



Open Report on behalf of Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer

Report to:	Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date:	14 May 2024
Subject:	Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue New Crewing Arrangements - Post Implementation Review

Summary:

On 1 January 2024, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR) implemented a change in the contractual requirements of staff, that crew eight of the nine fire stations which employs wholetime staff. This change was brought about following a review of staff feedback relating to potential recruitment barriers onto Lincolnshire Crewing System and following notification from the fire brigades union of their intention to withdraw from the locally negotiated agreement upon which the duty system was established.

The service took the opportunity to review the duty system and identify if changes could be made, without increasing any risk to the community and satisfy the contractual arrangements of the workforce.

This report informs the Committee of the changes and the impact during the first three months since implementation.

Actions Required:

The Committee is invited to:

1. review and comment on the detail of the report.
2. request that Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue monitors the continued performance at Sleaford station as part of business-as-usual performance management and reports back as part of the annual performance report.

1. Background

On 1 January 2024, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue implemented a change in the contractual requirements of staff, that crew eight of the nine fire stations which employs wholetime staff. This change was brought about following a review of staff feedback relating to potential recruitment barriers onto Lincolnshire Crewing System and following

notification from the fire brigades union of their intention to withdraw from the locally negotiated agreement upon which the duty system was established.

To ensure that any proposed change would not significantly impact the communities of Lincolnshire, the service undertook a fire cover review so that it could fully understand the current and future risks in the areas that are covered by the stations which provide this duty system. The review identified that seven of the eight stations (Boston, Gainsborough, Grantham, Lincoln North, Louth, Skegness and Spalding) were mobilised to more incidents during the night time period than any of the services fully on call stations with one station, Sleaford, mobilised to fewer incidents than the service’s two busiest on call stations.

The decision was to revert all eight stations that were working the Lincolnshire crewing system back to a nationally compliant day crewing system as defined within the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services Schemes of Conditions of Service, which is commonly referred to as Grey Book Conditions.

At the seven stations, the service would maintain the enhanced allowance if they continued to provide the night time cover but at Sleaford, the whole time staff would revert back to a day crewed system that was fully compliant with the Grey Book terms and conditions. This meant during night time hours, Sleaford would be crewed by a mix of wholetime staff who took up on call cover and staff conditioned to the on call duty system. None of the changes would change the response standards set by the service.

The following data sets provided show a direct comparison between the same periods (1 January to 31 March) in 2023 and 2024. These only show the data relating to Sleaford station as this is the only station which now relies on two duty systems to mobilise operational assets during the night time period.

On Call Availability Data

The following tables show the availability of both Sleaford Fire appliances.

On Call Availability – This table shows the number of on call staff that work from Sleaford fire station.

Year	January	February	March
2023	13	13	14
2024	18	18	18

This shows an increase in On Call establishment over the last 12 months by four personnel.

Response Data

The following tables show the time taken for staff to respond to an emergency alert and mobilise from Sleaford station.

Mobilisation time

Year	January	February	March	Average
2023	0:02:52	0:03:37	0:03:59	0:03:29
2024	0:03:04	0:03:39	0:03:16	0:03:19

Mobilisation time - day period 07:30-18:30

Year	January	February	March	Average
2023	0:01:08	0:02:27	0:02:04	0:01:53
2024	0:01:14	0:02:19	0:00:49	0:01:27

Mobilisation time - night period 18:30-07:30

Year	January	February	March	Average
2023	0:04:37	0:04:48	0:05:54	0:05:06
2024	0:04:54	0:05:20	0:05:43	0:05:19

Incident Data

Number of attended incidents within Sleaford's station ground

Year	January	February	March	Grand Total
2023	23	18	23	64
2024	18	22	20	60

Number of attended incidents within Sleaford's station ground - day period 07:30-18:30

Year	January	February	March	Grand Total
2023	14	11	16	41
2024	14	13	11	38

Number of attended incidents within Sleaford's station ground - night period 18:30-07:30

Year	January	February	March	Grand Total
2023	9	7	7	23
2024	4	9	9	22

Number of incidents within Sleaford's station ground with two or more pumps mobilised

Year	January	February	March	Grand Total
2023	5	3	2	10
2024	5	9	2	16

Number of incidents within Sleaford's station ground with two or more appliances mobilised and second Appliance not mobilised - reasons

2023	
OFRN at Time of Call (TOC)	1
2024	
Committed at incident (spate conditions)	2
Incident Support Team crew only at TOC – Crew of 3 (require 4 for full capabilities)	1
Location of incident meant other station quicker as second appliance	1
OFRN at TOC	2

Incidents by day

Year	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
2023	11	8	7	9	12	6	11
2024	5	14	6	5	7	15	8

Impact on Wholetime Crewing

As part of the engagement and consultation process, the service was anticipating some issues. These included:

- Risk of high number of personnel wishing to transfer away from Sleaford - Only one member of staff submitted a transfer request due to these reasons, and this transfer request has subsequently been retracted. There has been other staff that have moved from Sleaford station but the reason was promotions and exploring other roles within the service.
- Reduction in whole time staff taking up the night time on call contract – two members of staff have maintained all on call duties from Sleaford fire station. Two further members of staff now provide on call duties from other stations. All qualified urban search and rescue staff have maintained their on call contracts.
- Impact on the on call crew – These changes have meant that the on call crew now attend more incidents during the night time period. This change has been a positive for the on call crew at Sleaford as the increase in activity has improved the morale of the section.

The substantive wholetime crewing at Sleaford is above the expected level with one member of staff currently undertaking a temporary change in role as the services medical coordinator.

2. Conclusion

The implemented changes have not had an adverse impact on service delivery and in fact the performance being delivered is as expected. The early evidence suggests that the delivery to the community is still within the service performance standards and our fire appliances are mobilising within the expected timeframes. The daytime mobilisation has improved, and the night time mobilisation is only thirteen seconds slower when compared to same period in 2023.

The numbers of On Call staff at Sleaford fire station have increased by four staff when compared to the previous period. The service believes that the retention of on call staff at Sleaford station may improve as they will now have an increase in operational activity.

In comparing the incident data, the wholetime crew from Sleaford station mobilised to emergency incidents 350 times, which is 20 fewer mobilisations than the previous year. As previously identified, these mobilisation levels are similar to our busiest On Call station (Stamford 333 mobilisations).

In monitoring the impact on our wholetime staff, the changes have not de-stabilised the current crewing and actually staff have withdrawn transfer applications where it was identified that the change was the reason they had submitted the request.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Not Applicable.

4. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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