



Wirral Consultation concerning Station Mergers – results from Feedback Surveys 2nd October 2014 – 5th January 2015

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STRATEGY & PERFORMANCE

Document Control

Amendment History

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1.0	08/01/2015	J Fielding	
1.1	09/01/2015	J Fielding	Additional Comments as per D Appleton

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Related Documents

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1. Agreement

For the purpose of this report the following agreement was made between the client and the Strategy & Performance Function.

This work was requested by Deb Appleton; Director of Strategy & Performance and received on 05/01/2015.

The Manager¹ has approved this report/ piece of work can be undertaken by the Strategy & Performance Function.

If the scope of the work changes, authorisation must be again obtained and would be noted within the version control document sheet.

It was agreed that this report would be produced in draft format by 08//01/2015, and would be sent electronically to the Director of Strategy & Performance and Client for comment.

The Manager / Client agreed that their comments would be received back by 15/01/2015.

¹ Deb Appleton

2. Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide high level analysis of feedback following community consultation within Wirral regarding the potential mergers of the Upton and West Kirby stations.

In summary the report presents the following high level findings:

- There were two questionnaires produced to capture public views on the proposals. The initial survey specified a location in Greasby, which was later withdrawn by Wirral MBC. With the Greasby location unavailable, a revised questionnaire was produced, which asked whether respondents were in favour of a merger in principle. Both questionnaires were available on-line and in hard copy on request and at public events.
- The questionnaire was treated as an information gathering exercise, in the same way as the views expressed at public meetings. This is because the participants were self-selecting and as a result cannot be considered as statistically representative of the local population.
- In total there were 984 responses to the initial survey and 12 to the revised survey
- In the initial survey; of 977 valid responses, 876 or 89.7% thought that the concept of the merger was not reasonable. Regarding the revised survey (once the Frankby Road site had been withdrawn); of the 12 responses, 9 or 75% Thought the merger proposal was reasonable
- Concerning comments submitted; the vast majority of comments received were against a merger as respondents did not want a Fire Station to be built on the Frankby Road site in Greasby, for reasons including: Pedestrian Safety, Congestion, Destruction of Green space, Noise, Pollution to name a few. This echoes the views expressed at the Greasby public meetings, but not at the other public meetings or the focus groups, stakeholder meeting or forum.
- Regarding post code; based on 832 valid responses the vast majority of people resided in the areas which will be most affected by the merger; specifically the CH49, CH48 and CH47 postcode areas.
- Feedback from the CH49 postcode heavily skews the responses to the surveys. Regarding the first question concerning whether it was reasonable or not to build a merged station in Greasby 658 from 711 responses felt it was unreasonable to build a station in Greasby. This is further backed up by comments made where there were 527 commentaries against a merger in Greasby and 205 commentaries preferring Upton to stay open over building a new station in Greasby. The majority of inappropriate comments (11 from 14) emerge from this postcode.
- Concerning **age** and **gender** 933 valid responses were analysed with 432 (46.3%) male respondents with 501 female (53.7%). Concerning age there was a wide distribution of ages to have responded to the survey most common being the 60-69 age group with 272 (29.2%) responses and the 50-59 age group with 200 (21.4%) responses.
- Of the 950 valid responses to the question concerning **disability**, 68 of the 950 (7.2%) declared they were disabled.
- Concerning ethnicity in combination 858 from 942 (91.1%) respondents were White with 15 (1.6%) being from a BME background. 7.3% (69) respondents "Prefer not to say".

3. Introduction

Background

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) are responsible for providing fire and rescue services for Merseyside's 1.4 million people. This currently includes delivering fire and rescue services from six community stations in Wirral located at Birkenhead & Tranmere, Bromborough, Heswall, Upton, West Kirby and Wallasey.

Over the last four years MFRA has had to make savings of £20 million as a result of Government cuts. MFRA is required to make a further £6.3 million savings in 2015/16. It is possible that future savings required as a result of ongoing Government cuts might reach £9.1 million in 2016/17 and up to £20 million in total by 2020. We now need to make more changes to meet this new financial challenge.

MFRA has already had to make significant reductions in its support services and back office staff and the number of firefighters it employs has reduced from 1,400 to 764 with fire appliances reducing from 42 to 28. What has not changed in more than 20 years is the number of community fire stations (26) and this cannot continue in the future.

Mergers

To save £6.3 million the Authority has assumed it will be able to deliver £2.9 million from support services such as Finance, Human Resources and Estates management as well as technical areas such as debt financing. The remaining £3.4 million will have to come from our emergency response and this will require at least four station mergers or outright closures.

As part of this consideration twelve weeks public consultation took place between 3rd October 2014 and 5th January 2015. During this period an online survey was available on the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service external website and also in paper format at consultation events.

There were two surveys produced the initial survey² was primarily concerned with the proposal to merge Upton and West Kirby fire stations at a proposed site on Frankby Road, Greasby - as an alternative to an outright closure of West Kirby Fire Station.

Following the withdrawal of Frankby Road, Greasby as a potential site a second survey³ was produced asking whether the principal of merging Upton and West Kirby fire stations at an undetermined location was reasonable.

This report analyses feedback to provide an understanding of any issues identified by members of the public as well as a demographical analysis of who responded as a means of diversity monitoring.

The surveys closed with a total of 984 responses for the initial survey and 12 for the revised version of the survey.

² <http://surveys.merseyfire.gov.uk/surveys/Wirral/wirralmerger.htm>

³ <http://surveys.merseyfire.gov.uk/surveys/Wirral/wirralmergerconsultation.htm>

4. Methodology

For the purpose of analysing the public's feedback and opinions on the merger of the Upton and West Kirby Station Grounds the following method was applied:

- An electronic survey was created using Snap 10 Survey Software which can be viewed in Appendix A & B
- The online survey was live: between the 2nd October 2014 to 5th January 2015.
- Microsoft Excel 2010 was used to interpret results
- MapInfo 10.5 was used to provide an understanding of where respondents reside – based on postcodes submitted when the survey was completed.
- This report does not include comments made by respondents to the initial survey; this is due to that the large quantity of comments received would make this report too ungainly. Comments have been summarised within this report by splitting feedback into four subject areas⁴ being:
 - Anti the Greasby site
 - Pro Merger
 - Pro remaining at Upton (ie closing West Kirby)
 - Inappropriate comment (this could include personal or derogatory comments about individuals or communities for example)
- Only valid (complete) responses are analysed within this report.

5. Results

5.1 Responding to the Survey

Original Version of Survey

Question 1: Do you think the proposed merger of Upton and West Kirby fire stations, creating a new community fire station in Greasby, is reasonable (as an alternative to an outright closure of West Kirby Fire Station), given the financial challenges faced by the Authority?

Table 1: Response to whether the planned merger is reasonable or not

Response	Count	%
Yes	82	8.4%
No	876	89.7%
Don't Know	19	1.9%
Grand Total	977 ⁵	

Table 1 identifies that the vast majority of respondents (89.7% or 876 from 977) felt that it was not reasonable for Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority to merge the stations at Upton and West Kirby at the proposed site on Frankby Road, Greasby.

⁴ Please note that the commentaries can be subject to several these subject areas, for example a respondent could be against the idea of a proposed station within the Greasby area, but agree that a merger is a good idea.

⁵ Please note there were 7 "no responses" to this question, this is why the total is 977 and not 984.

Revised Version of Survey

Question 1: Do you think the proposed merger of Upton and West Kirby fire stations, creating a new community fire station between Upton and West Kirby is reasonable (as an alternative to an outright closure of West Kirby Fire Station), given the financial challenges faced by the Authority?

Table 2: Response to whether the planned merger is reasonable or not – *revised survey*

Response	Count	%
Yes	9	75.0%
No	3	25.0%
Don't Know	0	0.0%
Grand Total	12	

Concerning the revised survey there is evidence that the majority of respondents felt that it was reasonable to merge the station areas of Upton and West Kirby at a centralised location. Though it is a much smaller sample size when compared to the original survey it does appear that when there is support for the principle of merger once the specific location has been removed.

Commentary Analysis – initial version of survey

The following section summarises comments made by respondents in relation to the following questions posed on both surveys:

- **Question 2: If you answered "No", please use the box below to explain why you do not think the proposal is reasonable:**
- **Question 3: If you would like to give us any more information, please use the box below:**

As mentioned in the methodology section, there are too many responses to feasibly publish them within this report. Instead commentaries were reviewed and tagged with whether the commentary provided was: against Greasby as a site, Pro Merger, Pro Upton and whether the comment was Inappropriate.

Table 3: Summary of responses cross tabulated with question 1 (above)

Response	Count of Anti Greasby	Count of Pro Merger	Count of Pro Upton	Count of Inappropriate
Yes	8	82	2	
No	659	62	259	18
Don't Know	7	2	2	
No Response to Q1	4	1	1	
Grand Total	678	147	264	18

Table 3 is a brief reflection of the comments made against the response to question 1 of the survey.⁶

Where the response to Question 1 was "No" i.e. the respondent was in not favour of a merger, there were 659 comments reflecting that the proposed site on Frankby

⁶ Please note the above counts do not reflect the overall response counts in Table 1 as not all responses included commentary

Road was not suitable for a variety of reasons⁷. There were 62 comments which understood that a merger was of importance – just not in Greasby. Additionally there were 259 comments indicating a preference to keep Upton Station open at the expense of West Kirby Station. It is important to note that the significant strength of feeling against building a fire station on Frankby Road, Greasby has effectively influenced all the comments regarding Upton as well; i.e. the preference for keeping Upton at the expense of West Kirby is inextricably linked to the proposed location. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that the same group of people would prefer Upton to remain where it is, had the proposed location of a new station been different, or not specified.

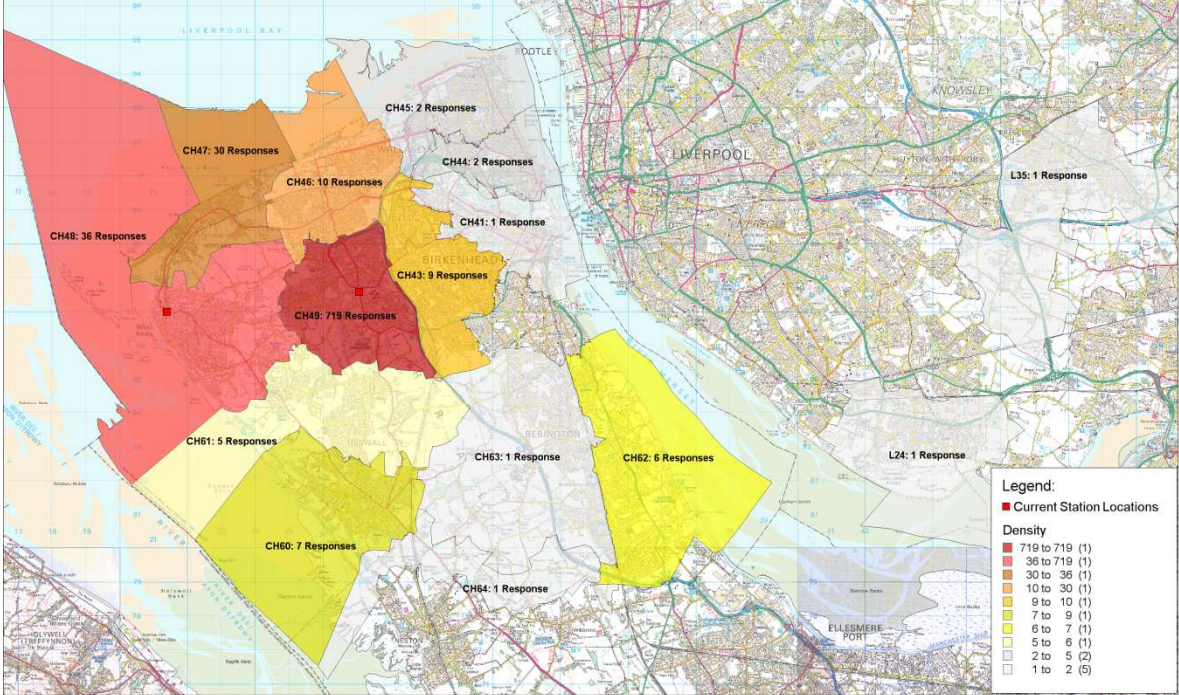
Where the response to Question 1 was “Yes” i.e. the respondent was in favour of a merger, 82 responses were “Pro Merger”. However when analysing comments further there was still some doubt concerning the suitability of Frankby Road with 8 comments mentioning this; with 2 comments reflecting that Upton Station could still be feasible should a merger not take place.

5.2 Monitoring Information

The following section analyses the protective characteristics from both surveys combined.

Locality of Respondents

Map 1: Locations of respondents by Post Code area



Author: J Fielding
 Date: 07/01/2015
 Produced using MapInfo
 Strategy & Performance

Thematic Map Identifying Density of Survey Respondents by Post Code

Map Reference:

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⁷ Reasons include (and not limited to): Pedestrian Safety, Congestion, Destruction of Green space, Noise, Pollution to name a few.

Map 1 identifies where respondents to the consultation survey live. The map identifies that the vast majority of respondents (719) live within the CH49 postcode which covers Greasby and Woodchurch. The post codes of CH47 (Hoylake area) and CH48 (West Kirby area) follow with 30 and 36 responses respectively. Though the CH49 postcode heavily skews data; the map does show that the greatest response rates originate from the areas to which the potential station merger will impact upon most.

CH49 Post Code Analysis

There were 719 responses from the CH49 post code alone, significantly more than any other; this section briefly analyses these responses (Please note this analysis is for the initial survey only). The CH49 post code includes Greasby as well as Woodchurch.

Question 1: Do you think the proposed merger of Upton and West Kirby fire stations, creating a new community fire station in Greasby, is reasonable (as an alternative to an outright closure of West Kirby Fire Station), given the financial challenges faced by the Authority?

Table 6: Valid responses to Question 1 from residents of CH49, crossed with commentary feedback

Question 1	Overall	Count of Anti Greasby	Count of Pro Merger	Count of Pro Upton	Count of Inappropriate
Yes	41 (5.8%)	7 (1.3%)	41 (45.6%)	2 (1.0%)	
No	658 (92.5%)	527 (97.6%)	48 (53.3%)	205 (98.1%)	11 (100.0%)
Don't Know	12 (1.7%)	6 (1.1%)	1 (1.1%)	2 (1.0%)	
Grand Total	711	540	90	209	11

Table 6 provides the response for residents of the CH49 post code with regard to whether they felt that a merger at a site within Greasby was reasonable or not. The table identifies that the majority of respondents 92.5% (658 from 711) felt that a merger was not reasonable. Further findings are as follows:

- Where respondents answered the first question “Yes”, even though respondents were in principal in favour of a merger though 7 respondents were still not in favour of a merger at Greasby. There were also 2 respondents that felt a merger was reasonable but stated that keeping Upton was still a viable option.
- Where respondents answered the first question “No”, the majority of comments received were anti Greasby in nature with 527 responses. There were 205 comments which refer to Upton remaining open as opposed to a merger in Greasby. There will still 48 respondents, who felt it was unreasonable to build a merged station in Greasby, were in favour of a merger elsewhere.

Table 7: Comparison of commentary feedback by postcode

Post Code	Count of Anti Greasby	Count of Pro Merger	Count of Pro Upton	Count of Inappropriate
CH41		1 (0.8%)		
CH43	2 (0.3%)	1 (0.8%)	2 (0.9%)	1 (7.1%)
CH44				
CH45			1 (0.5%)	
CH46	3 (0.5%)		1 (0.5%)	
CH47	6 (1.0%)	14 (11.8%)	4 (1.8%)	
CH48	15 (2.6%)	5 (4.2%)	2 (0.9%)	1 (7.1%)
CH49	544 (94.8%)	91 (76.5%)	210 (95.0%)	11 (78.6%)
CH60	1 (0.2%)	2 (1.7%)	1 (0.5%)	
CH61	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.8%)		
CH62	1 (0.2%)	2 (1.7%)		
CH64		1 (0.8%)		
CW8	1 (0.2%)			
L24		1 (0.8%)		
L35				1 (7.1%)
Grand Total	574	119	221	14

Table 7 provides a comparison by postcode concerning the comments provided by respondents and split into the four categories as described earlier. The table clearly shows that the “Anti Greasby” sentiment is heavily influenced by the CH49 postcode with 94.8% (544 from 574) of responses, heavily skewing any further analysis. The majority of inappropriate comments (11 from 14) emerge from the CH49 postcode.

Disability and Age

Table 4: Disability against age

Age Group	Yes	No	Prefer not to Say	Grand Total
19 or younger	1	9		10
20 - 29	1	44	1	46
30 - 39	2	87	9	98
40 - 49	8	135	6	149
50 - 59	13	170	18	201
60 - 69	15	244	20	279
70 - 79	16	102	11	129
Greater than 80	12	21	5	38
Grand Total	68	812	70	950

Table 4 contrasts the age of a respondent to whether they classified themselves as being disabled. The table identifies that of the 950 valid responses to this question; 68 (7.2%) considered themselves to be disabled with 812 (85.5%) not being disabled.

When broken down further it is apparent that the majority of respondents who consider themselves disabled are above the age 50; 56 out of 68 equating to 82.4%.

Age and Gender

Chart 1: Respondents by Age and Gender

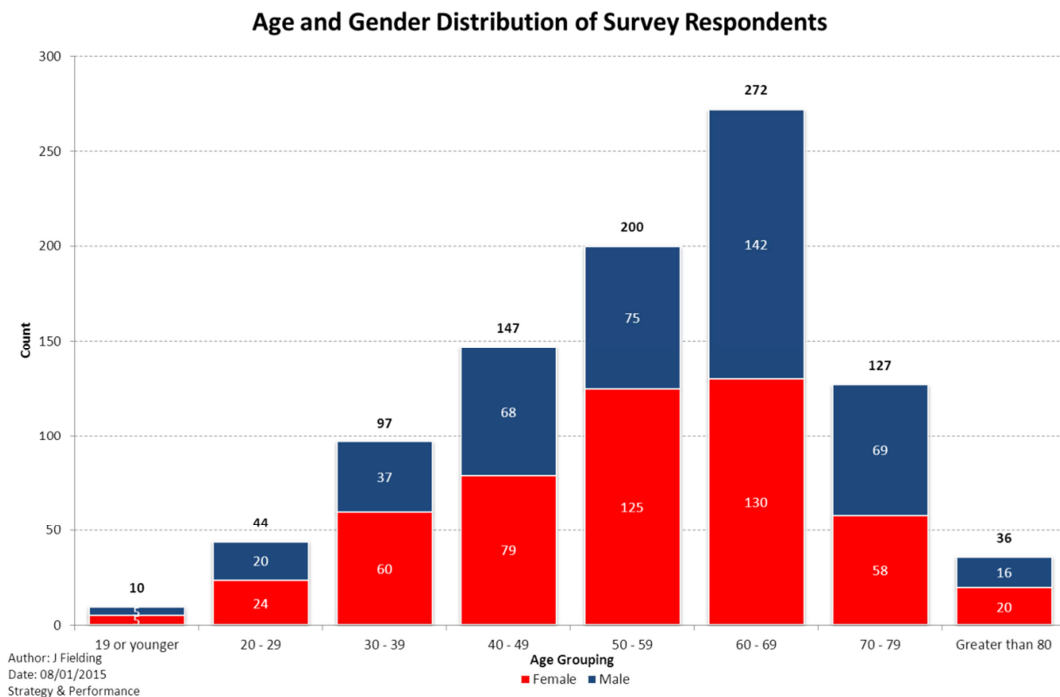


Chart 1 provides a breakdown of the ages and genders of people to have responded to the consultation survey. Taking the responses into account there were 432 male responses and 501 female responses⁸ equating to 46.3% of responses being from males and 53.7% being female.

The 60-69 age group is the most common group to respond to the survey accounting for 29.2% (272) of total responses. When compared to the age breakdowns of the local wards⁸ and Wirral as a whole (based on Census 2011 data) there is a heavy skewing as the 60-69 age group only accounts for 12.9% of local ward population and 12.1% of the population across Wirral.

The 60-69 group have the highest single count of any gender with 142 male responses. In general the trend is that above the age group of 50-59 males tend to respond more, while the opposite is true for females.

⁸ The wards primarily affected by the Merger of the Upton and West Kirby stations include: Greasby, Frankby and Irby, Hoylake and Meols, Leasowe and Moreton East, Moreton West and Saughall Massie, Upton, West Kirby and Thurston

Ethnic Background

Table 5: Ethnicity of respondents

Ethnic Origin	Count	%
White: English	825	87.6%
Prefer not to say	69	7.3%
White: Welsh	12	1.3%
White: Scottish	10	1.1%
White: Irish	8	0.8%
Asian or Asian British: Other Asian Background	4	0.4%
Asian or Asian British: Chinese	2	0.2%
Asian or Asian British: Indian	2	0.2%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background: White & Black African	2	0.2%
White: Other White Background	2	0.2%
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	1	0.1%
Black or Black British: Other Black Background	1	0.1%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background: Other Mixed / multiple background	1	0.1%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background: White & Black Caribbean	1	0.1%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background: White & Asian	1	0.1%
White: Northern Irish	1	0.1%
Grand Total	942	

Table 5 identifies that the majority of people who responded to the survey were from a white background with 91.1% (858 from 942 valid responses). With the exception of the "Prefer not to say" grouping other non-white BME groups equate to 15 responses or 1.6%.

6. Appendices

Appendix A: Copy of the initial Survey Published on the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service website

Upton & West Kirby Station Merger Public Consultation Questions

Our consultation newsletter outlines Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority's proposal to merge Upton and West Kirby fire stations at a new station on Frankby Road, Greasby - as an alternative to an outright closure of West Kirby Fire Station. The newsletter explains why we are proposing this change and how we would do it.

We are planning public meetings and other events during the twelve-week consultation beginning on 3rd October 2014 in order to fully understand the views of the public, stakeholders and other interested parties.

There is an opportunity for you to comment on the proposed changes online. The Fire and Rescue Authority will consider all the comments it receives before it makes any final decisions.

Please note this survey should take no longer than 5 minutes to complete.

Do you think the proposed merger of Upton and West Kirby fire stations, creating a new community fire station in Greasby, is reasonable (as an alternative to an outright closure of West Kirby Fire Station), given the financial challenges faced by the Authority?

Yes

No

Don't Know

If you answered "No", please use the box below to explain why you do not think the proposal is reasonable:

If you would like to give us any more information, please use the box below:

Monitoring Information

Please note that information collected within this section is for monitoring purposes - no personal identifiable information will be collated.

Are you a member of: Please tick the appropriate box

Public
Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Staff
Partner Organisation

What is the first part of your post code: (for example CH49)

Your Gender:

Male
Female

Your Age: Please tick the appropriate box

19 or younger
20 - 29
30 - 39
40 - 49
50 - 59
60 - 69
70 - 79
Greater than 80

Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Please tick the appropriate box

Yes
No
Prefer not to Say

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Please tick the appropriate box

White: *English*

White: *Welsh*

White: *Scottish*

White: *Northern Irish*

White: *Irish*

White: *Gypsy or Traveller*

White: *Other White Background*

Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background:

White & Black Caribbean

Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background:

White & Black African

Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background:

White & Asian

Other ethnic group (please state)

Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background:

Other Mixed / multiple background

Asian or Asian British: *Indian*

Asian or Asian British: *Pakistani*

Asian or Asian British: *Bangladeshi*

Asian or Asian British: *Chinese*

Asian or Asian British: *Other Asian*

Background

Black or Black British: *Caribbean*

Black or Black British: *African*

Black or Black British: *Other Black*

Background

Prefer not to say

Thank you for your comments, please click submit to continue

Appendix B: Copy of the second Survey Published on the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service website following the withdrawal of the Greasby site by Wirral MBC

**Upton & West Kirby Station Merger
Public Consultation Questions**

REVISED QUESTIONNAIRE - Our second consultation document (published on 2nd December) explains Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority's draft proposal to close Upton and West Kirby fire stations and build a new station at a central location as an alternative to an outright closure of West Kirby Fire Station.

Following the withdrawal by Wirral Council of the potential site on Frankby Road, Greasby this consultation is continuing, but respondents should only consider whether they think the principal of merging Upton and West Kirby fire stations is reasonable, not base this response on any particular site.

We have held public meetings and other events during the twelve-week consultation beginning on 3rd October 2014, in order to fully understand the views of the public, stakeholders and other interested parties.

The Fire and Rescue Authority will consider all the comments it receives before it makes any final decisions.

Please note this survey should take no longer than 5 minutes to complete.

Do you think the proposed merger of Upton and West Kirby fire stations, creating a new community fire station between Upton and West Kirby is reasonable (as an alternative to an outright closure of West Kirby Fire Station), given the financial challenges faced by the Authority?

Yes

No

Don't Know

If you answered "No", please use the box below to explain why you do not think the proposal is reasonable:

If you would like to give us any more information, please use the box below:

Monitoring Information

Please note that information collected within this section is for monitoring purposes - no personal identifiable information will be collated.

Are you a member of: Please tick the appropriate box

Public

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Staff

Partner Organisation

What is the first part of your post code: (for example CH49)

Your Gender:

Male

Female

Your Age: Please tick the appropriate box

19 or younger

20 - 29

30 - 39

40 - 49

50 - 59

60 - 69

70 - 79

Greater than 80

Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Please tick the appropriate box

Yes

No

Prefer not to Say

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Please tick the appropriate box

White: English

White: Welsh

White: Scottish

White: Northern Irish

White: Irish

White: Gypsy or Traveller

White: Other White Background

Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background:

White & Black Caribbean

Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background:

White & Black African

Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background:

White & Asian

Other ethnic group (please state)

Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background:

Other Mixed / multiple background

Asian or Asian British: Indian

Asian or Asian British: Pakistani

Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi

Asian or Asian British: Chinese

Asian or Asian British: Other Asian Background

Black or Black British: Caribbean

Black or Black British: African

Black or Black British: Other Black Background

Prefer not to say

Thank you for your comments, please click submit to continue