

Dr John Pugh MP House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

A J McGuirk, CBE, QFSM, MSc, MIFire E Chief Executive and Chief Fire Officer Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service

Fire Service Headquarters Bridle Road Bootle Merseyside L30 4YD

Telephone: 0151 296 4101 Fax: 0151 296 4116 (calls may be recorded)

Web Site: www.merseyfire.gov.uk

Date: 21st June 2011

Your ref:

Our ref: AJMc/CFO/SW

Dear

Thank you for your letter regarding the Marine Rescue Unit.

The Consultation process on this matter is nearing conclusion and the points raised in the correspondence sent to you, have already been raised in that Consultation I will ensure that you receive a copy of the relevant Authority report where these matters have been dealt with.

Thank you for taking the time to write and if you would like to discuss any aspect of this correspondence, please do not hesitate to contact me direct.

Yours sincerely

A J McGuirk

Chief Executive & Chief Fire Officer

Mike Cummins, Consultation Manager



CC











HOUSE OF COMMONS LONDON SW1A 0AA

Our Ref: JDP/M/td

Mr Anthony McGurk
Chief Fire Officer
Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service
Birdle Road
BOOTLE L30 4XD

Date: 15 June 2011

Dear Mr McGurk

I have been approached by people who are concerned at the potential adverse impact of the proposed reduction of staffing of the MRRS Marine Rescue Unit.

I have received the attached letter from some of those concerned and would be grateful if you could supply me with a response to the detailed points made in this letter.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Dr John Pugh MP

MRU
Unit 10,
King Edward industrial estate
Gibraltar Row
Liverpool
L3 7HJ

Date: 24th May 2011

Ref: Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service - Marine Rescue Unit.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you in order to express my concerns with regard to the proposal to reduce the staffing of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services (MF&RS) 'Marine Rescue Unit'.

As you may be aware the MF&RS Marine Rescue Unit has become an integral part of the Fire and Rescue Services emergency provision and is staffed with highly skilled, trained and dedicated staff. The Unit is based at Liverpool Cruise Liner terminal and provides an essential 24 hour, 7 day a week professional rescue response fro the Mersey Estuary in the event of a maritime emergency.

Since its first year of operation in 1984 the Unit has attended over 4,500 incidents and has assisted nearly 3,500 people. Additionally, the Service has provided assistance of more than 2,000 vessels found to be in difficulty or distress. Many of the crew have had their professionalism and dedication recognised by the provision of numerous Resuscitation Awards from the Liverpool Shipwreck and humane Society.

The Unit is also considered and designated as the primary water-born rescue response for Liverpool John Lennon Airport in the event of an Aircraft 'ditching' in the waters of the River Mersey.

As part of the Budget and Financial Plan for 2011/12, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MF&RA) is proposing to make 5 posts redundant within the Unit in order to save £100,000. This will result in a drop in crewing levels down to only 8 staff to crew the Rescue launch on a 24 hour, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year basis. Simply put the crews are effectively being asked to double their working week to cover the shortfalls the loss of 5 posts will result in for the savings of only £100,000 per annum, less than 0.14% of the Authorities £72 million pound a year budget.

I am deeply concerned at the loss of 5 posts within the Unit and the subsequent loss to the community and those visiting the area of their unique skills, experience and courage.

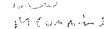
In addition to this I am equally concerned at the pressure that will inevitably be applied on those who remain, to work longer hours which would undoubtedly have an impact on home lives and family commitments, I cannot see how this could be viewed as anything but less than family friendly.

It seems puzzling that this proposal is being considered given the massive investment planned for the River Mersey and its water front over the next number of years and I would have hoped and expected that maritime safety and security would have been given a much higher priority by MF&RS.

Accordingly I respectfully ask that you could give this matter some consideration and if you feel you could voice your objections to this proposal it may assist the Unit in persuading the Authority to review the issue and hopefully ensure the Unit remains as it is today enabling the very best service possible.

Yours sincerely

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Marine Rescue Team





"An Excellent Authority"

Louise Ellman, MP **Room 515** The Cotton Exchange Old Hall Street Liverpool L3 9LQ

Your ref:

Our ref: AJMc/CFO/SW

A J McGuirk, CBE,QFSM,MSc,MIFireE Chief Executive and Chief Fire Officer Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service

Fire Service Headquarters Bridle Road

Bootle L30 4YD Merseyside

Telephone: 0151 296 4101 0151 296 4116 Fax:

(calls may be recorded) Web Site: www.merseyfire.gov.uk

Date: 17th June 2011

Dear Loune

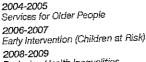
Thank you for your letter of 10th June and your invitation to comment on the points raised by the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Marine Rescue Team.

I think the team have expressed some strong and legitimate views in a reasonable and well constructed manner in their letter to you. I find myself in the position of agreeing with a great deal of the content of their letter and I share their view that they are a highly skilled, trained and dedicated team. It is also true that many members of the team have had their professionalism and dedication recognised extensively and have provided a fantastic service to the people of Merseyside.

Notwithstanding my agreement with these comments, the Fire Authority is faced with a budget deficit in excess of £9 million and as a result of the cuts to Government grant the Fire & Rescue Service, the Fire Authority are having to examine every area of saving that achieves minimum detriment to the service to the public, in so far as that is possible. The proposal the Fire Authority is considering aims to achieve these balanced outcomes of maintaining service levels whilst achieving efficiency. It is both regrettable and of concern that the achievement of these efficiencies will come from a reduction in staffing, however, that is simply the fact of life that the Authority face as a result of political decisions that have been taken by successive Government over a number of years.

A similar letter has been sent by the unit to other political colleagues and I thought you might be interested in a copy of a letter I have sent to your colleague the Rt. Hon. George Howarth on this matter.













I hope this information is satisfactory, however if you require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A J McGuirk

Chief Executive & Chief Fire Officer

Attch

The Rt Hon George Howarth, MP House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

A J McGuirk, QFSM,MSc,MIFireE Chief Executive and Chief Fire Officer Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service

Fire Service Headquarters Bridle Road Bootle Merseyside L30 4YD

Telephone: 0151 296 4101 0151 296 4116 (calls may be recorded) Web Site: www.merseyfire.gov.uk

Your ref:

Our ref: AJMc/CFO/SW

Date: 7th June 2011

Dear

Thank you for your letter of 3rd June in which you express your concerns regarding the proposal to reduce the staffing at the Marine Rescue Unit.

On a point of accuracy, the current proposals are to change the shift pattern of the Unit rather than a specific proposal to reduce staffing. However, I do accept the broad principle you are making and I will ensure your comments are taken into account by the Authority when they consider the outcomes of consultation.

Thank you for taking the time and trouble to respond to the consultation and I fully support your view that the Marine Rescue Unit proves a valuable and much needed service to the people of Merseyside and beyond. Ultimately the Authority must deliver a balanced budget however difficult that may be.

Thank you once again.

Yours sincerely

)

A J McGuirk Chief Executive & Chief Fire Officer

Mike Cummins - Consultation Manager CC:



HOUSE OF COMMONS LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Tony McGuirk Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Bridle Road Bootle Merseyside L30 4YD

3rd June, 2011

Dear Tony

I am writing to you to express concern regarding the proposal to reduce the staffing of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services Marine Rescue Unit.

I fully understand the budgetary pressures being placed on the Public Sector, however, this unit provides an invaluable and much needed service to the people of Merseyside and beyond.

I would be grateful if you could consider these concerns when making your deliberations.

Yours sincerely

The Rt Hon George Howarth MP

Knowsley

LOUISE ELLMAN MP



Labour and Co-operative Member of Parliament for Liverpool Riverside



Constituency Office:

Room 515, The Cotton Exchange Old Hall Street, Liverpool L3 9LQ

Tel: 0151 236 2969 Fax: 0151 236 4301

Web: www.louiseellman.co.uk

Westminster Office:

House of Commons

London SW1A 0AA

Tel: 0207 219 5210 Fax: 0207 219 2592

E-mail: ellmanl@parliament.uk

10th June 2011

Our ref: GG/CO

Please respond to the constituency office

Chief Fire Officer Tony McGuirk MSc, MIFireE, CGLI MF & RS Headquarters Bridle Road Bootle Merseyside L30 4YD

Dear Mr McGuirk

Please find enclosed a letter received concerning the Marine Rescue Unit. I would appreciate your comments on the points raised.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Louise Ellman

Labour and Co-operative MP

Liverpool Riverside

enc

MRU
Unit 10,
King Edward industrial estate
Gibraltar Row
Liverpool
L3 7HJ

Date: 24th May 2011

Ref: Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service - Marine Rescue Unit.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you in order to express my concerns with regard to the proposal to reduce the staffing of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services (MF&RS) 'Marine Rescue Unit'.

As you may be aware the MF&RS Marine Rescue Unit has become an integral part of the Fire and Rescue Services emergency provision and is staffed with highly skilled, trained and dedicated staff. The Unit is based at Liverpool Cruise Liner terminal and provides an essential 24 hour, 7 day a week professional rescue response fro the Mersey Estuary in the event of a maritime emergency.

Since its first year of operation in 1984 the Unit has attended over 4,500 incidents and has assisted nearly 3,500 people. Additionally, the Service has provided assistance of more than 2,000 vessels found to be in difficulty or distress. Many of the crew have had their professionalism and dedication recognised by the provision of numerous Resuscitation Awards from the Liverpool Shipwreck and humane Society.

The Unit is also considered and designated as the primary water-born rescue response for Liverpool John Lennon Airport in the event of an Aircraft 'ditching' in the waters of the River Mersey.

As part of the Budget and Financial Plan for 2011/12, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MF&RA) is proposing to make 5 posts redundant within the Unit in order to save £100,000. This will result in a drop in crewing levels down to only 8 staff to crew the Rescue launch on a 24 hour, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year basis. Simply put the crews are effectively being asked to double their working week to cover the shortfalls the loss of 5 posts will result in for the savings of only £100,000 per annum, less than 0.14% of the Authorities £72 million pound a year budget.

I am deeply concerned at the loss of 5 posts within the Unit and the subsequent loss to the community and those visiting the area of their unique skills, experience and courage.

In addition to this I am equally concerned at the pressure that will inevitably be applied on those who remain, to work longer hours which would undoubtedly have an impact on home lives and family commitments, I cannot see how this could be viewed as anything but less than family friendly.

It seems puzzling that this proposal is being considered given the massive investment planned for the River Mersey and its water front over the next number of years and I would have hoped and expected that maritime safety and security would have been given a much higher priority by MF&RS.

Accordingly I respectfully ask that you could give this matter some consideration and if you feel you could voice your objections to this proposal it may assist the Unit in persuading the Authority to review the issue and hopefully ensure the Unit remains as it is today enabling the very best service possible.

Yours sincerely

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Marine Rescue Team



"An Excellent Authority"

Dave Watts MP Consitutency Office 6th Floor Century House Hardshaw Street St Helens **WA10 1QU**

M.J. Hagen Deputy Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Fire Officer Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters Bridle Road Merseyside L30 4YD

Tel: 0151 296 4107 Fax: 0151 296 4116 Calls may be recorded)

Web Site: www.merseyfire.gov.uk

Your ref:

Our ref: DCFO/MH/LM

31st May 2011

Dear Mr. Watts

Thank you for your letter dated 26th May regarding the proposed changes to the crewing system in operation at the Marine Rescue Unit (MRU). I am responding promptly in the absence of the Chief Fire Officer.

As you may be aware, in June 2005 Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority took the decision to transfer the employees of the River Mersey Inshore Rescue Service into the Service. This decision was taken to ensure the longevity of this much valued capability which had found itself under significant financial pressure.

At the time of transfer Merseyside Police, Liverpool City Council, Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council, Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council, Halton Borough Council, Merseytravel and Liverpool Airport all undertook to continue to contribute towards the funding of the MRU. Since that time, Merseyside Police, Halton Borough Council and more recently Liverpool City Council have withdrawn funding. It is anticipated that all partners will review their funding as the full impact of the local government cuts begins to really take effect.

It is in light of the budgetary pressures facing the Authority that the decision has been taken to set a savings target of £100k from the MRU.

The MRU has averaged a total of 69 incident responses per year over the period 1st April 2008 - 31st January 2011. Of these incidents on average around 25 involve a risk to life and may result in a rescue. The timing and distribution of these mobilisations can be accurately predicted across the year.









The analysis of activity shows two discernable peaks between 1100hrs and 1200hrs and 1600hrs and 1700rs. Overall the greatest likelihood of a mobilisation occurs between 0800hrs and 2200hrs each day.

The likelihood of a mobilisation outside of these hours is very low, occurring on average once every 17 days (2000hrs - 0800hrs). The average time deployed is one hour.

These are by some considerable margin the lowest mobilisation figures for any frontline team within Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service.

The proposed duty system for the MRU is considered entirely appropriate for this level of activity and broadly reflects that employed at a number of low activity fire stations within Merseyside including two in St Helens.

The primary advantage of the system is that it ensures an immediate emergency response is maintained. In very simple terms crew members will undertake a 12 hour day duty shift as they do currently but will provide night time cover on what is termed as a 'sleeping in' shift from purpose built accommodation on the new Merseytravel pontoon. Such arrangements are used extensively elsewhere in the public sector to very good effect.

In order to further improve the rescue response to the River Mersey the Service has procured a Rescue Hovercraft which will be crewed by the MRU and located on the new pontoon along with Jet Ski's and a 10m purpose built jet boat. This level of provision is unrivalled elsewhere in the country.

The changes proposed by the Fire Authority are currently under consultation with local trade unions and staff.

I trust that this response allays any concerns you may have in relation to this matter however if you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

MICHAEL HAGEN

DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

rus che etma " 21/8/1



DAVE WATTS MP

Labour Member of Parliament for St Helens North Constituency

Constituency Office
6th Floor Century House
Hardshaw Street
St Helens
Merseyside
WA10 1QU

Tel.: 01744 21336 Fax: 01744 21343

Email: davewattsmp@hotmail.com

Mr Tony McGuirk
Chief Fire Officer
Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters
Bridle Road
Bootle
Liverpool
L30 4YD

26 May 2011

Dear Mr McGuirk

Please find enclosed correspondence I have received regarding the Marine Rescue Unit.

The comments and concerns are self-explanatory and I would be grateful if you could give your views on the issues raised.

What is the rationale behind the decisions on the MRU and what assurances can you give that it will not impact on the level of service provided.

Yours sincerely

DAVE WATTS MP St Helens North Date: 24th May 2011

Ref: Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service - Marine Rescue Unit.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you in order to express my concerns with regard to the proposal to reduce the staffing of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services (MF&RS) 'Marine Rescue Unit'.

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Yours sincerely





HOUSE OF COMMONS LONDON SW1A 0AA

16 June 2011

Dear Tony

Many thanks for sending me a copy of your letter for Mark Thomar at the Liverpool Daily Post which clarifies the position about the finding for the marrie arm of the Merseyride Fre and Renne Service.

I am pleased to hear that the service is serve, not least because of the impact of the closure of the Coartynand at Crothy.

Please contin that you will be able to guarantee Finding for the morne arm in the light of spending cuts and let me know if you have any concern about the impact on services of current spending levels.

My apologies for any confusion between your service and the maitine mident Repower Group. I war under the impression that your marie service was part finded by the maitine and Coartquard Agency and here also under

Rill Ederson MP

Best wither

Mr M Thomas
Editor
Liverpool Daily Post
PO Box 48
Old Hall Street
Liverpool
L69 3EB

A J McGuirk, CBE,QFSM,MSc,MIFireE Chief Executive and Chief Fire Officer Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service

Fire Service Headquarters Bridle Road Bootle Merseyside L30 4YD

Telephone: 0151 296 4101 Fax: 0151 296 4116 (calls may be recorded)

Date: 15th June 2011

Web Site: www.merseyfire.gov.uk

Your ref:

Our ref: AJMc/CFO/SW

Dear

In your article "off-shore fire risk ignored" (15th June) you quote Sefton MP Bill Esterson in a Westminster debate saying that "Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service is set to lose its marine arm as a result of Government spending cuts".

This statement is untrue. I believe the statement may be a comment on the reduction in funding for the Maritime Incident Response Group based in North Wales, which we are not a member of.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service has developed its own off-shore firefighting response for vessels on fire in the River which we train for regularly. We also have our Marine Rescue Unit which provides a high quality emergency response to people in difficulties on the river.

The article commented on the threat of closure to Crosby Coastguard Station and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service has responded to that consultation process. We do believe there is a risk in the current proposals and we have suggested that Government should consider whether other emergency services could provide capacity in handling emergency calls off-shore.

We remain open to further discussion about how we might develop alternative provision to maintain safety on this important river.

Yours sincerely

A J McGuirk Chief Executive & Chief Fire Officer

cc:

Mike Penning, MP Bill Esterson, MP Elected Members, MFRA

(? rights). Psyno Bejacji († right)/Tos Angeles, Laughlir Nerdada and Las Vegas (al Zinjaths * Vedas is Noviciaes/Campe, Hollwood and Thile Drive * Full day Vedas to the East of the Campe San Francisco, Anathem and Las Vegas; Comfortable coach travel throughout . The services of





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ook online: www.newmarket.travel/lps

III Halfpenny, left, and Sarah Parish arrive at the opening night of Shrek The Musical, at the Theatre Royal, in London

He added: "I'm a mass ion. said: "I've made a l

a fan of the movie."

OFE-Shore fire tisk ignored

T Coastguard closure plan

by lan Hemon

an hernon@liverpool.com

assessment of rescue services in the event of an offshore fire suards has not included a risk HE Government admitted he ongoing review of coas

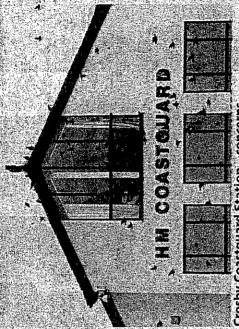
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RNLL lifeboat network is also ne arm as a result of governservice is set to lose its mar ersevside Fire and Rescue ment spending cuts, and the bate, he pointed out that id; in a Westminster

that the Government has not carried out a risk assessmen It strikes me as very odd about the impact on publi

owledge and years of exper ambulance service carry où low will police. fire and Coastguard staff with local their duties given a loss of

four people were rescued from a pilot boat which caught fire The Labour MP referred to a March incident in whic



Crosby Coastguard Station -- concerns

emergency response services are rushed," he added

example of cuts which are too

"They are the worse."

emergency services to protect fast and too soon as they will indenmine the ability of the

Shipping minister Mike Penning, an ex-fire fighter other emergency services

conceded the impact on

one of eight or nine stations to Ministers will decide by the end of July whether Crosby is He said "I know how fright howed that the Governbe kept open in the shake-up. ening that is. I will consider Mr Penning said that the emergency agencies.

of this with an ener "We will come ou gency service which ment is listening to concerns.

part of the Coastguards 🕆

had not been a major

He said that as a figehird call-out was to g

ighter in Essex his

MP Bill Esterson