

5. The RMB was established in 2004 to deliver the core functions as set out in the National Framework. In the North West the RMB has been working to its Business Plan, however, the Fire Authorities of Cheshire, Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside and Greater Manchester are now free to decide if this particular form of structure best meets the needs of local communities.
6. At its meeting on 22nd September 2010 the RMB considered a report from the Clerk to the Board in respect of potential options for the future. A copy of the paper is attached as Appendix A and Members are referred to paragraph 7 which outlines these potential options.
7. After due consideration the Members representing the five Fire Authorities agreed that option 7 (iii) would be the most appropriate option as Members did recognise the benefits of collaboration which have already been achieved for example the Cage Soccer plans and climbing wall and regional approaches to procurement.
8. The RMB recommended that a future RMB for the North West should comprise of the Chair, Vice Chair and Lead Opposition Spokesperson for each fire authority.
9. The RMB, however, needs approval from each of the fire authorities and Members are therefore asked to approve this recommendation. The name and constitutional type issues of a future Board will be decided at a later meeting if the fire authorities approve the recommendation above.

Equality & Diversity Implications

10. None arising from this report.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

11. There is currently an agreed budget in place which funds specific activities. The current distribution of costs is pro rata to the Elected Member composition of the Board – it is proposed that this arrangement would continue.

Health & Safety and Environmental Implications

12. None arising from this report.

Contribution to Achieving the Vision:

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

13. In the emerging financial climate there will be greater pressure to deliver more cashable savings through collaboration in the public sector and the retention of this North West Forum could be beneficial to the process, helping Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority to deliver services for the communities of Merseyside to stay safe, stronger and healthier.