

1. Support Services review Equality Impact Assessment

Title of policy/report/project:	Budget EIA – Impacts of Support Services Review
Department:	All Organisational Services
Date:	18.2.13
1: What is the aim or purpose of the Support Service Review	
<p>MFRA recognised in 2010/11 that it would need to make further significant cuts due to the Government budget cuts it anticipated for 2013/14/15. Public consultation forums were held during June 2012 to seek feedback on what the public felt the priorities should be for MFRA in delivering its services and where the cuts should be focused</p> <p>The public forums were held in each of the 5 Districts of Merseyside, were representative of the Merseyside population at large; in particular the equality protected groups¹ and discussed a range of important issues and possible implications of budget reductions, including reductions in Support Services. Section 5 details the outcomes of those discussions, however their view was generally to carry out a review of support services with the aim to : <i>Target those support resources on the activity that supports the high and medium risk areas and higher risk people (living in low risk areas) and areas that have slower response times – this included the support services provided and the prevention and protection.</i></p> <p>During 2012 MFRA undertook an extensive programme of lobbying to encourage the Government to carefully consider the way in which budget reductions were allocated. This has been successful in relation to the amount of budget cut Merseyside has received (Merseyside’s budget is below average compared to English FRA); however the cuts are still significant when considering the proportion of the reductions when compared to the overall budget.</p> <p>MFRA has identified support and back office savings in the first instance in order to minimise the impact of cuts on the communities of Merseyside. Equally it recognised that “support” roles provide a critical role in keeping firefighters safe and in maintaining frontline services</p>	

¹ Protected Characteristics include Age, Disability, and Gender. Gender Reassignment, Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Pregnancy/maternity, Religion/Belief and MFRA also includes Socio economic disadvantage

As part of preparing for the cuts the Authority budget resolution in February 2012 commissioned:-

“The CFO and management team to report back on what savings can be delivered from a fundamental review of cuts achievable in support services.”

The Strategic Management Group were tasked to consider all the ways in which the necessary savings can be made and asked to minimise the impact on staff, however it has always been recognised, that compulsory redundancies were likely depending on the level of cuts from Government.

During the autumn of 2012 Strategic Management Group and Heads of Departments for support services functions carried out fundamental reviews on their areas to develop a business case for 2013/15 staffing. The review was to realise savings of up to 25% across the support services budgets using the following principles:

- Whether the role/function is required from a statutory point of view
- The potential impact on fire-fighter health and safety
- The potential impact on services to Merseyside
- Potential impacts on the quality and availability of front line resources (e.g. fire appliances etc.)
- Potential impacts on other factors such as community risk, equality and diversity, reputational risk, financial risk
- Potential for services to be shared or outsourced

Each area was assisted in carrying out their reviews with support from People and Organisational Development (POD) team who offered 1 to1 guidance to managers on the review process thus ensuring transparency and consistency across the whole of the support service function. The terms of reference for all departments were:

- Whether the role/service is essential to the organisation
- Identify duties/roles that are no longer required
- Explore the continuation of certain work/roles that are desirable but not essential to the organisation and validate continuation
- Whether In house restructures and internal shared services can be applied to deliver savings and efficiency
- Whether changes to working practices and/or terms and conditions of employment can deliver savings and/or efficiencies
- Whether managerial spans of control are appropriate
- Whether the service can be provided by external shared services and deliver additional savings and efficiency
- Whether the service be outsourced and deliver additional savings and efficiency
- Whether changes to processes and/or technological investment can

deliver efficiencies

- Impacts and risks of proposed changes including legal, equality and diversity, health and safety, HR legislation, environmental, impact on existing plans and objectives
- Implications for staff in terms of potential redundancies including consideration of more generic roles for remaining posts

The Redeployment and Redundancy policy has already been reviewed and subject to an EIA to ensure that the outcomes of the Support Services reviews are managed according to policy and take into account any particular needs/adjustments for different groups of staff

<http://intranetportal/sites/smd/Policies/PODPOL01%20Service%20redundancy%20overarching.doc>

The outplacement support process has also been developed taking into account the outcomes of the EIA carried out on the redeployment and redundancy policy.

<http://.../My Documents/EIA's/EIA redundancy redeployment 3.doc>

The outplacement support packages are significant support which will be offered to all staff that are at risk of redundancy and will include CV development, access to job centre support, interview skills, job search skills and mentoring.

The purpose of this EIA is to assess the impact of the Support Service Review process on the different staffing groups.

A further EIA will be completed at the next stage of the Review process to include each functional area once the redundancy formal consultation commences. This will include an equality analysis of the posts and staff placed at risk and the outcomes of the process in terms of compulsory redundancy, voluntary redundancy and redeployment.

2: Who will be affected by the changes proposed in the Support Services Review

MFRS Green and Red book conditioned employees

Potential for some community groups to receive less support services
Potential for operational staff to receive a reduced support service

3. What monitoring data have you considered

Summarise the findings of any monitoring data you have considered regarding this policy/report/project. This could include data which shows whether it is having the desired outcomes and also its impact on members of different equality groups.

What monitoring data have you considered?	What did it show?
<p>MFRS – Staff Equality Analyses Report 2012 http://intranetportal/sites/smd/equalityanddiversity/Shared%20Documents/Public%20Sector%20Equality%20Data%20-%20Reports%20for%202012/Public%20Sector%20Equality%20Data%20Report%20-%20Published%20version.pdf</p> <p>Budget Settlement information</p>	<p>A total of 1,228 staff were in post as at 1st December 2012 Of the 1,228 total workforce population:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 5 Senior Operational Uniformed staff, representing 0.5% of the total workforce population • There are 5 Senior Non-uniformed Managers, representing 0.5% of the total workforce population • 341 staff are in support posts, representing 28% of the total workforce population • 840 Staff are in operational/uniformed posts, representing 68% of the total workforce population • 37 are Mobilising and Communications Centre (MACC) staff, representing 3% of the total workforce population <p>£10million savings needs to be delivered over the next 2 years or which £ 7million has been identified as needing to fall from support services efficiencies</p>

4: Research

Summarise the findings of any research you have considered regarding this

policy/report/project. This could include quantitative data and qualitative information; anything you have obtained from other sources e.g. CFOA/CLG guidance, other FRSs, etc.

What research have you considered?	What did it show?
<p>MFRA Redeployment and Redundancy Policy and associated EIA http://intranetportal/sites/pod/Policies%20%20Service%20Instructions/Forms/AllItems.aspx</p> <p>MFRA terms of reference for Fundamental review of support services</p>	<p>The redundancy procedure provides a transparent and clear framework within current legislative procedures, to facilitate the termination of Fire Service Employees on the grounds of voluntary and compulsory redundancy. The procedures have been subject to a thorough EIA which raised specific issues to which POD will be addressed when the procedures are used in the future.</p> <p>Terms of reference provides guidance and criteria for MFRA Strategic Managers and Heads of Functions to follow to enable a fair and transparent approach to reviewing the support services to identify savings to meet the significant budget cuts.</p>

5. Consultation

Public consultation

The report on the outcomes of the 2012/13 public consultation forums is attached at **appendix A**. The forums were very successful and resulted in some high quality comments and views that members and officers found helpful in making decision about the needs and the priorities of different community groups. In summary there were 5 public consultation forums held across the 5 districts. Each forum had a good representation of all protected groups.

The major areas considered by the forums in relation to support services review when making decisions about priorities and resources as a result of any budget cuts were:

- 1. “Reducing support services (including prevention and protection activities)”**

A majority of participants agreed that, given its diminishing resources, MFRA should target its prevention work towards higher risk areas, higher risk people (in low risk areas), and areas that have slower response times. Charging for providing smoke alarms in low risk/affluent areas was also endorsed by a large majority, who felt that those who can afford to pay should expect to

have to do so

The outcomes of the public consultation have been taken into consideration when developing proposals in the IRMP and making final decisions about the support services review cuts

The key points raised by the public were in relation to support services reviews were

Reduce support staff resources where they are not focused on high risk activities

Union Consultation

Involvement of trade unions has taken place with the MFRA Joint Secretary and representative bodies to confirm the intention of MFRA to act in open, honest and transparent way in dealing with the issues of any potential redundancy and potential losses in posts moving forward. Additional meetings have been scheduled in to discuss the scale of the situation once the financial budget settlement has been made clear.

Staff Consultation

When it becomes clear which staff could be affected by potential loss of posts and redundancy, consultation will take place in line with the relevant legal procedures and MFRA redundancy and redeployment policy.

6. Conclusions

(a) Age

The support services review process has no significant negative impact on staff from different ages.

Staff from different age groups may have different needs in relation to redeployment options and redundancy procedures e.g. the need to consider older staff with long service and the need to tailor career development support for redeployment or redundancy. This has been considered as part of the Redundancy and Redeployment procedure EIA and outcomes are identified in section 7 below.

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

The support services review process has no significant negative impact on disabled staff in the way that it has been applied to date; absences relating to disability are removed from any criteria used to decide who is at risk of redundancy and redeployment assessments.

Staff with different disabilities may have different needs in relation to redeployment options and redundancy communications. It is important to also consider the individuals impact of their disability and tailor career development support.

Further considerations have taken place within the EIA carried out on the Redundancy and Redeployment procedure and have been included in section 7 below.

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

The support services review process has no significant negative impact on

different ethnicities in the way that it has been applied to date.

There is no criterion within the review process that may have a detrimental impact to any of the Minority ethnic groups.

Further considerations have taken place within the EIA carried out on the Redundancy and Redeployment procedure and have been included in section 7 below.

(d) Religion or Belief

The support services review process has no significant negative impact on different religious groups of staff in the way that it has been applied to date.

There is no criterion within the review process that may have a detrimental impact to any religion or faith that staff may belong to.

Further considerations have taken place within the EIA carried out on the Redundancy and Redeployment procedure and have been included in section 7 below.

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

MFRA Equality Data shows that support services have a higher proportion of female staff at 48% when compared to the whole organisation where female staff make up 20%. Female staff may be unintentionally adversely affected by the cuts and the decision to look at support services specifically. It is not possible to see if the review process will have a disproportionate impact on any gender at this stage, however the forthcoming EIA on staff/posts at risk will be a better indication on the review process.

Further considerations have taken place within the EIA carried out on redundancy and redeployment procedure and have been included in section 7 below.

(f) Sexual Orientation

The support services review process has no significant negative impact on different sexual orientations in the way that it has been applied to date.

There is no criterion within the review process that may have a detrimental impact to staff with different sexual orientations.

Further considerations have taken place within the EIA carried out on the Redundancy and Redeployment procedure and have been included in section 7 below.

(g) Socio-economic disadvantage

N/A

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.

There will be a further EIA carried out at the next stage of the review process when posts and staff are identified as being at risk of potential redundancy or redeployment and equality analysis will be reviewed at that stage. (due March 2013)

The recommendations established from the EIA on MFRA redundancy and redeployment procedure will also need to be put in place during the next stage of the review process. For clarity they were :

Although age is a factor in the statutory redundancy provisions adopted in the procedure, it will not be used as a single factor for redundancy. The procedure will not therefore discriminate unlawfully against older people.

The redundancy and redeployment policy ensures that any disability is taken into account of and dealt with strictly in relation to the law when any element of redundancy selection is completed.

Advice to be sought from the Diversity Manager on the provision of reasonable adjustments for staff throughout the process.

Staff on sick leave (whether disability related or otherwise) will be included in the policy

Women on maternity leave will be considered separately under the policy in line with regulation 10 of the Maternity and Parental Leave regulations 1999

Further support will also be made available through Job Centres and Access to Work as part of the outplacement support for those staff who may need to discuss what support is available in relation to their registered disability

8. Equality Improvement Plan

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

Non at this time

9. Equality & Diversity Sign Off

Signed off by:
Comments :

Wendy Kenyon

Date: 10.2.2013

Action Planned	Responsibility of	Completed by
EIA and Equality Analysis and modelling of the outcomes will need to be undertaken once the final decisions taken about redundancies and redeployments are made.	Director of POD – With support from Diversity and Consultation Manager where required.	
Ensure the Recommendations outlined in the redeployment and redundancy EIA are planned for as early as possible and staff affected are communicated with and about how reasonable adjustments will be put in place for those with disabilities where appropriate for any redeployment assessment processes.	Director of POD – With support from Diversity and Consultation Manager where required	

For any advice, support or guidance about completing this form please contact the DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk or on 0151 296 4422

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