



**Safest People, Safest Places**

## **Combined Fire Authority**

**15 December 2020**

### **Staffing Arrangements at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe**

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#### **Report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer**

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##### **Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the staffing arrangements at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe fire stations, following the Combined Fire Authorities (CFA) decision on the 21 September 2020 to introduce a Day Crewing (DC) style duty system, in line with the 2020/21 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), providing a collective agreement could be negotiated with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU).

##### **Background**

2. The Day Crewing Plus (DCP) duty system was introduced at both Seaham and Newton Aycliffe in 2013. Following notification from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) that any fire and rescue service (FRS) that had or was considering an alternative crewing system must be compliant with the Working Time Regulations 1998, unless a local collective agreement was in place the CFA agreed to replace the DCP duty system with a DC duty system for a trial period from 1 April 2019.
3. In March 2020, the CFA approved a request to extend the DC trial at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe for a further six months to enable legal advice to be sought and further consideration on the longer-term position to be made.
4. Following a comprehensive review of the trial and full consideration of the legal advice, the CFA approved a paper on the 21 September 2020 which made two recommendations:

- a. Approve the implementation of DC at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe on a permanent basis, in line with the 2020/21 IRMP recommendation, providing a collective local agreement could be negotiated with the FBU.
- b. Should a collective local agreement not be successfully negotiated with the FBU, receive a further paper outlining the additional options and recommendation for the permanent crewing arrangements at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe.

### **The Current Position**

5. Following the CFA meeting in September 2020, officers within the Service have undertaken consultation with staff at both Seaham and Newton Aycliffe and the FBU to identify a suitable replacement to DCP.
6. The Service recognised the flexibility and benefits provided to both the Service and to staff who work the DCP / DC duty system; one key aspect is the self-rostering element, which provides an efficient approach to crewing appliances whilst offering a flexible working pattern for staff.
7. Early engagement with the FBU recognised the importance of appropriately naming the new duty system at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe and agreement has been reached on the term "Self Rostering Duty System" (SRDS).
8. Following positive engagement with staff and the FBU, a formal offer has been made as part of a collective agreement which includes:
  - As per the current arrangements, a requirement to work a total of 150 shifts per annum for those with long service entitlement or alternatively 153 shifts for those without. These figures are calculated after leave and public holidays are taken into account.
  - Self-rostering in line with the Self Rostering Duty System Procedure.
  - 12-hour dayshifts operating between 07.00-19.00 hrs.
  - A pensionable enhancement to basic salary of 8%.
9. During October 2020, a survey of staff at both Seaham and Newton Aycliffe was undertaken, with most responses indicating a preference to work the SRDS. To provide resilience and fill a small number of current vacancies, the Service is also seeking expressions of interest from staff who may wish to transfer to the SRDS.
10. Consultation and formal negotiations with the FBU have been constructive and included officials from within County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service along with engagement with FBU representatives for the North East region.
11. Amendments to associated documents which support the introduction of the SRDS, namely the 'Self Rostering Duty System Procedure' and the Internal Transfer Procedure have been subject to consultation and agreed.

12. A local collective agreement was signed between CDDFRS and the FBU on the 01 December 2020, and Human Resources are making changes to the terms and conditions of staff located at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe.

### **Next steps**

13. The SRDS will be introduced at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe on a permanent basis on 1 January 2021.

14. As part of organisational learning the Service will reflect upon and review the processes and procedures which have supported the introduction of the SRDS.

### **Recommendations**

15. Members are asked to **note** the contents of the report.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Steve Helps (0191 375 5557)