

Wholetime and Retained Duty System Performance Monitoring April to July 2014

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact John Redmond, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260205 or Mark Donnelly, Group Commander Shropshire Rural Performance Group, on 01743 260283.

1 Purpose of Report

This report provides information regarding the ongoing performance and management in terms of the availability of Wholetime and Retained Duty System (RDS) appliances in Shropshire.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

3 Background

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service has 23 fire stations, 19 of which are solely crewed by RDS staff, and a further 3 stations have both a wholetime and RDS complement. Only Telford Central Fire Station is solely crewed by wholetime firefighters.

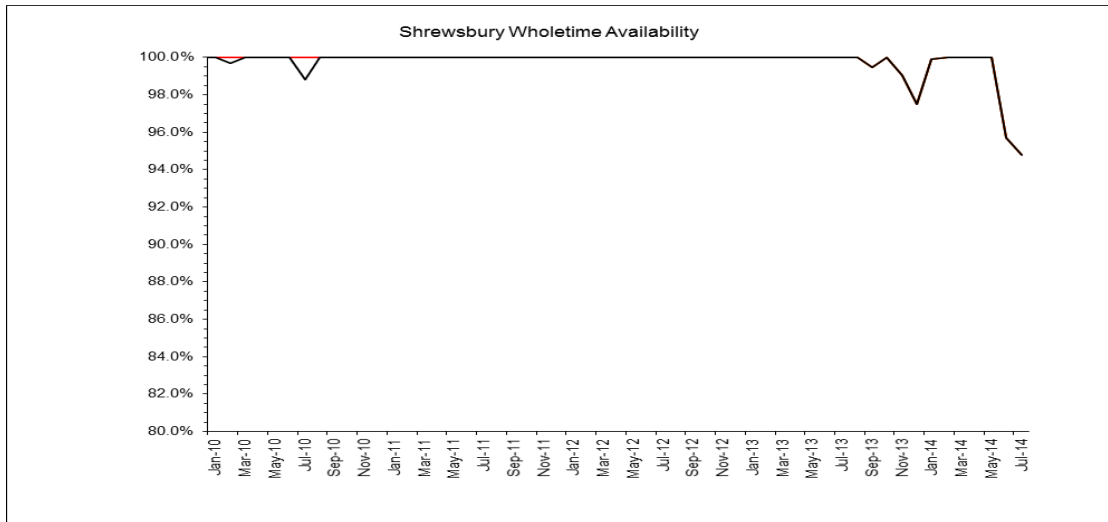
4 Wholetime Availability Update

The addition within the report of wholetime performance is to provide Committee members with an update as to the performance impact the Service has experienced through the current period of industrial action.

The ongoing industrial action being undertaken by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and its members has had an impact on the Service's ability to maintain its wholetime figures at 100% over the current reporting period. Several strikes throughout June and July have resulted in a reduction in the overall performance. Regardless of the time and duration of the strike, the Service is unable to provide any wholetime appliances during these periods.

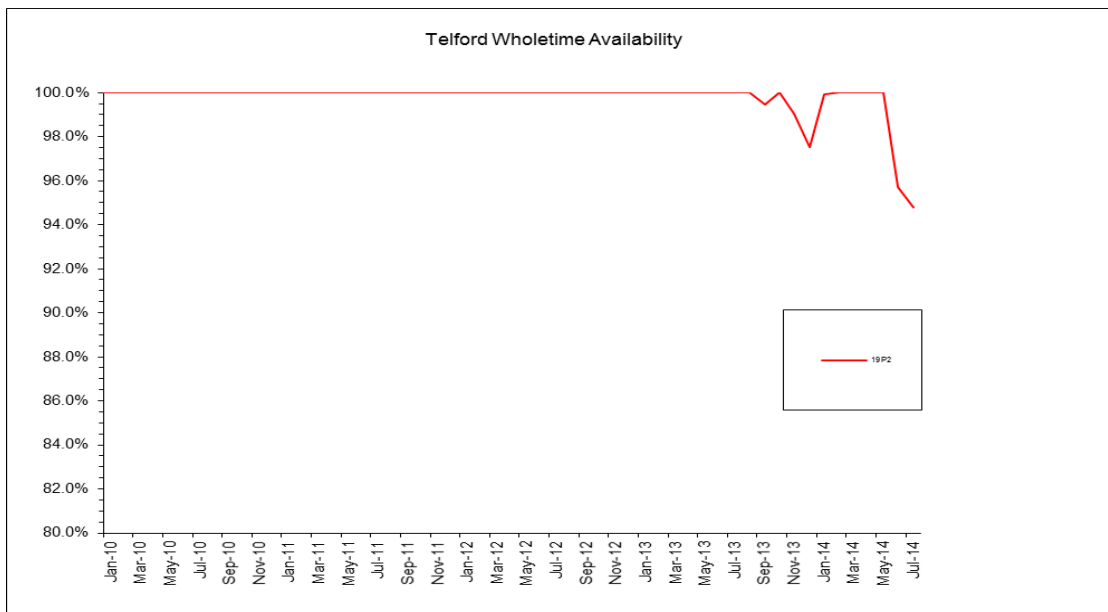
The introduction of action short of strike (ASOS) in July, which entails a continuous ban on FBU members' undertaking any voluntary overtime has had a significant impact on the availability of the second appliance at Telford.

Shrewsbury



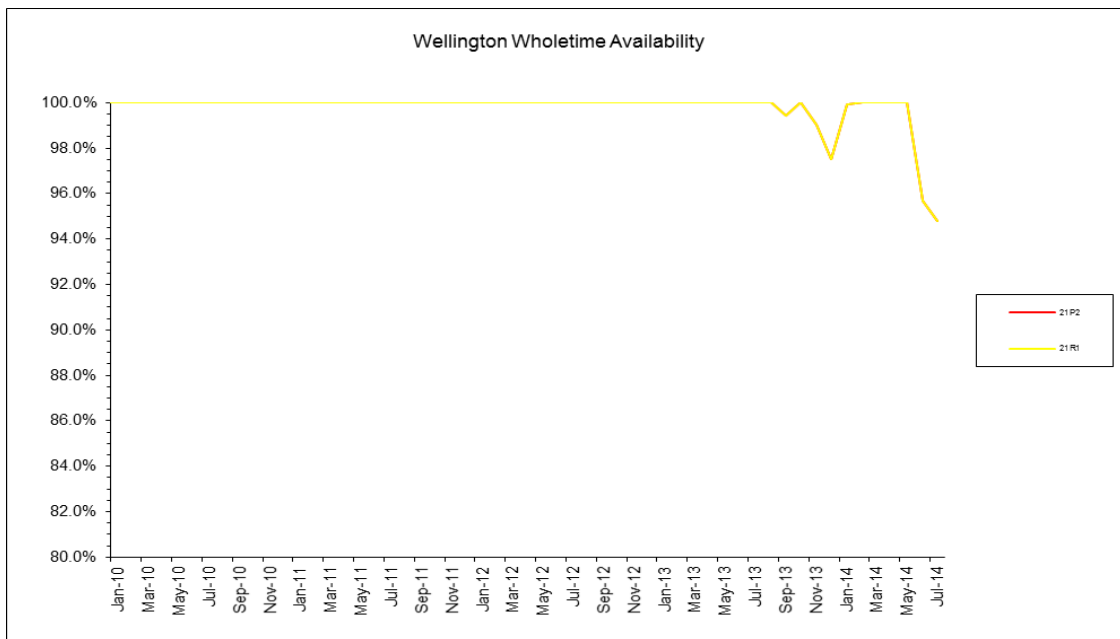
%		Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Yearly %
2014/15	18P1	100	100	95.7	94.8									97.63
	18P2	100	100	95.7	94.8									97.63
	18A1	100	100	95.7	94.8									97.63
2013/14	18P1	100	100	100	100	100	99.45	100	99.03	97.51	99.93	100	100	99.66
	18P2	100	100	100	100	100	99.45	100	99.03	97.51	99.93	100	100	99.66
	18A1	100	100	100	100	100	99.45	100	99.03	97.51	99.93	100	100	99.66
2012/13	18P1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	18P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	18A1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2011/12	18P1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	18P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	18A1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2010/11	18P1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	18P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	18A1	100	100	100	98.8	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	99.9
2009/10	18P1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	18P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	18A1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	99.7	100	99.9

Telford



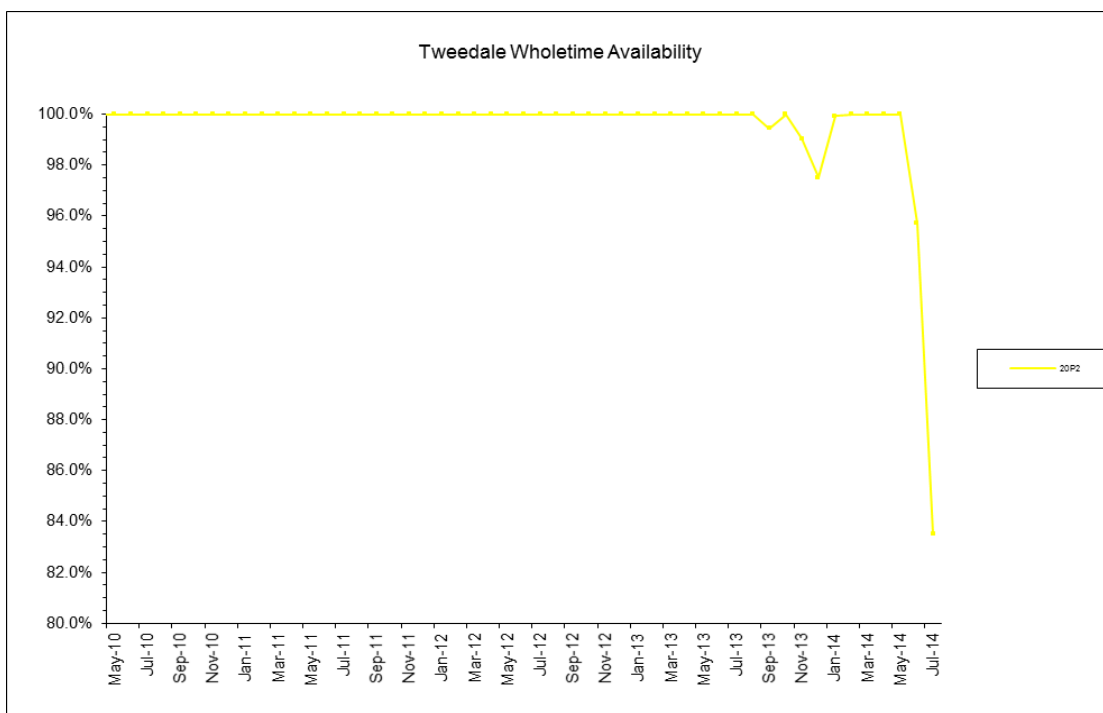
%	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Yearly %
2014/15	19P2	100	100	95.7	94.8								97.63
2013/14	19P2	100	100	100	100	100	99.45	100	99.03	97.51	99.93	100	99.66
2012/13	19P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2011/12	19P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2010/11	19A1	100	100	100	98.8	100	100	100	100	100	100*	/	/
	19P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2009/10	19A1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	99.7	99.9
	19P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2008/09	19A1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	19P1	100	100	100	100	100	97.9	100	98.8	100	N/A	N/A	99.6
2007/08	19P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	19A1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2006/07	19P1	96.3	90.7	90.4	96.8	85.1	92.1	100	100	100	100	100	95.6
	19P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2005/06	19A1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	19P1	89.2	88.3	97.5	96.8	91.5	99.4	96	100	100	100	96.4	96.1
	19P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	19A1	100	98	95.4	86.7	90.3	96	98	97.9	98	100	92.9	95.7

Wellington



%	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Yearly %
2014/15	21P2	100	100	95.7	94.8								97.63
	21R1	100	100	95.7	94.8								97.63
2013/14	21P2	100	100	100	100	100	99.45	100	99.03	97.51	99.93	100	99.66
	21R1	100	100	100	100	100	99.45	100	99.03	97.51	99.93	100	99.66
2012/13	21P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	21R1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2011/12	21P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	21R1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2010/11	21P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	21R1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2009/10	21P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	21R1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2008/09	21P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	21R1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2007/08	21P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	21R1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2006/07	21P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	21R1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2005/06	21P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	21R1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Tweeddale



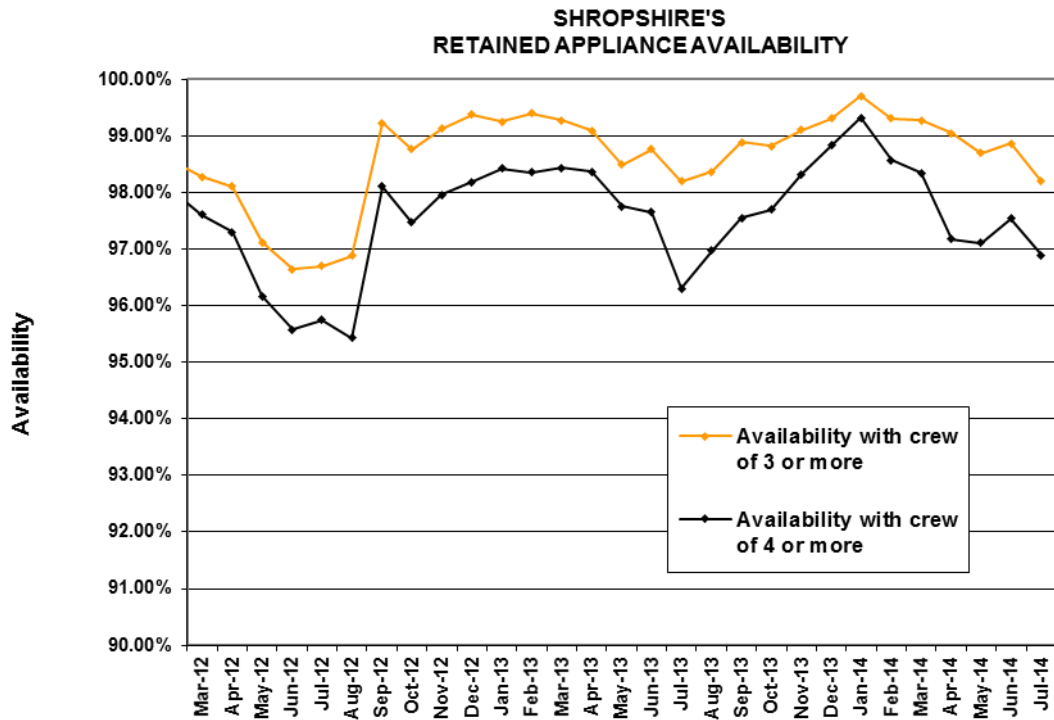
%	Apr	May	June	July *	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Yearly %
2014/15	20P2	100	100	95.7	83.5								94.80
2013/14	20P2	100	100	100	100	99.45	100	99.03	97.51	99.93	100	100	99.66
2012/13	20P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2011/12	20P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2010/11	20P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2009/10	20P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2008/09	20P2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2007/08	20P2	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	100	100	100	100

The decline in the performance of Tweeddale wholetime through June and July can be attributed to the current voluntary overtime ban that has resulted in availability decline from 100% in May to 95.7% in June and 83.5% in July. Under normal circumstances the availability of this appliance is consistently 100%.

Retained Availability

Overall availability of RDS fire engines, by comparison with many other fire and rescue services, remains high at over 98% (see Graph 1 overleaf). Graph 1 shows the average performance for all 23 RDS fire engines, which includes two based at Oswestry Fire Station. Of the 23 RDS fire engines, 15 are available for 98% to 100% of the time, which is an outstanding level of performance. The Fire Authority’s target is, however, always for 100% availability for all of its fire engines.

Night-time cover remains at almost 100% availability between the hours of 6.00 pm and 8.00 am across all stations. The exception to this is an occasional shortfall with the ‘second’ fire engine at Oswestry, which, whilst not ideal, is tolerated, as the remaining ‘primary’ fire engine remains available 100% of the time during these hours. Please see the appendix to the report for maintenance of over 70% performance since December 2013, increasing to 80% in recent months.



Graph 1 – Retained Duty System Crew Availability

5 Performance

Please note that the data includes July 2014 performance.

Graph 1 reveals an overall upward trend in availability during 2013 until January this year. Performance has seen a decline since then to just below 97%. This has been, in part, due to the ongoing industrial action but notably three stations, where recruitment has been difficult for a number of years, have fallen below 90% availability. This has had a significant impact in overall Service performance. To improve on this level of performance, the Service is focusing attention on those fire engines / stations that are currently failing to meet the Service average. An outline of the factors affecting availability and the actions to improve performance is provided below.

6 Factors Influencing Availability

In recent years it has become increasingly challenging to ensure that all 23 fire appliances crewed by RDS personnel are available '24 / 7'. Whilst recruitment levels have increased, retention remains a significant factor. There have been a number of legal, economic and societal changes in recent years that have affected the RDS, and these have been summarised in previous reports. Levels of operational exposure and commitment requirements are cited as significant concerns by personnel locally.

The Service is, therefore, working closely with regional and national fire and rescue service bodies, who have recognised similar trends, with a view to sharing best practice and identifying improvement initiatives. The national focus, following the Sir Ken Knight report "Facing the Future", published in 2013, aims to raise the profile of, and provide the level of support necessary for, "on call" teams moving forward.

Significantly increasing the establishment for this vital aspect of the service is seen as fundamental to delivering a modern and economically viable Fire and Rescue Service.

7 Background Station Specific Performance

There are currently eight fire stations, whose performance during the last quarter falls below the mean of 98% to 100%, achieved by the remaining stations. An analysis of performance is provided at the appendix to this report. Please note that this includes the Oswestry second appliance and Newport, Tweedale and Ludlow, each of which have only fallen slightly below the 98% benchmark, currently achieving between 96.7% and 97.1% availability (see the notes in the Appendix to this report).

8 Recruitment Campaign

Ongoing analysis of overall RDS availability has identified those stations with insufficient staff that need to be targeted for recruitment. During 2013 the Service conducted a successful campaign, which provided 28 new recruits for those stations identified as a priority.

The first course of 2014 commenced on 10 February with a full complement of 10 recruits. This included two candidates from Much Wenlock, who are now providing long-awaited and well-deserved support for this small, but committed, team. The June 2014 course will be completed this month and will provide personnel for several stations, which, whilst maintaining high levels of availability, have recently been affected by a number of leavers.

There are nine candidates scheduled in advance for the October course and, whilst officers are confident that the course will have a full complement of recruits, key stations, such as Oswestry and Clun, are already represented at this early stage.

All aspects of the recruitment campaign, including the Service's decision to venture into social networking as a method of engagement, have been hugely successful. Similar recruitment tactics will, therefore, be employed in the future along with engagement with local employers and seeking support from local councillors and Fire Authority Members to raise the profile of "on call" teams.

A number of taster sessions for women were held at Oswestry Fire Station in October 2013, Craven Arms in March 2014 and Shrewsbury in July 2014, as part of the organisation's drive to influence greater diversity within the Service. A total of 46 women have attended these events and 20 have subsequently attended Job Related Test (JRT) taster sessions. So far, 8 applications for RDS employment at a variety of stations have been received and there is one candidate from Clun scheduled to attend the October 2014 course. Two candidates have failed the official JRT on two occasions but remain keen to re-apply in 12 months' time. The Equality and Diversity team has planned a rolling positive action programme for 2015.

9 Retained Support Officer (RSO) Cover – Quarter 1

Table 1 below shows those fire stations that have required the highest level of support (for reasons detailed earlier in this report) during 2012/13 and 2013/14. These stations accounted for **85.4%** of all RSO cover during 2012/13 and **85.3%** of available RSO hours during 2013/14.

The deployment of RSOs during the first quarter of 2014/15 has been significant in supporting performance at Albrighton and Minsterley in particular and the table below accounts for 89.9% of all RSO activity during that period. The new recruit for Minsterley, who will be available for operational cover in a few weeks, should reduce the need for such significant RSO support during the second quarter of the year.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15				
Stations	Total	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Albrighton	472.00	276.50	197				
Bridgnorth		203.25	77.5				
Cleobury Mortimer	565.25	902.50	89				
Ludlow	419.70	156.25	39.75				
Market Drayton	240.75	88.50	20.75				
Minsterley	371.50	449.25	395.75				
Much Wenlock	194.75	226.25	52				
Oswestry 16 (P4)	532.75	460.00	35				
Totals	2,796.70	2,762.25	906.75				
Total RSO hours	3,275.95	3,239.75	1008				

Table 1 – Retained Support Officer Cover

10 Flexible Cover

The Service has initiated work to develop an option for cover outside the current full and three-quarter cover levels that operate at present. The intention is to provide more flexibility for people, who are available in areas where the Service struggles to provide cover at certain times. However, it must be noted that, to support such a strategy, the requirement for an automated availability system will be a priority.

Work has been conducted in relation to the procurement of a bespoke retained availability system that will assist in the monitoring and management of RDS activities across the Service. The potential benefits to the Service appear to be considerable. The recently trialled Interim Availability system provided benefits from a station management perspective and also in terms of remote monitoring, enabling Area Command instant availability status for all “on call” teams.

Hull University (SEED software) is supporting Area Command with an updated version of its original availability software, with trials currently taking place at six key stations: Oswestry, Much Wenlock, Market Drayton, Baschurch, Wellington and Clun. This enables crews to access remotely the database via personal communication devices, recording availability without having to attend the Station.

This efficient and 'user friendly' aspect would form one of the key requirements from any product selected as the Service's eventual long-term availability solution. The interim system is scheduled to be rolled out to all RDS stations during the next week.

A progress report will be provided to the Committee at its meeting in November 2014.

11 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

12 Legal Comment

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

13 Initial Impact Assessment

This report contains merely statements of fact / historical data. An Initial Impact Assessment is not, therefore, required.

14 Appendix

Retained Duty System Fire Station Availability Analysis

15 Background Papers

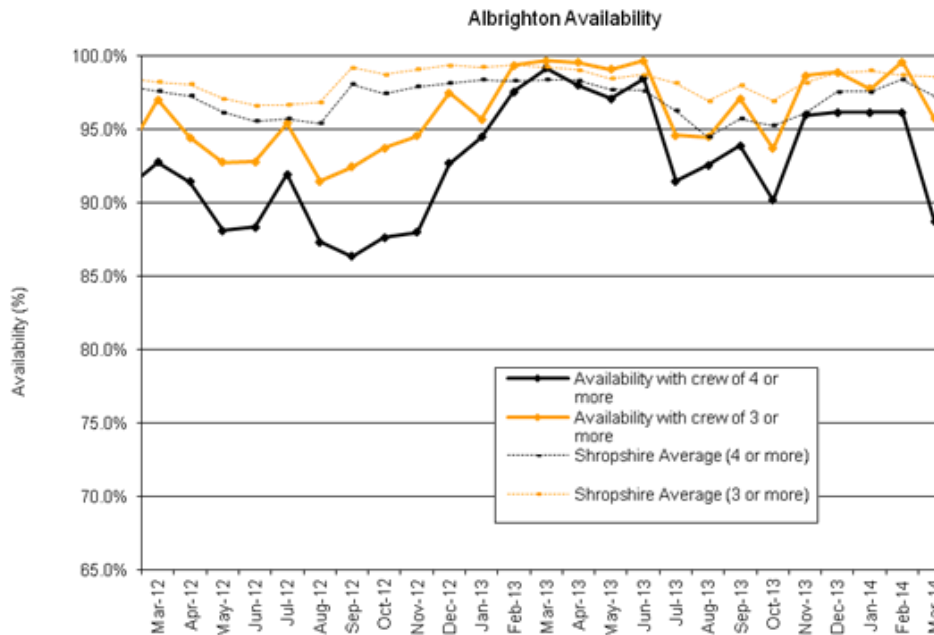
A quarterly RDS performance review summary is presented to the Fire Authority's Audit and Performance Management Committee. Previous reports can be accessed via the following link:

<http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/managing-service/fra/meetings>

Retained Duty System Fire Station Availability: Analysis

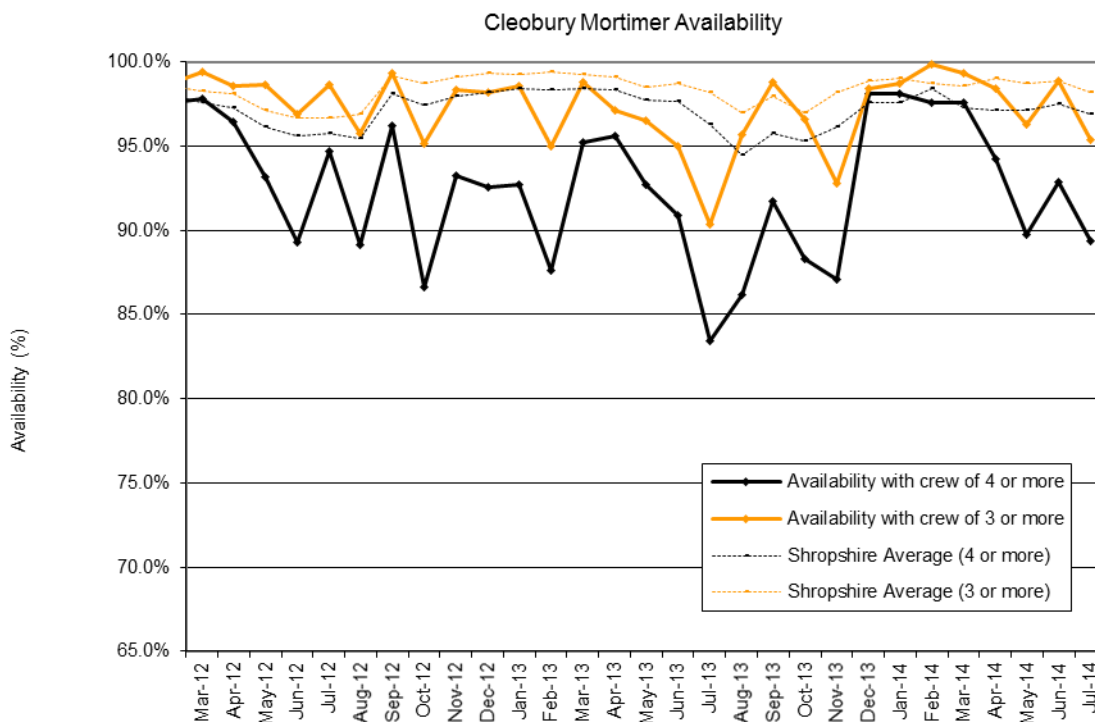
NB: One (1) unit is equivalent to one person being available for full cover (over 120 hours a week), so two crew members each committing three quarter cover (up to 120 hours but no less than 84 hours per week) would equate to 1.5 units.

Albrighton



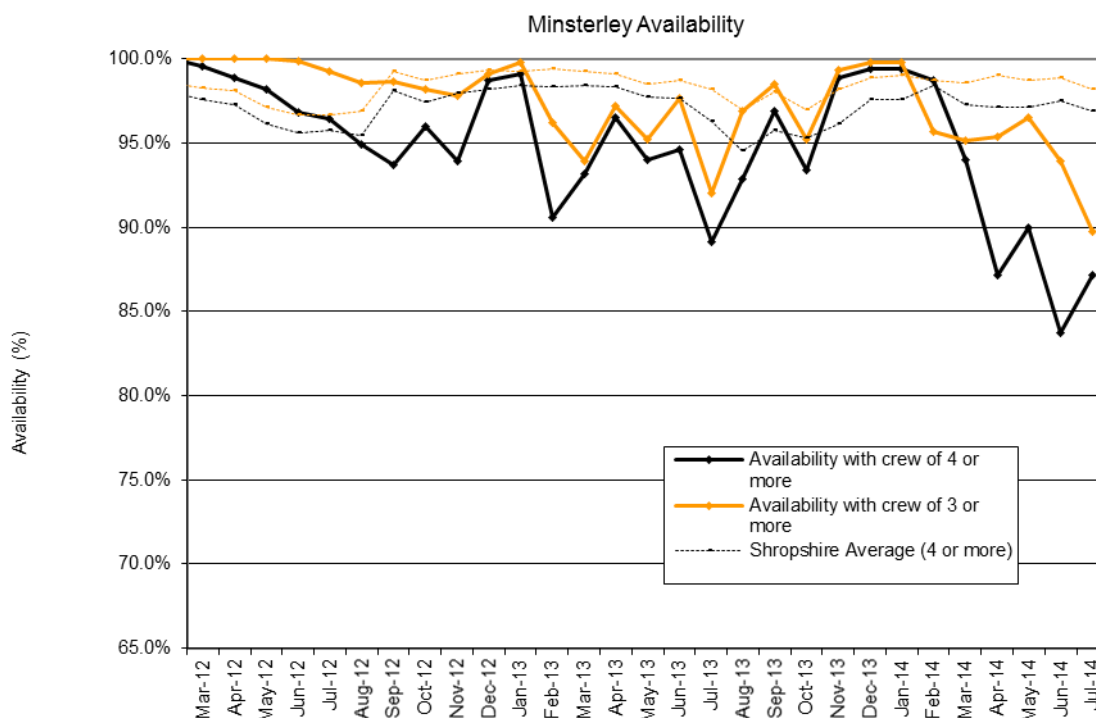
Station profile	Reasons for availability issues	Actions taken
<p>13 units (10.75 available)</p> <p>Historically, it has been extremely difficult to recruit in the Albrighton area, with daytime cover the key problem.</p>	<p>Recent medium-term absences and the likelihood of two further resignations for employment and family reasons are driving a renewed recruitment campaign.</p>	<p>New recruitment banners have been erected. The Service’s outreach vehicle attended a “party in the park” event on 21 June to promote recruitment and community safety. The Group Support Team will engage with the local traders association to increase the profile and understanding of the “on call” service.</p> <p>A leaflet drop recently covered all properties within a 5 minute radius of the station. There have been no successes at this stage, because of applicants’ home base and travel distance to the Station. A new gymnasium has recently opened at Cosford and attempts to engage will soon be conducted by the Albrighton team.</p>

Cleobury Mortimer



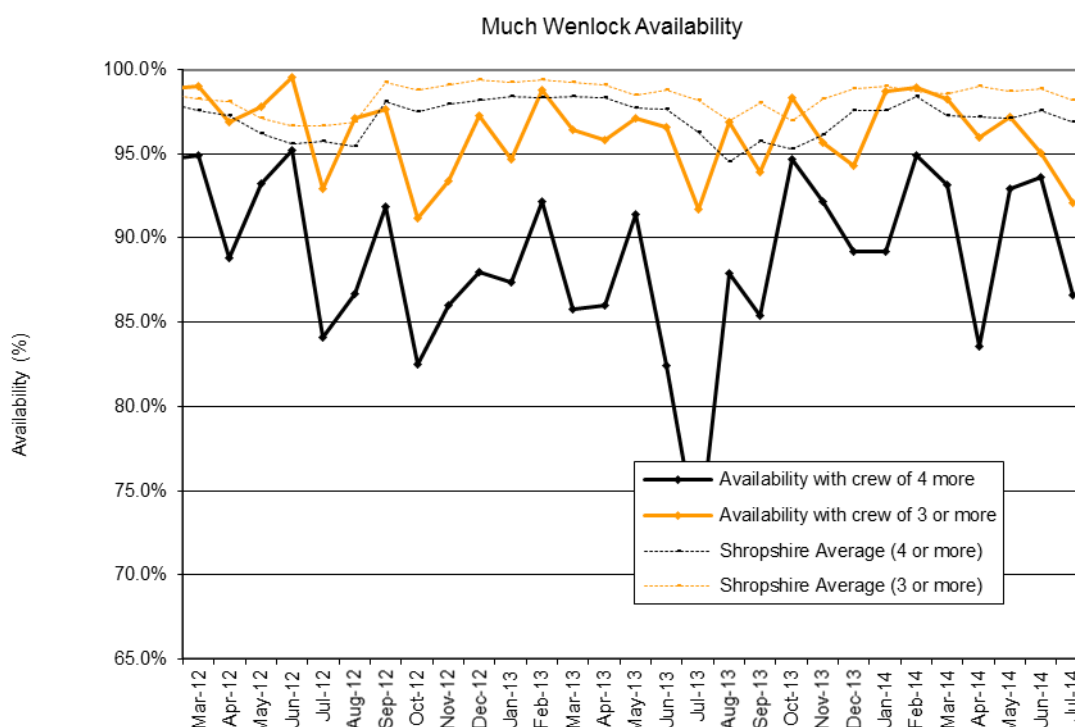
Station profile	Reason for availability issues	Actions taken
<p>Although 13 units are budgeted for, only 10.75 units are currently on station strength.</p> <p>Daytime crewing is presenting the greatest challenge.</p>	<p>It is difficult to recruit firefighters in the Cleobury Mortimer area.</p>	<p>An ongoing recruitment campaign has focussed on providing additional daytime cover. Some work with the local council, councillors and trading network in conjunction with employer initiatives are underway.</p> <p>One recruit completed initial training in February 2014 and is now attending incidents. A further recruit is attending the October 2014 course.</p>

Minsterley



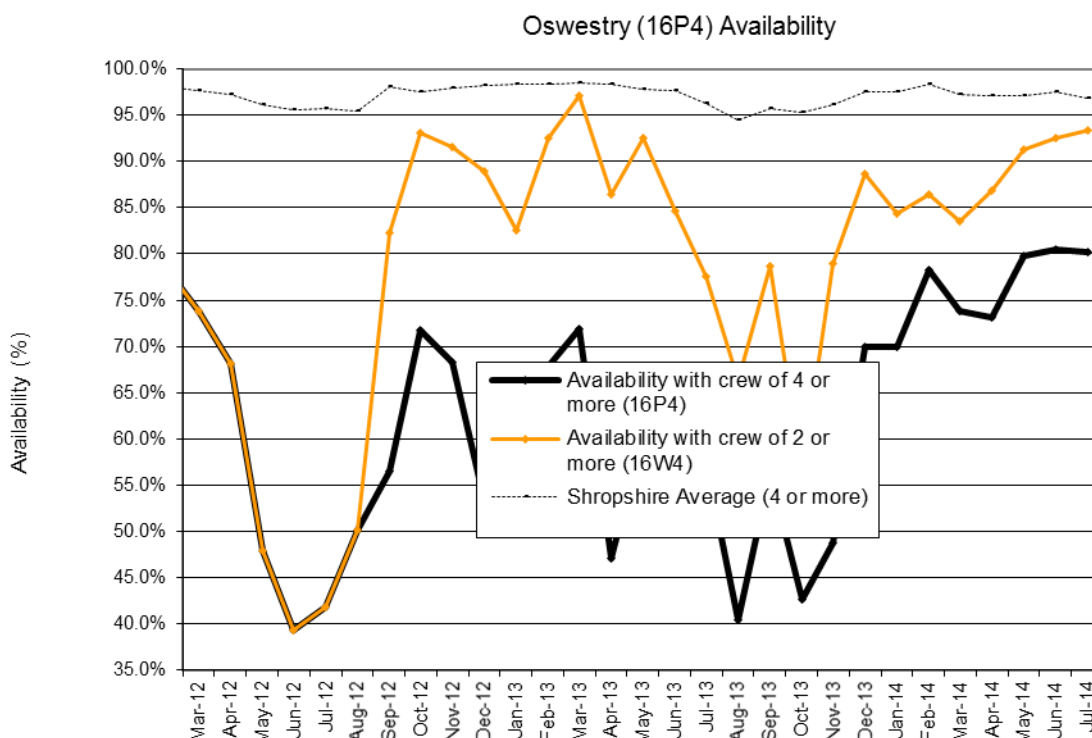
Station profile	Reason for availability issues	Actions taken
<p>Although 15 units are budgeted for, only 10.5 units are currently on station.</p> <p>Daytime crewing is presenting the greatest challenge.</p>	<p>During 2012 and early 2013 there have been several retirements and resignations.</p> <p>A reduction in employment opportunities in the area has resulted in personnel relocating.</p>	<p>One recruit completed training in June and is now available for operational calls. Performance has dropped significantly during 2014 and a new recruitment campaign was started in April 2014 by the Group Support Team. A new recruit will be available for operational cover in late September 2014.</p>

Much Wenlock



Station profile	Reason for availability issues	Actions taken
<p>Although 13 units are budgeted for, only 9.25 units are currently on station strength.</p> <p>Daytime crewing still remains the greatest challenge.</p>	<p>It is difficult to recruit from the local population, because of the high number working outside Much Wenlock.</p>	<p>1 new recruit commenced training but failed to complete the course. A focussed recruitment drive commenced in January 2013 with a local home and business leaflet drop, poster campaign and two open days in March and April.</p> <p>2 recruits commenced training on 10 February 2014 and are now available for operational calls. It is expected that positive benefits will be seen in the third quarter of 2014.</p>
<p>Much Wenlock are trialling the SEED availability application detailed in paragraph 9 of the report.</p>		

Oswestry



As of September 2012 Oswestry’s second appliance report shows availability with crew of 4 or more and availability with crew of 2 or more. The second appliance availability has fluctuated considerably over the last 18 months, reflecting several personnel changes for reasons communicated at earlier Committee meetings. Significantly, there are positive signs for the future, with recruitment at Oswestry remaining a priority and a number of personnel currently in the system, as indicated below. The latest data demonstrates the commitment of the team, who have been able to increase availability of the second pump to over 80%.

Station profile	Reason for availability issues	Actions taken
<p>Although 18 units are budgeted for, only 14 units are currently on station.</p> <p>This is Oswestry’s second appliance, which has a dual role as a water ladder and water carrier.</p>	<p>The first pump at Oswestry currently has 100% availability. Availability of the second appliance has fluctuated continually since June 2012, due to further difficulties with retention of personnel as a result of the level of commitment required. However, since October 2013 the upward trend has taken availability to 80% for the first time in many years.</p>	<p>Three recruits have been scheduled to attend the October 2014 course. It is hoped that this level of recruitment and greater retention of staff is able to maintain, and even improve on, recent gains.</p>
<p>Oswestry are trialling the SEED availability application detailed in paragraph 9 of the report.</p>		