

# Public Document Pack



To: All Members of the Scrutiny Committee  
(and any other Members who may wish to attend)



**R. Groves**  
**Monitoring Officer**

Tel: 0151 296 4000  
Extn: 4113 Shauna Healey

Our ref SH/RG

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held at **1.00pm** on **THURSDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024** in the Wirral Suite – Fire Service Headquarters.

This meeting is webcast live to YouTube and is available at the following link:

<https://youtube.com/live/VuePqtba6g0?feature=share>

Yours faithfully,

PP – S Healey

Monitoring Officer

This page is intentionally blank

**MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**25 JANUARY 2024**

**AGENDA**

**Members**

Councillor Paul Tweed (Chair)  
Councillor Linda Maloney  
Councillor Gillian Wood  
Councillor Dave Hanratty  
Councillor Terry Byron  
Councillor Doreen Knight  
Councillor Pat Moloney  
Councillor Lesley Rennie  
Councillor Ed Lamb  
Mr Anthony Boyle (Independent Person)

1. **Apologies**  
To consider any apologies for absence.
2. **Declarations of Interest**  
To consider any Member declarations of interest.
3. **Minutes of the Last Meeting** (Pages 5 - 8)  
To consider the minutes of the last meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023.
4. **The Environment and the Impact on MFRS's Operational Response - Wildfire Specialism** (Pages 9 - 24)  
To consider a presentation on the impact of MFRS's operational response with regard to Wildfires (CFO/02/24).
5. **Review of Sickness Absence** (Pages 25 - 28)  
To consider a presentation on sickness absence at Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (CFO/03/24).
6. **Scrutiny Forward Work Plan** (Pages 29 - 32)  
To consider the Scrutiny Forward Work Plan for 2023-2025 (CFO/01/24).

This page is intentionally left blank

## MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

14 SEPTEMBER 2023

### MINUTES

**Present:** Councillors Paul Tweed, Linda Maloney, Doreen Knight, Pat Moloney, Lesley Rennie, Ed Lamb

**Also Present:** Ria Groves                      Monitoring Officer  
Dave Mottram                      Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Mike Rea                              Director of Finance and Procurement

1. **Apologies**

Apologies received from Councillors Dave Hanratty, Gill Wood, Terry Byron and Mr Anthony Boyle.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

**RESOLVED** that there were no declarations of interest received in relation to any item.

3. **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the last meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

4. **Health, Safety & Welfare Annual Report 2022/23**

Group Manager, Craig Whitfield presented the Health, Safety & Welfare Annual Report 2022/23 providing an overview of workplace accidents, sickness and road traffic collisions.

Members were advised that the Authority had been working on enforcing a positive reporting culture, which had resulted in an increase in incidents reported. This enabled the Authority to ensure its equipment and PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) were working correctly and any faults could be quickly identified.

With regards to injuries during routine operational activities, it was noted that 14 of the 17 recorded were for staff over the age of 30. Councillor Moloney asked if there was a trend in injuries for staff over 30 and he was advised that nothing stood out in the data to suggest that.

It was reported that in previous years, there had been a decline in near miss reporting and as such, the Authority had made this a focus as there was a direct correlation between near miss reporting, culture and accidents. There had been

a steady increase of 61% since the previous year and it was agreed that this was a positive step forward.

The Chair asked for more information about the reporting process and Members were informed that it was very robust. For example, if someone were to slip outside, they would report that to their Line Manager or another Senior Officer and that would be logged. The line manager would consider if a cordon of the area or cleaning was needed and then this would be relayed to the Health and Safety Team. The person's welfare would be the focus and if they needed to attend hospital then a Station Manager or supervisor would escort them. The OSHENS Health and Safety Management System would be utilised to record the incident and the level of investigation would be determined. Witness statements would be collected if necessary and the incident would be reviewed by the Work Place Review Group to identify remedial action to mitigate against repeat incidents.

Members enquired as to how well understood this process was across the organisation and it was explained that the Health and Safety Team frequently published safety flashes to educate staff. The system was designed so that an incident could be reported in just two clicks to make it easy for people to report and so it could be monitored more accurately.

*(Councillor Doreen Knight entered the meeting at 13.16)*

The report also focused on road traffic collisions, property fires and injuries during routine activities. Members were provided with a review of incidents pre and post Covid.

Councillor Moloney asked if there had been any injuries or accidents resulting from failing PPE or equipment. Group Manager Whitfield confirmed there had not been any to his knowledge and there were robust procedures in place for PPE and equipment to ensure any concerns were investigated thoroughly.

The Members welcomed the report, noting how easy it was to read and Councillor Maloney asked how many blue light vehicles the service had in operation. It was explained that there were around 40 and they were used for Senior Managers to respond to incidents.

With regards to Covid, Members asked if the Fire Service had found it difficult to undertake preventative work during lockdown and if that had impacted the figures in this report. Members were advised that the Service had played a significant role in safeguarding the community during the pandemic and had been able to undertake prevention activities from the end of people's driveways in some instances. The Authority had continued to undertake preventative work during the pandemic so Members were advised that this had not impacted the figures. Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Dave Mottram assured Members that post Covid, the number of house fires had declined and that the rise in response to incidents was a result of working collaboratively with other emergency services to gain entry to premises.

Councillor Murphy enquired as to how many officers had sought medical attention as a result of the injuries detailed in the report and it was explained that some individuals had been to the walk-in and some had visited occupational health on site.

Group Manager Whitfield was asked if there were any boundaries to people reporting incidents that needed to be overcome and what the timescales were for reporting an injury during response. Members were assured that the Health and Safety Team had worked extensively to create a positive reporting culture through simplifying the OSHENS system and providing training to staff. Anecdotally, it was felt that as low level injuries were being reported, this message was making its way out to the staff across the organisation and this information could be used to monitor for trends.

With regards to reporting injuries at an incident, it was explained that at a big incident there would be a Safety Officer to deal with any welfare issues and any injuries could be reported through Fire Control in the first instance.

The Members were advised that the Authority fared well compared to the rest of the country in relation to accidents and injuries.

Councillor Rennie enquired as to the process for personnel overseas and it was explained that the International Search and Rescue Team had robust procedures in place for reporting any incidents as well as dedicated medical staff on site. When staff return to the UK, it was explained that the Occupational Health team also undertook a health review of the Authority's UK ISAR team.

With regards to light duties, it was noted that Occupational health managed that information and they could provide an update through the Health and Safety Committee.

Councillor Maloney asked if a leaflet drop in busy streets would help to raise awareness of parking issues when crews are responding to incidents and in turn help to reduce the number of collisions. Councillor Maloney raised the motion to add this to the recommendations and this was seconded by Councillor Murphy and agreed by the Members.

Councillor Lamb noted that Wirral Council were working on a parking strategy to get more controlled parking and limit the amount of vehicles stored on the street and he agreed to feed into that consultation some of the points raised by the Authority.

**RESOLVED** that:

- a) the performance outcomes of the Authority against its H&S Performance targets for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 be scrutinised; and
- b) leaflets on parking to be shared with the Authority Members and a leaflet drop on busy streets to be considered.

## **5. Scrutiny Forward Work Plan 2023-2025**

Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves presented Scrutiny Forward Work Plan for 2023-2025 which incorporated topics for scrutiny from the Members and from previous Work Plans.

Members attention was drawn to the topic 'The Environment and its impact on MFRS's operational response' which was a significant piece of work for the Committee given the scope of the topic. It was explained that this would be broken down and spread out over two years with a deep dive on elements like wildfires, floods alternative fuels and pathway to net zero.

The proposal was for the document to be flexible so that it could be added to if Members wanted to explore more topics. It was recommended that the work plan be shared with the full Authority on the 12<sup>th</sup> October for approval with a report going back to Authority at the end of the year with a review of what Scrutiny has covered and any recommendations they may have.

The Chair requested that culture and inclusivity be broadened to include behaviour and he asked why it was not being discussed until the next municipal year. It was explained that this was a result of timetabling the topics in rather than for a specific reason.

Councillor Maloney requested that areas of Scrutiny be called back to identify any changes or improvements.

**RESOLVED** that

- a) Members were content with the review undertaken of the Scrutiny Forward Work Plan 2023-2025; and
- b) the Scrutiny Forward Work Plan in appendix A was submitted to Authority and approved.

**Close**

Date of next meeting Thursday, 25 January 2024



<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>			
<b>MEETING OF THE:</b>	<b>SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>25 JANUARY 2024</b>	<b>REPORT NO:</b>	<b>CFO/02/2024</b>
<b>PRESENTING OFFICER</b>	<b>ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, DAVE MOTTRAM (PRESENTED BY SM JOHN KELLAWAY)</b>		
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	<b>AM BEN RYDER</b>	<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>SM JOHN KELLAWAY</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	<b>JOHN KELLAWAY, STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM</b>		
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE IMPACT ON MFRS'S OPERATIONAL RESPONSE - WILDFIRE SPECIALISM</b>		
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	<b>APPENDIX A: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>		

## **Purpose of Report**

1. To advise Members of the Authority on the way in which Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) responds to changes in risk; this presentation focusing particularly on the environmental impacts and Service response to Wildfire.

## **Recommendation**

2. It is recommended that Members;
  - a) note the introduction of the Wildfire Specialism into Operational Response capabilities of MFRS, as contained within Appendix A Wildfire presentation; and
  - b) apply scrutiny to the approach adopted.

## **Introduction and Background**

3. The MFRA Integrated Risk Management Plan 2021/24 included an action to locate a capability specialised to respond to wildfire in areas of Merseyside with the highest risk of those events. The action included providing the skills, knowledge and equipment to our firefighters to enable them to effectively deal with this type of fire.
4. The National Security Risk Assessment is produced by the Cabinet Office in the United Kingdom. This identified Wildfire as an environmental hazard within the National Risk Register (2023). This is a key document which is reviewed within planning cycles to ensure MFRS has the capability to respond effectively to identified risk.

5. MFRS aim is to:
  - a) Mitigate the likelihood of wildfires occurring
  - b) Prepare our communities to be safer from the effects of wildfire
  - c) Respond effectively to wildfires
  - d) To provide assistance to promote recovery from the environmental effects of wildfires.
6. The locations chosen to base the specialism are Formby and Heswall.
7. The target date for operational availability of the specialism is 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024
8. A presentation on the wildfire specialist capability will accompany this report at the meeting.

---

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

---

9. The EIA is attached as Appendix A and is in relation to MFRA's capabilities.
10. E&D considerations have been made, but as the activity in question is not a new role, no implications were identified (It is a development based on enhancing knowledge and skills of existing firefighters who already perform the activity of responding to wildfires).

---

### **Staff Implications**

---

11. The staff at the selected locations have been widely consulted with over defining the role, training, specifying equipment and vehicles. This has included in person visits, equipment trials, online questionnaires and emails over the last twelve months.
12. The role is not a departure from routine activity associated with the role of a firefighter or manager. The skills, knowledge and equipment allow; more tactical options to be used than the existing methods of firefighting and a proactive approach to working with landowners and residents to reduce risk and potential severity of wildfires.
13. Initial training has already been provided but to embed continuity of the specialism, further training is required. A training needs analysis has been produced and further courses are being sourced for 2024/25.
14. The production of the station plans at these locations will reflect the implications of the introduction of the wildfire specialism going forward from 2024.

---

**Legal Implications**

---

15. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 Section 7 states that each Fire and Rescue Authority must make provision for the purpose of extinguishing fires in its area and protecting life and property in the event of fires in its area.
16. The Fire and Rescue National Framework 2018 states;
  - a) Every Fire and Rescue Authority must assess all foreseeable Fire and Rescue related risks that could affect their communities, whether they are local, cross-border, multi-authority and/or national in nature from fires to terrorist attacks.
17. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 Section 2 details our duty to plan for emergencies.

---

**Financial Implications & Value for Money**

---

18. The initial costs have been provided for from existing budgets.
19. The existing vehicles are contained within the asset refresh plan; therefore replacements are already provided for within existing budgets.
20. Further review of the costs associated with maintaining the specialism will be reviewed as part of the routine budgetary cycle conducted within each directorate.
21. One of the aims of the action is to reduce the number and severity of wildfires, which in turn will reduce the demand on operational appliances and personnel. This will allow front line resources to be available for emergency response and other activity more often.

---

**Risk Management and Health & Implications**

---

22. Initial training has been undertaken and ongoing training and exercising is planned.
23. Appropriate tools and equipment are being sourced, to mitigate the risks associated with deploying the tactical firefighting options.
24. The role has been defined to ensure that the team can utilise support from other frontline firefighters, rather than undertake all activity themselves. Specifically, the prediction of wildfire behaviour, identify appropriate firefighting tactics and manage the health and safety of all firefighters at the incident.

---

## **Environmental Implications**

---

25. Management of the environmental impact of wildfires is fundamental to the process of predicting wildfire behaviour and selecting the appropriate firefighting tactic, for the specific circumstances of each wildfire.
26. Planning with landowners and stakeholder before any wildfires occur, allows crews to gain better understanding of the precise environment at each of our high risk open land locations. This allows plans to identify appropriate tactical options not only for each plot of land, but specific areas within each plot.
27. The powered tools which have been procured are all battery powered. This requirement is part of the procurement process.
28. The recovery process is considered within the role of the teams, allowing feedback on the fire to be given to landowners and stakeholders. This understanding will better target the recovery activity by landowners.

---

**Contribution to Our Vision:** *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

---

29. The reduction of risk and demand is central to our purpose of protecting the public. These are primary aims of this action.
30. Embedded within the team's role is the provision of advice to the public to protect their lives and homes. This will improve the safety of the public but will also improve public resilience to wildfires.

---

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

---

**CFO/039/21 IRMP 2021-24 Post Consultation Report**

---

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

---

**MFRA** Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority is the physical and legal entity.

**MFRS** Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service is the service provided by MFRA.

# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

## Overview Details

<b>Function /Department</b>	<b>Operational Response</b>	<b>Date Of analysis</b>	10/01/2024
<b>Title and overview of what is being assessed / considered</b>	Wildfire Specialism within Operational Response	<b>Review Date</b>	10/01/2027
<b>Who will be affected by this activity?</b> (Please tick)		Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Author of Equality Impact Analysis</b>	John Kellaway	<b>Equality Analysis quality assured by (Member of the POD team)</b>	

The purpose of undertaking an equality impact analysis and assessment is to understand the potential and/or actual impact that a service or policy may have on protected groups within the Equality Act (2010). The protected groups are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and / or belief
- Sex (gender)
- Sexual orientation
- Socio-economic disadvantage (Although not one of the 9 protected groups MFRA recognise that Socio-economic disadvantage affects many deprived communities within Merseyside.)

People who are protected from discrimination on the basis of any of these characteristics are described in this document as belonging to one or other “protected group”. In addition, equality analysis can be applied to groups of people not afforded protection by the Equality Act, but who often face disadvantage and stigma in life in general and when trying to access services & employment opportunities. Such groups include homeless people, sex workers, people who misuse drugs and other groups who experience socio economic disadvantage & others. This

template has been developed following consultation with staff and other external stakeholders including reference to the National Fire Chiefs Councils (NFCC) [equality impact assessment toolkit](#) as well as the [Maturity Models and Workforce Good Practice Frameworks](#) developed by the NFCC which MFRS will use to underpin EIAs as wider work on improvement.

MFRS have also created the [ED&I Assurance Checklist](#), which is a useful outline of ED&I factors that staff need to consider to help demonstrate minimum legal compliance, making the most of ED&O opportunities and minimising risk for the organisation. This checklist can be used when preparing plans, discussing new services and organisational change.

Impact Analysis	
1	<p><b>What evidence have you used to think about any potential impact on particular groups?</b> (Please highlight any evidence that you have considered to help you address what the potential impact may be)</p> <p>Also include an introduction here giving background the purpose of the Policy, SI etc. that is being assessed. (A good place to start is the introduction and purpose of the document)</p> <p><b>Example evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ONS Census data</li> <li>• Regional or local demographic information</li> <li>• MFRS reports &amp; data</li> <li>• NFCC Reports/Guidance</li> <li>• Home office/Local government Reports</li> <li>• Risk Assessments</li> <li>• Staff survey results</li> <li>• Research / epidemiology studies</li> <li>• Updates to legislation</li> <li>• Engagement records or analysis</li> </ul> <p><u>NFCC Equality of Access documents</u> – We encourage you to click on the following <a href="#">link</a> to</p>
	<p><u>Aim</u></p> <p>The decision to create a wildlife specialism within MFRS was documented in the IRMP 2021/24 . The action was placed on the Operational Response Directorate. The aim is: “where there is more likelihood of a particular type of risk occurring and as well as the appliances being based at these locations, the firefighters working there will have extra training to give them a higher level of knowledge about these risks and how to deal with them. Whilst these specialisms aren’t new to us, we already plan and train for these types of incident. What is different is that we plan to locate these specialisms at specific stations and enhance the skills of the staff at those locations to deal more effectively with such incidents”</p> <p>A document has been created in conjunction with staff and stakeholders which details exactly what the wildfire specialism is. It defines the role in 4 areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare</li> <li>• Prevent</li> <li>• Respond</li> <li>• Recover</li> </ul> <p>A range of evidence has been used to establish potential impacts on groups, these include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EIA for the IRMP 2021/24</li> <li>• Incident data relating to wildfires on Merseyside</li> </ul>

<p>access a series of 'equality of access documents', developed by the National Fire Service Council (NFCC) &amp; reference the data and information highlighted.</p> <p>Some aspects of these documents will help you provide information, awareness, and data to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated Risk Management Plans</li> <li>• Service delivery strategies</li> <li>• Positive action and recruitment plans</li> <li>• Workforce improvement plans</li> <li>• Community engagement activities</li> <li>• and, will prompt conversations within the workplace.</li> </ul> <p>Each document provides a significant amount of data and information, including research undertaken and risk-based evidence, and then goes into some ideas for actions which Services can use based on the information and their individual circumstances</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indices of Multiple Deprivation in relation to the interface between wildland and the urban environment.</li> <li>• Stakeholder engagement with landowners, UK and international wildfire professional community.</li> <li>• NFCC National Occupational Guidance for Wildfires.</li> <li>• Existing Service Plans; Site Specific Operational Plans.</li> <li>• Staff engagement</li> </ul> <p>The role is not a departure from the current role of the firefighter, it is an expansion of the knowledge, skills and equipment of a selected group of firefighters from MFRS.</p> <p>MFRS is committed to being the best Fire and Rescue Service in the UK this enhancement supports our Vision.</p> <p>The impact of this upskilling will be positive on our operational firefighters.</p> <p>The role includes a proactive approach to planning for wildfires and engaging with those in the community which may be affected by wildfires.</p> <p>The result of this proactive approach, is that external stakeholders; such as land owners, Local Authorities, charitable organisations have support when mitigating the likelihood of wildfires occurring and limiting the potential severity of any wildfires which do occur.</p> <p>The impact on this group is twofold; they can manage their exposure to risk and the reputation of MFRS is enhanced. This is a positive impact.</p> <p>As a result of this engagement with stakeholders, members of the community whose homes are at risk from wildfire will be identified. The impact on these individuals is entirely positive as the team will provide advice on keeping homes safe from wildfire. In Merseyside there is a strong positive correlation between risk from wildfire and affluence. This ensures the impact is positive on all members of our community.</p> <p>The impact on the public is positive for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer wildfires occurring</li> <li>• Less risk to life and property</li> </ul>
--	---

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less disruption caused by responding appliances on the road and at the scene</li> <li>• Less environmental impact on the wild areas</li> <li>• More availability of wild areas for recreation and commerce</li> <li>• Maintaining carbon stores in the ground and vegetation, not releasing them into the atmosphere</li> <li>• Better protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest</li> <li>• Improving seasonal air quality</li> </ul>	
2	<p><b>Do you have all the evidence you need in order to make an informed decisions about the potential impact?</b> (Please tick)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If you feel that you have enough evidence, then you will <b>not</b> need to undertake any engagement activity</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If you feel that you do not have enough evidence to make an informed decision then you <b>will need to</b> undertake engagement activity with the staff or members of the public as applicable</p>



<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>What engagement is taking place or has already been undertaken to understand any potential impact on staff or members of the public?</b></p> <p>Examples include:</p> <p><u>Public</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Public Forums</li> <li>• Complaints, comments, compliments</li> </ul> <p><u>Staff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff events / workshop</li> <li>• Existing staff meetings / committees</li> <li>• Staff Networks</li> <li>• Representative Bodies</li> <li>• Annual Staff Survey questions</li> </ul>	<p>Engagement with the public has been limited to that which was undertaken in the preparation of the IRMP, where the public is directly engaged for their opinions on each action and the public have been offered the opportunity to respond with their opinions on the actions contained within the IRMP.</p> <p>Stakeholder engagement with landowners and a local authority has given them the opportunity to describe how the Service can support them managing their risk. A series of meetings have been able to capture these needs which has been included in the documentation of the role.</p> <p>Staff at the identified locations have been engaged via, in person meetings, online poll and emails around;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining what the role should be</li> <li>• What training and development is required</li> <li>• Identifying appropriate tools and equipment</li> <li>• Establishing the specification of the appliances.</li> <li>• Establishing the impact</li> </ul> <p>The Representative bodies were consulted with directly over the actions contained within the IRMP.</p>	
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Will there be an impact against the protected groups as described in the Equality Act (2010)?</b></p> <p>Summarise what impact there may be against each of the protected groups. Embed or provide a hyperlink to any reports or electronic files to which you are referring.</p> <p>Please remember when considering any possible impacts, these may be <b>positive or negative</b> and that there may be different impacts for our own staff when compared to those possible impacts on members of the community. Please detail clearly if the impacts are for staff or the wider community.</p>	<p><b>What is the <b>actual</b> or <b>potential</b> impact on <b>age</b>?</b></p> <p>The capability does not impact negatively on members of the community or members of staff.</p> <p>The EIA for the IRMP identified positive impacts on all of the groups within the communities of Merseyside.</p>	<p><b>Not applicable</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
		<p><b>What is the <b>actual</b> or <b>potential</b> impact on <b>disability</b>?</b></p> <p>The capability does not impact negatively on members of the community or members of staff.</p> <p>The EIA for the IRMP identified positive impacts on all of the groups within the communities of Merseyside.</p>	<p><b>Not applicable</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

<p>It is also important to note that there may not be an impact on some of the protected groups if this should be the case please tick the not applicable box.</p> <p>If there is <b>no impact</b>, please state that there is no impact.</p>	<p>What is the <b>actual</b> or <b>potential</b> impact on <b>gender reassignment</b>? The capability does not impact negatively on members of the community or members of staff. The EIA for the IRMP identified positive impacts on all of the groups within the communities of Merseyside.</p>	<p><b>Not applicable</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p>What is the <b>actual</b> or <b>potential</b> impact on <b>marriage and civil partnership</b>? . The capability does not impact negatively on members of the community or members of staff. The EIA for the IRMP identified positive impacts on all of the groups within the communities of Merseyside.</p>	<p><b>Not applicable</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p>What is the <b>actual</b> or <b>potential</b> impact on <b>pregnancy and maternity</b>? . The capability does not impact negatively on members of the community or members of staff. The EIA for the IRMP identified positive impacts on all of the groups within the communities of Merseyside.</p>	<p><b>Not applicable</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p>What is the <b>actual</b> or <b>potential</b> impact on <b>race</b>? The capability does not impact negatively on members of the community or members of staff. The EIA for the IRMP identified positive impacts on all of the groups within the communities of Merseyside.</p>	<p><b>Not applicable</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p>What is the <b>actual</b> or <b>potential</b> impact on <b>religion and / or belief</b>? The capability does not impact negatively on members of the community or members of staff. The EIA for the IRMP identified positive impacts on all of the groups within the communities of Merseyside.</p>	<p><b>Not applicable</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p>What is the <b>actual</b> or <b>potential</b> impact on <b>sex (gender)</b>? The capability does not impact negatively on members of the community or members of staff. The EIA for the IRMP identified positive impacts on all of the groups within the communities of Merseyside.</p>	<p><b>Not applicable</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

		<p>What is the <b>actual</b> or <b>potential</b> impact on <b>sexual orientation</b>?          The capability does not impact negatively on members of the community or members of staff. The EIA for the IRMP identified positive impacts on all of the groups within the communities of Merseyside.</p>	<p><b>Not applicable</b>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
		<p>What is the <b>actual</b> or <b>potential</b> impact on <b>Socio-economic disadvantage</b>?          The predicted impact will be positive allowing increased access to local recreational amenities and to enhance the safety of those utilising these facilities. The EIA for the IRMP identified positive impacts on all of the groups within the communities of Merseyside.</p>	<p><b>Not applicable</b>  <input type="checkbox"/></p>

# **ACTION PLAN**

**What actions need to be taken in order to mitigate the impacts identified in sections 3,4 and 5?**

Impact	Action Required	Integrated existing work (yes/no) outline	Target Date	Responsibility
Age	N/A			
Disability -	N/A			
Pregnancy and Maternity -	N/A			
Race	N/A			
Gender reassignment	N/A			
Marriage and civil partnership	N/A			
Religion and / or belief	N/A			
Sex (gender)	N/A			
Sexual orientation	N/A			
Carers	N/A			
Other	N/A			
Deprived communities/socio economic	N/A			

**How will these actions be monitored and where will the outcomes be reported?**

(Please describe below)

<b>Completed by</b> (Please print name /Designation)	SM John Kellaway	<b>Signature</b> <b>Date</b>	10/01/2024
<b>Quality Assured by</b> (Please print name /Designation)		<b>Signature</b> <b>Date</b>	

<b>Name of responsible SLT member</b> (Please print name /Designation)		<b>Signature</b> <b>Date</b>	
---	--	---------------------------------	--

## Bibliography and Guidance documents

This bibliography provides details of all the documents and reports included within this EIA or the EIA guidance. The bibliography will also include Hyperlinks to other useful documents, reports, data, and webinars on our portal page or links direct to the websites which you may find helpful when completing your EIA. **Please note, that this is a live document, do not use an old copy of this form to complete a new EIA. Please ensure that you download a new copy from the portal, as the bibliography and links will be updated regularly to ensure you have access to the most recent data, articles and training.**

### Documents referenced and hyperlinked within the form

National Fire Chiefs Councils (NFCC) [equality impact assessment template](#)

National Fire Chiefs Councils (NFCC) [Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit](#)

National Fire Chiefs Councils (NFCC) [Maturity Models and Workforce Good Practice Frameworks](#)

This document provides insight into the NFCC Maturity model and provides guidance on the following areas:

- Leadership Development
- Recruitment
- Learning Organisation
- Blended Learning
- Performance Management
- Employee Recognition
- Talent Management
- EDI
- Well Being
- HR Analytics

### [Equality Diversity & Inclusion Resource Library](#)

The ED&I resources Library is located on the ED&I portal page and provides a suite of documents (detailed below) from a wide variety of sources, they may be internally produced reports or guidance, toolkits or data produced by the NFCC or partners. A list of the documents can be found below or you can access the complete library [here](#).

Disability related support including:

- [AFSA - Lets talk workplace disability](#)

Gender Related Resources including:

- [Fast Facts for patients – Menopause](#)

Pregnancy and Maternity Related Resources

Religion and Belief related resources including:

- [AFSA – 2021 Workforce Religion and belief Toolkit](#)

Sexual Orientation Related Resources

[AFSA Workforce Positive Action Toolkit](#)

[Dementia Friendly Emergency Services Guidance](#)

[NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Employment](#) which includes:

- NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Actions for the Vulnerable Rehoused Homeless
- NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Employment for Black Communities
- NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Employment for Neurodiversity
- NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Employment for LGBT Communities
- NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Employment for People from Asian Communities
- NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Employment for the Roma Communities
- NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Employment for People Living with Dementia
- NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Employment for People Living in Rural Communities
- NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Employment for Emerging Migrant Communities
- NFCC Community Risk – CRMP Equality Impact Assessment

These can also be found on the [NFCC website](#)

### **NFCC Toolkits**

The NFCC have also created a number of toolkits to provide help and guidance these can be found here on the [NFCC website](#) or via the links below in the ED&I Resource Library

The toolkits currently available include:

- [Collecting and Disseminating of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Data Toolkit](#)

- [Gender Diversity Toolkit](#)
- [Neurodiversity Toolkit](#)
- [Undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit](#)
- [Staff Networks Toolkit](#)

## **Webinars**

[NFCC Lunch and Learns](#) which include

- Neurodiversity
- Trans Visibility in FRS
- Racial Equality
- Bite Size techniques to avoid burnout
- Being part of the LGBT Community

## **Other useful Links and documents**

[ED&I Annual Report](#) this report included our Staffing data, Gender and BAME Pay Gap analysis and recent reporting against our 5 Equality Objectives

[Diversity Events Calendar](#) the diversity calendar is helpful to understand what key dates are taking place throughout the year to assist with community engagement

[Knowing our Communities Data](#) this is a suite of documents, which provides data within each of the local Authorities, by different protected groups which include Age, Disability, Religion and Ethnicity.

## **[Service Instruction 0877 Resources to support managers and staff to implement the Equality & Diversity Policy](#)**

- [Appendix 1 - Disability in the workplace information for staff and managers](#)
- [Appendix 2 - Reasonable Adjustments Support for staff & managers in the workplace](#)
- [Appendix 3 - Access to Work Support for staff and managers in the workplace](#)
- [Appendix 4 - Supporting people with Dyslexia in the workplace](#)
- [Appendix 5 - Supporting Staff during the Menopause](#)
- [Appendix 6 - Guidance for supporting employees returning from maternity; breastfeeding in the workplace Operational Firefighters](#)
- [Appendix 7 - Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender \(LGBT\) staff in the Workplace](#)
- [Appendix 8 - Supporting Transgender staff in the Workplace](#)
- [Appendix 9 - Neurodiversity in the workplace](#)

[2021/22 Fire Statistics](#) this includes workforce data published by the government



<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>			
<b>MEETING OF THE:</b>	<b>SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>25 JANUARY 2024</b>	<b>REPORT NO:</b>	<b>CFO/03/24</b>
<b>PRESENTING OFFICER</b>	<b>ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, DAVE MOTTRAM (PRESENTATION BY DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEGAL, NICK MERNOCK)</b>		
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEGAL, NICK MERNOCK</b>	<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>MIKE PILKINGTON</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	<b>LIAM WILLIAMSON AMANDA CROSS KELLY PATTERSON</b>		
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>REVIEW OF SICKNESS ABSENCE</b>		
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	<b>THE ASSOCIATED PRESENTATION TO BE SHARED WITH MEMBERS AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING</b>		

### **Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Members as to sickness absence levels over the previous three years and the measures in place to manage, reduce and mitigate the impacts.

### **Recommendation**

2. It is recommended that Members;
  - a) note the performance in relation to sickness absence and the impact on our service delivery,
  - b) note the suite of management activities and support in place to reduce and mitigate the impact of sickness absence; and
  - c) consider and scrutinise the continued suitability of the approaches taken.

### **Introduction and Background**

3. Effective management of sickness absence is vital for maintaining a healthy, productive, and engaged workforce, and ensuring MFRA is able to deliver its aims to Protect, Prevent, Prepare & Respond.
4. As such absence levels are continually monitored and are included as a Key Performance Indicator as part of the Authority's Service Delivery Plan, with

quarterly updates provided to members as part of service plan committee updates.

5. The Health & Wellbeing team within People & Organisational Development has responsibility for absence management; working closely with colleagues in Strategy & Performance in terms of monitoring and trend analysis, and with line managers across the service in terms of offering advice and guidance to support employees back into the workplace from periods of absence.
6. Members will be aware that over the longer term we have seen huge reductions in sickness absence levels as a result of bold and innovative approaches adopted. More recently further reductions have followed the introduction of the Capability process in 2015 which moved away from a punitive approach based around 'absence warnings' and replaced this with an improvement driven 'supportive' approach utilising informal and formal support forms.
7. Whilst for a significant part of the 3 year period requested for scrutiny 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 the Covid-19 pandemic has had a negative significant impact on sickness absence levels, the pragmatic approach taken by the service mitigated the impact of absence on service delivery and appliance availability.
8. A wide variety of management activities and support exists to reduce sickness absence and minimise its impacts. Alongside the capability process which includes regular, structured long term sick calls and practical advice; the Service also signposts employees to supportive specialist bodies for example, CRUSE, the bereavement charity, or Marie Curie (terminal illness for hospice advice). The Service can pay for MRI scans and referrals to SPIRE for early diagnostics to speed up the NHS assessment process. The Authority provides physiotherapy sessions to act as a bridge between NHS interventions and to keep employees in work where possible.
9. The Service provides support via counsellors for mental and emotional health, trauma and PTSD treatment. This is in addition to the extensive trauma support offered to employees via our Critical Incident Stress Management Process. Stress risk assessments are completed by the Health & Safety team to support staff mental wellbeing. Staff also have access to an external nutritionist who provides support for diabetic employees, employees with weight, blood pressure and cholesterol conditions as well as food intolerances. Support for menopausal women has been implemented including support and advice from our OH nurse for menopausal and perimenopausal employees.
10. With the NHS having not fully recovered its service provision since Covid, and industrial action over the last 18 months there are, however, external barriers in relation to the management and reduction of sickness absence. Recent examples show referrals from a GP for a scan taking anything up to 6-months with additional waiting time before actually seeing a consultant of up to 26 weeks.
11. In addition, increases in employees absent following the long term sickness or increased care needs of family members have been evident, with shortages of

social care provision with a large waiting list for care packages can often mean employees are having to fill this shortfall.

12. The Service has proactively implemented measures to mitigate these and other external drivers. Examples include;
  - a) Wherever practical and supported by the medical team, employees are placed on “Other Duties” to enable them to remain in work and to undertake part of their role whilst waiting for NHS treatment.
  - b) Employees with caring responsibilities are being given temporary flexible working arrangements to relieve some of the pressure on them and creative packages are devised with the employee to assist them to balance their conflicting demands, for example giving someone time off to take their partner for treatments and then paying back the shifts flexibly.
  - c) Reasonable adjustments are enacted to support an employee presenting with neurodiversity before they get a formal neurological diagnosis, based on best practice from MIND and the NFCC neurodiverse toolkit, to generate non-pharmaceutical solutions.
13. A presentation on sickness absence will accompany this report.

---

#### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

---

14. All absence management policies and procedures are supported by an appropriate equality impact assessment.

---

#### **Staff Implications**

---

15. Sickness absence can have a wide range of impacts. As well as individual's personally suffering from illness and injury, team members can be impacted by requirements to fill in and complete additional workloads. Line Managers are encouraged to consider the impacts of long terms sickness on not just the individual who is absent but also the wider team ensuring support is put in place to mitigate impacts.

---

#### **Legal Implications**

---

16. The Authority, as an employer, has a legal duty of care towards its employees. The Authority exercises its legal obligation in regard to managing employee health, safety and wellbeing. Effective management of sickness absence and provision of support ensures we meet these requirements.

---

#### **Financial Implications & Value for Money**

---

17. Sickness absence costs the Service money with regards to payment of the sick pay, the potential overtime costs to bring in required staff, and in a loss of productivity. However, it can also cost the employee and whilst MFRS has

generous levels of sick pay, the waiting times for NHS treatment can erode this before the employee has any positive medical intervention.

18. MFRA funds modest interventions to act as a filler until NHS provision starts or in the case of scans to provide a diagnosis for the employee to move up the NHS waiting list; however, these must be prudently used. The funding of operations has been explored, however these costs are significant and would represent a benefit in kind, resulting in a potentially tax implications for the employee.

---

### **Risk Management and Health & Implications**

---

19. Employers have duty under the HASAWA to promote employee physical and mental health. The Service discharges its duty by providing OH medical support, early interventions, and stress risk assessments.

---

### **Environmental Implications**

---

20. There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

---

**Contribution to Our Vision:** *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

---

21. The continued work the Authority undertaking in respect of absence management seeks to ensure the employees well-being remains paramount and scrutiny of the current processes assures not just the community it serves and the Authority's own employees, but also the Authority being open to potential changes or new ways of working which may be identified as a result.

---

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

---

**NONE**

---

### **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

---

<b>MFRA</b>	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
<b>MFRS</b>	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
<b>PTSD</b>	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
<b>HASAWA</b>	Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
<b>NHS</b>	National Health Service

**MIND** Mental Health Charity  
**NFCC** National Fire Chief's Council  
**CRUISE** Bereavement Support Charity  
**SPIRE** Private health Care / Diagnostics Provider

This page is intentionally left blank

<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>			
<b>MEETING OF THE:</b>	<b>SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>25 JANUARY 2024</b>	<b>REPORT NO:</b>	<b>CFO/01/24</b>
<b>PRESENTING OFFICER</b>	<b>MONITORING OFFICER, RIA GROVES</b>		
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	<b>MONITORING OFFICER, RIA GROVES</b>	<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>MONITORING OFFICER, RIA GROVES</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM</b>		
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PLAN 2023-2025</b>		

<b>APPENDICES:</b>	<b>APPENDIX A: SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PLAN</b>
--------------------	---

### **Purpose of Report**

1. To request that Members review the proposed Scrutiny Forward Work Plan for 2023-2025.

### **Recommendation**

2. It is recommended that Members review the proposed Scrutiny Forward Work Plan 2023-2025.

### **Introduction and Background**

3. A draft Forward Work Plan was considered at the last Scrutiny Committee on the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and approved by the full Authority on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023.
4. The current and approved scrutiny forward work plan is contained in appendix A.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

5. There are no direct equality and diversity and inclusion implications for the proposed plan and no requirement for an EIA. However, the scrutiny topic itself will have an EIA or one will be drafted if necessary if the scrutiny topic is at inception stage.

### **Staff Implications**

6. The Democratic Services team will work with Members and arrange meetings accordingly.

---

**Legal Implications**

---

7. There are no direct legal Implications arising from this report.

---

**Financial Implications & Value for Money**

---

8. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report

---

**Risk Management and Health & Implications**

---

9. There are no direct implications arising out of this report. However, as the Scrutiny Forward Work Plan contains topics, which may include actions taken by the Authority that can affect the Authority's risk management, health and safety and response to the environment. Any potential impacts will be addressed within the relevant scrutiny topic as it is scrutinised.

---

**Environmental Implications**

---

10. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

---

**Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.***

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

---

11. The scrutiny of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services actions contained on the Scrutiny Forward Work Plan, provides a transparent and accountable process.

---

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

---

**NONE**

---

**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

---

**MFRA** Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

**MFRS** Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service



### SCRUTINY FORWARD PLAN 2023-2025

Item	DESCRIPTION &TYPE OF ACTION	DEPARTMENT	Proposed Scrutiny Meeting
Management of Contaminates	Scrutiny of the Authority's management of contaminants and hazardous materials.	Response	25 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
Staff Sickness	A review of the impact of staff sickness over the last 3 years and how this is managed by MFRA.	POD	25 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
Employee work/life balance	Scrutiny of the Authority's working practices which offer staff a greater work life balance (including hybrid and family friendly policies) and the impact they have for the Authority to become an employer of choice when tackling retention, recruitment and development of staff.	POD	25 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
Enforcement and Prosecution Action	Scrutiny of the Authority's prosecution and enforcement powers and how they are used.	Protection	16 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
Culture, Inclusivity and Behaviours	Scrutiny of how the Authority has progressed in development of culture and inclusivity over the past two years and how it plans to progress it in the future.	POD	25 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
The environment and the impact on MFRS's operational response (broken down into smaller topics through the two years)	A review of how environmental changes and developments are impacting the Authority in terms of wildfires, alternative fuels, the fleet management, pathway to net zero and flooding.	Response Preparedness Estates SLT	Operational response to Wildfires – 25 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 Update on Pathway to Net Zero including Fleet Management – 16 <sup>th</sup> January 2025 Alternative Fuels - TBC Operational response to flooding - TBC

Actions from Staff Survey and Preparation for 2024	Scrutiny of the actions undertaken from the 2022 Staff Survey and preparation for the staff survey in 2024.	S&P	25th April 2024
Protections adaptation to new legislation and the response to and actions from the Grenfell Tower and Manchester Enquiry	Scrutiny of the Authority's response to new legislation resulting from Grenfell Tower and the Manchester Enquiry with a focus on the actions arising and how they are implemented.	Response	25 <sup>th</sup> September 2024

*Standing Items:*

Health and Safety Review

Scrutiny Forward Work Plan