

AGENDA ITEM:

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE &amp; RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETING</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>16<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2010</b>
<b>REPORT NO.</b>	<b>CFO/213/10</b>
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	<b>ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE &amp; TREASURER</b>
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<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN FOCUS GROUP 2010</b>

**THERE ARE NO APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT**

Purpose of Report

1. To request that Members note the positive response and support received from members of the public during an IRMP consultation event held at Service Headquarters on 24<sup>th</sup> November.

Recommendation

2. That Members note the successful outcomes from the IRMP public consultation forum.

Introduction & Background

3. Public consultation is endorsing the strategies being planned by the Authority as part of the IRMP. Members will be aware that the MFRS approach to public consultation includes holding public consultation forums before and after the production of the IRMP. Five of these forums were held in June, one on each district, to inform the planning process. A single event, comprising a cross section of the participants in the district forums, was held at SHQ on 24<sup>th</sup> November to discuss the draft IRMP during its twelve week consultation period.

4. These consultation events are facilitated by Opinion Research Services (ORS) who provide consultation services to the Fire Services' Consultation Association (FSCA), of which MFRS is a member. The benefit of using ORS in this way is that they provide independent facilitation of consultation events, bringing with them extensive knowledge of what affects the fire and rescue service nationally and also of other fire and rescue services, helping to set issues in context for participants. As a result, they are seen as "an honest messenger" by attendees at these events.
5. The event held on 24<sup>th</sup> November brought together 24 participants from throughout Merseyside who represented a good cross section of our communities in terms of ethnic origin, gender and age.
6. The consultation focused on specific areas of the draft IRMP but all participants had received the full document and were free to ask questions or comment on any part of it. The areas of focus for the event were the Authority's approach to reducing unwanted fire signals (particularly automatic fire alarms) the Authority's involvement in community safety and partnership work that adds value to other areas of society as well as the fire and rescue service, and the broad issues affecting the public sector in relation to budget cuts.

The full outcomes from the event will be available in the New Year but in brief, there was considerable support for the Authority taking a rigorous approach to dealing with building owners and occupiers who are not effectively managing their automatic fire alarm systems. Another area that received unanimous support was that MFRS should continue to work in partnership on a wide range of community safety, cohesion and health related projects and initiatives to reduce fires and other incidents, but also an understanding that in times of public sector spending restraint, this area of work is particularly important for the whole of society.

7. The comments below summarise the overall views of the participants in relation to Automatic Fire Alarm incidents:
  - The Forum was very 'sympathetic' to MFRS regarding the extent of false Automatic Fire Alarm calls it attends;
  - The option of not responding unless AFAs are confirmed by 999 calls was favoured by three-quarters for 'non-vulnerable' situations and by two-thirds for 'vulnerable' situations;
  - About a sixth and a fifth (respectively for 'vulnerable' and 'non-vulnerable situations) favoured responding with a motorbike/van rather than committing with a full response;
  - One in eight or twelve (respectively for 'vulnerable' and 'non-vulnerable situations) favoured responding with one fire engine.

8. In addition to responses to specific focus areas as detailed above, several participants were willing to share their appreciation of the services provided by MFRS, whether that was an elderly participant expressing thanks that she had received two HFSC visits, or another participant noting that antisocial behaviour had reduced in her area and that she could see how the work of MFRS had contributed to that reduction.
9. It should be noted that this focus group is just one strand of MFRS's overall Consultation programme. Further consultation is taking place through, for example, the pilot of an online consultation tool which includes an online survey. This pilot, at no cost to MFRS, aims to provide information from our internet site to the citizens of Merseyside about ongoing public consultations across Merseyside.

This is illustrated in the screen print below.

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Title	Dates	Status
<a href="#">Draft Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment Consultation (Public)</a> -NHS Sefton	4/10/2010 to 6/12/2010	Current
Public consultation on the draft Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment for Sefton.		
<a href="#">Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2011 - 2014</a> -Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service	3/11/2010 to 28/1/2011	Current
Public consultation on the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan 2011 - 2014.		
<a href="#">Safeguarding Employment Land Supplementary Planning Guidance</a>	11/11/2010 to 15/12/2010	Current

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## Equality & Diversity Implications

10. A total of 24 people attended, drawn from each of the five local authority districts. All the participants had attended one of five previous MFRS forums, held in their respective districts. Participants were a diverse cross-section of Merseyside residents.

### Financial Implications & Value for Money

11. There are no financial implications arising from this report but it is significant to note that the participants understood and supported the Authority's approach of tackling fires and other emergencies "up stream" and that MFRS doing this in partnership would become more important as public sector cuts take effect, not less.
12. Two-thirds of the forum felt that the Comprehensive Spending Review would have a "big impact" on the MFRS. A third thought the impact would be "fairly big", no one thought the impact would be fairly small or small.

### Health & Safety and Environmental Implications

13. There are no health and safety or environmental issues arising from this report.

### Contribution to Achieving Our Purpose:

"To Make Merseyside a Safer, Stronger, Healthier Community"

14. Consultation of this type is vital to assist MFRS in determining that its strategies and planning take into account the views and needs our communities to deliver better outcomes.