

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Human Resources Committee

13 July 2010

Retained Duty System Strategy Project

Report by Bruce Gordon

Contact: Bruce Gordon, SHQ Ext 5462, Email: Bruce.Gordon@hantsfire.gov.uk

1 Summary

The purpose of this paper is to update the Human Resources (HR) Committee with respect to the Retained Duty System (RDS) Strategy Project progress and its future direction.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the HR Committee accept the content of the report and the progress made.
- 2.2 That the HR Committee acknowledge the need to conduct a trial to support the proposed changes to the way the RDS could be rewarded in the future.

3 Introduction and background

- 3.1 Responding nationally to increasing concerns relayed from Fire and Rescue Services throughout the country, the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) established a national review to examine Retained Duty System Issues in England and Wales. Under the (ODPM) direction, the national Retained Review Team (RRT) was established, producing its final report in February 2005.
- 3.2 The report made 51 recommendations of which 35 were considered to fall within the remit of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services. As a result an RDS Review Project was completed, reporting to SMT in June 2007 with 6 recommendations, see App A. These were carried forward to the RDS Strategy Project to implement and with regard to recommendation 1 make proposals for change to SMT.

The overall strategy is to introduce agreed changes and improvements to maximise support and efficiency of the current Retained Duty System.

The project was divided into four interlinked phases, with the developments in each feeding into the next. Phase one revisited the earlier Review Project

recommendations and developed the six high level recommendations (Appendix A).

Phase two initiated the procurement and implementation of an electronic management system, support for RDS and research and initial development of an annualised salary scheme.

Once the retained management system was rolled out to all RDS stations the current project manager joined the project to carry forward the progress made within the first 2 stages, and is currently responsible for progressing the contracts and annualised salary scheme proposals.

4 Progress to Date

- 4.1 A major aspect of the project was to introduce an electronic retained management system (Recommendation 4). The project board considered 4 proposals, eventually opting for an RMS system provide by Gartan Fsi UK (the 'Gartan system').
- 4.2 The Gartan system was introduced as an interim solution for 2 years with the option for a 3rd year, if required.
- 4.3 This system supports management and firefighters alike. Firefighters now have more flexibility with how they book on and off call by use of text, mobile, landline, internet and station visit. They can now see an up to the minute account of their availability and the availability of other firefighters on station. When attending the station for a call they can also see at a glance who is available and the skills that they possess.
- 4.4 Management now have a greater tool with which to manage performance of stations and individuals through a number of reports that can be generated through the system.
- 4.5 Fire control now have an up to the minute picture, via a real time map, of appliance availability throughout the county. This has enabled more efficient appliance movement and enabled an effective use of the 'Personnel Reserve' (PR) resource.
- 4.6 An interim payroll module is also attached to the system that has the potential to stream line the processing of payments. With suitable interfaces between SAP and this system (or one with similar capabilities) could result in an efficiency saving of approximately £32,000, as there would be a reduced workload associated with progressing pay claims from RDS staff.
- 4.7 The RMS system has also been able to provide valuable data for other aspects of the RDS and other associated projects affecting the Retained Duty System.
- 4.8 A review of the system is currently under way and will be presented to the RDS Strategy Project Board on 22nd June 2010.
- 4.9 An effective support mechanism for the RDS was also amongst the six high level recommendations (Recommendation 5). This support has been established by

changes to the Support Officer and Group Training Instructor (GTI) roles.

- 4.10 Support Officers now form part of a Group Management team, although line managed in this role by a Group Manager in Response Support.

5 Contracts and Annualised Salary Proposals

- 5.1 Recommendations 35 and 38 of the RRT document suggested that Fire and Rescue Services reviewed contractual provisions and remuneration systems.
- 5.2 The RDS system has always been viewed as a flexible and efficient system. There is no doubt that it is flexible, however it is certainly not as efficient as it could be.
- 5.3 There are a number of inefficiencies within the RDS section:
- The full time equivalent (FTE) for RDS firefighters is 647. HFRS currently have an RDS establishment of 770 firefighters (FTE 618.75) This equates to 92% of full establishment. This is the highest percentage number of RDS firefighters employed by HFRS for many years. However, most days there are an average of 10 appliances showing 'unavailable' in control.
 - In line with 'Grey Book' conditions there are currently 2 types of RDS contract. Full for those offering 120 – 144 hours cover per week with a 25% reduction for those offering 119 or less. Research of the data held on RMS has highlighted that of the 177 employees that are paid a full retaining fee, 70 are providing less than 120 hours cover. This equates to an inefficiency of £44k
 - Data obtained from the RMS has identified that the average hours available are between 80 and 100. This does range between 20 and 160.
- 5.4 It is clear that we have sufficient firefighters, however they are not providing cover at the times of day that we require them.
- 5.5 The project managers have researched a number of pay models utilised by FRS's across the country and although interesting and useful models, they have all proved to be more expensive in the long term than the current system. As a result of this research a pay model has been developed using the most effective features from various schemes.
- 5.6 The proposed model is based on rewarding individuals for the cover they provide rather than the current 'pay as you go' method. The retaining fee is split into four separate bands as opposed to the 2 current bands. The new bands will offer 100, 80, 60, and 40% of the retaining fee. In addition to this the salary will include training nights, an average of the stations calls, turnouts and attendances.
- 5.7 Each station will be required to ensure that of those available only the required numbers respond to crew the appliance/appliances i.e. 5/10. This offers the opportunity for an improved work life balance as those not designated to ride, although available, will not be required to respond. The advantage of this system is that it is easier to manage from a budget perspective as Group Managers will be able to predict RDS expenditure based on the number of firefighters they have and

they cover bands they are in.

- 5.8 The Service is currently negotiating the model with representative bodies and consulting with employees via staff briefings.
- 5.9 Once agreed, virtual trials will commence in September 2010. The results of these trials will be evaluated and presented to SMT in February 2011.

6 Supporting our corporate aims and objectives

- 6.1 This project supports the Resources and Community priorities outlined in the Service Plan 2010-2013
- 6.2 By rewarding the operational cover availability of our RDS firefighters we will have more control over how many RDS firefighters we have on each station and how they are deployed, resulting in a more efficient operational response.

7 Risk analysis

- 7.1 Failure to adapt the way we manage the inefficiencies within the retained service will result in HFRS not being in a position to provide the best possible service to residents and businesses Hampshire.
- 7.2 There is a risk that the annual salary scheme proposals will result in the resignation of a number of firefighters. This could be due to the proposal to sharing out the calls via a rota system and the way this will affect those that consistently make a turnout. There would be both a reduction in the number of operational call they would attend and that they could lose out financially. The current flexibilities for individuals within the RDS system could be perceived as being reduced as result of these proposals and may not suit certain individuals.
- 7.3 This project has a significant impact on the RDS firefighters with regard to their salaries. Other projects including, RDS budgets, Special Appliances and Selective Paging will add to the impact.

8 People Impact Assessment

- 8.1 A PIA has been written and is being updated as the project progresses.
- 8.2 The proposals in this report are considered compatible with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, the Human Rights Act 1998, and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

9 Resource implications

- 9.1 Human Resources

As detailed in section 7 there is a risk that there may be a reduction in the RDS workforce as a result of this proposal. This would require additional efforts to recruit

into posts on RDS stations where required.

9.2 Physical Resources

There have been no additional physical resources identified in this phase of the project.

9.3 Information and Communications Technology Resources

Information will be gathered via Community Risk intelligence team, RMS data and the Human Resources management information team. There is a significant reliance on the Retained Management System (RMS) and whilst this is already seen as an operational crucial system, it is also fundamental to the successful completion of the project. It's continued availability is therefore seen as an organisational high priority.

9.4 Financial Implications

There will be cashable efficiency savings as a result of proposed changes to salaries. Whilst these can be estimated, these will be more accurately identifiable following the trial. However, the potential savings was not the originating driver for the proposals which were geared towards more effective systems to staff RDS Sections and respond to demands upon the service.

10 Consultation

10.1 Staff have been widely consulted throughout the project through various means. This has been through representative bodies, RDS Newsletters, focus groups and forums.

10.2 In addition to the negotiation process, representative bodies are also invited to attend project board meetings. There has been high degrees of involvement and engagement to date.

10.3 Due to the majority of the RDS workforce not being members of a union, separate staff briefings have been held with regard to contracts and salary proposals in order to assist with the negotiation process.

11 Conclusion

11.1 Through use of the Retained Management System individuals are now in a position to better manage their own availability.

11.2 By providing modern contract schedules and providing a working system with greater flexibility in cover arrangements we will be in a position to help support and facilitate a more efficient and effective RDS workforce.

11.3 New contracts and salary arrangements will also be supported by use of a Retained Management System.

12 Background papers

12.1 The following documents disclose the facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of the report: None

Note: The list excludes: (1) published works; and (2) documents that disclose exempt or confidential information defined in the Act.

Appendix A: RDS Strategic Review Project, SMT Agreed Six High Level Recommendations

1. Further annualised salary scheme developments should be progressed and overseen by an implementation project team to include a specified trial, with review and evaluation prior to any final implementation decision. SMT should give agreement in principle to the development of an annualised salary scheme. An implementation project board should comment on preferred model variables utilising the one hour pay comparison model developed, the method and frequency of future payment methods, in order to inform any future implementation project team.
2. A new IRMP objective should be considered that establishes a risk profiling project team. This area of work should both quantify and qualify risk within station grounds across the county.
3. A new IRMP objective to strategically review operational resources and their distribution should be considered. This should align to meet identified risk with strategic resilience and capacity integral to its conclusions. It should consider the adoption of new or modified resources such as combined appliances, enlarged crew appliances, new rural concept appliances and dedicated specialist RDS appliances as examples.
4. Prior to any introduction of an annualised salary scheme, an electronic Retained Management System should be trialled, evaluated and successfully introduced across the RDS locations for fair, equitable and consistent performance management. Following the Project Manager's lead role on behalf of the South East HRDG sub group (RDS) researching into availability systems, HFRS have entered into collaborative discussions with *Sophtlogic* to facilitate national development trials of an eagerly awaited new product. It is recommended that this collaboration is now progressed in conjunction with the Workforce Strategy Management Information Group project and the RDS availability and WTD related aspects are scoped by a consultant analyst.
5. The holistic provision of support to the RDS should be evaluated by an implementation group to ensure adaptation or developments where necessary achieve efficient delivery at the point of most effectiveness.
6. A Project Manager and project team should be appointed for the implementation of agreed proposals. SMT should comment on the timeframe desired for the implementation strategy. Consideration should be given to the adoption of short, medium and long term objectives and where this implementation project should sit within the revised Service Delivery structure.

Note:- recommendation 2 and 3 have been adopted by Service Delivery for progression and are now considered core activity. Recommendation 6 has been implemented and is the mandate for the RDS Strategy Project.