

Appendix B to Item 4 on the Agenda

**AGENDA ITEM:**

<b>REPORT TO: MEETING OF THE</b>	<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE &amp; RESCUE AUTHORITY PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>26<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2012</b>
<b>REPORT NO.</b>	<b>CFO/109/12</b>
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	<b>DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC PLANNING, DEB APPLETON, X4402</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	<b><sup>1</sup>CONTESTABLE RESEARCH FUND PANEL MEMBERS DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>REVIEW OF THE CONTESTABLE RESEARCH FUND AND PROPOSAL TO IMPLEMENT A COMMUNITY IMPACT FUND</b>

**IS THIS REPORT EXEMPT?      NO**

**ARE THERE ANY APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT? YES**

<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Examples of innovative research projects supported by the Contestable Research Fund</b>
	<b>B</b>		<b>Terms of reference</b>
	<b>C</b>		<b>Application Form</b>
	<b>D</b>		<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>

**ATTACHED – ELECTRONIC / HARD COPY**

Purpose of Report

1. To request that Members consider the recommendations of this report relating to a proposal to close the Contestable Research Fund and create a Community Impact Fund.

Recommendation

That Members;

- a) Scrutinise the implications of the proposal to replace the Contestable Research Fund with a Community Impact Fund to better reflect the current requirements and resources of the Authority whilst contributing to the delivery of the Community Safety Plans, which will improve outcomes for communities.
- b) If satisfied with the proposals, Members are recommended to:
  - (i) approve the proposal

<sup>1</sup> Director of Strategic Planning (Chair), Director of Legal Services, AM Operational Preparedness, AM, Operational Response, AM Prevention and Protection, Head of Finance, Head of Procurement.

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- (ii) Scrutinise the operation of the Fund at the next meeting of this committee
- c) Recommend any task and finish work that might need to be undertaken arising from the scrutiny process.

### Introduction & Background

3. The Contestable Research Fund is a fund of £25,000 per year with an additional sum of £30,000 held in an earmarked reserve. The Fund was created in 2004 to encourage new and innovative research, from any field, that would help MFRA achieve its aims and have a positive impact on the communities of Merseyside. The premise of the Fund is simple; individuals and organisations can submit a bid for funding for research that they think will help MFRA meet its IRMP priorities. The bids are then evaluated by a panel of senior managers. The bids can be submitted at any time of the year and are judged on their own merits, not against other bids.
4. Since 2004 44 bids for funding have been received and 27 agreed. The total amount of funding awarded by the scheme is almost £225,000 although £18,000 of that amount was subsequently reimbursed by funding received from an external source.
5. When the idea of the Fund was conceived it was envisaged that MFRA would attract ground breaking ideas from a range of organisations and individuals. In the early years of the scheme it is considered that this initial aspiration was achieved and that the research projects at appendix A are examples of innovation and imagination:
6. In 2009 the focus of the bids to the Contestable Research Fund shifted away for the examination of innovative ideas and more towards evaluation of existing MFRA initiatives, including those involving partners. This may have been a response to the increasing demand for evidence to demonstrate the success and impact of the work being carried out by MFRA. Although the CRF supported some of these bids because the outputs were useful to the Authority, it is considered that this was a shift away from the original intentions of the scheme and that now is an appropriate time to review its value to the organisation. It should be noted however, that research already commissioned by the Contestable Research Fund Panel will continue until it is completed.

### Proposal – Community Impact Fund

7. In the time since the Contestable Research Fund was established MFRA has changed considerably, not least as a result of the severe budget pressures it faces. During the same time the Government has begun to focus on allocating funding at a local level with an emphasis on communities having much more influence over the way in which services are delivered to them. It is now considered that the MRFA fund in its current format has delivered all the benefits it can to the Authority and that a new approach could deliver more effective outcomes. This proposed new approach would be known as the Community

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Impact Fund and it would engage staff on stations and in districts to deliver the objectives contained within their Community Safety Delivery Plans by enabling them to bid for funding for small scale projects with their partners.

8. It is considered that the Community Impact Fund would be more effectively used to support community based initiatives at a local level, to help deliver the objectives of the District and Station Community Safety Delivery Plans. This approach would draw on the principles of Community Budgeting, in that local community groups or other local partners in collaboration with MFRA staff would be able to bid for funding to support initiatives that help improve outcomes for our communities. Seeking match funding from partners for such bids would also be encouraged and the Fund would also allow individual employees to demonstrate how they would be working innovatively and creatively with partners to achieve their objectives.
9. In practice, an individual or group of staff who have responsibility for the delivery of actions within a Community Safety Delivery Plan and led by the District Group Manager would (often in conjunction with partners) complete a brief application form to bid for funding, which would be submitted to the Fund's administrator. The applicant for funding would then attend a meeting of the Community Impact Fund Panel where they would be required to explain in more detail the benefits the funding could bring to their communities including an equality impact assessment. The bid would then be judged against criteria linked to the Partnership and Grant funding toolkits to ensure appropriate governance.
10. It is proposed that there would be no upper or lower limits for bids but that there would be two opportunities for bidding each year to ensure that funding is not all allocated at the beginning of the financial year. This would help ensure that staff and partners who are planning seasonal campaigns or initiatives designed to run in the latter part of the year would not miss out on funding opportunities.
11. The Community Impact Fund would be administered by the Prevention and Protection Function and the Panel would also include managers from other departments such as Strategic Planning and Finance. The Panel might also require legal and contractual support, depending on the nature and scale of the projects for which funding is granted. However, as the new fund would be likely to attract more bids than the CRF the capacity to provide this support will have to be monitored.

### Equality & Diversity Implications

12. The Equality Impact Assessment is attached. In general, it is expected that the Community Impact Fund would have a positive impact on a number of the Protected Groups (for example older people or socially disadvantaged communities) as it is anticipated that the fund would be used to directly benefit these higher risk groups.

### Staff Implications

13. Staff would have the opportunity to directly influence the achievement of local objectives by bidding (with partners) for funding to run initiatives and events.

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### Legal Implications

14. There are no specific legal implications resulting from this report. All existing Contestable Research Fund contracts will continue until the research is completed. All new allocations of funding to external providers will be subject to formal contracts to protect the Authority's interests.

### Financial Implications & Value for Money

15. Assuming Members approve the recommendations of this report the Contestable Research Fund would become the Community Impact Fund and it is proposed that it would remain at £25,000 per year. Money would be set aside in the current Contestable Research Fund Reserve to ensure that funding would be available for the research projects that are currently underway and to cover any future research that the Authority considers worthwhile, but the Contestable Research Fund would be closed to new bids.

### Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

16. There are no health and safety or environmental implications resulting from the proposals. There is a risk that evaluation of initiatives will not be carried out in the future. It is possible that if major evaluations or research projects are required, they could be funded from elsewhere in the Authority's budget. It is important that any future bids for external grant funding contain sufficient estimates for evaluation of projects. There will be a limited capacity for internal evaluation of initiatives and projects.

### Contribution to \*\*Our Mission – To Achieve; Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters\*\*

17. This proposal reflects the Authority's commitment to working with partners to deliver improved outcomes in our communities.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Examples of innovative research projects supported by the Contestable Research Fund**

**Mott McDonald MIS – Research into the link between HFSCs and Accidental Dwelling fires – 2004 – Cost £3,500.**

This research, which was carried out jointly with Cumbria Fire and Rescue Authority, is believed to be the first of its type to consider whether home fire safety checks reduced accidental dwelling fires. It was instrumental in demonstrating to Government, the Audit Commission and the Authority that HFSCs were effective.

**Ariel Trust – Development and evaluation of the Street Heat educational resource – 2007 and 2008 – Cost £14,000 and £8,000.**

Ariel Trust worked with MFRS to develop and deliver the Street Heat DVD and educational programme which focused on reducing antisocial behaviour in young people. In 2006 an evaluation of the delivery of the programme in a Liverpool School showed the positive impact it had had, not only on young people's views on antisocial behaviour, but on their attainment at GCSE.

**Liverpool John Moores University and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority – Recuperation at incidents – 2007 - £18,000**

This research evaluation of fire fighter recuperation at incidents and led to the development of the MFRS Rehab Unit. Although initially funded through the CRF, the research eventually won funding through a national grant.

**Liverpool John Moores University – the application of Chaos Theory to fire deaths and injuries. – 2007 - £16,000**

This truly ground breaking piece of research looked at the way in which mathematical models that are used to predict earthquakes could be applied to identifying the highest risk individuals in our communities. It led to a Knowledge Transfer Partnership to develop a community risk map and eventually to the Customer Insight project (both fully funded externally). The outcomes of these pieces of research will be instrumental in delivering MFRSs prevention programmes going forward as it will be instrumental in assisting the Authority identify those communities and individuals most at risk, thus helping the Authority deliver prevention services in the most effective way.

**Tridata Division – “Saves” Project - 2009 - £18,000**

This research developed a credible approach for quantitatively estimating the money and lives saved by fire service operational activity. Although already in use in the military in the USA, this research introduced the concept to the UK Fire and rescue service.

## **Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority**

### **Community Impact Fund**

#### **TERMS OF REFERENCE** [*When approved this will be published as a Service Instruction*]

##### **Introduction**

1. The Community Impact Fund is intended to assist staff on stations and in districts to deliver the objectives contained within their Community Safety Delivery Plans by enabling them to bid for funding for small scale projects with their partners.
2. The Community Impact Fund will support community based initiatives at a local level, to help deliver the objectives of the District and Station Community Safety Delivery Plans. This approach draws on the principles of Community Budgets, in that local community groups or other local partners in collaboration with station or Prevention staff can bid for funding to support initiatives that help improve outcomes for our communities. Seeking match funding from partners for such bids is also encouraged. This links into the Authority's approach to supporting Charities and will also allow individual employees to demonstrate how they are working innovatively and creatively with partners to achieve their objectives.

##### **Bidding for Funds**

##### **Notes for applicants:**

3. Deadlines for bids to be received by [The Fund Administrator] are 1<sup>st</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> September each year.
4. There is no upper or lower limit for bids, but applicants must take care to ensure that the detail and supporting evidence provided is proportionate to the amount they are bidding for.
5. Applicants are encouraged to seek match funding or contributions from partners.

##### **The Bidding Process:**

6. Led by the District Group Manager; an individual or group of staff who have responsibility for the delivery of actions within a Community Safety Delivery Plan (in conjunction with partners where appropriate) should complete the Community Impact Fund application form (below). Attach supporting evidence if appropriate.

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7. The Group Manager submits the bid via the Portal to [the Fund's administrator] by the deadline.
8. Following initial evaluation by the [Fund Administrator] to ensure the necessary information is included, bid team representatives will attend a meeting of the Community Impact Fund Panel where they will be required to explain in more detail the benefits the funding could bring to their communities including the equality and diversity implications (through the completion of an equality impact assessment).
9. The bid will then be judged against criteria linked to the Partnership and Grant funding toolkits to ensure appropriate governance.
10. If the funding is awarded, the proposed expenditure will be monitored and evaluated using the Partnership or Project Management processes proportionate to the scale of the award and the project.

**COMMUNITY IMPACT FUND BID FORM – Submit via the Portal to [Fund Administrator].**

**DEADLINES – 1<sup>st</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> September**

	<b>Questions</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Name of the project/activity</b>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Details of the project/activity; how it will assist in the delivery of the Community Safety Delivery Plan and how it will benefit the community.</b></p> <p><b>Attach supporting evidence if appropriate</b></p>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Amount of funding being bid for</b>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Funding contribution from partners</b>	
<b>6</b>	<b>District and station</b>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Applicant 1 (GM) Contact details</b>	
<b>8</b>	<b>Applicant 2 Contact details</b>	
<b>9</b>	<b>Applicant 3 Contact details</b>	
<b>10</b>	<b>Partner Organisation/s (include contact names and addresses)</b>	



**Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service**

**Equality Impact Assessment Form**

<b>Title of policy/report/project:</b>	<b>Community Impact Fund</b>
<b>Department:</b>	<b>Strategic Planning</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>1/6/12</b>
<p><b>1: What is the aim or purpose of the policy/report/project</b></p> <p><i>This should identify “the legitimate aim” of the policy/report/project (there may be more than one)</i></p>	
<p>Following a review of the Contestable Research Fund, the Service is considering replacing it with a Community Impact Fund.</p>	
<p><b>2: Who will be affected by the policy/report/project?</b></p> <p><i>This should identify the persons/organisations who may need to be consulted about the policy /report/project and its outcomes (There may be more than one)</i></p>	
<p>Staff responsible for Community Safety Delivery Plans (station based and prevention teams), partners working with those teams and communities.</p>	
<p><b>3. Monitoring</b></p> <p><i>Summarise the findings of any monitoring data you have considered regarding this policy/report/project. This could include data which shows whether the it is having the desired outcomes and also its impact on members of different equality groups.</i></p>	
<p><b>What monitoring data have you considered?</b></p> <p>It is not considered that there is any appropriate monitoring data for this</p>	<p><b>What did it show?</b></p>



	<p>be known as the Community Impact Fund and it would be both outward and inward facing, helping to engage staff on stations and in districts to deliver the objectives contained within their Community Safety Delivery Plans by enabling them to bid for funding for small scale projects with their partners and potentially attract match funding for initiatives.</p>
<p><b>5. Consultation</b></p> <p><i>Summarise the opinions of any consultation. Who was consulted and how? (This should include reference to people and organisations identified in section 2 above)</i>  <i>Outline any plans to inform consultees of the results of the consultation</i></p>	
<p><b>What Consultation have you undertaken?</b></p> <p>Consultation with the Contestable Research Fund and Panel and IDEAS Committee</p> <p>Public consultation – Public Forums May 2009 to 2012</p>	<p><b>What did it say?</b></p> <p>Panel and committee members were supportive of the proposed changes and suggested improvements that have been incorporated.</p> <p>Although not consulted about this proposal, the attendees at MFRA’s consultation forums have always been largely supportive of the Service’s prevention work and understanding of the need adapt to different circumstances as the budget is cut.</p>

**6. Conclusions**

*Taking into account the results of the monitoring, research and consultation, set out how the policy/report/project impacts or could impact on people from the following protected groups? (Include positive and/or negative impacts)*

**(a) Age**

The bidding process for funding will take into account already identified priorities for station areas and districts. As older people are more at risk from fire and younger people more at risk from RTC, or themselves pose a risk of starting antisocial behaviour fires there is a likelihood that these age groups will be beneficiaries of the Community Impact Fund.

**(b) Disability including mental, physical and sensory conditions)**

The bidding process for funding will take into account already identified priorities for station areas and districts. As people with a disability are more at risk from fire there is a likelihood that these groups will be beneficiaries of the Community Impact Fund.

**(c) Race (include: nationality, national or ethnic origin and/or colour)**

The bidding process for funding will take into account already identified priorities for station areas and districts. As people from some racial and ethnic backgrounds are at a greater risk of suffering hate crimes (including the use of fire as a weapon) there is a likelihood that these groups will be beneficiaries of the Community Impact Fund.

**(d) Religion or Belief**

The bidding process for funding will take into account already identified priorities for station areas and districts. As people from some religious backgrounds are at a greater risk of suffering hate crimes (including the use of fire as a weapon) there is a likelihood that these groups will be beneficiaries of the Community Impact Fund.

**(e) Sex (include gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership and pregnancy or maternity)**

The bidding process for funding will take into account already identified priorities for station areas and districts. As older men living alone are at a higher risk from fire and LGBT and gender reassigned people are at a greater risk of suffering hate crimes (including the use of fire as a weapon) there is a likelihood that these groups will be beneficiaries of the Community Impact Fund.

**(f) Sexual Orientation**

The bidding process for funding will take into account already identified priorities for station areas and districts. As LGBT and gender reassigned people are at a greater risk of suffering hate crimes (including the use of fire as a weapon) there is a likelihood that these groups will be beneficiaries of the Community Impact Fund.

**(g) Socio-economic disadvantage**

The bidding process for funding will take into account already identified priorities for station areas and districts. As more socially disadvantaged communities are at a greater risk from fire and other emergencies there is a likelihood that these communities will be beneficiaries of the Community Impact Fund.

**7. Decisions**

*If the policy/report/project will have a negative impact on members of one or more of the protected groups, explain how it will change or why it is to continue in the same way.*

*If no changes are proposed, the policy/report/project needs to be objectively justified as being an appropriate and necessary means of achieving the legitimate aim set out in 1 above.*

Some of the research previously carried out by the Contestable Research Fund has been instrumental in shaping MFRAs overall approach to improving community safety. However, much of that work has also been supported by external funding over the years. Removal of this fund is unlikely to have a specific impact on any of the protected characteristics as it rarely had a local focus. One exception is the evaluation of local initiatives. In the future, the evaluation will have to be carried out in house, or potentially by partners. This will not prevent new and innovative projects going ahead.

**8. Equality Improvement Plan**

*List any changes to our policies or procedures that need to be included in the Equality Action Plan/Service Plan.*

**9. Equality & Diversity Sign Off**

***The completed EIA form must be signed off by the Diversity Manager before it is submitted to Strategic Management Group or Authority.***

**Signed off by:**  **Date:**

Action Planned	Responsibility of	Completed by

For any advice, support or guidance about completing this form please contact the [DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk](mailto:DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk) or on 0151 296 4237

**The completed form along with the related policy/report/project document should be emailed to the Diversity Team at: [DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk](mailto:DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk)**