

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: STAFFING COMMITTEE
DATE: 31 OCTOBER 2018
REPORT OF: HEAD OF SERVICE DELIVERY
AUTHORS: ANDY ROYLE AND URSULA JONES

SUBJECT: WORKFORCE PLANNING UPDATE

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update in respect of a paper received by the Senior Management Team (SMT), identifying predicted operational establishment levels up to 2024/25. The report also contains recommendations in respect of mitigating potential medium term shortfall in staffing levels.

Recommended: That Members

- [1] Note the Workforce Planning Update; and
- [2] Approve the recommendations contained in paragraphs 10 to 13.3 of this report.

Background

2. The workforce planning proposals approved by SMT in December 2017 have now been completed with the following outcomes:
 - One (1) inter brigade transfer at firefighter level.
 - Recruitment of eight (8) firefighters from an internal on call migration process.
 - Completion of a wholetime recruits course January 2018 to May 2018. The applicants for this recruit course included four (4) on call firefighters who were deemed competent prior to commencing on the course. These firefighters were posted to station in January 2018. The remaining ten (10) new recruits who completed their initial training course were posted to station in May 2018.
 - A new wholetime recruitment campaign commenced in June 2018. This included a comprehensive positive action campaign to attract up to a further 12 firefighters. It is intended that these recruits will commence training in January 2019 and arrive on station in May 2019.
3. In February 2018 the Fire Authority made a decision to maintain the second wholetime fire engine in Crewe and to undertake a further review of the second wholetime fire engine at Ellesmere Port. In view of the policy of no compulsory redundancies nine (9) of the twelve (12) on call firefighters at Crewe and Ellesmere Port are migrating to the wholetime duty system:

- Eight (8) firefighters commenced an initial recruit course in May 2018, five (5) from Crewe and three (3) from Ellesmere Port, these firefighters were posted to station in September 2018.
 - One (1) firefighter already deemed competent was posted on station in May 2018.
4. Following the workforce planning update given in December 2017, further work has been undertaken to assess and understand the implications of the changes made to the firefighter's pension scheme and the implications of having the current numbers of development firefighters as well as those predicted to be recruited to the Service.
 5. To assist workforce planning officers are required to predict the number of retirees and other leavers from the service annually. Currently the Service assumes that staff who are over age 50 and have 30 years service will retire. In the short term the Service will be able to maintain this assumption. However, in the medium to long term the Service will need to take account of changes within the new firefighter's pension scheme. Appendix A details assumptions that have been used at this time to predict retirees and other leavers going forward.
 6. To maximise fire engine availability the Service will, where possible, limit the number of development firefighters to one per duty watch, inclusive of all duty systems, the exception being stations with more than one fire engine (Crewe and Ellesmere Port). This is due to the restrictions placed on development firefighters within the Service's Development to Competent Guidance - Pillar Three of the Assessment Strategy.¹
 7. Applying these restrictions the total number of development firefighters the Service can sustain at any one time is 42 (excluding DC1 watches). However it is recommended that the Service apply a contingency factor of minus 25% to the total number of development firefighters, which will reduce this figure to 33. This reduction will allow for overlap/extension of development/competency timelines and assist the Service when posting recruit firefighters. Further detail on how this has been calculated is included in Appendix B.
 8. The establishment totals and estimates of predicted retirements and other leavers between 2018/19 and 2024/25 contained within Appendix B are based on the following planning and staffing assumptions.

¹ Until the Learner has completed the operational units they will not be able to ride appliances in positions 3 or 4 (in accordance with the Fire Service Training Manual) with another Firefighter in development riding 3 or 4 on the same appliance, undertake out-staffing duties, be a part of the same 2 person Breathing Apparatus team at operational incidents or volunteer to participate as a member of the enhanced Strategic Reserve. *(Note this criteria extracted from the Service Development to Competent Guidance - Pillar Three of the Assessment Strategy requires updating to reflect current practice).*

Planning Assumptions:

- **Ellesmere Port** - maintain the 2nd fire engine at Ellesmere Port as wholetime for the period of the Whole Service Review, between February 2018 and April 2020.
- **Penketh** - the previous assumption that staffing model would change from wholetime to nucleus has been deferred until the findings of the Whole Service Review are reported.
- **Congleton On Call Duty System Staff** - in January 2019 the High Volume Pump (HVP) at Congleton will relocate to Powey Lane, this will result in the on call duty system staff who are currently being utilised to provide resilience for the operational deployment of the HVP being offered redeployment alternatives, similar to those previously offered to the on call staff at Crewe and Ellesmere Port.
- **Development Firefighters** - the Service will where possible limit the number of development firefighters to one per duty watch.

Staffing Assumptions:

- The first cohort of ten (10) apprentices recruited in 2016/17 undertook final interviews during August 2018 and were posted to stations in September 2018.
- The cohort of eight (8) Crewe and Ellesmere Port on call migration firefighters were posted to stations in September 2018.
- One (1) HPDS student will be inducted as a trainee firefighter and should arrive on station by July/August 2019.
- One (1) external candidate has been appointed to the role of Station Manager via the Station Manager Promotion Boards.
- Seven (7) on call fire fighters from Congleton fire station have now returned posting preference forms and will be migrated into wholetime fire fighter posts as a result of the relocation of the Congleton on call appliance. This will take place in two phases, phase one in November 2018 and phase two in January 2019. In addition one (1) on call fire fighter from Congleton will join a wholetime recruit course in January 2019.
- The cohort of twelve (12) recruit fire fighters from the June 2018 will arrive on station May 2019. (Note: There will be one (1) additional fire fighter from the Congleton On call cohort that will attend this course).
- The second cohort of eleven (11) apprentices², should they all be successful, will arrive on station in September 2019.

² Of the 12 apprentices taken on in 2017, 1 apprentice whilst continuing on the course will not be fulfilling the operational elements. Therefore we assume 11 apprentices from the 2017 cohort, if successful, will be posted to fire stations in September 2019.

- A third cohort of twelve (12) apprentices will be recruited in order to arrive on station in September 2021.
9. The foundation of this workforce planning report was presented as an SMT paper on 28th August 2018. As establishment figures change on a monthly basis the figures have been updated since the submission of that SMT report. The recommendations below were, in principle, agreed by SMT with a subsequent action to provide this report to update Staffing Committee and have Staffing Committee approve the recommendations contained in paragraphs 10 to 13.3 of this report.

Recommended that Members:

10. Approve the following retirement assumptions to be utilised by the establishment group when predicting the Service retirement profile.
- 10.1. Firefighters who have completed 30 years service, are aged 50 or over and are fully protected in the FPS1992 will retire, and/or,
- 10.2. Firefighters who have completed 30 years service, are aged 50 or over and have a two part pension provision FPS1992 and NFPS2015 **having accrued more than 25 years** pension benefit in FPS1992, excluding double accrual protection will retire. If these firefighters are not aged 55 or over and retire they would defer any accrued benefits in the NFPS2015 until normal pension age,
- 10.3. Firefighters who have completed 30 years service, are aged 50 or over and have a two part pension provision FPS1992 and NFPS2015 **having not accrued more than 25 years** pension benefit in the FPS1992, excluding double accrual protection, will remain in service and will continue to accrue benefits in the NFPS2015 until they choose to retire.
- 10.4. In addition, to mitigate the possibility that some firefighters will choose to retire on the completion of 30 years service regardless of any financial implication, a mid point is used between the number of firefighters predicted to retire utilising the historical retirement assumption and those predicted to retire utilising new assumptions, further detail is included in Appendix A.
11. Approve that wholetime development firefighter's work to achieve competence in the firefighter role map units 3, 4 and 5³ within a 12 month timescale. To assist in this process all trainee firefighters on completing a recruit course will be issued with a timeline to indicate the required dates of assessments. On achieving units 3, 4 and 5 development firefighters can have the restrictions listed in pillar 3 of the Service Development to Competent Guidance lifted.
12. Approve the introduction of a contingency factor to be applied to the total number of development firefighters that the Service can accommodate at any one point in time, further detail is included in Appendix C.

³ Fire fighter role map units 3, 4 and 5 all relate to fire service operations: Unit 3 - Save and preserve endangered life. Unit 4 - Resolve fire and rescue operational incidents. Unit 5 - Protect the environment from the effects of hazardous materials.

13. A review will be undertaken post the Station Manager, Watch Manager and Crew Manager autumn 2018 promotion boards and the outcome of the June 2018 recruitment campaign and it is possible that the Service may require additional fire fighters with key skills. Officers are recommending that the Staffing Committee authorise additional recruitment should this be required, in order to mitigate medium term establishment and skills deficiencies between 2019/20 and 2020/21.

13.1. Recruit up to eight (8) competent firefighters (with LGV driver skills) between January 2018 and March 2019, these may include:

- External candidates appointed to the Service via the autumn 2018 promotion boards and/or June 2018 recruitment campaign.
- Inter Brigade Transfers.
- On call migration.

Note:

This figure is based on the establishment figures in Table 3, Appendix B and it is expected that the firefighters would be on station by March 2019.

13.2. Recruit twelve (12) trainee firefighters from a 2019/20 recruitment campaign. It is intended that once recruited the trainee firefighters would commence training in January 2020 and arrive on station in May 2020 as development firefighters.

13.3. Recruit a cohort of twelve (12) apprentice fire fighters from a 2019/20 recruitment campaign. It is intended that once recruited the apprentices would commence as trainee firefighters with the Operational Training Group in June 2021 and would arrive on station in September 2021 as development firefighters.

Financial Implications

14. Based on the assumptions within this report and the requirement to recruit and maintain adequate crewing levels, additional funding will be required from reserves until 2021.

15. The indicative additional costs have been calculated based on the planning assumptions detailed earlier in this report and the recommendations in paragraphs 10 to 13.3, they are as follows:

2018/19	12	additional staff above funded total	£469k
2019/20	15	additional staff above funded total	£586k
2020/21	7	additional staff above funded total	£274k
Total Cost	34	additional staff above funded total	£1.33m⁴

16. It is important to note that these figures are an estimate based on the planning and staffing assumptions and could be influenced positively or negatively by many variable factors such as fluctuation in the numbers of retirements and other

⁴ Note: Financial calculations are based on the cost (+ on costs) of a firefighter @ £39,047⁴ rounded to £39k (pay scale used 2017-18 inc 1% pay rise July 17) and establishment figures in table 3 Appendix B.

leavers and any agreed change as a result of the Whole Service Review. Therefore, the establishments group will continue to review and revise the recruitment plan and will advise SMT and Staffing Committee of any further recommendations or changes.

Legal Implications

17. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Equality & Diversity Implications

18. There are no equality or diversity implications associated directly with the recommendations. However, all the normal recruitment and selection protocols including positive action will apply.

Environmental Implications

19. There are no specific environmental implications arising from this report.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: SMT WORKFORCE PLANNING PAPER 28TH
AUGUST 2018.**

Appendix A – Retirement and Other Leavers Predictions

1. To assist workforce planning by predicting retirements from service, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service have historically used the assumption that a firefighter who is an active member of the Fire Fighters Pension Scheme 1992 (FPS1992) will retire when aged 50 or over and having completing 30 years service. This is the date that a firefighter who meets this criteria is able to access the full benefits of this pension scheme.
2. For the purpose of short term planning (2018-19 to 2019-20) the Service are able to rely on the use of this assumption as firefighters due to retire in this period generally have protected pension status and where this is not the case they have accrued pension benefits that are very close to full pension provision. However due to pension changes implemented in 2015 and for the purpose of longer term workforce planning, the Service are no longer able to exclusively rely on this assumption.
3. The New Firefighters Pension Scheme 2015 (NFPS 2015) was implemented in April 2015, the result of which was that any firefighter who did not meet the criteria for full protection or tapered protection in the FPS 1992, became a member of this scheme in April 2015.
4. The terms and conditions of the NFPS 2015 varied from those of the FPS 1992, the principle factor in terms of workforce planning being that access to the full pension benefits of this scheme can not be achieved until the age of 60.
5. The implication for the Service in regard to workforce planning is that if a firefighter was previously a member of the FPS 1992 and is now a member of the NFPS 2015, they will have a two part pension provision and the balance of accrued benefits in each scheme will vary on an individual basis.
6. It is likely that due to this variance and the options within the NFPS 2015 to access pension benefits prior to the age of 60, albeit with actuarial reductions, firefighters will make a range of decisions regarding the date that they choose to retire from service, this presents a challenge to the Service in terms of workforce planning and predicting such retirements.
7. There is a possibility that some firefighters when reaching 30 years service and are aged 50 years or over, will retire and access any accrued benefits in the FPS 1992, regardless of the financial implications that brings to bare.
8. It is likely that these firefighters will be those that have accrued substantial benefits in the FPS 1992 and minimal benefits in the NFPS 2015. This likely to be attributable to some firefighters who were due to retire between 2019 and 2023.
9. Alternatively these firefighters may choose to remain in service until they reach the age of 55 and then retire. At aged 55 firefighters with a two part pension will be able to access pension benefits accrued in the FPS 1992 and as a member of the NFPS 2015, they will be able to access any benefit accrued in the that scheme, albeit with an actuarial reduction⁵.
10. To mitigate the challenges identified above between 2019 and 2023, it is recommended that a modified retirement assumption is applied as follows:
 - 10.1. Firefighters who have completed 30 years service, are aged 50 or over and are fully protected in the FPS1992 will retire, and/or,
 - 10.2. Firefighters who have completed 30 years service, are aged 50 or over and have a two part pension provision FPS1992 and NFPS2015 **having accrued more than 25 years** pension benefit, excluding double accrual protection, in the FPS1992 will retire.

⁵ **Note:** age 55 is the first opportunity that firefighters who are a member of the NFPS 2015, have access to any benefit they have accrued. A firefighter choosing to retire prior to reaching the age of 55, who is a member of the NFPS 2015 will have all pension benefit accrued in that scheme deferred until normal pension age.

If these firefighters are not aged 55 or over and retire they would defer any accrued benefits in the NFPS2015 until normal pension age,

- 10.3. Firefighters who have completed 30 years service, are aged 50 or over and have a two part pension provision FPS1992 and NFPS2015 **having not accrued more than 25 years** pension benefit in the FPS1992, excluding double accrual protection, will remain in service and will continue to accrue benefits in the NFPS2015 until they choose to retire.

Note: In addition, to mitigate the possibility that some firefighters will choose to retire on the completion of 30 years service regardless of any financial implication, a mid point has been used between the number of firefighters predicted to retire utilising the historical retirement assumption at paragraph 1, Appendix A and those who are predicted to retire utilising the modified retirement assumptions at paragraph 10, Appendix A.

11. To further assist workforce planning Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service predict the number of firefighters (grey book staff) who leave the Service for any reason other than retirement, this cohort are referred to as 'other leavers'.
12. To determine the expected number of other leavers an annual review of the number of firefighters who have left the Service over the preceding five year period is undertaken and then an average figure is applied.

Appendix B – Establishment Predictions

Table 1

A	D	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	Q
Financial Year	FUNDED Establishment	PLANNED Establishment	REALITY Establishment at beginning of year	Variation WT Posts REALITY vs PLANNED	Retirements due 1st April to 31st march following year	Other Leavers	New Intake	Total Expected Staffing strength as of end of year (After Retirements)	Variance against PLANNED establishment - after retirements (negative is under) at year end
2018/19	335	331	346	15	6	5	8	343	12
2019/20	335	331	343	12	12	10	25	346	15
2020/21	335	331	346	15	11	10	12	337	6
2021/22	335	331	337	6	11	10	12	328	-3
2022/23	335	331	328	-3	17	10		301	-30
2023/24	335	331	301	-30	9	10		282	-49
2024/25	335	331	282	-49	19	10		253	-78

Table 2

A	D	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	Q
Financial Year	FUNDED Establishment	PLANNED Establishment	REALITY Establishment at beginning of year	Variation WT Posts REALITY vs PLANNED	Retirements due 1st April to 31st march following year	Other Leavers	New Intake	Total Expected Staffing strength as of end of year (After Retirements)	Variance against PLANNED establishment - after retirements (negative is under) at year end
2018/19	335	331	346	15	6	5	8	343	12
2019/20	335	331	343	12	12	10	25	346	15
2020/21	335	331	346	15	10	10	12	338	7
2021/22	335	331	338	7	3	10	12	337	6
2022/23	335	331	337	6	8	10		319	-12
2023/24	335	331	319	-12	1	10		308	-23
2024/25	335	331	308	-23	1	10		297	-34

Table 3

A	D	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	Q
Financial Year	FUNDED Establishment	PLANNED Establishment	REALITY Establishment at beginning of year	Variation WT Posts REALITY vs PLANNED	Retirements due 1st April to 31st march following year	Other Leavers	New Intake	Total Expected Staffing strength as of end of year (After Retirements)	Variance against PLANNED establishment - after retirements (negative is under) at year end
2018/19	335	331	346	15	6	5	8	343	12
2019/20	335	331	343	12	12	10	25	346	15
2020/21	335	331	346	15	10	10	12	338	7
2021/22	335	331	338	7	7	10	12	333	2
2022/23	335	331	333	2	12	10		311	-20
2023/24	335	331	311	-20	5	10		296	-35
2024/25	335	331	296	-35	10	10		276	-55

Recruitment assumptions:

2018/19 – 8 IBT's/Ext. Promotion/CFRS on call migration = 8
 2019/20 - 11 apprentice, 12 recruit firefighters (+1 Congleton on call FF), 1 HPDS. = 25
 2020/21 – 12 recruit fire fighters = 12
 2021/22 – 12 apprentice fire fighters = 12

Retirement Assumptions:

Table 1

The retirement figures (column J) in table 1 are based on the assumptions that staff retire at aged 50 or over, who have completed 30 years service.

There have been no modifications applied to the retirement figures due to new firefighter's pension scheme 2015.

Table 2

The retirement figures (column J) are based on the assumptions that staff who have completed 30 years service, are aged 50 or over and are fully protected will retire.

Or staff who have completed 30 years service, are aged 50 or over but have not reached the age of 55 and have accrued more than 25 years pension benefit in the FPS1992, will retire. Staff who have accrued pension benefits in the NFPS2015 will have those benefits deferred until normal pension age.

Modifications have been applied to the retirement figures due to the implementation of the new firefighter's pension scheme 2015.

Table 3

The retirement figures (column J) are based on the assumptions used for table 2.

In addition to mitigate the possibility that some firefighters will choose to retire on the completion of 30 years service regardless of any financial implication, a mid point has been used between the number of firefighters predicted to retire utilising the historical retirement assumption table 1 and the new assumption in table 2.

1. The configuration of roles required to deploy a fire engine to any category of emergency response is:
 - a. One (1) x Officer in Charge (Watch Manager/Crew Manager or ICA Firefighter)
 - b. One (1) x Emergency Fire Appliance Driver (EFAD - LGV)
 - c. Two (2) x competent firefighters (BA team) or, one (1) x competent firefighters and one (1) x development firefighter (BA Team).
2. To maintain the above configuration, the Service will where possible limit the number of development firefighters to one per duty watch, (at this time Crewe and Ellesmere Port can accommodate two (2) development firefighters per watch).
3. Should the Service choose to over establish a watch at a particular station with development firefighters the local managers must ensure that the development firefighters are not allocated the same leave group and that on all occasions the above configuration is met.
4. When considering workforce planning and making recommendations for recruitment the establishment team were requested to identify the maximum capacity of development firefighters that the Service can accommodate.
5. There are forty five (45) duty wholetime duty system watches in the Service. To meet the criteria of one (1) development firefighter per watch the Service could in theory sustain a maximum of forty five (45) development firefighters at any one time on wholetime duty systems, however this is unlikely to be the case practically, due to the constraints related to the day crewing DC1 duty system and their cycle of recruitment, transfers, promotion and retirements. For the purpose of this calculation the maximum achievable figure for development firefighters, taking account of the potential difficulties of moving staff on and off the day crewing duty system would be forty two (42).
6. To clarify, this does not prohibit the posting of development fire firefighters to the DC1 duty system stations, in fact when opportunities arise one (1) development firefighter will be posted to DC1 stations, therefore meeting the criteria of one (1) development fire fighter per watch.
7. It is recommended that a contingency factor of minus 25%⁶ is considered and applied to the maximum number of development firefighters that wholetime duty systems can sustain. The application of this factor would allow for the overlap/extension of development/competency timelines should this occur and will also assist the establishment group when making future recruitment recommendations and posting of development firefighters to stations. The application of this contingency factor would reduce the maximum number of development firefighters to thirty four (34)
8. The establishment group when providing the recruitment recommendations in this update have taken account of the numbers of development firefighters in the organisation and for illustrative purposes have provided development firefighter profiles which identify the number of development firefighters currently in service and further predicted recruitment:
 - Prediction 1: is based on the date development firefighters are posted to station and then an 18 month development to full competency timeline, see Appendix D.
 - Prediction 2: is based on the date development firefighters are posted to station and then an 12 month development to achieving competency in units 3, 4 and 5 timeline, see Appendix D.

⁶ There are a total of 42 duty watches in CFRS excluding DC1 watches. Applying a -25% contingency factor to the total of 42 watches would result in a total of development firefighters to 33.

9. It is identified that if the Service apply the same criteria to wholetime staff as is applied to on call staff for achieving operational competence in units 3, 4 and 5 rather than applying a full role map competence criteria, then this will assist in the ongoing recruitment of trainee firefighters and posting of development firefighters whilst applying the recommended contingency factor and meeting the configuration of roles required to staff a fire engine.

Note: It is likely that the continued recruitment of trainee firefighters and the subsequent postings to stations may result in compulsory watch/station moves for existing competent firefighters in order to maintain the required configuration of roles to deploy a fire engine to any category of emergency response.

