

AGENDA ITEM:

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE &amp; RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETING</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>27<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2010</b>
<b>REPORT NO.</b>	<b>CFO/096/10</b>
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE &amp; CHIEF FIRE OFFICER</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>AREA MANAGER STEPHENS, EXT 4315</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	<b>STATION MANAGER SEARLE</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>EXERCISE ORION</b>

**THERE ARE NO APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT**

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

Purpose of Report

1. By undertaking regular large scale live training exercises Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) have developed an excellent operational response capability which has been extensively demonstrated at recent major incidents such as the Tabley Street crane collapse and the Global Recycling Limited fire which were resolved successfully without loss of life.
2. The purpose of this report is to advise Members of Exercise Orion which is to be held between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> September inclusive. Exercise Orion will be the largest and most extensive operational training event ever to be undertaken by MFRS and will give rise to excellent learning and development opportunities for significant numbers of our personnel.

Recommendation

3. That Members note the contents of this report.

Introduction & Background

4. On 4<sup>th</sup> December 2008 the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) board supported an application by Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) to bid for EU funding to conduct an international exercise in the second half of 2010. Prior to the application the Cabinet Office and the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) were consulted. The application was also endorsed by the Civil Contingences Secretariat. Co-signatories to the application were Lincolnshire FRS, Hampshire FRS, the Fire Service College, and organisations from Germany, Denmark and Eire.

5. This application was successful and €953,900 was awarded to HFRS to lead on the delivery of the exercise which will be called Exercise Orion. The exercise scenario will be an earthquake that affects large areas of the United Kingdom. The reason for this choice of scenario is that this is a low likelihood but high impact event that would extensively challenge emergency response arrangements and invariably give rise to the need to request international assistance.
6. MFRS were requested to partake in the exercise by the Chief Fire Officer of HFRS on account of its significant involvement within the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capability and its reputation for hosting high quality live exercises. Hertfordshire, Hampshire and Lincolnshire FRS's are also participating in the exercise. Hampshire will conduct a live exercise whilst Hertfordshire and Lincolnshire will conduct table top exercises.
7. The Merseyside element of the exercise will take the form of up to 4 live field events over the 48 hour period and a Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG) running throughout.
8. The field events are scheduled to take place at the Training and Development Academy (TDA), the Rendell Street spur of the Birkenhead Tunnel, the Bidston Tunnels complex in Birkenhead and at a high rise block of flats in either Liverpool or Sefton.
9. Each event is scheduled to last in excess of 24 hours and will be attended by up to 4 USAR teams who will partake in the exercise from around the country. These USAR teams will work in support of Merseyside Firefighters from stations across the County who will make up the primary response to the simulated incident.
10. The exercise planning team have secured significant multi agency commitment through the Local Resilience Forum. This commitment varies from Chief Executive participation in SCG meetings to the provision of military helicopters for air support and the transport of equipment and personnel.
11. The exercise is likely to attract significant media interest and to that end arrangements are in place to embed journalists within the responding teams.
12. Whilst a second live event is being held in Hampshire it is likely that the scale will be far less than that of the live play taking place on Merseyside.

#### Equality & Diversity Implications

13. None contained within this report.

#### Financial Implications & Value for Money

14. The set up costs for the exercise incurred by MFRS are being met by the National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT). The costs of participation are being met from grant funding received from CLG for USAR training.

#### Health & Safety and Environmental Implications

15. All venues and events have been subject to extensive risk assessments. A dedicated team of exercise staff will manage and direct each event for their full duration.

#### Contribution to Achieving the Vision:

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

16. By extensive training and exercising MFRS are able to provide an excellent front line firefighting and USAR capability which has the ability to provide a local and national response.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

#### **\*Glossary of Terms**

USAR Teams

A USAR team consists of 10 personnel and a canine/handler who respond with up to 5 modules (ISO containers) of specialist equipment to affect the rescue of persons from collapsed structures or heavy transport incidents.