

AGENDA ITEM:

**MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**SCRUTINY REPORT TO THE**

**PERFORMANCE & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**14<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

**SUBJECT:** Outcomes and Improvement Plan from the Operational Assessment Peer Challenge – November 2012

**REPORT NO:** CFO/020/13

**APPENDICES:**

A	Op A Final Report
B	Op A Improvement plan
C	LGA Publication Piece

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Deputy Chief Fire Officer

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Director of Strategic Planning Deb Appleton 4402

**OFFICERS CONSULTED:**

Purpose of Report

1. Following a resolution of the Authority on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2012, this report requests that Members scrutinise the proposed Operational Assessment Improvement Plan that has been developed in response to the recommendations included in the final report resulting from the Operational Assessment Peer Challenge which took place from 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2012. Members are asked to consider whether the proposed actions will address the issues raised and deliver improvement.
2. In order to do this Members are asked to:
  - Consider the final report from Op A 2012 (appendix A) and publication piece (appendix C) and scrutinise the improvement plan that details the actions arising from the recommendations of the report (appendix B)
  - Consider whether they want to recommend to the Authority meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> February that the final report should be published on the website.

Introduction & Background

3. The Operational Assessment (Op A) Peer Challenge took place from 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> November. During the challenge visit the Op A team carried out meetings and visits with a wide variety of MFRA staff, Members, volunteers and partners to test all aspects of the detailed self-assessment that was produced by MFRA and in

particular the key focus areas that were identified as part of the self-assessment process:

***Are the plans the Authority is making for the future, particularly in response to anticipated budget cuts, robust and appropriate and will they enable the Authority to continue to achieve its Mission of “Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters”.***

**Operational Preparedness and Response:** Particularly focusing on the internal and external impact of potential station closures and the challenges associated with such closures. This will include consideration of the appropriate levels of consultation and staff and community impact and impact on operational planning and training.

**Support Services Review:** Particularly focusing on whether the Authority’s approach is appropriate to meet the future needs of the organisation; are we transforming the Service in response to the cuts or simply cutting staff. i.e. Does the review consider the right areas and are we going about it in the right way?

**Prevention and Protection:** Will our plans for Prevention and Protection result in a workforce that is adapted to deliver what we are required to do and/or what our communities will need in the future?

And, In relation to all the above and the Authority’s future capacity to deliver services to its communities:

**ICT systems:** Will the Authority’s current ICT systems and/or future planned ICT development enable a reduced number of staff to work smarter through streamlining and integration to assist the remaining staff to deliver the best services that they can? This will include evaluation of the best organisational structural and/or contractual approach to manage and support these systems.”

4. The Peer Challenge Team members were very impressed with the people they met, their enthusiasm for what they do, their loyalty to the Service and its leaders and their focus on the Authority’s mission and values. They were appreciative of the welcome they received, the arrangements that had been made for them and the cooperation and assistance they received from the people they encountered during their visit.
5. The detailed feedback is presented in the report at appendix B. A summary publication piece prepared by the LGA is attached at appendix C.
6. An improvement plan has been produced and is attached as appendix B. The actions have been considered by the Strategic Management Group and will be addressed through the 2013/14 Functional Planning process unless otherwise stated. The deliverables from those plans will be presented to Members at Community Safety and Protection Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> March, for approval as part of the Service Delivery Plan. Members are asked to scrutinise the proposed actions that are included. Performance against the improvement plan will be reported back to this Committee as part of the regular Service Delivery Plan updates. Actions against the ICT part of the review will be presented to a later meeting as the report on this is not expected until February.

7. There is no requirement for the Authority to publish the final report but this is considered good practice and the majority of Fire and Rescue Authorities that have received an Op A peer challenge have published the report.

#### Equality & Diversity Implications

8. There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report. These would be considered as the plan is implemented.

#### Staff Implications

9. There are no staff implications arising from this report. These would be considered as the plan is implemented.

#### Legal Implications

10. There are no legal implications arising from this report. These would be considered as the plan is implemented.

#### Financial Implications & Value for Money

11. There are no financial implications arising from this report. These would be considered as the plan is implemented.

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

12. There are no risk management, health and safety or environmental implications arising from this report. These would be considered as the plan is implemented.

#### Contribution to Our Mission – To Achieve: Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters”

13. Sector led improvement and peer review are one of the most effective ways of improving the services provided to the communities of Merseyside.

#### Recommendations

14. That Members;
  - a) Scrutinise the information contained within this report concerning the Operational Assessment Improvement Plan and
  - b) Consider whether they want to recommend to the Authority on 26<sup>th</sup> February that the final report should be published on the website.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

List any supporting documents/evidence here

**\*Glossary of Terms**

Please list any acronyms used within this Report and appendices, including their meaning.