

AGENDA ITEM:

REPORT TO:	MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETING
DATE:	27TH MAY 2010
REPORT NO.	CFO/092/10
REPORTING OFFICER:	ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE & ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
CONTACT OFFICER:	AREA MANAGER STEPHENS, EXTN. 4315
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STATION MANAGER HITCHEN
SUBJECT:	NATIONAL RESILIENCE ASSURANCE TEAM URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE REVIEW 29th - 30th APRIL 2010

APPENDIX A	TITLE	MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE REVIEW 29th - 30th APRIL 2010
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ATTACHED –HARD COPY

***A Glossary of Terms has been provided at the end of this report for your reference.**

Purpose of Report

1. Communities in Merseyside, and nationally, are provided with an excellent Urban Search and Rescue Response by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service. Following an operational review of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capability undertaken by the National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) on 29th and 30th April 2010, the Service has been assessed as 'Advanced' in all areas where it was possible to achieve this rating. Furthermore the report published by NRAT identifies two areas of notable practice which will be disseminated nationally.
2. The purpose of this report is to bring to the attention of Members the report produced by NRAT following the review.

Recommendation

3. That Members note the findings of NRAT following the review outlined within the report contained at Appendix A.

Introduction & Background

4. Article 3 of the Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007 places a statutory duty on Fire and Rescue Authorities to make provision for the rescues of persons from collapsed structures and heavy transport incidents. Given the complex nature of such incidents this is best achieved through a dedicated team. Members have previously recognised the need to develop such technical response capabilities and in 2004 approved the development of the Search and Rescue Team (SRT).
5. As an element of what was formerly known as the New Dimensions project the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) have provided 20 FRS's in England with funding and assets to provide a national USAR capability in the form of a USAR unit.
6. A USAR unit consists of 5 Modules and 3 Prime Movers staffed by 10 personnel and supported by one canine team. MFRS has hosted a USAR unit since 2004 and this has provided the foundation on which the SRT have been developed.
7. The National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) was formed in 2008 to ensure the continued maintenance and development of all of the New Dimensions capabilities inclusive of USAR on behalf of CLG. Primarily this is achieved by means of an operational review of the capability. This review is predicated on the model utilised on the Operational Assessment of Service Delivery undertaken by the IDeA (Improvement and Development Agency). This determines that an FRS is advanced, established or developing against the key lines of enquiry. Where notable practice is identified this is recorded and disseminated nationally.
8. Merseyside are the first FRS in England to be subject to a USAR review. In his position as CFOA Lead Officer for USAR, ACFO Evans volunteered to host the first review in order to support NRAT and to show leadership to the rest of the capability.
9. NRAT identified during the review that MFRS are 'Advanced' in all areas where it was possible to achieve this rating. In all other areas not noted as advanced the Service was assessed as having an established USAR capability. Members should note that in respect of these areas, there were only two possible outcomes, these being established (i.e. the element of the capability was in place) or developing (i.e. the element of the capability was not in place). An example of this is Question 33 from the assurance template which asks 'are all external vehicle chargers fitted and working?' Self evidently the answer to this question can only be 'yes' (therefore established) or no (therefore developing). Furthermore NRAT identified two areas of notable practice in respect of Mobilisation and Communications which will be disseminated nationally.
10. A copy of the full review report is provided for Members at Appendix A.

Equality & Diversity Implications

11. None contained within this report.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

12. None contained within this report.

Health & Safety and Environmental Implications

13. MFRS were assessed as advanced in all areas appertaining to health and safety within the review.

Contribution to Achieving the Vision:

“To Make Merseyside a Safer, Stronger, Healthier Community”

14. MFRS meet the requirements of Article 3 of the Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007 through the provision of an excellent USAR capability which has the ability to provide a local and national response.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

National Resilience Assurance Team Urban Search and Rescue Review 29th - 30th
April 2010

***Glossary of Terms**

USAR Modules

Module 1 is an ISO container containing scene assessment and initial response equipment.

Module 2 is an ISO container containing heavy rescue equipment

Module 3 is an ISO container containing heavy concrete breaching and breaking equipment

Module 4 is an ISO container used to transport a multi purpose bobcat vehicle

Module 5 is a flat bed unit used to transport timber to shore up collapsed structures

Prime Mover

The Prime Mover is the vehicle utilised to transport the demountable modules to an incident

Canine Team

The canine team consists of a search and rescue canine and handler who mobilise to the incident as a team in a bespoke vehicle.