that previously did not have one as follows:
 - **WT 224:** 4 CM Per station @ 15, 20
 - **SRT:** 4 CM Per station @ 19
 - **LLAR:** 1 CM per station @ 17, 22, 51
 - **DCWTR:** 1 CM per station @ 12, 18, 31
 - **Liverpool City:** 2 CM per station
12. All operational fire stations now have a Crew Manager role established which will allow permanent appointment alongside continued development pathways. The increased resilience provided allows for short term staffing abstractions to be covered more frequently from within the team reducing the reliance on premium rate overtime.

Equality and Diversity Implications

13. An Equality Impact Assessment accompanying the paper is attached as Appendix A.

14. The new structure facilitates additional and increased promotional pathways across all duty systems removing potential pay barriers, and providing additional opportunities to apply for promotion into managerial roles at the initial supervisory management level.
15. These positions will provide all staff, including female and BAME operational staff who are currently underrepresented in a number management positions, additional opportunities for progression.
16. The changes are also strengthened through the introduction our High Potential programme.

Staff Implications

17. Staff developing through the Crew Manager pathway have indicated that a barrier to progression has been the lack of permanent crew manager roles in duty systems such as LLAR, DCWTR and SRT, which have an enhanced salary based on their additional retained commitments.
18. By removing these barrier staff are able to seek promotion within their current duty system without the potential of having to take a significant pay cut to continue to progress. This benefits the Authority by ensuring more staff are willing to enter into management positions supporting our workforce requirements.

Training Implications

19. The Crew Manager development program is well established and available to all staff to view on the Portal. All training needs arising are built into the existing annual training needs analysis, which is aligned with workforce planning analysis and predictions.

Legal Implications

20. The Chief Fire Officer under delegated powers is responsible to implement decisions concerning maintaining the operational effectiveness of the Service.
21. Maintaining sufficient operational managers as part of workforce planning is a vital aspect of ensuring continued operational response and meeting our duties as outlined in the Fire Services Act 2004, National Framework 2018 and other associated legislation.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

22. The cost for converting 20 firefighter roles to Crew Manager is £107,900. This increase formed part of the MTFP for 2023/24 – 27/28 which was approved in February 2023 and was funded as part of the budget setting process.

23. It is expected that additional efficiencies will be delivered by a reduced use of premium rate overtime for supervisory managers, as additional Crew Managers will be available to cover staffing abstractions.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

24. The Crew Manager Development program provides for a progressive development path, which sees individual complete three discreet stages as they develop into crew managers. Crew Managers developing will not act as OIC for an operational appliance until they have successfully passed the relevant technical command assessment.
25. There are no environmental implications from this revised structure.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

26. The revised structure is operationally effective, efficient and resilient ensuring we can achieve our aim to respond. It allows us to meet both organisational workforce planning requirements and staff aspirations, whilst enabling us to become more reflective of our community at all operational managerial levels.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

NONE