

11. Progress of the Retained Duty System (RDS) Implementation Plan

Purpose of report

1. To provide the Policy and Resources Committee with a report on the progress of the Retained Duty System (RDS) Implementation Plan.
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Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that this report is noted by the Policy and Resources Committee.

Introduction and Background

2. A dedicated team was established to review the existing Retained Duty System (RDS) management and working practices in 2008. This team carried out an in-depth examination of such areas as availability of staff and appliances, work-life balance, resilience, recruitment, training, development and management.
3. The review team engaged extensively with every RDS station and a significant number of RDS Firefighters and managers. The team comprised a lead officer with considerable RDS experience and two RDS staff seconded on a full-time basis.
4. The team highlighted a number of key issues such as how the basis for an RDS service reliant on “traditional” communities and lifestyles did not always fit with the modern working and lifestyles of modern society. The team also considered the demographics of our local communities, which have altered significantly in recent years, as well as the ability for people to balance their work and life commitments with the requirements of an RDS Fire and Rescue Service career.
5. A three year RDS Implementation Plan consisting of 24 objectives was produced based upon the evidence provided in the review and in consultation with Officers, RDS staff and representative bodies. The plan was then refined further, and progress on delivering the Year Two objectives is outlined below.

Delivery of Year Two Objectives

6. Year Two commenced in April 2011, and the objectives are now substantially complete or in progress. A short summary of progress follows, and full details of the achievement of each objective are set out in the Appendix.
7. A major achievement was the integration of RDS objectives with the training review. In liaison with the Service Training and Development Centre, there have been numerous improvements, including enhanced opportunities for delivering

training locally including core skills modules, a redesign of the RDS promotion process, new supervisory level development opportunities, and more training flexibility. Additional levels of resilience and consistent levels of officer support have also been achieved, supported by the restructure of the Service Delivery directorate.

8. Two related objectives to create a database of employers and develop strong partnership arrangements with employers are still in progress, as they depend on the completion of HR Connect training within the RDS. This is due to be achieved during Year Three, and will be included as part of the RDS recruitment strategy. Work also continues to ensure that diversity in our workforce is encouraged through RDS recruitment.
9. Work towards delivering Year Three objectives has also commenced from April 2012, and an overview of progress to date is included in the Appendix. This will include providing a new Service Policy and Instruction (SPI) for RDS recruitment and an overall review of the RDS Implementation Plan.

Conclusion/Summary

10. Year Two of the Implementation Plan has been successful, with all of the objectives substantially completed. There has been a significant workload undertaken by the Service Training and Development Centre as well as the Human Resources Department to ensure that the objectives have been achieved.
11. As a result, the Retained Duty System staff should now begin to see the benefits of new processes that will assist them with training and development. The support structures which are now being implemented within the Districts will also enable Stations to concentrate their limited time on training.
12. Overall, this will provide the Service with a workforce, which is better qualified with improved safety, competence and operational efficiency.
13. As well as the benefits described above, the Service will now also have a more structured support network in place for the RDS which is both consistent and cost efficient.

Financial Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
There are financial issues that require consideration	No	

Legal Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
There are no legal issues e.g. contractual and procurement, reputational issues that require consideration	No	Non Applicable

Additional Considerations

14. The table below sets out any additional issues arising from the proposals contained in this report and identifies the relevant paragraphs in the report where such issues are addressed.

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
Resources (e.g. Assets, ICT, Human Resources, Training & Development, Sustainability).	No	Non Applicable
Strategic Policy Links (e.g. IRMP, Authority Plan, Equality & Diversity, Partnerships, Environmental Impact).	No	Non Applicable
Risk Management / Health & Safety (e.g. risk management and control measures, risk register score).	No	Non Applicable
Consultation with Representative Bodies	No	Non Applicable

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 Table outlining progress in delivering Year Two Objectives of the RDS Implementation Plan.

Background papers

None

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Retained Duty System (RDS) Implementation Plan progress report

The following table outlines progress in delivering Year Two objectives of the RDS Implementation Plan.

Year Two Objectives	
1	<p><i>To create and maintain a database of employers from within the RDS which is reviewed annually.</i></p> <hr/> <p>This has been held over from Year Two. This objective will form part of the recruitment strategy and come online when all HR Connect training is complete within the RDS. Following this, all RDS employers will be recorded on HR Connect (software used by Human Resources Department) and will be updated accordingly when employees move to other primary employers.</p>
2	<p><i>To provide regular contact with potential RDS employers, via the local manager, throughout the recruitment process. This contact will aim to create a partnership arrangement between the local manager, RDS employer and applicant.</i></p> <hr/> <p>This is linked to the above deferred objective. Once the Service has an up to date database, the newly appointed RDS Support Watch Commanders will be utilised to forge stronger links with the existing employers' business community and strive to 'recruit' new potential employers that may be receptive towards releasing staff for RDS duties.</p>
3	<p><i>To continue to work towards the challenging diversity targets to ensure that both Black Minority and Ethnic (BME) and females are attracted to the RDS.</i></p> <hr/> <p>This work still continues as part of the four RDS recruitment campaigns per year. This work will still be undertaken by the RDS Support Watch Commanders working closely with the newly formed Recruitment Officer role within the Human Resources department.</p>
4	<p><i>To liaise with the Service Training and Development Centre (STDC) and the Approved Centre to provide support, feedback and assistance in relation to the shared objectives forming part of the training review.</i></p> <hr/> <p>Overall, this objective is complete; please see below for the specifics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>To explore the potential for creating opportunities for the STDC to deliver training locally within the Districts to support the RDS with suitable resources and staff.</i> <p>This has been delivered by STDC by the use of instructors going out into Districts to deliver specific training locally, and will also be supported in more detail when the Strategic Training Facilities (STFs) are online.</p>

- *To review the core skills module, and subsequent training modules, to identify what content can be delivered locally within the District structure to reduce the initial impact on RDS applicants.*

The modules have been reviewed and it is expected that once the STFs are online, initial training courses and modules will be discharged locally.

- *Explore options for additional support to both candidates and assessors in the RDS to reduce the numbers of Firefighters in development to a more manageable number.*

With the removal of the NVQ system and the introduction of the development workbook, there has been a reduction in the number of Firefighters in development. Also, with a more structured approach using the workbook and more interaction from STDC and the Development Department, the burden of the development process has eased at Station level.

- *To review the role of the Assessment and Development Centre (ADC) process in selecting, assessing and training RDS Supervisory Managers to ensure a safe level of operational response and appropriate supervisory managerial skills.*

This has been completed by the redesign of the promotion process for RDS and the removal of the Assessment & Development Centre (ADC) element from it.

- *To conduct a skills-gap analysis to identify training requirements for Supervisory Managers to fulfil the requirement of the role map and to maintain competence whilst filling any potential skills gaps.*

This is complete following the redesign and development of a Supervisory Incident Command Course and the introduction of incident command assessments using the vector system.

- *To develop a structured approach to ensure that all interested RDS staff are made aware of the career progression process. Districts should be encouraged to take "ownership" provide initial awareness and the Service to facilitate a series of week-end seminars covering all aspects of the process.*

There is now a series of awareness sessions undertaken prior to RDS promotion processes, undertaken by the Development Department.

- *To support succession planning within RDS units and consider the introduction of temporary development posts.*

This complete and development posts have been introduced.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>To provide a more flexible and RDS friendly method of delivering the Supervisory Managers Programme.</i> <p>This is completed, with a full range of days offered including weekends, further work to provide flexibility is being considered.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>To review the frequency rates of the training recording system on an annual basis to ensure that they accurately reflect competency standards and risk based training.</i> <p>This is now complete due to the extensive review undertaken by STDC into the frequency rates of the Individual Development Record (IDR) system and the introduction of the new Competency & Training Record (CTR) recording system which takes into account the types of risk within a Station area and suggests training accordingly. The training is now more centred around the risk profile rather than the frequency and repetition of training.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Service to adopt a transparent method of assessing Acquired Prior Learning (APL) and Acquired Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) for staff undertaking development, recognising skills, experience and knowledge.</i> <p>Complete, as APL is now fully considered</p>
5	<p><i>To explore options to provide or develop additional levels of resilience and consistent levels of officer support.</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>This is now complete.</p>

The following table provides an update on Year Three objectives of the RDS Implementation Plan.

Year Three Objectives	
1	<p><i>To consider further exploration of “front loaded” salary based schemes or similar in future years if recruitment initiatives are successful.</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>This objective on hold for the foreseeable future and is no longer believed to be viable or necessary.</p>
2	<p><i>To create an SPI to provide clear guidance and structure to the recruitment process for all staff and managers which will be reviewed and updated at regular intervals.</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>The RDS Manager is working closely with the newly appointed Recruitment Officer within the HR department to develop a recruitment strategy for the RDS, which will be then be included in a new Recruitment SPI (Service Policy and Instruction) later in the year.</p>
3	<p><i>To undertake a full review of the Implementation Plan</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>This is planned for Quarter 4 of the business planning year.</p>

