

REPORT TO:	POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE
DATE:	13 <sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2006
REPORT NO:	CFO/177/06
REPORTING OFFICER:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
CONTACT OFFICER:	KIERAN TIMMINS, EXEC. DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, ICT, & PROCUREMENT
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	
SUBJECT:	REVIEW OF STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS IN MOBILISING COMMAND AND CONTROL ROOM (MACC)

#### Purpose of report

1. To review the staffing patterns within MACC and to recommend changes that  
:-
  - Improve resource allocation in line with risk
  - Deliver budget savings
  - Are reflective of consultation undertaken with staff

#### Recommendations

2. That members note the report and consider how they wish to proceed.

## Executive Summary

3. Currently 52 Staff work in MACC - resource is not closely matched to risk. The total current staffing cost is £1.745m.
4. Since MACC was last reviewed in 1997 the following factors need to be taken into account:-
  - Introduction of national framework and IRMP
  - Reduced sickness
  - The workload has reduced overall
  - Variable workload across the day and through the year
  - Technology changes
  - The regional control project is proceeding
  - The responsibility for central staffing duties has transferred from MACC to the Attendance Management Department reducing the overall workload.
5. Data analysis shows that staffing levels can be varied in line with demand for service. In light of this, consultation was opened with staff on a variety of shift patterns that sought to match risk to resource.
6. The results of consultation have been received and staff have indicated clearly that;-
  - 6.1 Existing patterns (2-2-4 system) suit the work life balance needs of the majority of existing staff.
  - 6.2 Start and finish times of proposed shifts are unrealistic in terms of family commitments.
  - 6.3 Staff have built family commitments around existing shift arrangements.
  - 6.4 In general the existing 2-2-4 shift pattern suits the majority of staff who do not wish to take voluntary redundancy or early retirement under the LGP's 85 Rule.
  - 6.5 Staff believe that a shift conclusion time of midnight is both unrealistic and unsafe for staff who need to use public transport.
  - 6.6 Staff understand and support in principle the need to align watch numbers to demand at different times of the day/night
  - 6.7 Staff have also expressed a wish for temporary MACC contracts to be made permanent.

7 As a result of the consultation a proposal has been formulated to reflect staff wishes within the limited timescale (consultation closed on the 6<sup>th</sup> September). This proposes reducing core staffing by three whole time staff per watch (Total 12 posts). In combination with the establishment of a number of part/time contracts to allow more flexible family friendly ways of working and to match resource to risk at the busiest times – this extra investment is anticipated to be 6 equivalent wholetime posts. **The proposed new staffing structure would save £0.197m p.a in a full year, and mean that we have more staff on duty at the busiest period.**

8. In order to deliver the proposal the Authority can:-

8.1 End the temporary contracts for staff in MACC, which would involve selection for dismissal on the grounds of redundancy, on the basis of the traditional objective criteria of “last in, first out”. (It is considered that this would not be in line with the aspirations of members in relation to restructuring) OR

8.2 Implement the Authority’s VER/VS proposals. In this respect 13 staff have expressed an interest in taking VER/ Voluntary Redundancy.

9. The costs of moving to the new structure using VER and VS are relatively high (especially as the pay back period is only 2.5 years if the regional control room project proceeds in line with current published timetables).

10. The table below summarises the position.

	Cost to Achieve Saving £'m	Full year Saving £'m	Net Present Value/ (cost) to Authority	
			Over 2.5 years (Current Control Room Forecast) £'m	Over 5 years £'m
Maximum Cost - Offer VER and VS to all staff	-0.973	0.197	-0.566	-0.187
Reduced Cost - Offer pension Only	-0.801	0.197	-0.434	-0.054
<i>End Temporary Contracts (* Estimates only)</i>	-0.050	0.197	0.443	0.800

11. Members will recall that they have set aside £1.235m in a modernisation reserve as a result of capitalising smoke alarm purchase and installation costs in anticipation of funding the proposed programme of VER/VES to deliver savings from MACC and non-uniformed staffing areas.

12. Based upon the current published timescale the business case for the proposal, purely in financial terms, is not especially strong taking into account the estimated completion date of March 2009. However, Members must bear in mind that the project has already slipped from its original timescales and prospects for further slippage cannot be ruled out at this stage.

13. This project is expected to reduce the number of required staff in total across the Northwest significantly

14. If redundancies are appropriate, it is currently unclear what levels of redundancy pay and pension costs the government will fund at that time under the "new burdens" arrangements.

15. In addition, further potential staffing savings from Rank to Role cannot be realised without adopting the proposed approach (£15,000 p.a approx)

#### Information

16. The Staffing and resource levels in MACC were last reviewed in 1997. Because of the lack of local management information and refined incidence data the staffing structure was based upon a Home Office model and it allocates the same resource to each time of the day without reflecting risk factors.

17. The current budgeted establishment is as set out below;

Role		Number of Staff	Budgeted Salary £	Total Budget Cost Incl. On Costs £
Principal Fire Control Officer	PFCO	1	50,201	63,200
Fire Control Officer	FCO	5	33,091	205,000
Senior Fire Control Operator	SFCOp	6	28,851	214,000
Leading Fire Control Operator	LFCOp	8	27,374	272,000
Fire Control Operator	FCOp	32	25,028	991,000
		52		1,745,200

This budget is based upon July 2005 pay scales and reflects actual current pay scales including protected pay points and LSI. The PCFO receive a flexible duty allowance of 20%.

18. The "call taking" staff are the Leading Fire Control Operators and the Fire Control Operators.

19. The Staffing is made up of 4 watches and a number of day staff as shown below:-

Role		Watch				Day Staff
		Red	Green	Blue	White	
Principal Fire Control Officer	PFCO					1
Fire Control Officer	FCO	1	1	1	1	1
Senior Fire Control Operator	SFCOp	1	1	1	1	2
Leading Fire Control Operator	LFCOp	2	2	2	2	
Fire Control Operator	FCOp	8	8	8	8	
		12	12	12	12	4

20. Ten of the FCop staff have temporary contracts. They were taken on between January 2001 and July 2003 to replace staff vacancies and were only given temporary contracts because:-

20.1 Work was underway to review staffing arrangements in MACC

20.2 The situation around the national strategy on regional fire services and control rooms was unclear

21. Whilst the contracts for these staff are temporary, since they have worked for the authority for more than two years those staff qualify for the same rights, benefits and entitlements as permanent employees including a right to redundancy pay, a right to claim unfair dismissal, and in cases where they have been employed for 4 years or more right not to be treated less favourably than permanent employees without objective justification.

## 22. **SO WHAT HAS CHANGED FOR MACC?**

### 22.1 The National Framework and IRMP

The Fire Authority now has a duty to review risks facing the community of Merseyside and to allocate resources in the most effective way to meet those risks. It is no longer hide bound by prescriptive national staffing models. In line with the rest of the service, resources in MACC should be redirected in line with workloads.

### 22.2 Workload has reduced Overall

A review of the volume, time and type of call received by MACC has been conducted with a view to identifying service improvement. This work has been carried out by risk modeling consultants - Process Evolution. Various papers prepared during this work are attached as appendix 1.

The review has supported the view of the Chief Fire Officer that the service can better match resources to demand with a view to enhancing service performance and working conditions for staff. Such views reflect the observations of commentators and observers of call handling and incident management within Fire Service Control Rooms for over 20 years:

- **Audit Commission Report 1986 “In the Line of Fire” Para 5.1.** “The call taking workload of control rooms varies considerably according to time of day ... Staffing levels should be determined by first deciding on the number of staff needed to handle peaks in high priority core workload of answering calls and mobilising resources ...”

**Para 5.1. (117) “Even allowing for factors which limit Brigades ability to respond flexibly to varying workloads, there is scope to match staff more closely to core-activities workloads in control rooms. Some Brigades are beginning to use part time staff in control rooms ...”**

This was reiterated in a variety of subsequent reports

- HMI Principal Inspection Report 1999 1999, Home Office Report on the Future of Fire Service Control Rooms in England and Wales.
- 2000 Mott McDonalds report *Future of Fire Service Control Rooms and Communications*
- 2003 Mott McDonalds’s *Future of Fire and Rescue Service Control Rooms in England and Wales: Update*

22.3 There has also been a significant reduction in the administrative workload in MACC following the transfer of central staffing duties to the Time and Attendance Management Department at Bridle Road Headquarters.

Figure 1

Year	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	% Reduction
Total Calls	79681	66757	63558	21%
Year	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	% Reduction
Primary Fires	8012	2976	5960	25%
Year	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	% Reduction
ASB Fires	18992	12715	12084	36%

\* ASB fires – Anti Social Behaviour type incidents.

22.4 As can be seen there has been a steady reduction in the overall calls together with primary and anti social behaviour (asb) type calls dealt with by MACC staff.

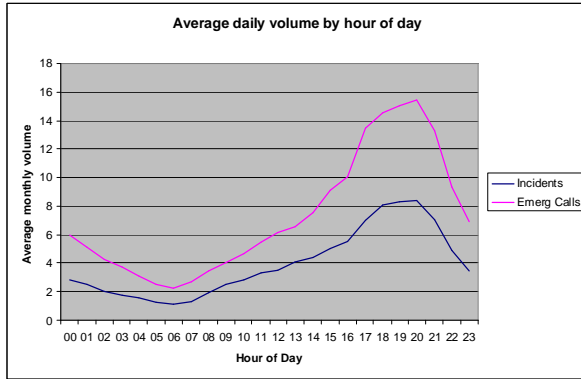
22.5 However it should be noted that whilst calls and incidents have reduced, staff consider that the workload resulting from the use of the most advanced technology in the country has increased. This has prompted the suggestion of a review of workloads, and work routines within MACC.

a) Recent Data Analysis Indicates that the Workload varies over the time of day

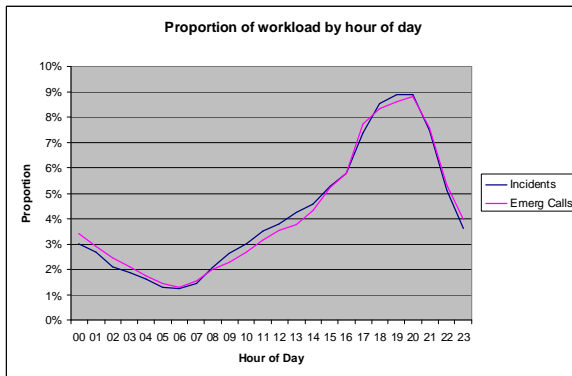
This is clearly not a new phenomenon but has been confirmed by the recent Process Evolution work .

The graphs below show how the volume of calls varies over the day, comparing incoming *emergency* calls with incident volumes:

Graph 1



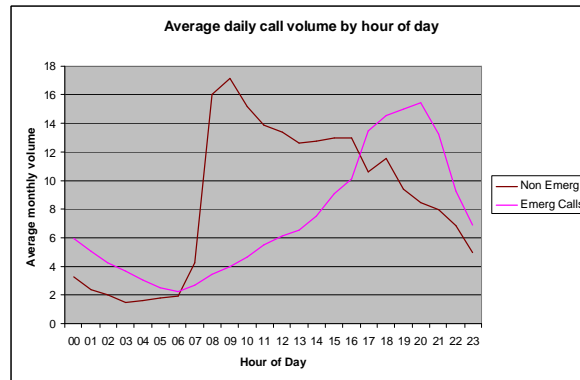
Graph 2



Graph 1 shows the average number of incidents and calls for each hour of the day over the calendar year 2004. Unsurprisingly the number of emergency calls are higher than the number of incidents. However, Graph 2 (which 'standardises' the data by looking at the proportion of calls and incidents in each hour) shows that the ratio of calls to incidents remains static across the day.

The control centre also answers non emergency 'admin' calls. Graph 3 below compares the volume and profile of emergency and non emergency calls:

Graph 3



b) Recent Data Analysis Indicates that Workload varies by time of year

Again not a new phenomenon but recent data analysis clearly shows that there are busy times for fire calls;

- long hot,dry period in summer
- The approach to Bonfire night
- Periods of flooding

These peaks in demand can be clearly predicted and forecast

c) New Technolgy has been introduced

Members will recall that they have recently invested in a new mobilizing system giving the most advance technology to control room staff. For the most part this has helped efficiency and working practices but with the increased technology there has been some increase in the complexity of role.

d) Sickness levels have improved

In line with the rest of the service sickness levels have improved within the control room. When the service was last reviewed the review included an assumption of 15 shifts lost to sickness per year per member of staff. This has reduced in practice to 8.9 shifts lost per member of staff per year. Whilst the improvement is welcome this still remains unacceptably high and it is believed that the raft of changes to the sickness management procedures and the staff incentives introduced will help improve this figure further in future.

e) Regional Controls

The Government is developing a regional control for the Northwest as part of national arrangements for resilience . The project has slipped slightly from its original timescales but is now forecast to deliver a new control room in financial year 2008 (ie March 2009)

This project is expected to reduce the number of required staff in total across the Northwest significantly

If redundancies are appropriate it is currently unclear what levels of redundancy pay and pension costs that the government will fund at that time under the "new burdens" arrangements. The TUPE arrangements for staff and the governance arrangements are also under discussion with the DCLG but it is expected that all current control staff will have a right of TUPE to the new body.

There is clearly a significant risk for the Authority around these uncertainties particularly as to the costs of any large scale redundancy/redeployment programme at that time.

The timescale for the project clearly limits the length of time over which the Authority will receive benefits from any efficiency improvements - currently anticipated to be 2.5 years. However the project timescale has already slipped and there is a possibility of timescales being further reviewed in such a large scale national ICT infrastructure project.

## 22.6 What did the Data analysis show?

The demand data presented here, along with data on average call lengths for the different call types has been used to build a simulation model of MACC. This model has been used to optimise the number of staff required at work without affecting service levels. Using this method, it has been agreed between Process Evolution and MF&RS that the table below represents the minimum number of *call takers* (either FCOPs and LFCOPs) who should be on shift at each hour of day (i.e. actually at work in the control centre).

<b>Hour</b>	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
<b>Operators</b>	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	7	8	8	8	7	5	5

22.7 Allowing for current levels of abstraction, and minimum staffing requirements overnight, the table below is therefore the number of staff who should be rostered on shift for each hour of the day in our shift planning solutions described in this document.

<b>Hour</b>	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
<b>Operators</b>	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	9	10	10	10	9	7	7

22.8 It should be noted that the staff model includes significant resilience built into the model ( see further in report) (A copy of the report from process evolution is attached as Appendix 1.)

## 22.9 Initial Proposals

As a result of this work a number of different shift patterns were developed for consultation with staff. This was based around compulsory shift pattern changes for all staff. A variety of different models were considered. (A copy of the consultation paper is attached as Appendix B.)

22.10 Consultation as to working patterns in MACC is concluded on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2006 and members received an update on that consultation on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2006 (CFO/172/06).

### 23. **Responses to Consultation**

The key findings from consultation were.

- 23.1 The FBU's accountants Hard Dowdy have recommended that savings should be identified in MACC, if possible.
- 23.2 There has been a significant reduction in the administrative workload in MACC following the transfer of central staffing duties to the Attendance Management Department at Headquarters. However, it should be noted that MACC staff have indicated that whilst calls and incidents have reduced, they consider that the workload resulting from the use of new technology has increased. This has prompted the suggestion of a review of workloads and work routines within MACC.
- 23.3 Consultation has involved the FBU despite their preference to ballot. The FBU do not support any variations to staffing levels in MACC. In addition, the FBU have submitted a petition signed by a number of MACC staff requesting no variation to staff levels or shift patterns. Latterly, however, during a Joint Secretaries meeting, the FBU asked for details of the alternative proposals emanating from MACC which were forwarded to the FBU on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2006 but to date no consultation response from the FBU has been received.
- 23.4 Consultation in respect of MACC shift patterns has been dynamic and extremely positive in terms of feedback. All watches have attended presentations regarding the need for change and the options available. Elected Members have taken an active part in the process and all personnel involved have received a copy of the Process Evolution report. A frequently asked questions database has been set up and has been the conduit through which ideas and feedback has been received.
- 23.5 Staff who wish to remain in the employ of the Service also wish to remain on the 2-2-4 system of shift working (2 days followed by 2 nights followed by 4 days off duty). The original proposals clearly are not supported by staff and the following observations have been expressed:
  - a. Existing patterns (2-2-4 system) suit the work life balance needs of existing staff.
  - b. Start and finish times of proposed shifts are unrealistic in terms of family commitments.

- c. Staff have built family commitments around existing shift arrangements.
- d. In general the existing 2-2-4 shift pattern suits the majority of staff who do not wish to take voluntary redundancy or early retirement under the LGP's 85 Rule.
- e. A proposed afternoon shift conclusion time of midnight is both unrealistic and unsafe for staff who need to use public transport.
- f. Staff understand and support in principle the need to align watch numbers to demand at different times of the day/night.
- g. Staff have also expressed a wish for the temporary MACC contracts to be made permanent.

**This report presumes that the Authority is not minded to impose shift changes on MACC staff .**

#### **24. Proposal arising from consultation**

As a result of the consultation process the following proposal has been developed

- Reduce core staffing levels on each shift in line with risk and demand by two Fire Control Operators and 1 Leading Fire Control Operator
- Maintain current shift working patterns which are popular with staff
- Propose a number of new posts to provide additional resources at peak times of workload

The proposed revised staffing structure is set out below.

Role		Number of Staff	Budgeted Salary £	Total Budget Cost Incl. On Costs £
Principal Fire Control Officer	PFCO	1	50,201	63,200
Fire Control Officer	FCO	5	33,091	205,000
Senior Fire Control Operator	SFCOp	6	28,851	214,000
Leading Fire Control Operator	LFCOp	4	27,374	136,000
Fire Control Operator	FCOp	24	25,028	743,250
Part Time contracts		6 Wte	25,028	185,813
		40		1,547,263

- 25. More work is required to establish exactly the best type of and time of temporary contracts to both meet resource demands flexibly and to provide working arrangements that are family friendly and flexible for staff wishing to work. The provision for a cost of 6 whole time equivalents is considered to be a sensible prudent provision that will allow a number of innovative working patterns to be developed. The new working arrangements will give greater flexibility and possibilities for family friendly arrangements to staff.

26. This gives a saving of £0.197million per annum.

**27. Resilience of Proposal**

The staffing model used by Process Evolution is robust and ensures a significant degree of resilience based upon current abstraction rates.

28. In particular it should be noted that there remains significant spare capacity in the quieter hours of the day. Officers will continue to review the efficiency and effectiveness of working arrangements

29. Member will also notice the prudence built into the modeling by process evolution which has also factored in incidents such as spate conditions and large incidents to ensure resilience.

**Senior Management and Rank to Role**

30. At this stage no revision has been made to management levels within the control centre which clearly provides greater resilience for the proposed solution.

31. Members will note that a large number of staff who have expressed an interest in VER and VS are from the more senior roles.

32. Members will also be aware that the move from Rank to Role has yet to be applied to Control Room. This change will reduce the number of structural levels within the control room staffing model since Fire Control Officers and Senior Fire Control Operators are both Watch Manager (Control) roles at varying points within the scale under the revised arrangements. It is intended that the implementation of this proposal will also include the full move of the control room from rank to role. It is anticipated that this will generate further savings that have not been anticipated within this report. These savings are anticipated to be £15,000 p.a approximately.

**Moving to the New Structure**

33. The proposal entails deletion of 12 posts (8FCop and 4 LFCOp). It also offers opportunities for staff to work different patterns (should they wish to do so) and to employ additional staff on part-time contracts.

34. In order to move to the new arrangements the Authority has two key options;

A) Termination of Temporary Contracts

The cheapest option for moving to the new working arrangement would be to terminate the temporary contracts.

Whilst the postholders have always been aware of the temporary nature of these roles some have worked for the Authority for up to five years. They now have the same rights as permanent employees and would qualify for a redundancy payment.

However, it is considered that the Authority's clear policy is to seek to avoid compulsory redundancy and it is assumed that the Fire Authority would wish to treat those staff as permanent employees.

Financially, terminating temporary contracts would be altogether cheaper – a full costing has not been completed but the costs of redundancy would be anticipated to be less than £50,000. But adopting this approach;

- Would mean effectively compulsory redundancies
- Would make the move from rank to role which is expected to deliver future savings harder
- Would mean retaining staff who having expressed a desire in exploring VER/VS and who would therefore be likely to be demotivated
- The newer staff bring fresher experience of different organisations and work environments
- May involve additional costs and time in defending claims for unfair dismissal.

On the other hand terminating temporary contracts would

- be significantly cheaper compared to other options
- allow retention of staff closer to retirement who might apply for staffing reorganisation rearrangements around regional controls that might be paid for by central government (although this is by no means certain)
- ensure retention of experienced knowledgeable staff

***In the light of all the issues above it is considered unlikely that the Authority would be mindful to support this option but further work can be done on this if the Authority minded to adopt this approach. Members may wish to consider if this assumption is correct.***

#### (B) Reducing Establishment by VER/VS

As part of a wider voluntary redundancy scheme previously approved by the Authority, a number of MACC personnel have expressed an interest in either voluntary redundancy or early retirement under the LGPS "85 Year" Rule (*this gives employees an ability to retire early where age plus service totals 85 or more*) or through Authority approval of early retirement.

Following an initial expression of interest from 27 staff, 13 staff continue to register an interest in VER/VS. Of these 10 might qualify for early retirement and redundancy. The remaining three qualify for voluntary redundancy only.

If all eligible staff were given maximum redundancy payments paid at their actual weekly rate of pay rather than the statutory maximum (as has been usual authority practice) and all staff who can receive an early pension were offered that option – (the Authority has to meet the cost of early release of pensions) – the total investment required would be £0.973 million.

Clearly this is a significant investment compared to the revenue saving of £0.197m p.a for what, at present, seems to be a period of 2.5 years based upon the current forecast date for a regional

control room. **(ie a Net Present Value Loss on the proposal of a loss £0.566 million) This represents a worse case scenario.**

35. However it must also be considered that :-

- This projection assumes that there will be no redundancy costs arising for the Authority in the move to regional control rooms. It is unclear if that will be the case.
- If for any reason the regional control room project was delayed by two years or more the proposal becomes much more financially attractive (A delay of 2 years would Reduce the Net present loss of the proposal to £0.187m).
- Further staffing savings from Rank to Role cannot be realised without adopting this approach (£15,000 p.a approx)
- This proposal helps the staff and the Authority prepare for regional control rooms in a more structured fashion
- The monies to pay for the redundancy costs have been set aside in a modernisation reserve and implementing the changes will help the underlying budget position and overall cost base of the Authority over the next two years.
- The financial position above does not take into account the benefits of reflecting staffing to business need.

#### **Can the Investment cost be reduced?**

36. If the offer to staff is restricted to :-

- a) early retirement for those to whom it applies (not voluntary redundancy as well)
- b) for those not qualifying for early retirement offer voluntary redundancy based upon actual salary

37. Then the cost of the investment would be reduced to £0.801m. Clearly this is still a significant investment compared to the revenue saving of £0.197m p.a for what, at present, seems to be a period of 2.5 years but it becomes closer to break even position based upon the current forecast date for a regional control room. **(ie a Net Present Value Loss on the proposal of a loss £0.434million)** This represents a worse case scenario and note other comments above

38. However it must also be considered that

- This projection assumes that there will be no redundancy costs arising for the Authority in the move to regional control rooms. It is unclear if that will be the case.
- If for any reason the regional control room project was delayed by two years or more the proposal becomes much more financially attractive. **(A delay of 2 years would make this a net present value loss after 4.5 years of £0.054m).**
- Further staffing savings from Rank to Role cannot be realised without adopting this approach (£15,000 p.a approx)
- This proposal helps the staff and the Authority prepare for regional control rooms in amore structured fashion

- The monies to pay for the redundancy costs have been set aside in a modernisation reserve and implementing the changes will help the underlying budget position and overall cost base of the Authority over the next two years.

**IT SHOULD BE NOTED IN ANY CONSIDERATION OF VER/VS THAT STAFF HAVE ONLY EXPRESSED AN INITIAL INTEREST AND THAT UNTIL A FINAL OFFER IS MADE AND ACCEPTED THERE IS NO CERTAINTY ABOUT THE COSTS NOR ABOUT THE NUMBERS OF STAFF ACCEPTING VER/VS TO HELP DELIVER THE STRUCTURE.**

### Equality and Diversity Implications

39. A wider variety of working patterns would be helpful to staff in terms of family friendly policies and would be conducive to a more diverse workforce within MACC.

40. The current shift pattern and those proposed in consultation underwent an equalities impact assessment. Time has not allowed this to be done yet for the new proposal but this will be carried out before any change is implemented.

### Financial Implications Summary

41. The proposed new staffing structure would save £0.197m p.a in a full year.

42. The costs of moving to the new structure using VER and VS are relatively high (especially as the pay back period is only 2.5 years if regional control room projects proceed in line with current published timetables)

The table below summarises the position.

	Cost to Achieve Saving £'m	Full year Saving £'m	Net Present Value/ (cost) to Authority	
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43. Members will recall that they have set aside £1.235m in a modernisation reserve as a result of capitalising smoke alarm purchase and installation costs in anticipation of funding the proposed programme of VER/VES to deliver savings from MACC and non-uniformed staffing areas.

44. Based upon the current published timescale the business case for the proposal is not especially strong but members must bear in mind that the

project has already slipped slightly from its original timescales but is now forecast to deliver a new control room in financial year 2008 (ie March 2009)

45. This project is expected to reduce the number of required staff in total across the Northwest significantly

46. If redundancies are appropriate it is currently unclear what levels of redundancy pay and pension costs that the government will fund at that time under the "new burdens" arrangements. The TUPE arrangements for staff and the governance arrangements are also under discussion with the DCLG but it is believed that all current control staff will have a right of TUPE to the new body.

47. There is clearly a significant risk for the Authority around these uncertainties

48. Further potential staffing savings from Rank to Role cannot be realised without adopting this approach (£15,000 p.a approx)

## **Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service**

### **Mobilising and Communications Centre**

### **Consultation Paper - Staffing Patterns**

#### **Introduction.**

The Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan 2006/07 details how alternative staffing arrangements would be considered. Action point 2.12 says we will examine and introduce where appropriate, alternative duty systems and staffing levels.

This paper details the outcomes of that examination and it is intended that any new arrangements will improve flexibility for staff, be family friendly and more efficient

The current situation where the same number of staff, are scheduled on shift at all hours of the day, does not represent the profile of the work undertaken by MACC staff. Call activity follows a very predictable pattern and creates the opportunity to align staff more closely with this profile. To do this requires alternative shift patterns for the current 2.2.4 system this document will show the demand profile of calls received by MACC. This will ensure a more effective and efficient response.

There are three shift patterns described in this document, and we will be seeking the views of MACC staff as to which is their preferred option.

#### **Demand**

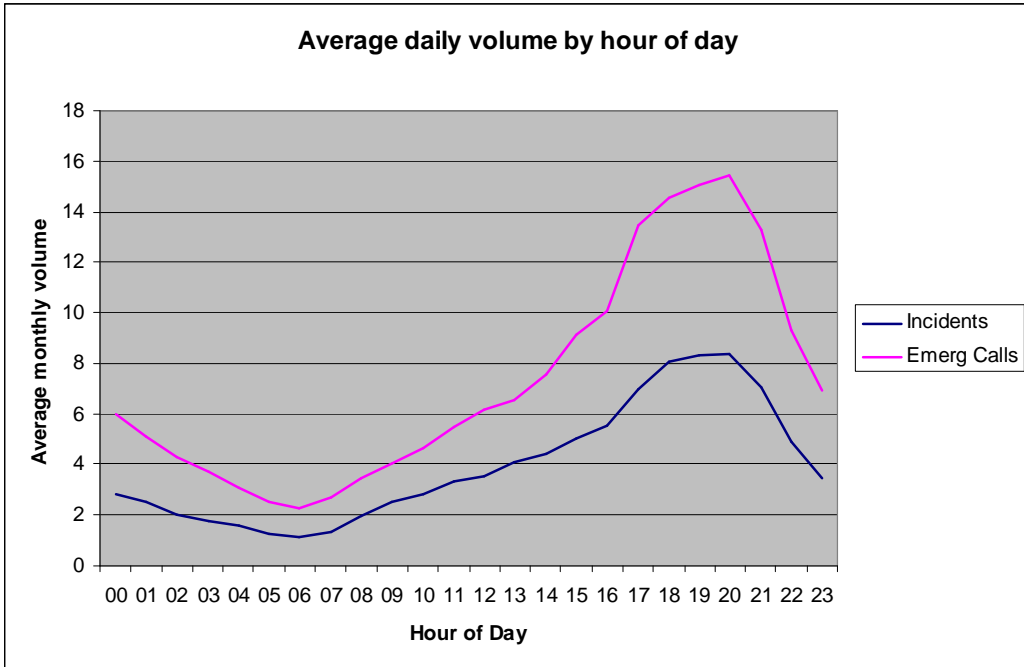
The demand placed upon MACC in terms of incoming call volumes are shown in the graphs below. The graphs show how the volume of calls varies over the period of a day, it also compares incoming emergency calls with incident volumes:

When taking account of demand workload placed on MACC staff and call profile, it should be noted that the current duties in relation to Central Staffing, will cease in the near future. The responsibility for Central Staffing will be transferred, freeing up MACC completely from these duties.

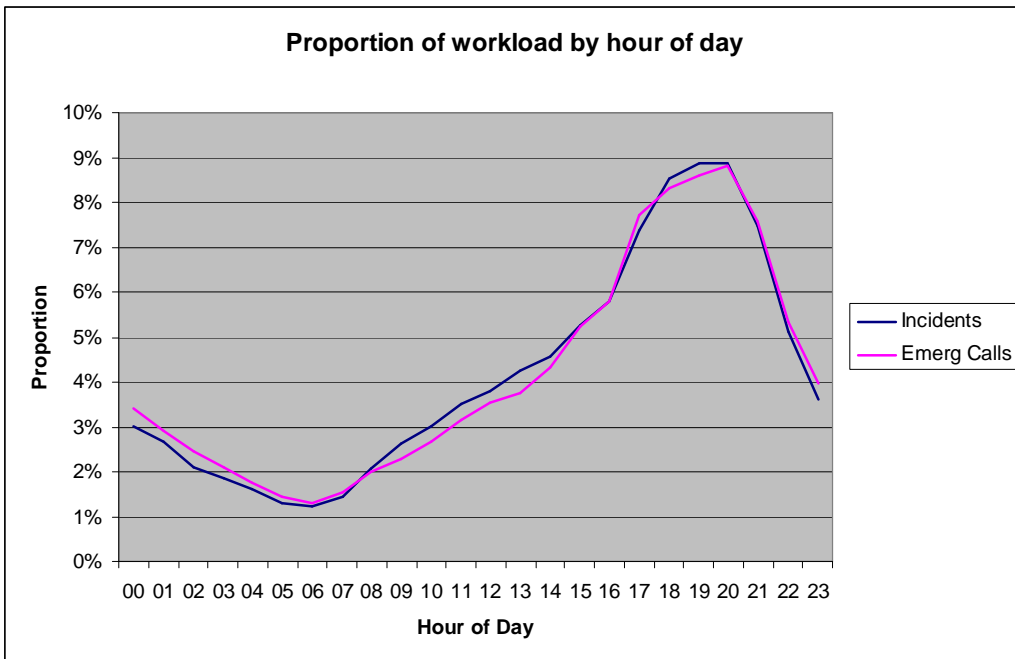
Graph number 1, shows the average number of incidents and calls for each hour of the day over the calendar year. (Year 2004 was used for the study).

Unsurprisingly the number of emergency calls is higher than the number of incidents. However, graph number 2, (which 'standardises' the data by looking at

the proportion of calls and incidents in each hour) shows that the ratio of calls to incidents remains static across the day.

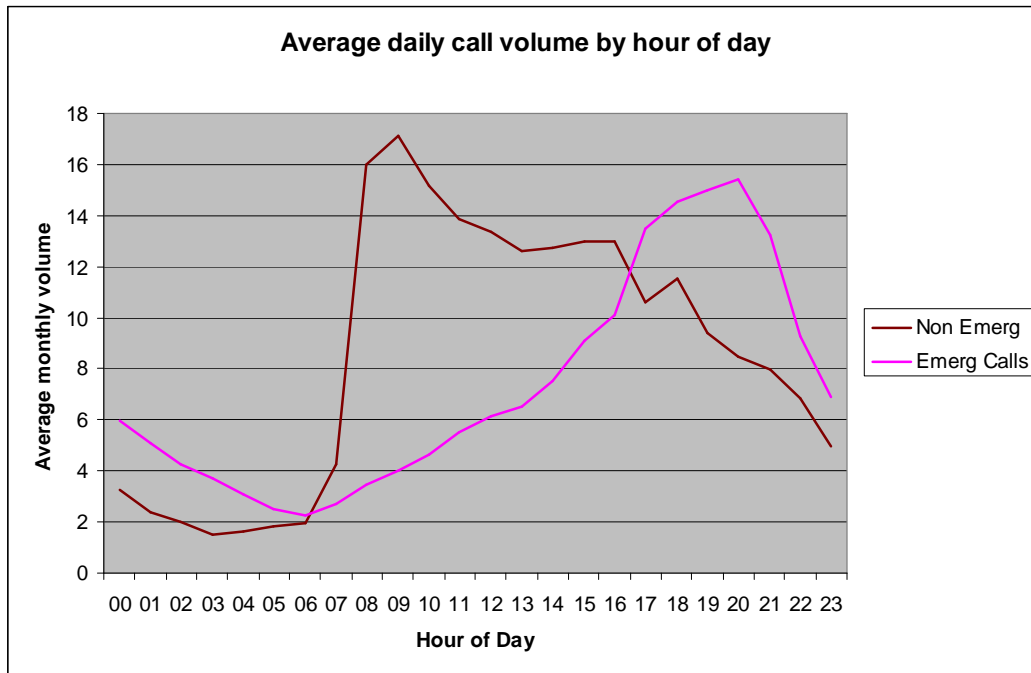


Graph Number 1.



Graph Number 2.

MACC also answers non-emergency 'admin' calls. The graph below compares the volume and profile of emergency and non-emergency calls:



An independent company, who are experts in this field, were engaged to analyse the data on call activity and asked to produce a report that ensured the maintenance of an effective MACC response and produce alternative shift patterns that recognised the variances in call activity.

The demand data presented here, along with data on average call lengths for the different call types have been used to build a simulation model of MACC. This model has been used to profile the number of staff required at work without affecting service levels. Using this method, it has been shown that the table below represents the minimum number of call takers (either FCOps and LFCOps) who should be on shift at each hour of day (i.e. actually at work in the control centre).

Hour	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Operators	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	7	8	8	8	7	5	5

Allowing for current levels of abstraction ( ie. annual leave, public holiday leave, sickness and training ) and staffing requirements overnight, the table below is therefore the number of staff who should be rostered on shift for each hour of the day in the shift planning solution described later in this document:

Hour	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Operators	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	9	10	10	10	9	7	7

It is important to note that the staffing profiles above do not include the management of the control room (i.e. Fire Control Officers and Mobilising Officers). They are considered separately later in this document.

**Staffing Options available.**

The Staffing profiles below on which consultation is taking place, all use 6 teams of 5 staff (**30** staff in total), operating the following 12 hour shifts:

Shift	Start Time	End Time	Length	Staff Required
M1	08:00	20:00	12	5
A1	12:00	00:00	12	5
N1	20:00	08:00	12	5

It is anticipated that each team would consist of 3 FCOps and 2 LFCOps, although this may depend on decisions to be taken regarding required numbers of mobilising officers.

In any one day, one team will be scheduled onto each of the shifts. In this way, the M1 and N1 shifts provide a 'core' base of 5 staff 24 hours a day and the A1 shift an additional 5 staff at the peak of the day. It should be noted that although the start and end times of M1 and N1 have been given here as 8am/8pm this could be altered to any start/end time provided the N1 shift starts when the M1 shift ends and vice versa.

The 3 ways in which these shifts could be scheduled amongst the teams are detailed below:

**Option 1A – 4 on, 4 off**

Each team operates a 4 on, 4 off pattern where the blocks of work are always the same shift and follow the order 4 M1, 4 A1, 4N1. The fact that the structure (4 on, 4 off) is the same as current patterns may make this option more attractive to staff, however, the block of 4 consecutive night shifts may be undesirable.

**Option 1B – 6 on, 6 off**

In order to overcome the issues with a run of 4 night shifts, option “ B “ below alternatively schedules the shifts into groups of 6 – 2 M1, 2 A1 and 2 N1 before 6 days off. Although this is better from a night shift perspective, it does require 6 consecutive days of 12 hour shifts.



Although in the current roster pattern the M1 shifts are 9 hours and the N1 shifts are 15 hours, it is intended to move to two 12 hour shifts, the start/end time are still under consideration. To cover this rota will require 4 Fire Control Officer and 4 Mobilising Officers.

This system is compatible with any of the options 1A-1C, however, in choosing this system the concept of team/'watch' working would be different between the call operators and the management of the centre – i.e. the shift patterns would not match those of the call operators. This has been considered and it is felt there are benefits to such arrangements, supporting a wider exchange management learning.

### **Conclusions**

In order for the Service to meet service standards and to provide value for money, it is crucial to conduct reviews of different areas of the Service. A review and analysis of MACC workloads has revealed an over provision of staff and an imbalance of staffing levels at certain times of the day versus the call profile. All three staffing options above offer a more efficient solution than the current duty system without any loss of service and as such it is incumbent to align the staffing levels with the call profile.