

## **Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority**

### **Response to Cheshire Fire and Rescue Authority Integrated Risk Management Plan consultation**

**1. How strongly do you value Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service as a partner organisation?**

Very Strongly - this will become even more important in the future – when FRS's will need to fully consider the IRMP changes in staffing and resourcing adopted in each of its neighbouring FRS's.

Cheshire is a nearby Authority and therefore it is important to ensure strong partnership working particularly in view of the need for Section 13/16 Agreements for cross border co operation as times become more difficult for everyone financially

**2. Do you support Cheshire Fire Authority's proposal to increase its council tax in 2013/14?**

Recent announcements may limit FRA's to 2% Council Tax increase. As a result, plans would need to reflect the realities of this.

Merseyside FRA recognises the very difficult financial challenges faced by all Authorities and that increasing precept is one of the few means by which to mitigate the impact of grant reductions from Central Government.

**3. Do you have any further comments about our plans to increase the Council Tax?**

As above

**4. Do you agree with the Service's plans to change the way in which we store and mobilise foam to incidents?**

Yes. It is important Cheshire work closely with NW partners to agree a comprehensive regional foam strategy in response to our significant COMAH risks

**5. Do you agree with the Service's plans to remove the two Hazardous Materials Units and use the Incident Response Unit in their place**

Yes. Operationally it makes absolute sense to utilise the IRU for local Hazmat response.

**6. Is there anything else you would like to add about our specialist appliances:**

Merseyside and Cheshire FRA have comprehensive mutual aid agreements in relation to specialist appliance provision and whilst not explicitly stated in the Cheshire IRMP we very much value these arrangements.

**7. Do you support Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's plans to introduce a blanket 10 minute response standard for house fires and road traffic collisions?**

Yes – from an operational perspective this is a logical proposal and the consistent standard is easier for the public to understand

**8. Do you support our proposals to change how and when some of our fire stations are staffed?**

From an operational perspective these are logical proposals. MFRA are committed to working with Cheshire to ensure mutual aid arrangements are maximised to deliver the best possible operational response cover in particular on the Wirral and Halton borders

**9. Do you support our plans to build some additional fire stations?**

From an operational perspective these are logical proposals. MFRA are committed to working with Cheshire to ensure mutual aid arrangements are maximised to deliver the best possible operational response cover in particular on the Wirral and Halton borders. In addition, it reflects the change to a 10 min response standard – which would only be achievable through the creation of additional Fire Stations.

**10. Do you support our plans to increase the maximum travel time by up to two minutes?**

From an operational perspective these are logical proposals. They enable an operational response to be maintained when it is difficult to recruit and retain Retained Duty System firefighters from within the traditional 5 minute distance from the fire station. To have an extra two minutes (maximum) on the recruitment pool and thus response standard is better than having no response at all.

**11. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposals in this section? Where possible give details why you support or oppose particular proposals**

No

The online survey then contains questions that reflect the detailed proposals for each area of Cheshire as set out in their IRMP and summary document, for which MFRA has no specific response.

The final questions on the survey are as follows:

**32. Do you support our overall plans for the year ahead as set out in our Integrated Risk Management Plan 2013/14?**

The plans outlined within the Cheshire IRMP are logical from an operational perspective.

**33. Please tell us any further comments you have regarding what we are proposing in our plans for 2013/14?**

As above