

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

Operational Assessment 2012

Improvement Plan

Ref.	Areas to Explore	Action required	Lead SMG member/s
	Leadership, Governance and Corporate Capacity		
1	<p>Independent scrutiny – consider bringing in LA to establish trusted scrutiny:</p> <p><i>Although MFRS has a system of regular scrutiny committees, this is exclusively from within the FA and lacks robust external challenge. This is understandable, given the political composition of the FA. MFRS could consider bringing in external partners, for example from the local authorities, to develop scrutiny further. More independent scrutiny would provide the FA better assurance about performance and policies. The team acknowledges that the decision to invite a peer challenge team into MFRA demonstrates its openness.</i></p>	<p>Under consideration by Task and Finish Group. Next Meeting 10th January and two further meetings planned ready for a report to Authority in February</p>	<p>Director of Legal Services</p>
	Operational preparedness & response		
2	<p>How MaCC is used to support operational activity</p> <p><i>There is the potential to use MaCC staff during the periods between operational calls. A system that automatically provides operational staffing availability could be explored and that would also reduce the</i></p>	<p>A trial is currently underway which involves MaCC receiving Operational availability directly from TRM, preventing the need for MaCC staff to contact each station at the commencement of each shift.</p> <p>All other anomalies are to be picked up</p>	<p>AM Operational Preparedness</p>

	<i>need for MACC staff to phone each fire station on change of shift. There are areas that MFRS is aware of that need to be more effectively coordinated and more effectively project managed. Items mentioned generally required ICT investment and involvement</i>	through the use of the current ICT Sophtlogic system.	
3	<p>Try to ensure all Operational Commanders, and in particular the District Managers, are included in operational issues</p> <p><i>All managers that spoke to the team were clearly positive about the changes that have already taken place and more specifically the focus on operational competence has played a key part in supporting that view. There are some managers who may need more time to see the tangible benefits of the new structure and they should be fully engaged in the programme of change. They have a clear sense of passion and purpose but there was some concern expressed that some reporting lines and areas of responsibility still need some clarity.</i></p>	<p>Discussions have taken place between the AM's on the inclusion of the District based GM's and SM's being responsible for the identification and management of the SSRI responsibilities for their respective areas.</p> <p>GM's also to be requested to provide Operational considerations for their districts through the Command Seminars.</p> <p>Operational considerations to be included in the station plans for 2013/14 which will be the responsibility of the District Manager</p>	AMs Response, Preparedness and Prevention and Protection
4	<p>Changing rotas and rosters needs to be inclusive</p> <p><i>Changing rotas is seen by some staff as the 'golden egg'. Staff are clearly engaged in the process of change and it is accepted that this issue above all others will create one of the biggest discussions in MFRS. The use of additional voluntary hours and payments is not supported by everyone, but those who do work it use it to maximum effect and are positive about the opportunities it brings. Views were also expressed about the part-time firefighters having primacy to cover additional voluntary hours not</i></p>	This has been incorporated into functional plan for Response for 13/14	AM Response

	<i>simply because of pay but also to improve their operational knowledge, understanding and experience.</i>		
	Prevention		
5	<p>Data sets could be made available for district teams on a self serve basis ALSO 19</p> <p><i>If reports could be developed and made available to front line staff via the portal to be accessed as and when required it may increase efficiency, especially if this is a request from a partner agency.</i></p>	<p>Work is already underway to procure a system that will integrate planning, project management, performance management and risk management which will help facilitate this. A second piece of work is considering the detail of the data and information that could be included in the self-service approach and an Excel based prototype has been produced. When this is agreed it will be integrated into the new system.</p>	<p>Director of Strategic Planning</p>
6	<p>Strategic managers to take the lead on the Road Safety Partnerships.</p> <p><i>A more decentralised approach to allocating high profile positions on key partnerships will enable managers to influence more effectively. For example, encouraging senior managers sit on the Road Safety Partnerships would provide access to senior road safety engineers and Highways Managers who may not always see the benefits of educational activities over engineered solutions.</i></p>	<p>This is included in the functional plan for prevention and Protection. MFRS will embed officers at each level of road safety governance across each district of Merseyside.</p>	<p>AM Prevention and Protection</p>
7	<p>Potential to devolve more community safety staff to districts</p> <p><i>As the success of the district based teams is starting to become apparent, there is potential to devolve</i></p>	<p>This will be included in the departmental restructure following the budget setting in February 2013 and recorded in the functional plan.</p>	<p>AM Prevention and Protection</p>

	<i>even more staff to the District Manager. This would increase the capacity locally to design and deliver targeted prevention and protection activities.</i>		
	Protection		
8	<p>Instigate a review of inspections and design a risk based inspection programme</p> <p><i>A risk based inspection programme takes time to design and implement but the benefits of such a system once in place can be significant. The inspections of premises that are deemed to be higher risk or regularly not compliant receive a higher degree of scrutiny while others who are always compliant can be visited less frequently. This type of system could deliver a greater degree of control over where and when inspecting officers are deployed, which may provide efficiencies in the longer term.</i></p>	<p>This is included in the Functional plan for prevention and protection.</p> <p>The Protection policy will be reviewed and a new Service instruction produced for a risk based approach to Fire safety Audit.</p>	AM Prevention and Protection
9	<p>Provide officers with clear focus around identifying new premises</p> <p><i>Inspecting officers could be encouraged to identify new premises that may require inspecting while out on their normal duties. This could potentially reduce community risk and increase firefighter safety.</i></p>	<p>This will be reported through the prevention and protection functional plan and relates to action 10.</p>	AM Prevention and Protection
10	<p>Develop/Purchase a suitable IT system</p> <p><i>A system that allows mobile working offers economy of scale when the current costs of travel, administration and office space are off set as potential savings against the cost of developing the system.</i></p>	<p>This is included in the functional plan for prevention and protection.</p>	AM Prevention and Protection

11	<p>Mobile working for inspecting officers</p> <p><i>Mobile working allows inspecting officers to work from any location with an internet connection. Completed work is uploaded to the system while new work is simultaneously downloaded for the officer's attention and completion. A system of this nature could remove the need for officers to be in the office allowing more time spent inspecting premises with potential reductions in travel costs and CO2 emissions.</i></p>	<p>This is included in the functional plan and will go live when the protection IMS is delivered as per action 12.</p>	<p>AM Prevention and Protection</p>
12	<p>Train crews to complete low risk assessments</p> <p><i>Operational crews could be trained to a slightly higher level of competence, allowing them to carry out the more straight forward inspections. This type of approach also improves the local firefighters' knowledge of their risks and building construction, improving firefighter safety at incidents.</i></p>	<p>This is currently being done as part of the 2012/13 functional plan and has been reported as such.</p>	<p>AM Prevention and Protection, AM Response, AM Preparedness</p>
Support Service Review			
13	<p>Greater understanding of the systemic impact of proposals</p> <p><i>Whilst Heads of Department have reviewed their own departments, with the support of their managers, the level of cross departmental review appears to have been a peer challenge meeting to assess inter-departmental impact.</i></p> <p><i>Whilst it may be the case that Managers understand their departments' function, there is no evidence that they have been reviewed as part of the whole</i></p>	<p>All reviews were coordinated through People and Organisational Development, so as a consequence work areas that cut across departments (ICT, Data and systems support) were considered organisationally as were areas of collaboration, this will continue to be</p>	<p>All SMG</p>

	<p><i>process. This should start with an analysis of the operational demand on prevention & protection and the functions required to support that process in the most purposeful and efficient way.</i></p> <p><i>As a consequence the review seeks to do what is currently done but with less resource, there does not appear the level of scrutiny and understanding of how they deliver against the mission as a whole. As a consequence there are areas of duplication, (e.g. call taking, performance management data, IT systems, prevention activity) and no evidence to show how the proposed changes will impact on the delivery of service, only a statutory compliance.</i></p>	<p>done as the reviews are implemented</p> <p>The EIA process will introduce some cross-organisation validation of the impact of the changes.</p>	
14	<p>The same logic and rigor in reducing demand on front line services has not been applied to support services</p> <p><i>MFRS has overseen tremendous reduction in demand for its emergency service over the past decade. This has been achieved by understanding this demand, understanding the root causes of this in the widest context from building design to the impact mental health has on the likelihood of being a victim of fire. With this understanding the Authority has designed its Service to deliver prevention and protection activity, as well as effective resources to tackle those situations that may face them. There is in built learning and de-briefing to ensure that efficiency and effectiveness is maintained and improved upon.</i></p> <p><i>The same level of understanding, delivery and evaluation can and needs to be applied to support services. This will improve the service provided and demonstrate areas where waste activities can be removed.</i></p>	<p>The Service is actively procuring new systems that are designed to streamline processes and reduce demand on reducing staff resources. For example, new systems for planning, project management and performance management will help maintain or improve services to the front line whilst reducing the demand on the departments that provide those services</p>	All SMG

15	<p>Support services might be improved by ensuring that the processes currently used are made as efficient as possible and in particular identifying when capacity potentially increases (eg MACC; demonstrable reduction in 999 calls compared to no change in relation to other non-operational areas of business)</p> <p><i>Examples of processes that appeared to show scope for improvement in utilising capacity within the organisation appeared in the MACC where use could be made of their down time capacity to carry out quality checks and audit carried out by other areas of support service.</i></p> <p><i>The example of 999 calls reducing is evidence that demand is being addressed, the volumes of non-999 calls into the organisation however are increasing. This was seen in the Fire Service Direct, where it is anticipated that calls regarding 'bleeping smoke alarms' will rise from approximately 12,000 this year to 16,000 next year. All these calls will represent a call on the time of your staff and potentially dissatisfaction if not responded to in line with the organisation values.</i></p> <p><i>This could be achieved through:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>o Analysis of non-operational demand on the organisation</i> <i>o Review business processes end to end</i> 	See above	All SMG
	Community risk management		
16	Further develop the mobile data terminals to	The use of mobile technology including	AM Prevention and

	<p>support community safety activity</p> <p><i>Colour coding of homes to inform operational crews when targeting communities and attending incidents is planned. When completed this will be a useful addition to the system.</i></p>	<p>the provision of information on the MDTs is in the scope for protection IMS and will be reported as such.</p>	<p>Protection</p>
17	<p>Develop IT systems to allow end users to self serve</p> <p><i>Improvements in the speed data can be retrieved would assist front line staff and deliver efficiencies, allowing analysts to carry out more in depth analytical work.</i></p>	<p>See 5</p>	<p>Director of Strategic Planning</p>
18	<p>Fire Support Network would like to be used more – perception is they may be seen as competition.</p> <p><i>This is an area that should be investigated, if the perception is true then a potential rift could begin to detract from the good work carried out by the Network.</i></p>	<p>The service level agreement with FSN and alternative options for community safety are being considered as part of the fundamental review of support services.</p>	<p>AM Prevention and Protection</p>
<p>Health and Safety</p>			
19	<p>The submission of near miss forms appears to be lower than expected</p> <p><i>As an organisation that has health and safety at the core of its mission, the use of 'near miss' forms submitted by the frontline are essential to provide further learning. The health and safety team acknowledge that at present there are fewer than expected forms and that submissions need to</i></p>	<p>This has been incorporated into functional plan for Response for 13/14</p>	<p>AM Response</p>

	<i>increase. The challenge team suggests that needs to be an understanding of patterns of submissions to identify risk areas and also to learn whether the submission of near miss forms correlate to environments which are safer for fire fighters.</i>		
20	<p>In a period of job insecurity where sickness is a factor, staff are choosing to not call in sick but are taking leave.</p> <p><i>In anticipation of reduced budgets and the possibility of redundancies, staff are concerned that sickness levels may be used as a criteria for selection. The peer challenge team heard that as a consequence some staff are choosing to come into work, when perhaps it would be more sensible recover at home, or they are taking annual leave instead of sick leave. The Service needs to satisfy itself that they are not placing undue pressure on staff to come to work, with the consequence that performance is reduced through low morale or in connection with frontline staff directly impacting on the safety of them and their colleagues.</i></p>	<p>Although it is the case that some staff do choose to take flexi or annual leave rather than declare themselves sick, this is most often when they expect to be ill for a very short time and do not want to adversely affect an otherwise good absence record. It is not considered to be a problem and certainly no pressure at all is placed on employees to do this. Managers were appropriate will deal with employees who are not fit enough to be in work, but this will be taken into account as sickness and absence continue to be reviewed.</p>	All SMG
	Training and Development		
21	<p>‘permit to work’ requires direction from SMG</p> <p><i>The Training and Development Academy requires strategic guidance from SMG on future direction and product development that will meet the needs of the organisation in the coming years.</i></p>	<p>Work on going with a revised training strategy which will ensure all Operational Personnel attend the identified risk critical training courses within a pre-determined time frame. Permit to work will be removed from all training SI’s as this phrase is unsuitable within this context.</p>	AM Preparedness
	Call Management and Incident Support		
22	Better work with the Highways Agency (eg	Work on going with the Highways Agency. Access through the HA website	AM Preparedness

	<p>strategic road network cameras)</p> <p><i>Consider making contact with the Highways Agency to access the strategic road network CCTV system. This should be easily available and will assist call management and improve communications between MFRS and the Highways Agency. It may also has the potential to have a positive effect on call attendance to incidents on the road network and also assist operational crews.</i></p>	<p>to the strategic road network CCTV system requires specific permissions which we are currently in discussion with the HA over.</p>	
23	<p>Improve understanding between MACC and operational staff</p> <p><i>The awareness programme that has started informally should be encouraged as it is already showing improved awareness and understanding between operational crews and the MACC staff.</i></p>	<p>Awareness programme continuing which will be enhanced with the JCC. Communications built into the Functional Plan for Ops Preparedness.</p>	AM Preparedness
24	<p>Large screen technology</p> <p><i>Comments were made by the MACC staff that they would welcome the return of the large visual display. The reasoning appears sensible as it is not just for the use of MACC staff but also provides visual information to supporting officers during large scale or complex incidents. There are examples of how this technology is used in other FRS's.</i></p>	<p>This has been rectified by the use of 'Static Board'. This is then replicated onto a smart board. The new JCC build will include a PC and projector which will allow this facility to be screened onto a wall.</p>	AM Preparedness