

# Public Document Pack

To: All Members of the Authority

J. Henshaw  
LLB (Hons)  
Clerk to the Authority

Tel: 0151 296 4000  
Extn: 4112 Helen Peek

Your ref:

Our ref HP/NP

Date: 25 November 2013

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **AUTHORITY** to be held at **1.30 pm** on **TUESDAY, 3RD DECEMBER, 2013** in the Wirral Suite at Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle at Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle.

Yours faithfully,



Clerk to the Authority

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**MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**AUTHORITY**

**3 DECEMBER 2013**

**AGENDA**

**1. Preliminary Matters**

The Authority is requested to consider the identification of:

- a) declarations of interest by individual Members in relation to any item of business on the Agenda
- b) any additional items of business which the Chair has determined should be considered as matters of urgency; and
- c) items of business which may require the exclusion of the press and public during consideration thereof because of the possibility of the disclosure of exempt information.

**2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 1 - 4)**

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Authority, held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2013, are submitted for approval as a correct record and for signature by the Chair.

**3. MFRA Annual Audit Letter (Pages 5 - 16)**

To consider the attached Report of the External Auditors, concerning Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority's Annual Audit Letter for 2013.

**4. Update On Financial Position (Pages 17 - 28)**

**(CFO/139/13)**

To consider Report CFO/139/13 of the Deputy Chief Executive, concerning an update on the financial position based on the latest confirmed Government announcements, in order for the Authority to consider strategic options to address the likely future financial challenge.

**5. Station Mergers (Pages 29 - 88)**

**(CFO/136/13)**

To consider Report CFO/136/13 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning

approval, subject to public consultation, for the merger of stations; and incremental changes to crewing resulting in the closure of one or more station, in order to meet the budget cuts faced by the Authority as a result of Government announcements which will impact on the financial plan for 2014-16.

6. **DCLG Consultation On Fitness And Capability - MFRA Response**  
(Pages 89 - 104)

**(CFO/138/13)**

To consider Report CFO/138/13 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the MFRA response to the consultation initiated by the Fire Minister – Brandon Lewis, on the draft set of principles advanced in relation to Firefighters fitness and capability.

7. **Statement Of Assurance 2013** (Pages 105 - 124)

**(CFO/137/13)**

To consider Report CFO/137/13 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning the Authority's Statement Of Assurance for 2013.

8. **MFRA Representation On The Board Of the Firefit Hub** (Pages 125 - 128)

**(CFO/134/13)**

To consider Report CFO/134/13/ of the Clerk to the Authority, concerning the change of nominations from the Authority for representation as a Director/ Trustee of the Firefit Hub Charitable Company.

9. **Fire Risk Management In Residential Blocks** (Pages 129 - 134)

**(CFO/135/13)**

To consider Report CFO/135/13/ of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning Fire Risk Management in residential accommodation blocks in Merseyside.

10. **Breathing Apparatus Asset Refresh** (Pages 135 - 140)

**(CFO/140/13)**

To consider Report CFO/140/13 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the asset refresh of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Breathing Apparatus sets, ahead of the planned schedule, in order to access funding from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport Spectrum Clearance Award

Panel.

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If any Members have queries, comments or require additional information relating to any item on the agenda please contact Committee Services and we will endeavour to provide the information you require for the meeting. Of course this does not affect the right of any Member to raise questions in the meeting itself but it may assist Members in their consideration of an item if additional information is available.

Refreshments

Any Members attending on Authority business straight from work or for long periods of time, and require a sandwich, please contact Democratic Services, prior to your arrival, for arrangements to be made.

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**MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY****22 OCTOBER 2013****MINUTES**

**Present:** Cllr Dave Hanratty (Chair) Councillors Les Byrom, Linda Maloney, Robbie Ayres, Andrew Blackburn, Roy Gladden, Ted Grannell, John Kelly, Pat Moloney, Barbara Murray, Tony Newman, Steve Niblock, Jean Stapleton and Sharon Sullivan

**Also Present:**

**Apologies of absence were received from:** Cllr Vi Bebb, Cllr Jimmy Mahon, Cllr Lesley Rennie and Cllr Denise Roberts

## Chairs Announcements

Members to Note the Change in date of the Annual Meeting for 2014 due to changes of Local Elections to run with the European Elections, and Diary Commitments of Officers, the date of the Annual meeting will be 26<sup>th</sup> June 2014

Members to remain for the Members Code of Conduct training following this meeting.

Members are to attend an additional Strategy event 2pm on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2013

Members visit to Stations in the St Helens District 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013 at HQ for 9.45am

**1. Preliminary Matters**

The Authority considered the identification of any declarations of interest, matters of urgency or items that would require the exclusion of the press and public due to the disclosure of exempt information.

**Resolved that:**

- a) no declarations of interest were made by individual Members in relation to any item of business on the Agenda
- b) no additional items of business were determined by the Chair to be considered as matters of urgency; and
- c) no items of business required the exclusion of the press and public during consideration thereof because of the possibility of the disclosure of exempt information, as no Member wished to speak to part two of the

minutes of the previous meeting which were exempt under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

**2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the authority, held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2013, part 1 one open minutes and part two exempt minutes, exempt under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

**3. Community Fire Protection Policy And Risk Based Strategy**

(CFO/122/13)

Members considered report CFO/122/13 of the Chief Fire Officer regarding amendments to the revised Community Fire Protection Policy (Appendix A) and the introduction of the new Community Fire Protection Risk Based Strategy (Appendix B).

The Chair requested that Members who sit on other Board and Panel meetings such as planning committees, consider water provision and suppression systems included in proposed plans.

Resolved that:

The amended Fire Protection Policy and Service Instruction for the Protection Risk Based Strategy be approved.

**4. Risk Based Response To Automatic Fire Alarms - Phase 2**

(CFO/123/13)

Members considered report CFO123/13 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning progress of the phased implementation of the new Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS) protocol, the outcome of the stakeholder consultations regarding go-live of Phase 2, and the outcomes of the revised risk assessment for the implementation of Phase 2.

It was noted that appropriate arrangements for Schools in the St Helens district be taken up with the appropriate officers for that area, and appropriate arrangements put in place.

Resolved that:

- a. The implementation of Phase 2 of the UwFS protocol for November 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 as advanced in this report, be approved;
- b. The current protocol be extended to cover the 24 hour period and exempt sleeping risk, such as hospitals, hotels and hostels, due to the risk to the safety of the Community and to responding Firefighters in the event of



any delay in response arising from the failure to develop a timely back-up call to the Authority;

- c. Significant sleeping risk premises (e.g. Hospitals, Care Homes, Hotels and Hostels ) are automatically exempted during night-time hours;
- d. The decision to charge for Unwanted Fire Signals be reviewed at a later meeting, and further work be completed to identify a suitable methodology.

**5. The Living Wage**

(CFO/111/13)

Members considered report CFO/111/13 of the Chief Fire Officer, which the Authority requested, at the meeting on 7th May 2013, regarding the Living Wage. Detail outlined the Living Wage and its comparator, the National Minimum Wage (NMW), Identification of the number of the Authority's employees who are currently employed below the Living wage and a costing of how much it would be to raise these employees to this level of payment.

**Resolved that:**

- a. The content of the report be noted;
- b. The adoption of the Living Wage at the time of the 2014/15 Budget Setting process at which point the Living Wage increase in November could be factored into the overall budget, as changes could see an increase in wage costs to the Authority and potentially the number of employees who would be eligible for the enhanced payment be agreed, and;
- c. Payment to all eligible employees be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014

Close

Date of next meeting Tuesday, 3 December 2013

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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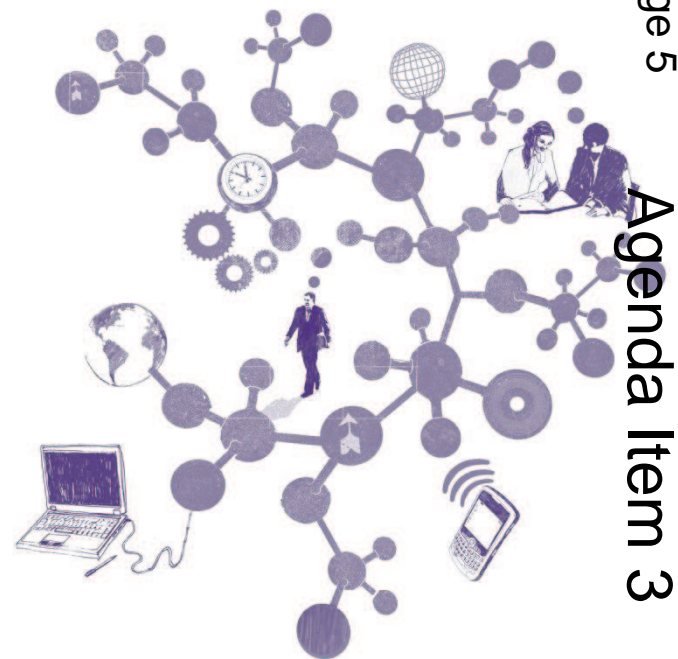
# The Annual Audit Letter for Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

**Year ended 31 March 2013**

23 October 2013

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# Section 1: Executive summary

01. Executive summary

02. Audit of the accounts

03. Value for Money

This Letter is intended to communicate key messages to the Authority and external stakeholders, including members of the public. We reported the detailed findings from our audit work to those charged with governance in the Audit Findings Report on 10 September 2013.

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# Executive summary

## **Purpose of this Letter**

Our Annual Audit Letter ('Letter') summarises the key findings arising from the following work that we have carried out at Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority ('the Authority') for the year ended 31 March 2013:

- auditing the 2012/13 accounts and Whole of Government Accounts submission (Section two)
- assessing the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources (Section three).

The Letter is intended to communicate key messages to the Authority and external stakeholders, including members of the public. We reported the detailed findings from our audit work to those charged with governance in the Audit Findings Report on 10 September at the Audit Sub-Committee.

## **Responsibilities of the external auditors and the Authority**

This Letter has been prepared in the context of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission ([www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)).

The Authority is responsible for preparing and publishing its accounts, accompanied by an Annual Governance Statement. It is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources (Value for Money).

Our annual work programme, which includes nationally prescribed and locally determined work, has been undertaken in accordance with the Audit Plan that we issued in March 2013 and was conducted in accordance with the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice ('the Code'), International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) and other guidance issued by the Audit Commission.

## **Audit conclusions**

The audit conclusions which we have provided in relation to 2012/13 are as follows:

- an unqualified opinion on the accounts which give a true and fair view of the Authority's financial position as at 31 March 2013 and its income and expenditure for the year;
- an unqualified conclusion in respect of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources; and
- an unqualified short form assurance statement on the Authority's Whole of Government Accounts submission.

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# Executive summary

## Key areas for Authority attention

We summarise here the key messages arising from our audit for the Authority to consider as well as highlighting key issues facing the Authority in the future.

Along with other public sector organisations, the Authority is operating in a period of significant financial challenges. In his Autumn Statement in December 2012, the Chancellor reinforced austerity measures announcing a further £6.6 billion of savings during 2013/14 to 2014/15. The spending review, announced by the Chancellor in June 2013, confirmed the Authority will face a further grant reduction of £3.4 million (8.4%) from the revised 2014/15 figures. The challenge for the Authority is to deliver a significant efficiency programme in each of the next 3 financial years (2013/14 to 2015/16), whilst maintaining strategic and operational objectives.

The Authority has a good track record of delivering planned savings. In 2012/13 the Authority delivered savings of £8.6 million which were close to the £9.2million agreed savings target for the period to 31 March 2014. These savings were achieved as part of the Authority's measures for the reduction in back-office and support service costs and the on-going review of fire cover by the Chief Fire Officer.

But the scale of future savings requirements, on top of what has already been achieved, increases the challenge significantly. As a result of the fire cover review the Authority has started to implement savings options of £10m for the next two years. The Authority recognises that this level of saving can only be achieved by reducing the number of fire appliances from 42 to 28, reviewing back-office cost structures and revising operational shift patterns. The Authority is currently engaged in discussions with other key stakeholders to deliver these plans.

The Authority has responded to the challenges created by the reduction in central government funding and has continued to ensure that arrangements are in place to secure the effective delivery of operational fire services. The Authority has a significant capital programme and it is clear the level of associated finance charges will increase over the next few years. It is important the Authority continues to monitor the affordability of its borrowing and assesses whether the overall asset base is sustainable.

We issued an unqualified audit opinion on the 25 September. The accounts presented for audit were of good quality and required relatively few changes and there were none which affected the financial position. We also issued an unqualified value for money conclusion on 25 September, confirming the Authority has appropriate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

## Acknowledgements

This Letter has been agreed with the Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Executive and the report will be presented to the Authority.

We would like record our appreciation for the assistance and co-operation provided to us during our audit by the Authority's staff.

**Grant Thornton UK LLP**  
**October 2013**

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## Section 2: Audit of the accounts

01. Executive summary

02. Audit of the accounts

03. Value for Money

The accounts were prepared to a high standard, supported by clear and comprehensive working papers. We did not identify any adjustments affecting the Authority's reported financial position, and issued an unqualified audit opinion on 25 September 2013.



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# Audit of the accounts

## **Audit of the accounts**

Before giving our opinion on the accounts, we are required to report significant matters arising from the audit to 'those charged with governance'. We presented our report to the Audit Sub-Committee on 10 September 2013, and we summarise only the key messages in this Letter. The key findings of our audit of the accounts are summarised below.

## **Preparation of the accounts**

We received draft financial statements and accompanying working papers at the start of our audit, in accordance with the national deadline. The accounts were prepared to a high standard, supported by clear and comprehensive working papers, and officers provided prompt and helpful responses to our requests for additional information.

## **Issues arising from the audit of the accounts**

The key messages arising from our audit of the Authority's financial statements were:

- we did not identify any adjustments affecting the Authority's income and expenditure position;
- we identified one amendment in the disclosure notes to reflect the accounting classification of the Toxteth Fire Fit Hub as a finance lease;
- we recommended a small number of minor adjustments to improve the presentation of the accounts; and
- we received good co-operation from officers and we would like to offer our thanks for their professional approach to the audit and to our requests for additional information.

The Deputy Chief Executive adjusted the financial statements for the amendments identified in page 18 of our Audit Findings Report.

## **Annual governance statement**

We have also reviewed the Authority's Annual Governance Statement (AGS) against the requirements set out within CIPFA guidelines, and concluded that the AGS was consistent with our knowledge of the Authority and that no additional disclosures were required.

## **Conclusion**

We issued an unqualified opinion on the Authority's 2012/13 accounts on 25 September 2013, meeting the deadline set by the Department for Communities and Local Government. Our opinion confirms that the accounts give a true and fair view of the Authority's financial position and of the income and expenditure recorded by the Authority.

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## Section 3: Value for Money

01. Executive summary

02. Audit of the accounts

03. Value for Money

Based on our review of the Authority's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, we issued an unqualified VFM conclusion on 25 September 2013.

# Value for Money

## Scope of work

The Code describes the Authority's responsibilities to put in place proper arrangements to:

- secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources;
- ensure proper stewardship and governance; and
- review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

We are required to give a VFM conclusion based on the following two criteria specified by the Audit Commission which support our reporting responsibilities under the Code:

**The Authority has proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience.** The Authority has robust systems and processes to manage effectively financial risks and opportunities, and to secure a stable financial position that enables it to continue to operate for the foreseeable future.

**The Authority has proper arrangements for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.** The Authority is prioritising its resources within tighter budgets, for example by achieving cost reductions and by improving efficiency and productivity.

## Key findings

### Securing financial resilience

We have reviewed whether the Authority proper arrangements in place to secure financial resilience. From the beginning of Comprehensive Spending Review in 2010, the Authority has regularly reviewed and modelled what the overall financial position may look like, taking into account both the likely longer term funding reductions and the changes to how local government will be financed.

The Authority has a good track record of delivering financial performance in line with budget and achieving required savings. Faced with a funding gap of £9.2m for the period to 2013/14, the Authority made early progress and succeeded in identifying and agreeing £8.6m of budget savings by the end of March 2013. The remaining savings plans have been developed by officers and will come before members for approval in 2013/14.

The most significant matter arising from our audit related to the Authority's assets and its long term commitments. It is important that the Authority continues to assess the size of its asset base and monitors the affordability of its borrowing in the light of the overall financial challenge.

### Challenging economy, efficiency and effectiveness

We have reviewed whether the Authority has prioritised its resources to take account of the tighter financial constraints, and whether it has achieved cost reductions and improved productivity and efficiencies. Our work highlighted that the Authority is responding well to the challenges of the Local Government Finance Settlement, delivering savings and targeting its resources effectively. The Authority does not underestimate the scale of the challenge it faces, and acknowledges that further significant transformation is called for. Progress is being made in starting to implement savings options of £10m for the 2014/15 budget following a review of fire cover undertaken by the Chief Fire Officer. The review has reduced the number of fire appliances from 42 to 28 and seeks to preserve service outputs by introducing revised duty patterns and work routines.

### Overall VFM conclusion

On the basis of our work, and having regard to the guidance on the specified criteria published by the Audit Commission, we are satisfied that in all significant respects the Authority put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2013.

# Appendix

# Appendix A: Reports issued and fees

We confirm below the fee charged for the audit.

## Fees

	Per Audit plan £	Actual fees £
Audit Fee	43,232	43,232
<b>Total fees</b>	<b>43,232</b>	<b>43,232</b>

## Fees for other services

Service	Fees £
None	Nil

## Reports issued

Report	Date issued
Audit Plan	May 2013
Audit Findings Report	September 2013
Annual Audit Letter	October 2013



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**AGENDA ITEM:**

<b>REPORT TO:</b> Meeting of the	<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE &amp; RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> DECEMBER 2013</b>
<b>REPORT NO.</b>	<b>CFO/139/13</b>
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	<b>DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT GROUP</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>UPDATE ON FINANCIAL POSITION</b>

**THERE ARE NO APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT**Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with an update on the financial position based on the latest confirmed Government announcements in order for the Authority to consider strategic options to address the likely future financial challenge.

Recommendation

2. Members note the report and use the information to consider strategic options that will allow balanced budgets to be set in the future.

**Executive Summary**

Members had previously set a balanced financial plan to 2014/15 that included a reduction from 42 Fire Appliances to 28.

There have been a number of announcements that have affected the financial plan and given greater clarity around the on-going financial challenges for 2015/16 and beyond. These are:-

- Local Government Finance settlement 14/15 and 15/16 technical consultation
- Announcement over Council tax referendum limits
- Pensions Changes that affect employers NI costs

The report also considers the prospects for Local Government Grant, Council Tax and inflation in the midterm. Based upon the information available three scenarios are modelled:-

- a) A forecast for 2015/16 based on confirmed announcements that indicates a

minimum deficit of £6.5m to deal with by 2015/16

- b) The forecast further extended into 2016/17 (assuming any new Government continues the spending plans set in place prior to 2016/17), which suggest the challenge would grow to £9.1m by 2016/17
- c) A model to 2020 based on LGA modelling around on-going grant cuts that suggest the overall challenge would be in excess of £20m by 2019/20

Future Large scale savings will inevitably:-

- Require reductions in the number of staff employed, both Firefighter and non-uniformed.
- Impact on front line service delivery.

Elsewhere on this agenda report CFO/136/13 considers how this scale of saving requirement might impact on operational delivery, given that the Authority is now in a situation whereby it has 28 appliances operating from 26 fire stations.

Members are asked to **note the report and use the information to consider** budget options to meet future challenges.

### Introduction and Background

- 3. Members will recall that they set a balanced budget in February 2013 for a two year period from 2013-2015 based on the information available at the time. The plan delivered £10m of savings. Those savings options were made up of £7m from back office and technical areas and £3m from front line operational response. The operational response change was delivered by reducing from 42 fire engines to 28 across the Authority's 26 fire stations. This balanced position is the starting point for considering future challenges.
- 4. The Government has made a number of announcements that affect that financial plan and/or begin scaling the financial challenge for 2015/16 and beyond. This report will consider those issues in detail.

### **Local Government Finance settlement 14/15 and 15/16 technical consultation**

- 5. On 26<sup>th</sup> July the Government announced a technical consultation on the finance settlement for 2014/15 and 2015/16. The consultation paper, together with supporting documents can be found at <http://www.local.communities.gov.uk/finance/1415/sumcon/index.htm>. The announcement was useful for financial planning as it gives specific grant figures at an Authority level for 14/15 and 15/16. This paper is prepared on the assumption that the figures will not change following the consultation process. The final announcement is expected towards Christmas time 2013.



**(a) 2014/15**

Grant funding has been cut by a further 1% in line with the Chancellors announcements and the safety net top slice increased. This requires the Authority to make additional savings of £407k to balance the 14/15 position over and above the £10m already planned.

In addition there were further technical assumptions that may yet affect the authority budget for 2014/15:-

- (i) The Government has set aside more money in the safety net, based on Council returns to date. The safety net is to protect Authorities with more than a 7.5% loss in local business rates.
- (ii) The Government has assumed the business rates total will increase by 2.8% in 2014/15. There is no guarantee that this is the position in Merseyside.

**(b) 2015/16**

The Government has announced indicative grant figures for 2015/16. The cash cut in 2015/16 is 8.4% (10% in "real terms"). This cut is not just being applied to old grant, but the new total including the Council Tax Benefit Localisation Grant. This equates to a further grant reduction of £3.412m in a single year from revised 2014/15 figure.

The Government has assumed inflationary growth in business rates. If the local business rates growth varies from Government forecast inflation growth Merseyside may be better/worse off.

There are no changes proposed to distribution methodologies for grant.

6. The Government has top sliced some monies from the funding total available for fire and rescue services and has indicated that it will introduce :-
  - a resource fund (£30m) and
  - a capital fund (£45m)
7. However these sums cannot be relied upon for medium term financial planning because :-
  - It is understood there is a need to bid for these resources and there is no guarantee that any authority will get 'its share' or indeed 'any share' of resource from that bidding process.
  - It is understood that these are short term resources (one year) only.
  - Capital funds are for capital projects only and cannot be used in support of revenue budgets.

### **Council Tax**

8. The Government has indicated that the “referendum” level for 2015/16 (and 2014/15) is set at 2%. In the financial plan the Authority had originally assumed 4% for 2015/16. Presuming that the Authority would wish to continue setting council tax increases at a level just below the level which would require a referendum for approval. This means that the Authority financial plan will be worse off by £460k.

### **Pension Costs**

9. The Government has confirmed that it intends to continue with ending the opt-out arrangements for public sector pension schemes in 2016 which will add an anticipated 3.4% to employers NI bill. The forecast cost to the Authority is £1.0m with effect from 1 April 2016.
10. The Local Government Pension Scheme is anticipating increased employer contribution costs of about £0.2m p.a. from 2014/15.

### **Inflation**

11. Members will recall that they have currently assumed on-going pay restraint in 2014/15 with pay bill increases of no more than 1%. The current financial plan assumes most costs will increase in 2015/16 and future years by 2% per annum adding about £1.5m per year to budgeted costs.

### **Beyond 2015/16**

12. Clearly making definite future predictions is challenging but the current Chancellor has recently been quoted on his approach as follows :-

*Speaking at IMF AGM, chancellor says repairing budget deficit will remain priority in December autumn statement. George Osborne has ruled out the possibility that Britain's improving economy will lead to immediate tax cuts or spending increases when he said repairing the public finances would be the priority of the autumn statement on 4 December.*

*Osborne Pledges Tories would run U.K. budget surplus by 2020  
Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne pledged to run a budget surplus by 2020 to help bring down U.K. Government debt if his Conservative Party is re-elected in 2015.*

13. Members will note that there will be a General Election on 7 May 2015 and that a new Government might bring about a change of policy. However the overall position for the economy remains challenging and the Labour Party appear likely to stick to spending plans in place for the first year at least. Ed Balls was quoted recently:-

*"We stand to inherit a very difficult situation. After three wasted years of lost growth, far from balancing the books, in 2015 there is now set to be a deficit of over £90bn ... We won't be able to reverse all the spending cuts and tax rises the Tories have pushed through. And we will have to govern with less money around. The next Labour Government will have to make cuts, too. Because while jobs and growth are vital to getting the deficit down – something this Government has never understood – they cannot magic the whole deficit away at a stroke."*

14. In addition, most independent organisations are expecting funding for Local Government to remain under pressure for some substantial time. The Institute for Fiscal Studies has said to expect further real cuts to departmental spending to come in 2016-17 and 2017-18. *"Without tax increases or welfare cuts then if NHS, schools and aid still protected, 'unprotected' resource DELs would face cumulative cut of 31.5% since 2010-11"*

**Assumptions for Future years**

15. In light of the issues above members might wish to consider the following:-

<b>Key issue</b>	<b>Assumption</b>
Grant	Based on a straight line trajectory for cuts in grant funding, the reduction in 2016/17 alone would be 5%. The LGA have done some modelling that 7% cash cut per annum from 2016/17 until 2020 might be one possible scenario.
Council Tax	It would seem reasonable to expect restraint on council tax to remain in place for the foreseeable future and to assume growth of no more than 2% p.a. (in line with inflation assumptions)
Pay and Price Increases	Assume Growth in the mid-term in line with Treasury CPI Targets of 2%

**Overall Impact of the Issues Identified**

16. In order to assist members scale the potential challenge arising from these scenarios this paper will model three three potential scenarios which were presented to members in more detail at the recent strategy day on 19<sup>th</sup> November. These will be considered in more detail as we approach the budget setting process.

The scenarios are:-

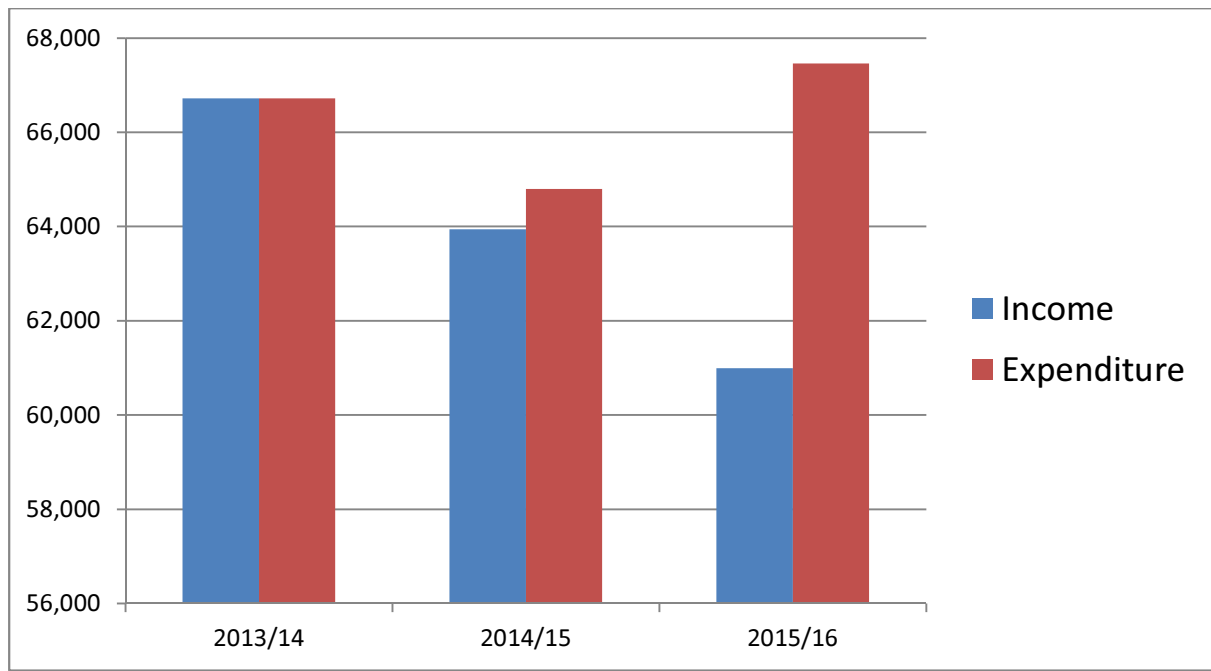
- d) A forecast for 2015/16 based on confirmed announcements
- e) The forecast further extended into 2016/17 (assuming any new Government continues the spending plans set in place prior to 2016/17)
- f) A model to 2020

**a) A forecast for 2015/16 based on announcements**

The confirmed announcements that we will have to deal with are:-

- Grant (announced for consultation) for 2014/15 and 2015/16
- Council tax referendum limits set at 2%
- Opt out for pensions from 1 April 2016.
- Local Government pension scheme costs

This would make the minimum possible deficit to deal with of £6.5m by 2015/16

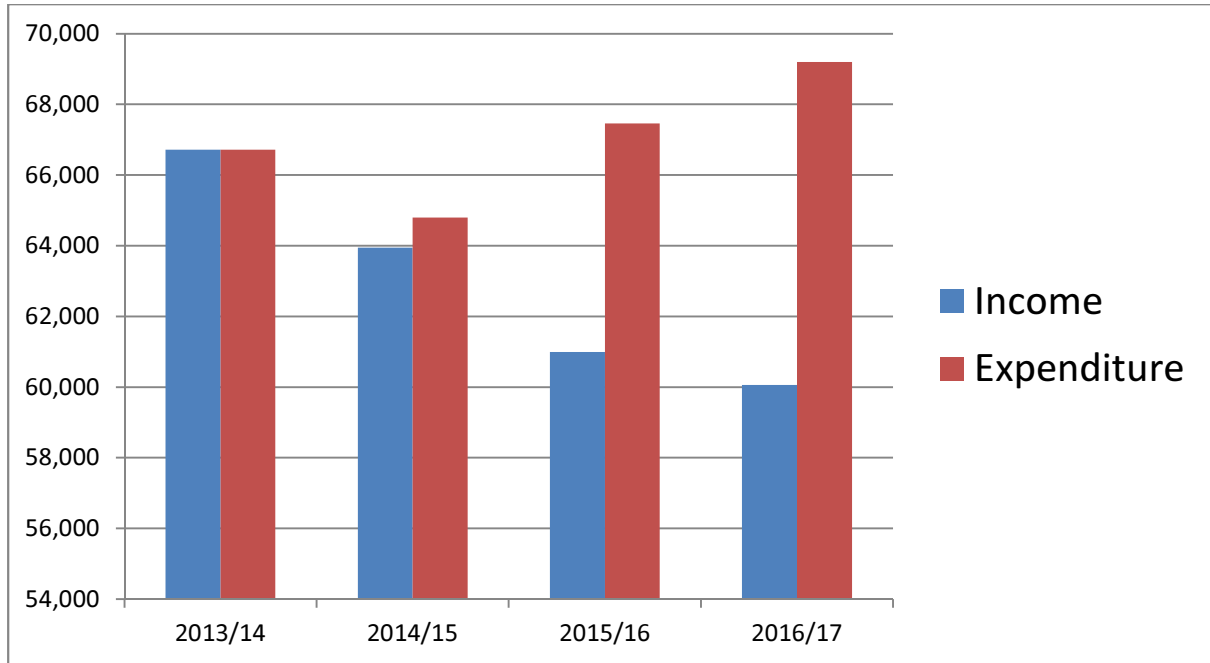


**b) The forecast further extended into 2016/17**

This scenario considers the announcements made by the Government to date as above and adds in:-

- Allowance for increases in pay and prices in 2015/16 and 2016/17 at 2%
- Assumption that there will be a further 5% reduction in grant funding in 2016/17 based on the fact that the Government has suggested a “straight line” of cuts continuing into that year to address budget deficits.

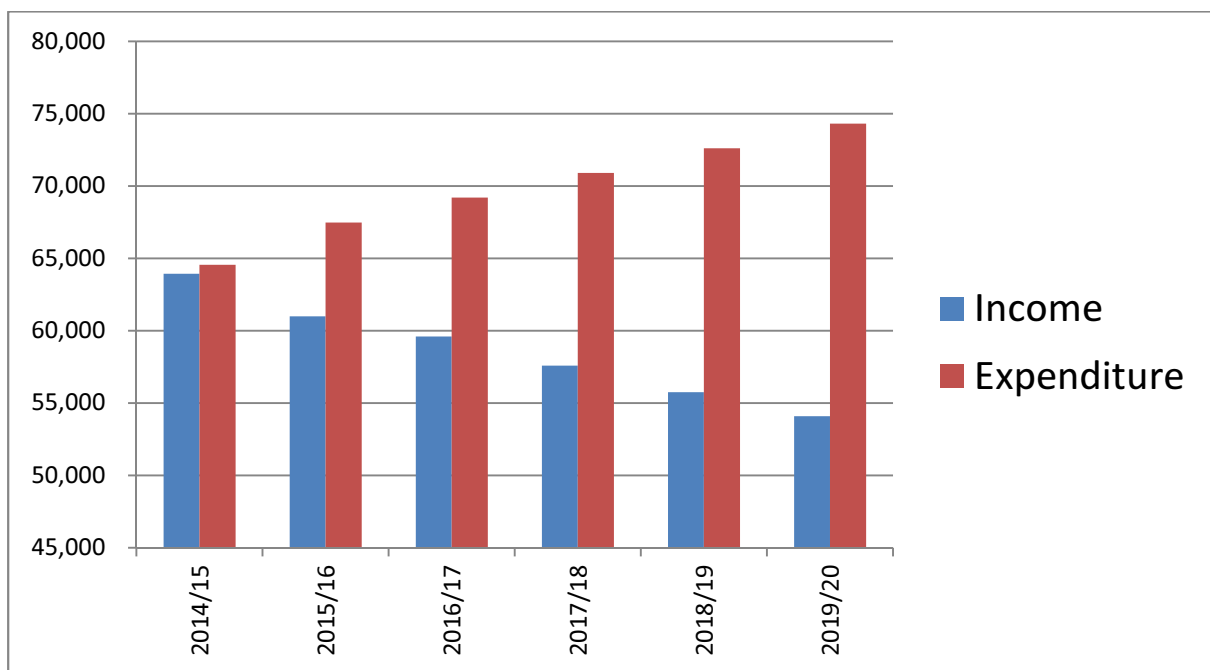
Then the overall forecast budget deficit the Authority will have to bridge is now estimated at £9.1m until 2016/17. It should be recognised however that there is some uncertainty around pay and pension costs in particular which may serve to exacerbate the situation.



**c) A model to 2020**

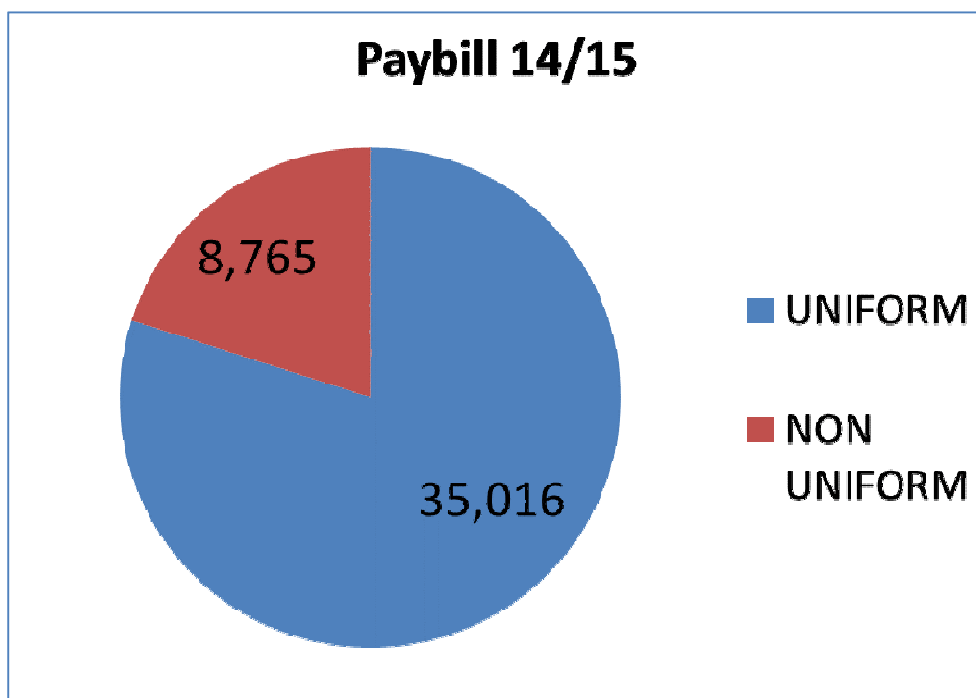
In the absence of a change of Government policy, it is highly likely that cuts in public spending will continue until 2020. Based on LGA assumptions around the trajectory of cuts in spending beyond 2015/16 the Authority may face a £20m real terms cut by 2020 after allowing for:-

- All Government announcement already made
- 7% per annum grant cuts in line with LGA forecasts
- Inflation at 2% p.a
- Council tax increases at 2% p.a

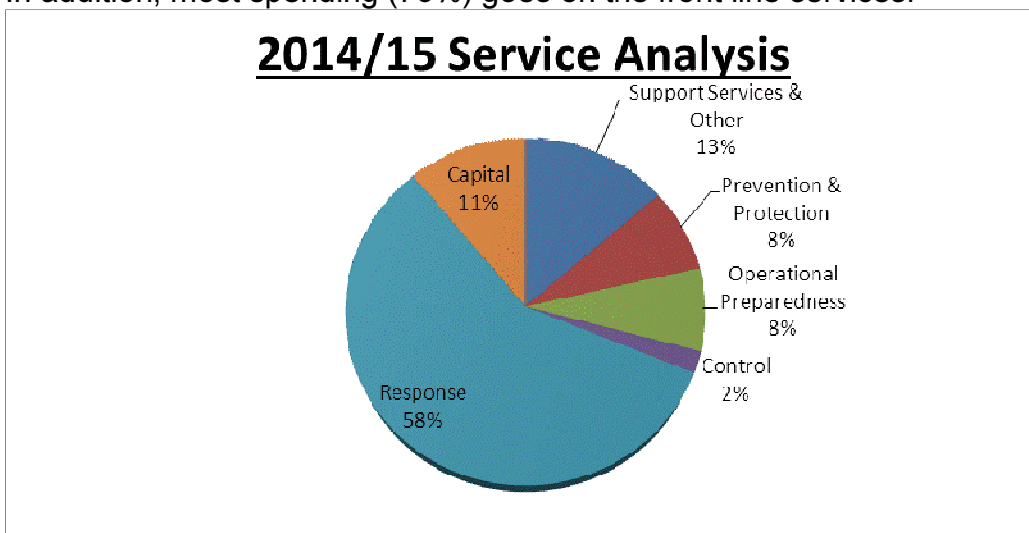


**Implications of this scale of cut**

- 17. Members will note that even the most optimistic scenario above (based only on firm announcements to date) anticipates a real terms cut of at least £6.5m by 2015/16.
- 18. Whilst every effort will be made to maximise technical and support service savings, cuts on this scale are such that they cannot be achieved without further reductions in staff, since staffing costs make up 68% of the Authority budget.
- 19. Within that staffing budget the majority (£35m of £44m) goes on Firefighters pay:-



In addition, most spending (76%) goes on the front line services:-



20. Large scale savings will require:-

- reductions in the number of staff employed, both Firefighter and non-uniformed.
- an impact on front line delivery

21. As an example, even if it were possible to deliver further savings in support services or technical areas of say £3m (which would be a very large challenge because of efficiencies already delivered.) This would still mean that a reduction of about 100 Firefighter posts £3.5m would be required from firefighting posts based on the 'best' model scenario considered in this paper.

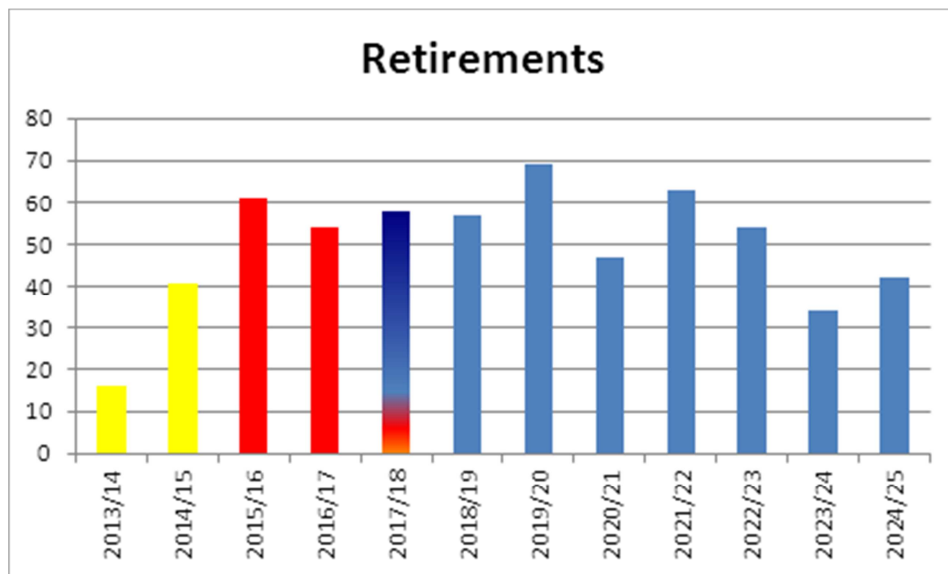
22. Elsewhere on this agenda report CFO/136/13 considers how this scale of saving might impact on operational delivery, given that the Authority is now in a situation whereby it has 28 appliances operating from 26 fire stations.

Avoiding redundancy

23. The Authority is committed to attempting to avoid compulsory redundancy wherever possible. In relation to Firefighter numbers there is a natural retirement rate that will in the mid-term deliver any savings required, however this will take several years to achieve if the Authority maintains its commitment to avoid redundancy.

24. Reserves will be needed to support budgets in 2015/16 and 2016/17 to avoid compulsory Firefighter redundancy.

25. The table below details the current forecast of the firefighter retirement profile.



26. In yellow are the numbers of Firefighters retiring which are already 'committed' to meet the current financial plan to 2014/15 (not fully achieved until just into 15/16).
27. In red are the retirements required for an assumed further reduction of, as an example, 150 posts. If it were necessary to "commit" this level of retirements to use natural turnover to deliver savings it would take until 21017/18 to deliver.
28. In total (assuming this is correct) the Authority will need significant reserves to cover the surplus of firefighter posts across the five year period to avoid compulsory redundancy.
29. Based upon the profile above, the Authority will however need to recruit significant numbers of firefighters by 2023 even if savings are delivered so in addition would also probably want some reserves to assist with recruitment.

#### Equality & Diversity Implications

30. The impact of specific cuts to be considered by the Authority in response to financial challenges will have full EIA's.

#### Staff Implications

31. Staff will be consulted on all of the options directly and through the Representative Bodies.

#### Legal Implications

32. The Authority is legally required to set its budget and financial plan by the end of February 2014.

#### Financial Implications & Value for money

33. All the financial implications are dealt with within the body of this report.

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

34. It is important that increasingly limited resources are allocated in a way to minimise risk and keep firefighters and communities safe.

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

35. Reductions in the resources available will inevitably impact on the service to Merseyside. It is important that increasingly limited resources are allocated in a way to minimise risk and keep firefighters and communities safe.





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**AGENDA ITEM:**

<b>REPORT TO:</b> Meeting of the	<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE &amp; RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> DECEMBER 2013</b>
<b>REPORT NO.</b>	<b>CFO/136/13</b>
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	<b>CHIEF FIRE OFFICER</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>CHIEF FIRE OFFICER</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT GROUP</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>STATION MERGERS</b>

**APPENDIX A****CFO/101/13 STRATEGIC ESTATES REVIEW****APPENDIX B****STATION MERGERS EIA****APPENDIX C****MODEL CONSULTATION PLAN**Purpose of Report

1. In order to meet the budget cuts faced by the Authority as a result of Government announcements which will impact on the financial plan for 2014-16, to;
  - a. seek Authority approval, subject to public consultation, for the merger of two stations on Wirral (West Kirby to merge with Upton within Greasby), two stations in St Helens (Eccleston to merge with St Helens at a site in the St Helens town centre ward) and two stations in Knowsley (the merger of Huyton and Whiston at a site in Prescot (which has previously been considered by the Authority and approved in principle).
  - b. also seek Authority approval, subject to public consultation, to progress the incremental move from wholetime crewing, to day crewing, then to wholetime retained crewing of at least one appliance in Liverpool and/or Sefton, resulting in the closure of one or more station.

Recommendation

2. That Members, in order to meet the budget cuts faced by the Authority as a result of Government announcements which will impact on the financial plan for 2014-16, approve in principle, subject to public consultation;
  - a) The options presented for the merger of two stations on Wirral (West Kirby to merge with Upton at within Greasby), two stations in St Helens (Eccleston to merge with St Helens at a site in the St Helens town centre ward) and two stations in Knowsley (the merger of Huyton and Whiston at Prescott which already has Authority approval). These mergers, if approved, will deliver a reduction of 66 wholetime equivalent (WTE) posts, reduce the Authority asset base down from 26 stations to 23 and deliver additional savings from a reduction in premises overheads.
  - b) The incremental move from wholetime crewing to day crewing to wholetime retained crewing of at least one appliance in Liverpool and/or Sefton, resulting in the closure of one or more station. This change in crewing and station closure, if approved, will deliver a saving of 22 WTE posts and deliver additional savings from a reduction in premises overheads.
3. That Members give delegated authority to the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) in consultation with the Chair to;
  - i. Identify the most suitable merger sites from which to operate whilst ensuring response standards are maintained.
  - ii. Identify potential partners for joint working.
  - iii. Undertake the necessary preparatory work around the procurement of appropriate sites in order to expedite the mergers option in the event that Authority approval is confirmed after the public consultation process is concluded.
  - iv. Submit a bid for resources to support any scheme as appropriate to any available funding sources
4. That Members approve the associated consultation process.
5. That reports be brought back on each of the individual mergers as soon as practicable.

## Introduction and Background

### Current Financial position

6. Elsewhere on the agenda, report CFO/139/13 summarizes confirmed Government announcements that will adversely affect the medium term financial plan. The report also considers other potential risks and issues that could place further pressures on the finances in the short to medium term. Based solely on the announcements to date, the total forecast deficit that the Authority will need to address to set a balanced budget for 2015/16 is not likely to be any less than £6.5m and could well be significantly more.
7. In order to meet this scale of deficit, even if significant savings from the back office and technical areas are identified, there will be an impact on operational response. For planning purposes it would not be unreasonable to expect that a reduction of in excess of 100 firefighter posts will be required to meet the deficit in 2015/16 which would save £3.6m, with the remainder of the savings being delivered from support services and technical areas.

### Current operational position

8. As of 9<sup>th</sup> October 2013 the Authority has 28 fire appliances operating from 26 stations. Of the 28 appliances, 24 are crewed wholetime and 4 are crewed on the Low Level of Activity and Risk (LLAR) duty system (wholetime 12 hour day shifts and retained 12 hour night shifts on a 1.9 minute recall). The CFO is in the process of establishing an additional 2 wholetime retained appliances to provide operational resilience. These appliances will be crewed by wholetime firefighters providing retained cover on rota days. The methodology supporting the operational response model was approved by members at the Authority meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2013 following a fundamental review of operational response by the CFO (Authority report CFO/027/13 Operational Response Review) and further endorsed when Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2013-16 was approved on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2013 (CFO/074/13).
9. The operational priority of the CFO is to maintain the availability of wholetime appliances in order to sustain as far as possible the existing standards of speed and weight of attack. The CFO recognises however that with a further inevitable reduction in Firefighter numbers as a result of the 2015/16 budget cuts it will not be possible to maintain the existing numbers of wholetime appliances. Given the existing ratio of appliances to stations this will necessitate either station mergers, days only crewing, station closures or changing duty systems to, for example, retained.
10. The Authority operational response model is predicated on a pan Merseyside 10 minute response standard. In order to achieve the 10 minute response standard Officers have designated 10 strategic locations (key stations) which, if always covered, will ensure that the 10 minute response is maintained. The aspiration is however to attend incidents well within the 10 minute standard. This is best achieved by maintaining as many wholetime appliances as possible

from as many stations as possible (CFO/027/13 refers). When faced with an inevitable reduction in appliances it is essential that the appliances that remain are sited at the most optimal deployment locations.

Strategic review – Identifying least worst options

11. In the light of the challenging financial position the Authority commissioned a strategic review of its estate (CFO/101/13 Appendix A) in order to identify potential saving options. The key conclusions of that review are reproduced below:-
  - Given the financial pressures on the Authority further large-scale savings will be required from operational response up to 2016/17
  - Encouraging partners to share buildings helps generate some income to offset the cost of stations
  - Borrowing costs will form an increasing proportion of the Authority's expenditure unless the number of assets is reduced
  - As the size of the organisation continues to reduce in line with budget pressures, savings from corporate overheads cannot be made unless the number of stations reduce
  - As all but 2 fire stations are now single pump, significant savings can only be delivered by:-
    - Changing crewing systems from wholetime to Low Level of Activity and Risk (LLAR) or retained
    - By strategic mergers that reduce the number of stations
    - Reducing the number of hours that stations are open i.e. open of a day only between 10am – 10pm
    - Closing stations
12. The following section of the report considers the operational implications drawn from the conclusions of the review and provides proposals to members on the most operationally and organisationally viable solutions in order to meet the 2015/16 savings.

Changing crewing systems from wholetime to Low Level of Activity and Risk (LLAR) or retained

13. Changing the crewing at a station from wholetime to LLAR would deliver a saving of 8 WTE posts. In order to deliver the same savings as for a station merger 3 wholetime stations would need to convert to LLAR resulting in a disproportionate distribution of LLAR to wholetime stations. Whilst this option would maintain an immediate emergency response it is less resilient than wholetime crewing and is therefore not considered to be a viable option by the CFO.
14. Changing the crewing at a station from wholetime to retained would deliver a net saving of 22 WTE posts. Pursuing this option would require the Authority to either seek volunteers from existing Firefighters who would be required to live within a 5 minute response time of the station (wholetime retained) or for the

Authority to recruit members of the public who live or work within 5 minutes of the station. Whilst it is not beyond the realms of possibility that this would be achievable there are three substantive issues for the Authority to consider.

15. Firstly, given the distribution of where Merseyside Firefighters live at present, there are insufficient numbers residing within 5 minutes of the stations that the CFO would recommend for retained crewing at this time, to recruit a full crew. That being so the Authority would need to recruit almost a full crew of retained Firefighters. It is the view of the CFO that a retained Firefighter does not have sufficient contact time within the Grey Book retained contract to acquire and maintain the skills of an existing Merseyside wholetime Firefighter (the Merseyside Trainee Firefighter course is 40 weeks duration and the wholetime work routine allocates in excess of 20 hours per week to training against the 2/3 hours per week contact time in the Grey Book retained contract). If the Authority were minded to still pursue this option they would have to accept that the retained Firefighters would not be trained to the same level as their wholetime counterparts and it would take a long period of time to train the crew to a position whereby they were deemed fit to ride. Additionally to maintain retained appliance availability a minimum of 4 members of the crew including a driver and an officer in charge would have to be permanently available within 5 minutes of the station.
16. Secondly, with 3 hours contact time each week retained Firefighters would only be able to undertake very limited amounts of community safety work.
17. Thirdly, assuming the 5 minute delay in responding in to the station and given the geography of Merseyside, it is likely that the nearest wholetime appliances would attend an incident in at least the same time as the retained crew if not quicker.
18. For these reasons this option is not considered viable by the CFO.

#### Strategic mergers that reduce the number of stations

19. Merging two stations would deliver a net saving of 24 WTE posts. There are a number of advantages to mergers when compared to the options detailed previously;
  - Mergers allow the maintenance of the best possible speed and weight of attack by the identifying the optimum deployment location to cover the two former station areas
  - Mergers would allow a rationalisation of the asset base to reduce capital and support costs
  - Mergers would allow the delivery of a much improved community asset with high quality purpose built firefighter facilities and training arrangements
  - Mergers allow better consideration of shared buildings with partners
  - Mergers and shared facilities with partners are likely to be suitable for bids for funding resources

20. The significant disadvantage of a merger is the potential loss of one fire appliance. This can be offset by maintaining one wholetime pump and one pump crewed wholetime retained, albeit on a 30 minute recall. The wholetime retained appliance would be utilised for resilience rather than for immediate response to incidents (hence the 30 minute recall). In practical terms the appliance would be recalled in to service when the overall number of available appliances across Merseyside dropped below a pre-determined trigger point (currently 17 appliances). This option would deliver a net saving of 22 WTE posts but has the significant advantage of maintaining a second wholetime pump at the station, albeit on a 30 minute delay, thus negating all of the issues detailed at paragraphs –15 - 17 above.

#### Reducing the number of hours that stations are open i.e. - Days Only Crewing

21. Days only crewing would deliver a saving of 12 WTE posts per station. In these circumstances the appliance would be crewed for 12 hours each day on the wholetime duty system but would be unavailable for the 12 hours of the night shift. In practical terms the appliance would be used during the day shift for strategic standby moves to one of the 10 key stations to facilitate crew based training etc. in addition to providing emergency response cover for its own station area.
22. There are a number of disadvantages with this option:
- There would be no reduction in the asset base and associated debt servicing and support costs
  - Assets would be significantly underutilised and the Authority would still have a number of older stations (some in poor condition) with limited firefighter training and community facilities
  - It is unlikely to be possible to bid for funding resources to support this option

#### Closing stations

23. Closing a station would deliver a saving of 24 WTE posts per station along with the additional savings from station overheads. In this option however the appliance from the station is permanently taken out of service.
24. From a community perspective this would be a loss of a community asset with no offsetting improvements. It would also be unlikely to be possible to bid for funding resources to support this option.
25. In order to offset the loss of the appliance but still deliver the substantive savings required, the appliance could be relocated to another station to be crewed on a wholetime retained basis.

#### Conclusion

26. In order to maintain the best possible speed and weight of attack from the remaining appliances it is the professional view of the CFO that merging



stations where the opportunity arises to secure the optimum deployment location is preferable to days-only crewing, closing stations or changing duty systems. Members should note however that the merger option would still involve the closure of stations.

27. Members should also note that having assessed the disposition and suitability of its stations and the operational response needs of the Service the CFO has identified that strategic mergers could only be realistically pursued in the Wirral, St Helens and in Knowsley given the age and location of the stations in these areas.
28. It is the recommendation of the CFO therefore that a public consultation takes place regarding the options presented for station mergers on Wirral (West Kirby to merge with Upton at a site within Greasby), in St Helens (Eccleston to merge with St Helens at a site in the St Helens town centre ward) and in Knowsley (the merger of Huyton and Whiston at Prescott which already has Authority approval in principle - CFO/091/12). These mergers would reduce the Authority asset base down from 26 stations to 23 and deliver additional savings from premises overheads.
29. The Authority is asked to take the outcome of the consultation into full account when it takes its decision to approve options to deliver the required savings as outlined above.
30. To maintain resilience and offset the loss of a wholetime pump the CFO recommends that each merged station would have 2 pumps (1 pump wholetime, 1 pump wholetime retained). The wholetime retained pump would be utilised for resilience and therefore could be made available within 30 minutes. Analysis of Firefighters home addresses that would allow for a 30 minute recall to the stations in question suggests sufficient numbers of personnel to achieve full wholetime retained availability of the second appliance.
31. The three mergers would deliver a reduction of 72 WTE posts gross and 66 net (the 6 post differential to pay for the retained contracts), which would deliver a saving of £2.4m.
32. Members will recognise however that, that this saving alone, whilst making inroads into the required likely total of at least £6.5m by 2015/16 is unlikely to be enough in itself and other options will also require consideration.
33. As the next 'least worst' option the CFO, therefore, also recommends the option of incremental closure of a station(s) in Liverpool or Sefton in order to achieve the balance of savings required as a result of the Government cuts.
34. This saving would be achieved by days-only crewing in the first instance and ultimately result in the relocating of the pump from the station to close to another station as a second pump to be crewed on a wholetime retained basis. One station closure would deliver a reduction of 24 posts gross and 22 net

which is a saving of £814,000 for salary costs and around £100,000 for overheads.

35. The Authority might then consider applying this broad methodology to manage further cuts as necessary recognising that savings would be also delivered from support budgets in no small part due to a much reduced asset base.
36. The exact details of the mergers will be considered in detail on a site by site basis and it is possible that other options and variations will emerge particularly as a result of public and staff consultation.

#### Actions on approval - Next steps

37. The next steps in delivering any of the station mergers are:-
  - 1) Stakeholder/public engagement on the options for mergers
  - 2) Partner identification and confirmation of intent
  - 3) Site identification
  - 4) Building outline design and costs
  - 5) Report back to Authority with full detail on plans/costs/engagement outcomes
  - 6) Public consultation on the individual mergers and Authority decision to proceed or to pursue other options.
  - 7) Planning permission
  - 8) Procurement
  - 9) Procurement of construction partner and build
  - 10) Sale of old stations/sites and purchase of new sites where appropriate.
38. Broadly speaking it is anticipated that the timescale for bringing a new station in to operation would be a minimum of two years. However, Members will also recognise that it would take until 2017 to deliver the structural changes in cash terms i.e. to actually merge/close a station due to anticipated retirement rates.

#### Proposed approach to consultation

39. Having considered this report in the context of the financial position and the options available to members it is clear that closures or mergers are likely to be required in order to deliver the proposed strategy. It is also recognised however, that other proposals or variations are possible – depending upon consultation with both employees and stakeholders. It is important that consultation takes place when the Authority is ready to put sufficient information into the public domain to enable an effective and informed dialogue on the issues being consulted on.
40. It is proposed that the Authority enters into a two-stage ‘consultation’ process to scrutinise the options and consider others. As such it is proposed to enter into consultation comprising of a more open-ended listening and engagement phase on the OPTIONS and a formal consultation process on the eventual PROPOSALS.

Stakeholder/public engagement

41. Following approval of the recommendations contained within this report Officers will, on behalf of the Authority, commence a series of presentations to those stakeholders directly affected by the proposals. These presentations will be delivered via the most appropriate forums in each area including established local authority forums and where appropriate facilitated public events.
42. The consultation will explore and review the options and rationale applied in reaching the recommendations prior to formal consultation.
43. The Authority will also conduct a number of deliberative Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) consultation events where the public will be asked to consider whether the recommendations reflect the proposals within the IRMP and are reasonable given the significant financial challenges placed on the Authority.
44. This will allow the Authority the opportunity to consider the OPTIONS in the light of any public concerns prior to moving to formal consultation, where more specific details on the PROPOSALS will be available.

Political engagement

45. Members and Officers will continue discussing the options with local and national politicians.

Staff Engagement

46. Staff engagement will underpin the consultation process –using the successful approach adopted with the PFI stations.

Trade Union Engagement

47. Engagement with the trade unions will underpin all aspects of the consultation process.

Formal Consultation

48. Once sufficient information is available and following the consultation process on the options set out above, a separate report on each merger would be brought back to the Authority. This would summarise the outcomes of the engagement phase and allow any changes to be made as a result of the outcomes of the engagement, demonstrating that the Authority has listened. Following approval of that report the, one or more OPTIONS would become PROPOSALS on which the Authority would formally consult.
49. The formal consultation would follow best practice and include on on-line questionnaires, full public meetings, district forums and focus groups

### Equality & Diversity Implications

50. An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been conducted which is attached as Appendix B. A more detailed EIA will be produced for each specific merger should the Authority agree to proceed.

### Staff Implications

51. Staff will be consulted on all of the options directly and through the Representative Bodies.

### Legal Implications

52. The Authority has a legal duty to deliver a Fire and Rescue Service under Sections 7-9 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The options recommended in this report will ensure that the Authority discharges this duty. Full consultation will take place and the outcomes taken into account before any final decisions are made.
53. Many Judicial Review applications challenge either the adequacy of the consultation and/or the sufficiency, accuracy and clarity of the information given to the public to enable them to reach an informed decision and/or it is alleged that an Authority has made its decisions before even consulting (i.e Pre-determination).

### Financial Implications & Value for money

54. The options recommended in this report would allow the Authority to develop fully a financial plan to meet future savings that will be required by 2015/16.
55. The Government has also top sliced some monies from the funding total available for Fire and Rescue Services and has indicated that it will introduce a resource fund (£30m) and a capital fund (£45m).
56. Whilst these sums cannot be relied upon for medium term financial planning they could be used by the Authority to fund the merging of stations. It is understood that the Government is to consult on a bidding process to gain access to these resources and it is expected that the Authority would wish to bid for such support.
57. More detailed costs for each of the individual schemes will be developed as the progress through consultation and detailed design. These costs will include any estimates of capital receipts which might be realised for each of the stations involved in the merger/closure options. The Authority will make individual decisions on specific proposals with detailed costs for each.

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

58. It is the recommendation of the CFO that a two-stage process for consultation be adopted, with a listening and engagement phase before the formal consultation process is undertaken, to avoid any challenge wherever possible..
59. An outline Model Formal Consultation plan is attached as Appendix C.

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

60. In the view of the CFO minimising the impact of Government cuts on operational response through station mergers/incremental days-only crewing to closure represents the least worst option for the Authority to pursue in the circumstances.

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**AGENDA ITEM:**

<b>REPORT TO:</b> Meeting of the	<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE &amp; RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2013</b>
<b>REPORT NO.</b>	<b>CFO/102/13</b>
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	<b>DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE, KIERAN TIMMINS, EXT. 4202</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>A STRATEGIC OVERVIEW OF ESTATES – IDENTIFICATION OF KEY PRIORITIES</b>

<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>A STRATEGIC REVIEW OF ESTATES</b>
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Purpose of Report

1. To review the property portfolio of the Authority and to make recommendations for savings in the light of the forecast significant reductions in funding. (These are discussed in more detail in report CFO/103/13, elsewhere on the Agenda.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members note the report and :-
  - (i) Approve the recommendations as set out on page 21 and 22 of Appendix A, specifically;

**Recommendations**

- 1) The Authority must identify strategic mergers that allow operational response to be maintained whilst improving community and firefighter facilities and reducing costs.

Having assessed the location of the newer stations and the operational response needs of the service the Chief Fire Officer has identified that the two key geographic options where strategic mergers should be considered following consultation are:-

a) Wirral:

Merging West Kirby and Upton to create a much improved station with extensive community facilities at Greasby, which would allow response standards to be maintained whilst improving the capability for community partnerships.

In addition, consideration might be given to the opportunities for the future development of Heswall. This site is commercially attractive and working with private/public partners may create opportunities to improve facilities or relocate services.

b) St Helens and Knowsley:

Members have already approved in principle the working up of a feasibility study for the merger of Huyton and Whiston fire stations at Prescott . There are a number of merger options to be considered across St Helen's and Knowsley including Huyton./Whiston, St Helens/Eccleston or Whiston/Eccleston

The Chief Fire Officer will report back with detailed proposals on how to take these recommendations forward.

- 2) For all stations the aim should be to encourage partners to create community hubs and to share costs, reduce wasted space and provide better facilities. Reserves should be used for invest to save schemes which deliver longer revenue streams from partners.
- 3) The Authority should sensibly invest in small scale works that would improve fire-fighter and community facilities at older stations in the short term. £0.5m of the capital investment reserve should be set aside to support those works.
- 4) The CFO should review the facilities at the TDA and report in full on what improvements and investments are required to ensure firefighter safety.
- 5) The following key projects will also be progressed:-

Plans are in place to **improve LLAR accommodation facilities** at Newton and Formby where additional land has been acquired and accommodation blocks will be built on site.

The new Joint Command and Control Centre with the police (including the refurbishment of HQ and the development of a new secondary MACC) is a major multi million pound project. Much of the focus of estates (and other support teams) will be on the delivery of this by May 2014 target.



A number of other **mid-scale projects** are already planned:

- Replace diesel tanks
- 5 year electrical testing
- Upton Training Tower
- Kensington Training Tower
- Demolish Claires Building at Liverpool City Community station

(ii) Request the Chief Fire Officer to report back with detailed proposals on :-

- (a) Options for Station mergers in Wirral
- (b) Options for Station mergers in St Helens and Knowsley
- (c) The future investment in the Training and Development Academy (TDA)

### Introduction & Background

3. Merseyside faces an unprecedented financial challenge for the foreseeable future, that will inevitably see the Service contract further despite the reduction from 42 fire appliances to 28 as a result of the cuts due to CSR 10.
4. Work has been undertaken to review the Authority's built estate, and a full report is attached as Appendix A.
5. The review assesses the estate under the following key headings :-
  - (a) Locations and Community Risk
  - (b) Comparison with other Fire and Rescue Services
  - (c) Building condition
  - (d) Operational response
  - (e) Fire Stations as Community Hubs
  - (f) Financial Implicationsand makes recommendations for the focus of future work.
6. Further reports will be brought back for the Authority to consider with detailed proposals. Any changes to station disposition would be subject to full public consultation.
7. Any changes recommended would ensure that our stations and facilities:
  - become more accessible to the public
  - Overcome problems with the existing site/ building which would be beneficial to users with a disability.
  - Fulfil our statutory duty under the Single Equality Act by bringing our stations/ buildings up to modern build standards with regard to access and facilities.
  - Improve the arrangements for female firefighters.

Equality & Diversity Implications

8. Of Merseyside's building stock, about half are newer buildings, which are open and accessible to the community. The remainder are in poorer condition, and do not meet modern standards.
9. It is hoped that any building projects would deliver the same level of community regeneration that was delivered at the Toxteth Firefit Hub and is being delivered at the JCC (8 apprenticeships per site). A preferred sustainability partner will be procured to support all future projects.
10. Any relocation of stations would potentially have an impact on communities served.

Staff Implications

11. The aim of this report is to deliver excellent buildings for all staff, that are in the best possible locations to support operational response.

Legal Implications

12. None immediately arising out of this report. However, as work progresses there may need to be leases and/ or other property transactions drawn up.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

13. The current operating cost of the estate is approximately £3.3m per annum. Total debt servicing costs are about £6m pa. Inroads into these costs cannot be made without reducing the asset base.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

14. Newer buildings provide a safer environment for Firefighters and "greener" buildings.

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

15. Fire stations are valued community assets. As buildings and training locations, they are vital for maintaining Firefighter safety and effectiveness.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Strategic Overview of Estates (App A)

**\*Glossary of Terms**

# MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

## A STRATEGIC OVERVIEW OF ESTATES

### IDENTIFICATION OF KEY PRIORITIES



## Review of Current Estates Assets

This report will focus on the key strategic issues for policy makers.

The Authority currently has 32 main buildings

- 26 Fire Stations
- A marine rescue station
- Training & Development Academy at Croxteth
- Control Room
- HQ
- Workshops and associated building
- And also some LLAR properties

The location of the fire stations is shown in the map below:-



The review will assess those properties and in particular the fire stations under the following key headings:-

- a) Locations and Community Risk
- b) Comparison with Other Fire and Rescue Services
- c) Building Condition
- d) Operational Response
- e) Fire Stations as Community Hubs
- f) Financial Implications

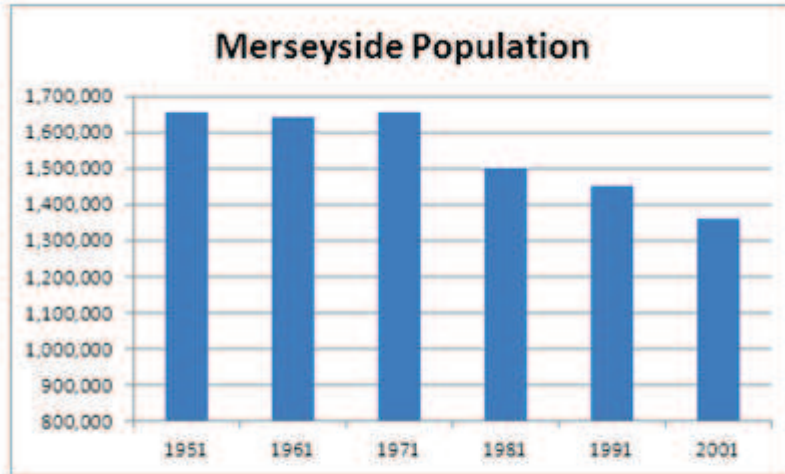
At the end of each section there will be conclusions drawn. These will be amalgamated together at the end of the report and recommendations made in light of those conclusions.

The recommendations are summarised in an action plan for building priorities across the next two years.

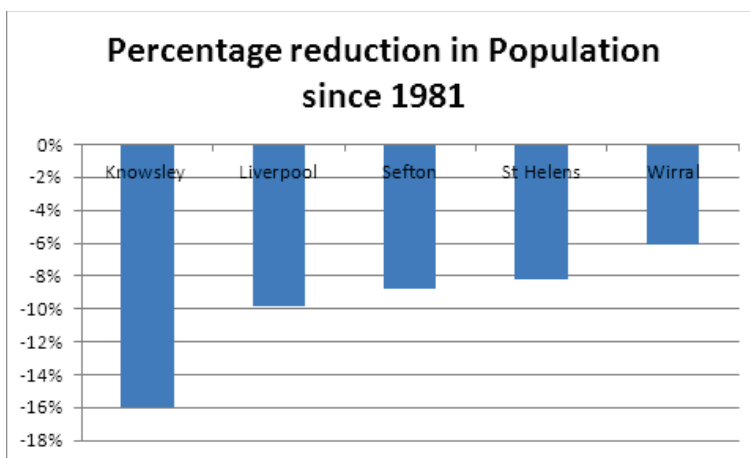


## A) Location and Community Risk

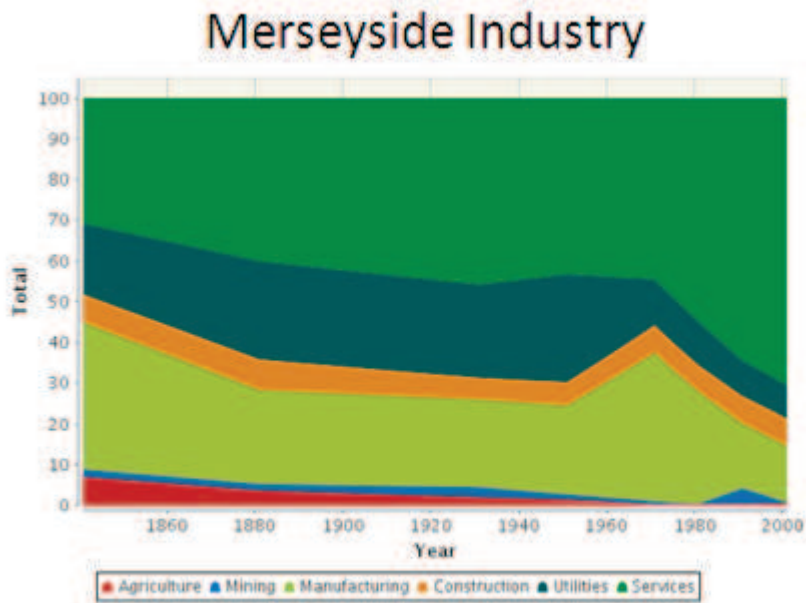
The current location of stations remains broadly the same as that which was in place under historic standards of fire cover (the Riversdale standards) in the 1950's. However, since that time much has changed in Merseyside in particular the population has reduced significantly from about 1.65million in 1951 to current levels of about 1.35 million around a 20% reduction:-



Despite a recent upturn in population, this is at odds with the pattern in most of the country and even recent increases remain below national growth levels. Because fire service funding is primarily founded on population numbers (since this is where risk is perceived to lie) this in significant part explains the funding pressures for the authority across the last decade. This pattern is common across all areas of Merseyside:-

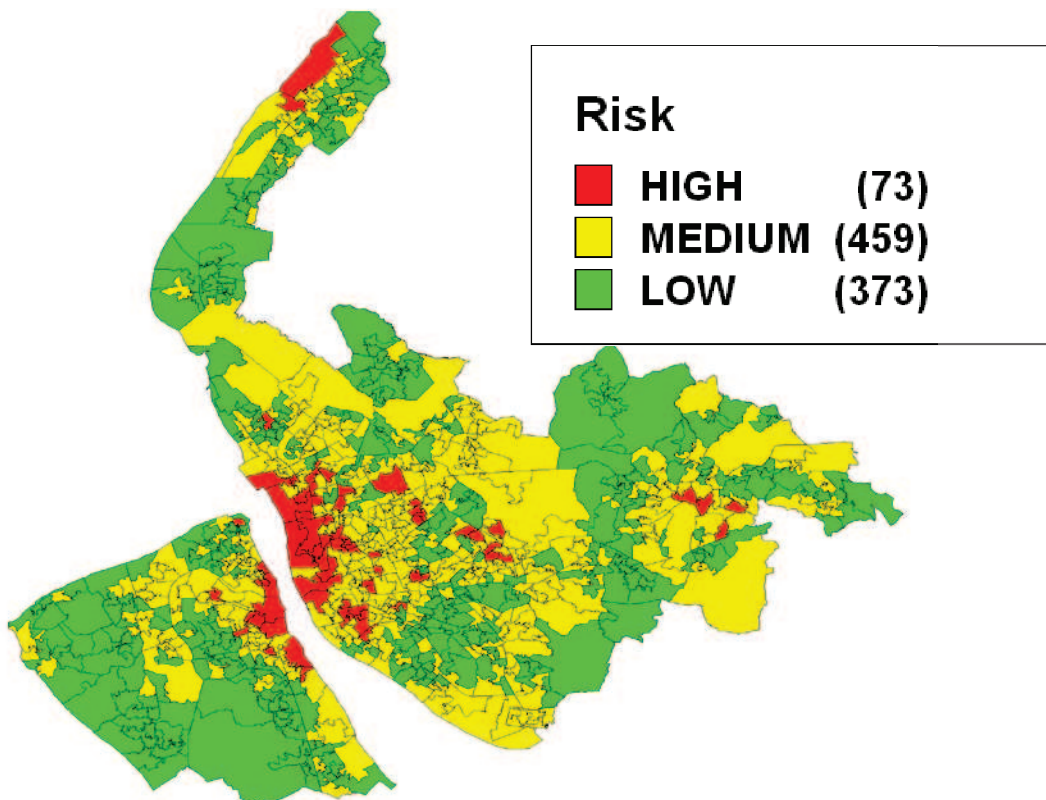


At the same time patterns in industry have seen a shift within Merseyside away from manufacturing towards a more service based economy.



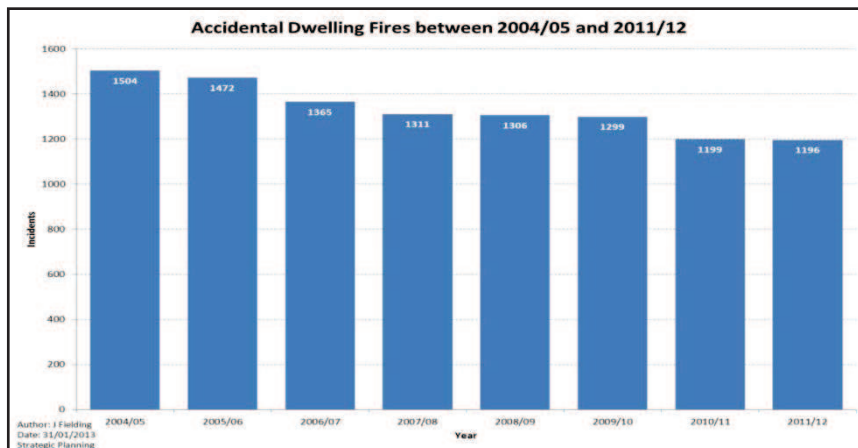
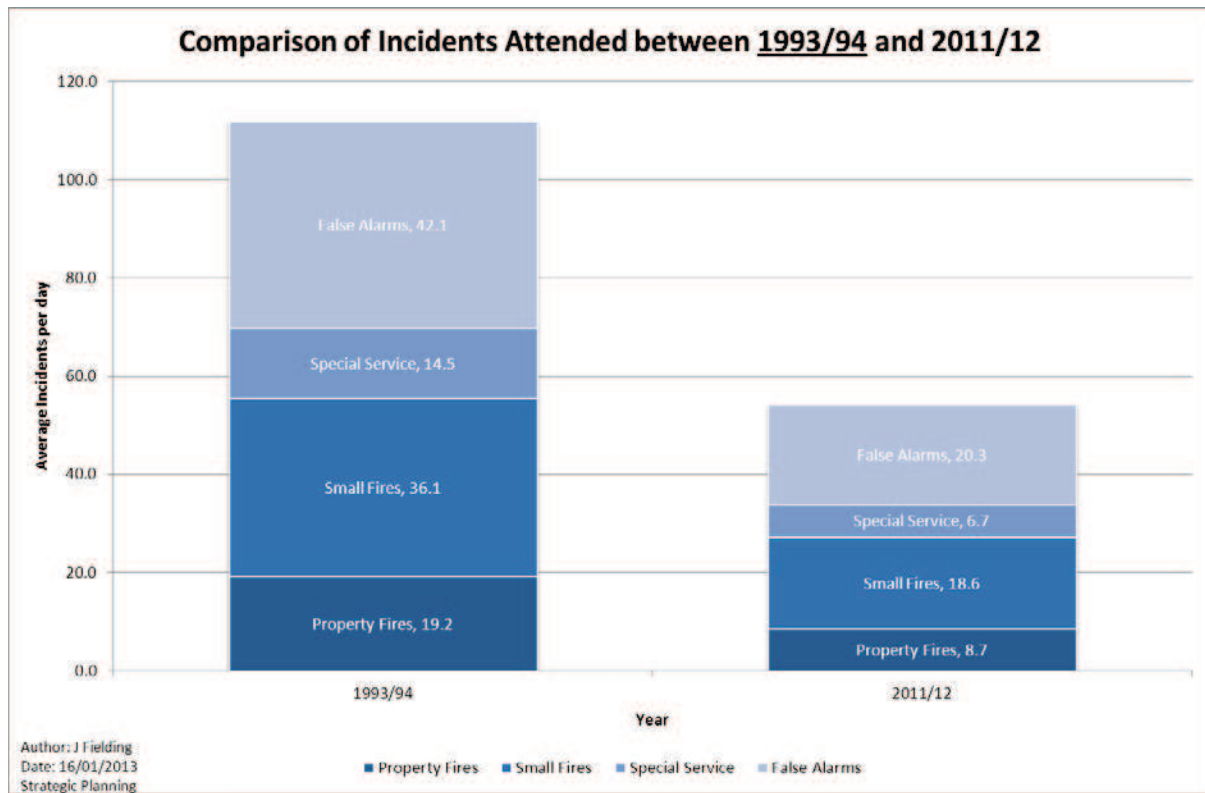
Across time those changes, in conjunction with a shift in focus by the Authority to preventative work, has seen an overall huge reduction in the number of incidents and in the risk pattern across Merseyside.

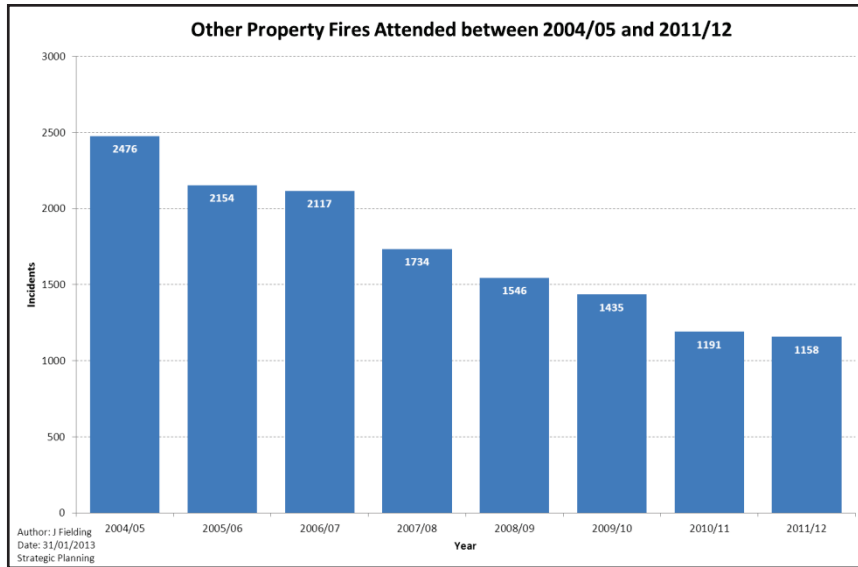
The current risk pattern across Merseyside is shown in the map below:-



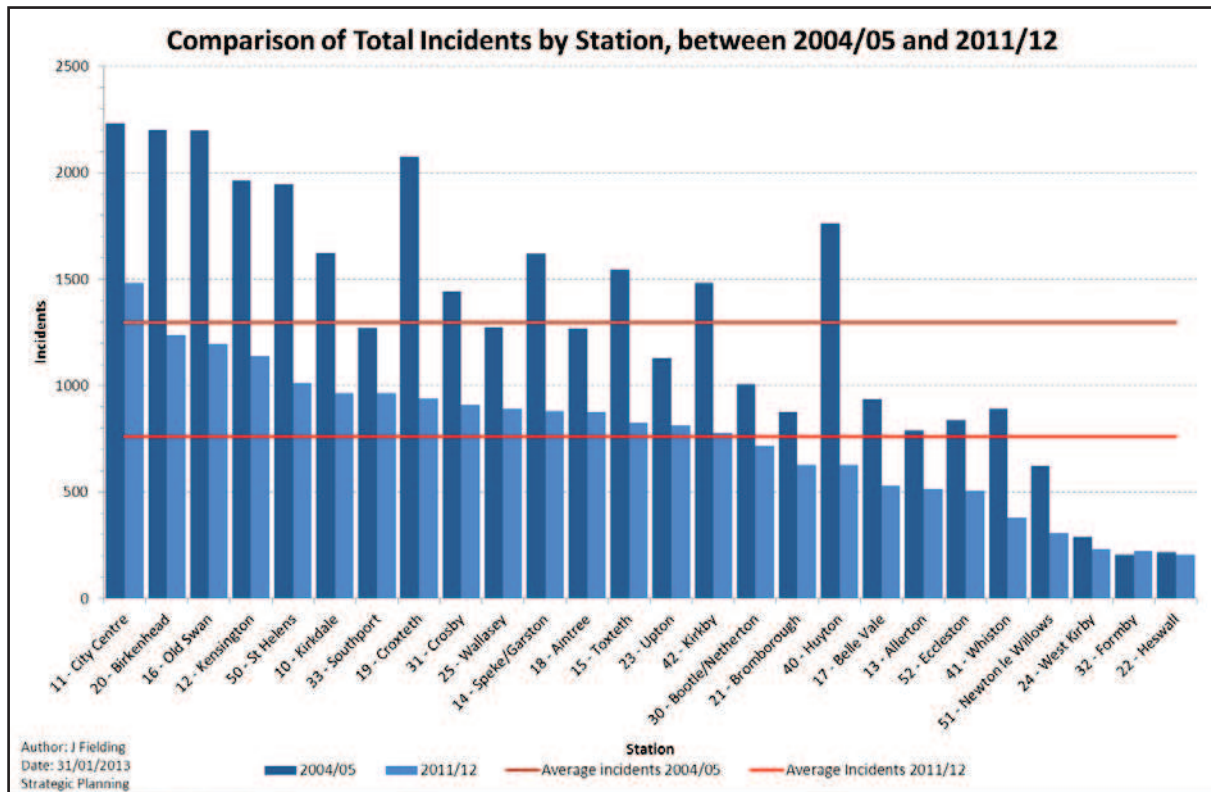


There has been a dramatic reduction in the number of deaths and injuries from fire. The graph below shows the reduction in overall incidents.





There is significant variation between stations in the number of incidents



**CONCLUSIONS - Location and Community Risk**

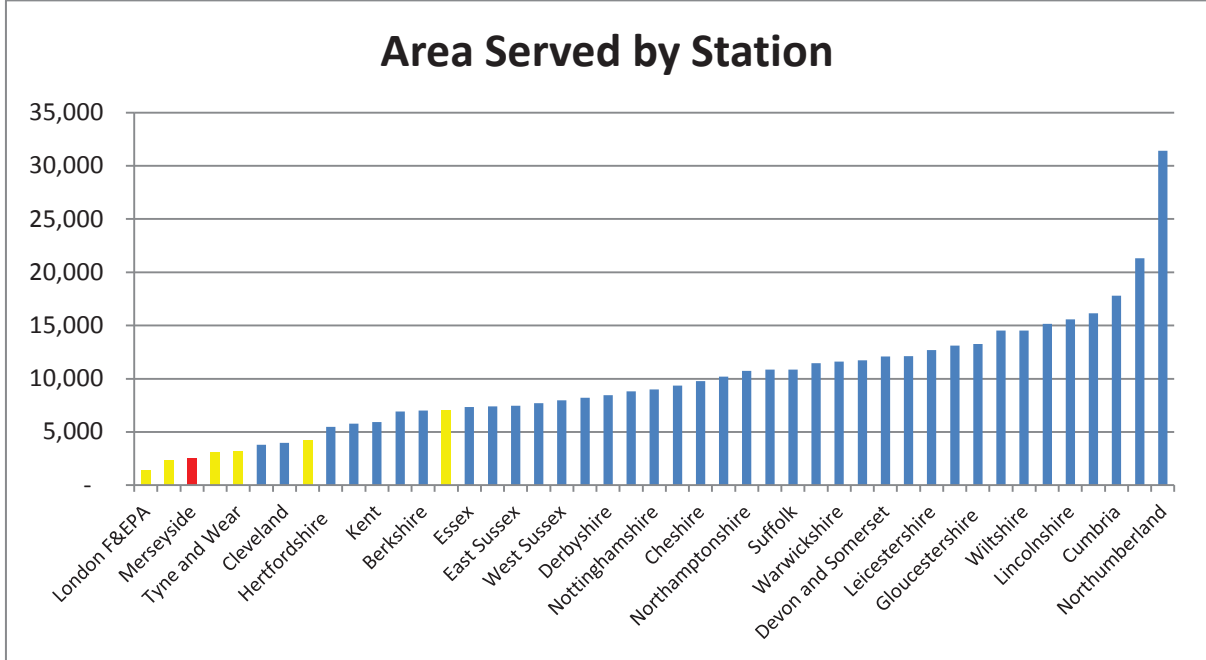
Merseyside's distribution of fire stations remains largely unchanged since the 1950's

Since the original distribution pattern of stations was established, the population of Merseyside has reduced dramatically and the risk pattern has changed significantly

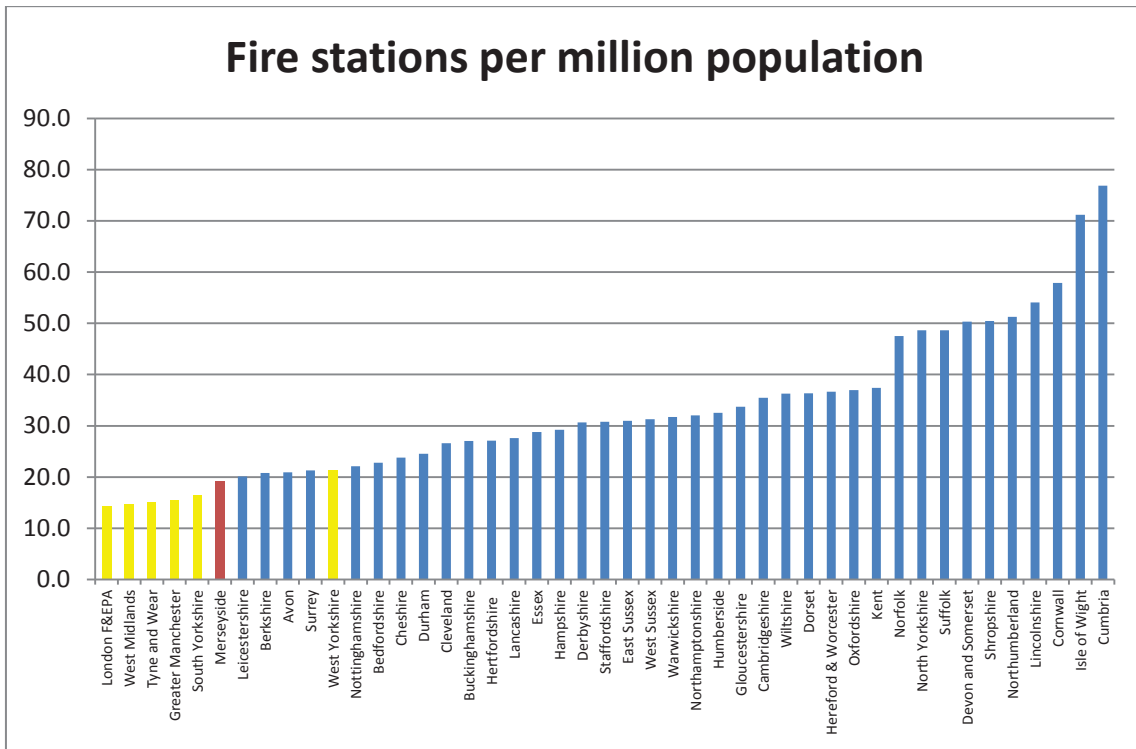
The number of incidents attended has reduced by over 50%

**b) Comparison with Other Fire and Rescue Services**

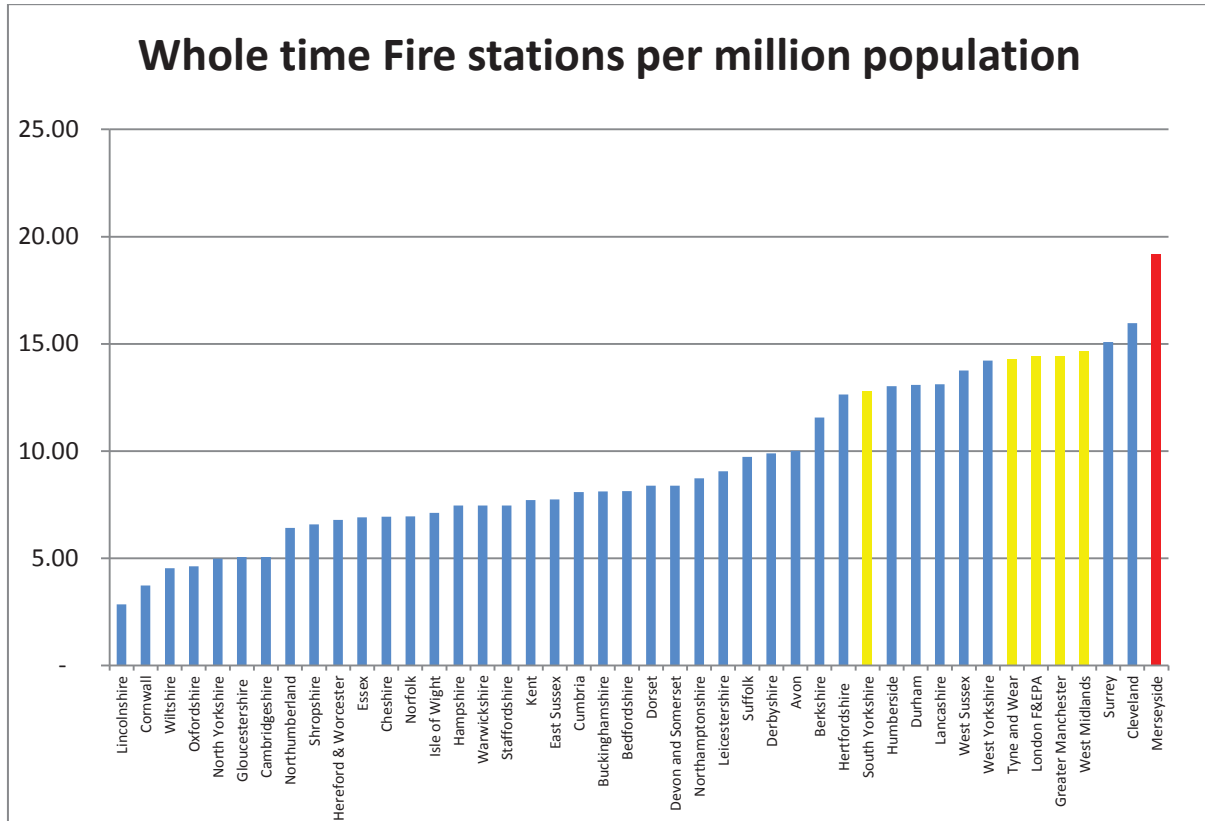
At present Merseyside has, because of historical decisions, a relatively high density of fire stations meaning each station serves a relatively small area. (The graph below is based on all stations)



Since Merseyside is mostly urban the stations do serve relatively high populations, however it can be seen that those population numbers are relatively lower than most other similar Metropolitan Areas (shown in Yellow/Merseyside in red).



It should be noted that this initial analysis is based upon **all** stations. Merseyside is one of few Authorities with fully whole time crews. When the analysis is repeated based on just whole time stations it can be seen that Merseyside has significantly higher numbers of fire stations than most other similar Authorities.



<b>CONCLUSIONS – Comparison with other Fire and Rescue Services</b>	
Merseyside's	has more fire stations than most comparable Authorities
Merseyside's	has no retained fire stations - across the country most Authorities use the retained service
Merseyside	has <b>many</b> more whole time fire stations than most other fire Authorities

### **c) Building Condition**

For many years the Authority did not adequately maintain or modernise its building assets. It maintained facilities on a “need to address” basis. This meant it was left with a legacy of poor quality stations which were energy inefficient, lacked space utilisation, with poor access and amenity for both staff and community users. Most assets were built in the 1960’s or earlier and major investment was needed. The Authority recognised this and, since 2009, there has been a major programme for the Authority’s properties. The following new buildings have been delivered:-

- Seven stations under the PFI programme
  - Birkenhead
  - Belle Vale
  - Bootle/Netherton
  - Formby
  - Kirkdale
  - Newton-le-Willows
  - Southport
- Toxteth Firefit Hub
- Kensington
- Marine Rescue
- Workshops/Vesty 5A & B

In addition, there are three stations which are relatively newer:-

- City Centre
- Speke
- Old Swan

And, of course, work continues in delivering the new Joint Command and Control Centre at HQ which will also allow the refurbishment of the HQ building.

As a result, these newer buildings do not need major investment but they also limit the room for strategic asset decisions to some degree since the Authority would not want to compromise investments already made.

The improvements in the building stock have driven Authority and staff aspirations for the remaining buildings in the stock to be improved. The remaining properties, however, are older and mostly are in poor condition, lacking modern amenities and in many cases are short of appropriate facilities and training arrangements for firefighters.

#### Wirral

- West Kirby
- Upton
- Wallasey
- Heswall

- Bromborough

#### Liverpool

- Aintree
- Allerton
- Croxteth and the training facilities at the TDA

#### Sefton

- Crosby

#### Knowsley

- Kirkby
- Huyton
- Whiston

#### St Helen's

- Eccleston
- St. Helens

### **There are a number of other projects underway to improve the building stock already which draw significantly on organisational resources and capacity**

Plans are in place to **improve LLAR accommodation facilities** at Newton and Formby where additional land has been acquired and accommodation blocks will be built on site.

The new **Joint Command and Control Centre** with the police (including the refurbishment of HQ and the development of a new secondary MACC) is a major multi million pound project. Much of the focus by estates (and other support teams) will be on the delivery of this by May 2014 target.

A number of other **mid-scale projects** are already planned

- Replace diesel tanks
- 5 year electrical testing
- Upton Tower
- Kensington Tower
- Demolish Claires Building at Liverpool City Community Fire Station

### **Other Issues**

In relation to the immediate requirements of the older stations identified above, analysis has identified a list of potential **“quick win” works** for these stations that might be achieved ahead of major refurbishment and make significant improvements for staff at a local level. It is thought that an investment of £0.5m from the capital investment reserve would allow many of these basic works to be completed.

The **TDA requires significant investment** in the core training equipment in order to maintain standards, keep training effective and ensure firefighter safety.

#### CONCLUSIONS – Condition

Merseyside's has 15 Buildings that have been relatively newly built and/or refurbished and meet our vision for quality facility provision .

This means there are 14 sites which are old and in poor condition. Many of these sites realistically require a rebuild to achieve satisfactory facilities for public and staff.

In the poorer buildings some quick wins have been identified that would improve firefighter and community conditions with little investment.

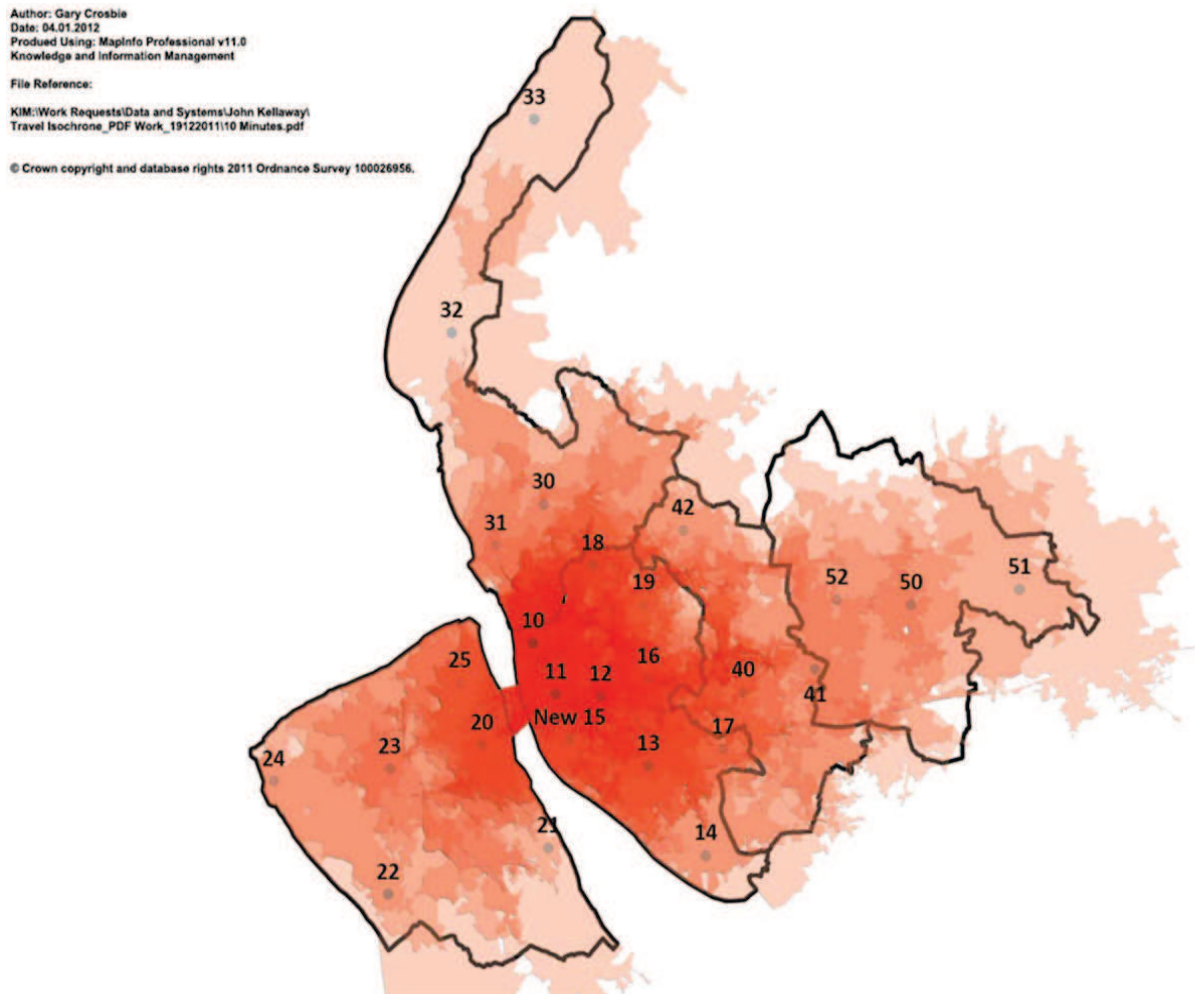
Corporate capacity to deliver major building works is already committed especially with the Joint Command and Control Centre (JCC).



### d) Operational response

The Chief Fire Officer has undertaken a full review of emergency response as part of the Authority's IRMP. As part of that review the Authority moved to a 10 minute response standard against which to measure itself. However the current actual response time is much faster and is nearer five minutes.

Mapping has been undertaken to map the 10 minute response standard from current station sites and is shown below:-



The areas in deeper red show where there is significant overlap between fire stations response.

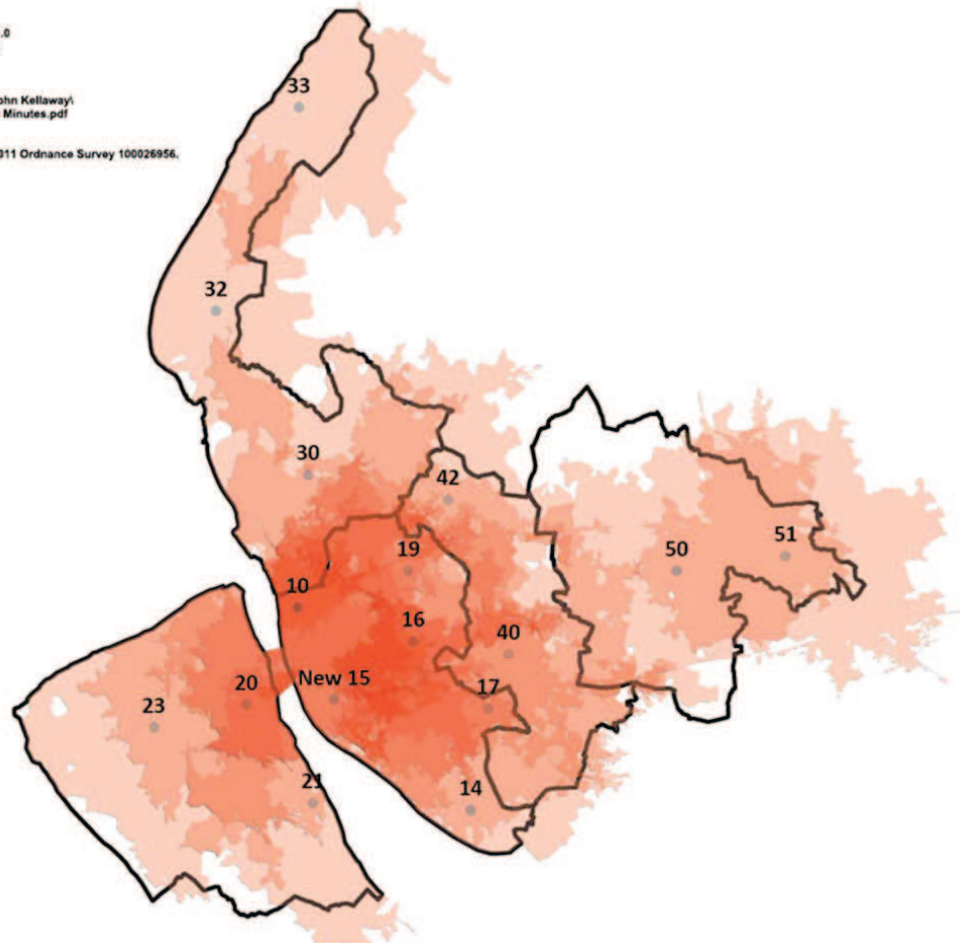
Further work has shown that it might be possible to provide full operational response to Merseyside to a ten minute standard from a theoretical minimum of ten stations—see overleaf

Author: Gary Crosbie  
Date: 04.01.2012  
Produced Using: MapInfo Professional v11.0  
Knowledge and Information Management

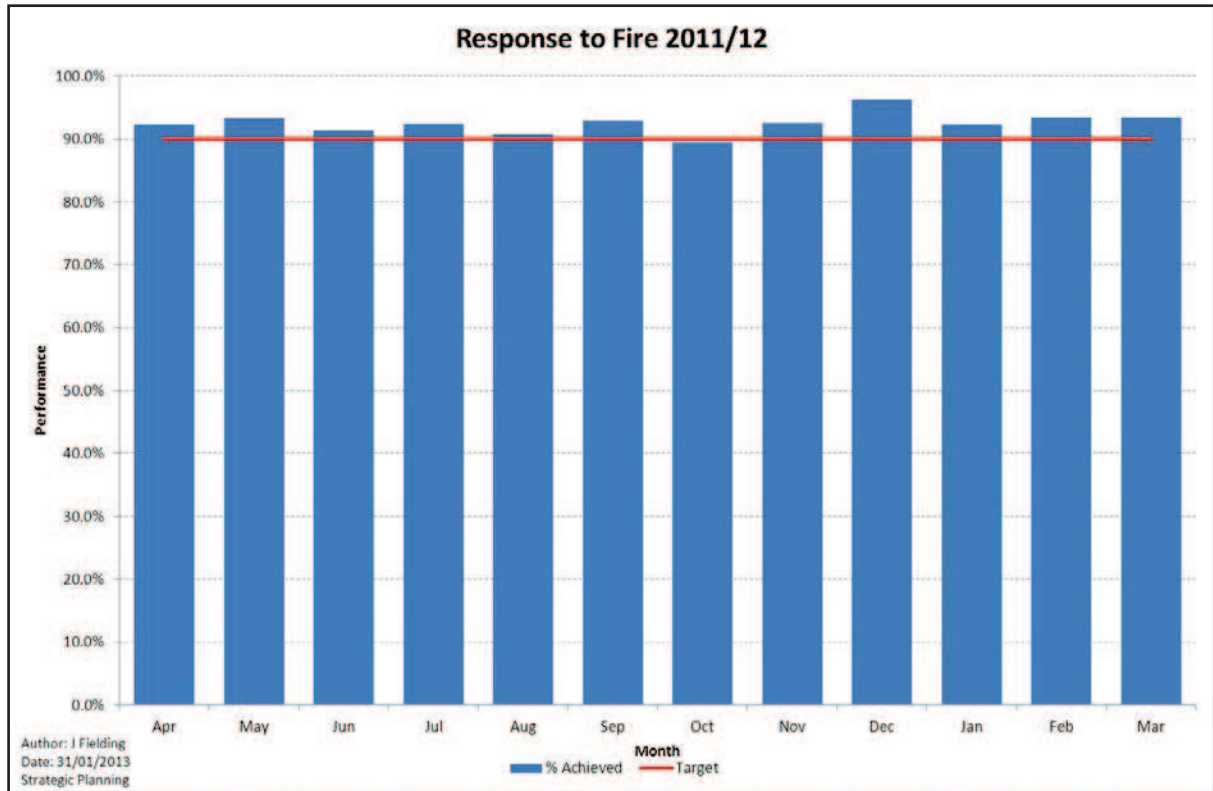
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KIM:\Work Requests\Data and Systems\John Kellaway\  
Travel Isochrone\_PDF Work\_19122011\10 Minutes.pdf

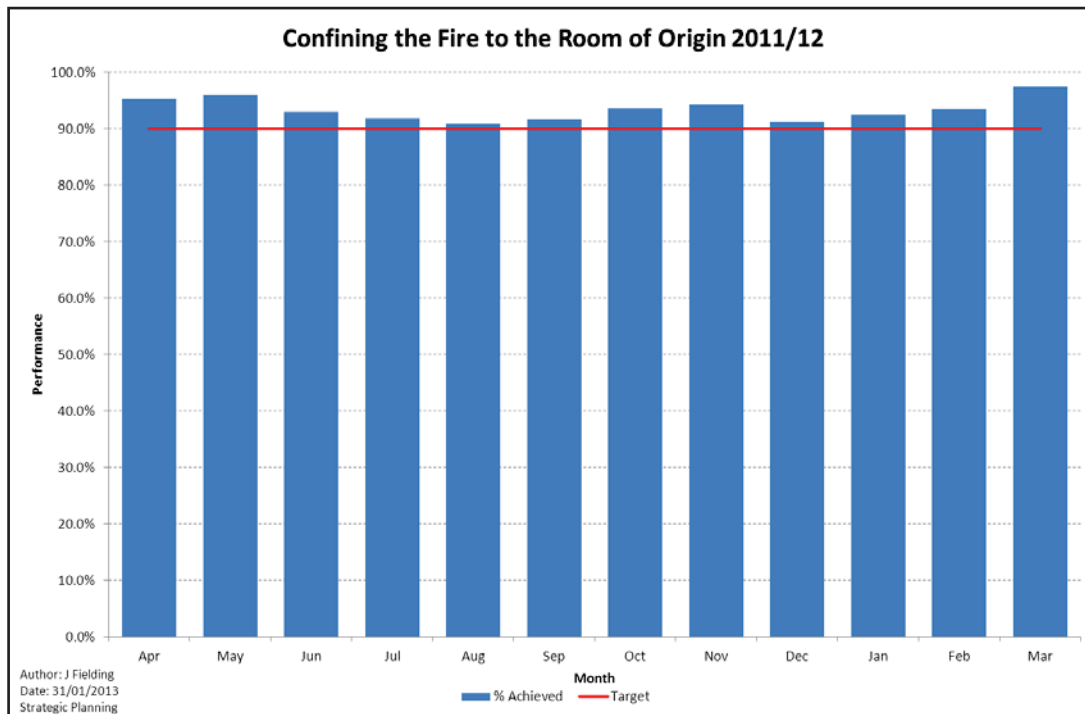
© Crown copyright and database rights 2011 Ordnance Survey 100026956.



Performance against standards is already very high. Response times are faster than in most areas of the country.



Fast response ensures that damage from fires is limited. The graph below shows fires contained to room of origin.



**CONCLUSIONS – Operational response**

Operational response times are amongst the very highest in the country.

The revised performance standards could be met in theory from significantly fewer response sites. However this would impact on the community and prevention work.

### **e) Fire Stations as Community Hubs**

MFRA recognises that fire stations do not just exist for incident response but have a vital role in prevention and protection. Historically, few people would say that fire stations were inviting places with fire appliances barely visible behind closed doors. MFRA vision is of true community hubs that provide a range of services and staff working together to make Merseyside communities safer and stronger and firefighters safe and effective, stronger and healthier.

The stations very much belong to local communities - it is THEIR community fire station and it is fully accessible to meet the needs of the community. Community stations offer:

- Inviting & welcoming community rooms and break out spaces.
- Flexible facilities for our diverse community groups.
- The community an increased sense of ownership.

Community fire stations are ideally situated in the centre of our communities. This positioning enables the Service to positively contribute to the revitalisation of our neighbourhoods.

**The fire and rescue service and its local stations have a unique ‘brand’ that is loved and trusted by the community in equal measure – the fire and rescue service draws people together in a way no other agency can. This allows work on:-**

### **Health , Fitness & Wellbeing**

We tackle health inequalities and improve the health and well-being of our communities through the provision of:

- Well-equipped community gyms that provide programmes like the heartbeat programme for patients recovering from heart problems
- Health advice and facilities for ‘drop in’ checks
- Specific targeted fitness programmes for groups and individuals
- Cooking programmes and advice on healthy eating
- Growing vegetables in allotments in the garden area

### **Working efficiently with Other Partners**

Merseyside actively seeks to share its buildings with its local partners:-

- Ambulance services share a significant number of sites including Newton, Formby, Croxteth, Birkenhead, Southport and with a number of other sites under consideration
- Joint work with the Merseyside Police has resulted in the development of a Joint Command and Control Centre
- Local Authority partners share the community facilities and use the fire service brand to draw in its own customers
- A range of preventative programmes with RSL’s
- The Toxteth Firefit Hub is a unique collaboration with Liverpool City Council to deliver a youth zone and fire station

### **Helping the Young & Elderly**

The enhanced facilities provided on our new community fire stations will enable the Service to interact more closely with the young and elderly in our communities through the provision of:

- Prince's Trust programmes for young adults aged 16 to 25
- BEACON courses 12 week programme (one day a week) for school children to learn about team building
- Young firefighter schemes for 8 to 12 year olds
- Diversionary courses run for young people in partnership with the local authorities
- Street cage soccer – trained football coaches running skill camps.
- Road traffic collision reduction courses.
- Specific safety campaigns and specialist safety equipment provided to vulnerable elderly persons in the area.
- A fully accessible building for those with disabilities.

### **Digital Inclusion**

Over 40% of Merseysiders do not have access to the internet.

MFRA has invested in a network which allows us to provide safe, high quality internet access in a 'café' environment in all our stations.

### **Contribution to the Surroundings and Streetscape**

The new community fire stations have been designed as welcoming buildings that will enhance neighbourhoods and have a civic presence. It is hoped that the community will have a sense of pride in their local fire station and the building will become a landmark for generations to come. To achieve this, buildings have been designed to provide:

- The best use of the site by prominently positioning the station
- A bold and inviting community entrance
- A distinctive angled frontage and glass façade for the community hub on the first floor
- A media wall – the ability to display community safety messages on the glass of the community hub and enable the Service to enhance community awareness
- A sustainable, 'environmentally friendly' building
- Clear appliance bay doors to provide impressive views of the fire appliances and give a sense of reassurance that the Service is ready to help

## **Volunteering and Local Involvement**

Merseyside's own charitable arm the Fire Support Network as well as other charitable partners provide a range of services alongside the fire service including:-

- After Fire Support (Helping home owners recover from a fire)
- Youth engagement through Princes Trust and Street Cage Soccer programmes
- A range of preventative work including work with older communities

## **Community Urban Gardens**

Our fire stations provide

- community garden areas
- allotments and growing areas for young people in urban areas
- managed green space for leisure, education and relaxation
- managed barbecue pits for reading groups and community parties

<b>CONCLUSIONS – <u>Fire stations as Community Hubs</u></b>
MFRA recognises that our fire stations are important to and valued by the community we serve – they provide very much more than just an operational response
Public buildings work to their optimum when agencies work together to improve community outcomes.
MFRA has successfully shared accommodation on a large number of sites across the county. The joint service hub concept works well for the public.

## **F) Financial Implications**

Merseyside has already faced a significant financial challenge in recent years and more pertinently in the last spending review cycle. In response to unprecedented budget cuts :-

- The number of firefighters has reduced from 1500 to 760 in the last decade
- The number of appliances has reduced from 42 to 28
- However, to date, the number of fire stations has remained static at 26.

The Government has announced further funding cuts for 2015/16 and intends to continue cutting beyond this. The current forecast is that the Authority will face a significant deficit - current forecast at £9.1m by 2016/17. More major savings will have to be made.

Whilst efforts are always made to maximise the savings from the back office and technical areas it is reasonably expected that there will need to be multi million pound savings from front line services over the next three years.

The current revenue budget for the Authority on estates is £3.3m as set out below

	£'m	
	Budget	
Estates Staff	0.3	9%
Repairs & Maintenance	0.6	18%
Energy	0.7	21%
Rates	0.9	27%
Water	0.3	9%
Cleaning	0.3	9%
Fixtures and Fittings	0.1	3%
Supplies and Services	0.1	3%
	<b>3.3</b>	

The table above excludes the PFI Annual payments which are £2.6 m p.a offset by grant of £2.1 m. (Net £0.5m ).

The income from ambulance occupancy at PFI fire stations is currently at least £0.138m not including Bootle/Netherton. In addition they pay for their proportion of energy and rates costs

It is recognised that most of the cost of a fire station is in the firefighting staff within the building. Typically a 1 pump station costs about £1.1m per annum to run directly of which about £1m is staff costs and £0.1m relates to the building.



In relation to the assets of the Authority, capital investment is achieved for the most part by borrowing. In the longer term the borrowing costs of the Authority will reflect the asset base of the organisation. In recent years, as the overall budget has reduced, the repayment of debt has formed a bigger proportion of the total expenditure and (whilst exact comparison is difficult) is a higher proportion of the budget than for most FRA's. Unless the number of assets is reduced this will remain the case.

As the size of the organisation continues to reduce in line with budget pressures it has been identified that:

- Inroads cannot be made into corporate overheads unless the number of stations reduce
- Since most fire stations are now one pump, major savings can only be delivered by:-
  - Strategic mergers that reduce the number of appliances
  - Reducing the number of hours that stations are open or closing stations altogether

Encouraging partners to share buildings helps generate some income to offset the cost of stations.

#### CONCLUSIONS – Financial Implications

Given the financial pressures on the Authority large-scale savings will be required in the front line by 2016/17.

Encouraging partners to share buildings helps generate some income to offset the cost of stations.

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## CONCLUSIONS

**CONCLUSIONS - Location and Community Risk**

Merseyside's distribution of fire stations remains largely unchanged since the 1950's.

Since the original distribution pattern of stations was established the population of Merseyside has reduced dramatically and the risk pattern has changed significantly.

The number of incidents attended has reduced by over 50%.

**CONCLUSIONS – Comparison with other Fire and Rescue Services**

Merseyside's has more fire stations than most comparable fire authorities.

Merseyside's has no retained fire stations - across the country most authorities use the retained service.

Merseyside has **many** more whole time fire stations than most other authorities.

**CONCLUSIONS – Condition**

Merseyside's has 15 buildings that have been relatively newly built and meet our vision for quality facility provision.

This means there are 14 sites which are aged and in poor condition. Many of these sites realistically require a rebuild to achieve satisfactory facilities for public and staff.

In the poorer buildings, some quick wins have been identified that would improve firefighter and community conditions with little investment.

Corporate capacity to deliver major building works is already committed especially with the JCC.

**CONCLUSIONS – Operational response**

Operational response times are amongst the very highest in the country.

The revised performance standards could be met in theory from significantly fewer response sites. However this would impact on the community and prevention work.

### CONCLUSIONS – Fire stations as Community Hubs

MFRA recognises that our fire stations are important to and valued by the community we serve – they provide very much more than just an operational response.

Public buildings work to their optimum when agencies work together to improve community outcomes.

MFRA has successfully shared accommodation on a large number of sites across the county. The joint service hub concept works well for the public.

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Given the financial pressures on the Authority large-scale savings will be required in the front line by 2016/17.

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- That since most fire stations are now one pump, major savings can only be delivered by:-
  - Strategic merger that reduce the number of appliances
  - Reducing the number of hours that stations are open or closing stations altogether

## **Recommendations**

- 1) The Authority must identify strategic mergers that allow operational response to be maintained whilst improving community and firefighter facilities and reducing costs.

Having assessed the location of the newer stations and the operational response needs of the service the Chief Fire Officer has identified that the two key geographic options where strategic mergers should be considered following consultation are:-

- a) Wirral:

Merging West Kirby and Upton to create a much improved station with extensive community facilities at Greasby, which would allow response standards to be maintained whilst improving the capability for community partnerships.

In addition, consideration might be given to the opportunities for the future development of Heswall. This site is commercially attractive and working with private/public partners may create opportunities to improve facilities or relocate services.

- b) St Helens and Knowsley:

Members have already approved in principle the working up of a feasibility study for the merger of Huyton and Whiston fire stations at Prescott . There are a number of merger options to be considered across St Helen's and Knowsley including Huyton./Whiston, St Helens/Eccleston or Whiston/Eccleston

The Chief Fire Officer will report back with detailed proposals on how to take these recommendations forward.

- 2) For all stations the aim should be to encourage partners to create community hubs and to share costs, reduce wasted space and provide better facilities. Reserves should be used for invest to save schemes which deliver longer revenue streams from partners.
- 3) The Authority should sensibly invest in small scale works that would improve fire-fighter and community facilities at older stations in the short term. £0.5m of the capital investment reserve should be set aside to support those works.

- 4) The CFO should review the facilities at the TDA and report in full on what improvements and investments are required to ensure firefighter safety.
- 5) The following key projects will also be progressed:-

Plans are in place to **improve LLAR accommodation facilities** at Newton and Formby where additional land has been acquired and accommodation blocks will be built on site.

The new Joint Command and Control Centre with the police (including the refurbishment of HQ and the development of a new secondary MACC) is a major multi million pound project. Much of the focus of estates (and other support teams) will be on the delivery of this by May 2014 target.

A number of other **mid-scale projects** are already planned:

- Replace diesel tanks
- 5 year electrical testing
- Upton Training Tower
- Kensington Training Tower
- Demolish Claires Building at Liverpool City Community station

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**Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service**  
**Equality Impact Assessment Form**

<b>Title of policy/report/project:</b>	<b>Station Mergers and Closures OPTIONS and PROPOSALS</b>
<b>Department:</b>	<b>Strategy and Performance</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>EIA Stage 1 - 19.11.12</b> <b>EIA Stage 2 -</b> <b>EIA Stage 3 -</b>
<p><b><u>Scope of EIA</u></b></p> <p>The purpose of this EIA is to review information and intelligence available at an early stage in the development of options for station mergers and closures. It is intended that the EIA can be used to help inform decisions as the options progress and will help Principal Officers and Authority Members to understand equality related impacts on the decisions being made in relation to local diverse communities</p> <p>The EIA will be a living document which will developed further during the life cycle of the consultation stages. This initial EIA will provide be an opportunity to plan ahead for various activities such as community and staff consultation and equality data gathering</p> <p>The EIA will be conducted in a number of stages :</p> <p><b>Stage 1 – Desk Top Assessment by 3/12/13</b> :To provide Principal Officers with some initial thoughts on equality impacts arising from the Mergers and Closures Authority Report and provide an outline of what further data, research and consultation may be needed to inform the EIA fully in preparation for Community Engagement and Consultation Exercises in the new year (by 19/11/13)</p> <p><b>Stage 2 – Consultation External and Internal:</b> to gain feedback from those communities and MF&amp;RA Staff groups affected by the mergers and closures options to ensure equality impacts are considered throughout the process and included in the final version of the EIA for review by final decision makers (Dec 2013 onwards)</p> <p><b>Stage 3 – More detailed assessment on the local areas affected by options:</b> for Authority members to take into account at their meeting when they review the EIA in full. (By April 2014)</p>	

**1: What is the aim or purpose of the policy/report/project**

*This should identify “the legitimate aim” of the policy/report/project (there may be more than one)*

The reports purpose is to provide Authority Members a number of recommendations for approval, subject to public consultation, around station mergers and closures as follows:

Options for mergers

- Two stations on Wirral (West Kirby to merge with Upton at Greasby)
- Two stations in St Helens (Eccleston to merge with St Helens at a site in the St Helens town centre ward)
- Two stations in Knowsley (the merger of Huyton and Whiston which already has Authority approval)

In order to meet the budget cuts faced by the Authority as a result of Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) 13. These merger options, if approved, will deliver a reduction of 66 whole time equivalent (WTE) posts, reduce the Authority asset base down from 26 stations to 23 and deliver additional savings from a reduction in premises overheads

Options for closures

The incremental move from whole time crewing to day crewing to whole time retained crewing of at least one appliance in Liverpool and/or Sefton, resulting in the closure of one or more station. This change in crewing and station closure, if approved, will deliver a saving of 22 WTE posts deliver additional savings from a reduction in premises overheads

**The options for mergers and closures would not affect the local communities which live in and around the closure areas in relation to fire response times, they would remain within a 10 minute response time, and therefore this EIA will not focus on response times but around the following:**

- **The impact of the options and any changes (positive and negative) in relation to any particular equality groups of the local communities’ use of MF&RA services and stations**
- **The impact of options and any changes on staff affected by closures**

**2: Who will be affected by the policy/report/project?**

*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)*



Communities of Wirral , St Helens, Liverpool, Sefton and Knowsley  
MF&RA staff affected by the mergers and closures

### 3. Monitoring

*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?

3.1 Profile of Merseyside and Demographics 2012 report -

[http://intranetportal/sites/smd/equalityanddiversity/Shared%20Documents/Public%20Sector%20Equality%20Data%20-%20Reports%20for%202012/Profile%20of%20Merseyside%20\(Demography,%20Equality%20and%20Diversity\).pdf](http://intranetportal/sites/smd/equalityanddiversity/Shared%20Documents/Public%20Sector%20Equality%20Data%20-%20Reports%20for%202012/Profile%20of%20Merseyside%20(Demography,%20Equality%20and%20Diversity).pdf)

3.2 Ward Demographics from Census 2011 - **Appendix A**

3.2 Profile of MF&RA staff -

<http://intranetportal/sites/smd/equalityanddiversity/Shared%20Documents/Public%20Sector%20Equality%20Data%20-%20Reports%20for%202012/Public%20Sector%20Equality%20Data%20Report%20-%20Published%20version.pdf>

#### What did it show?

3.1 and 3.2 - The demographics in each of the districts is broadly similar with no significant differences to consider. (Significant being + or- 5% difference). To gain a greater understanding of the make-up of the local communities affected by the impact of the closures and mergers, demographics for the local wards broadly covered by each station have been produced in **Appendix A**

Notable highlights showing differences in relation to the average for each district area are as follows:

#### **Huyton**

**Age Structure:** The Huyton Station ground has a mix of age groups depending on the ward; the wards of Longview and Page Moss have younger populations whilst the wards of Prescott West, Roby and Stockbridge in particular have older populations.

**Socio Economic (including Disability):** In Page Moss, Longview and Stockbridge wards in particular there are well above average levels of people with disability or long term health problems. Within these same wards there are proportionally high levels of adult unemployment.

**Racial Profile:** Within the Station Ground the predominant ethnicity grouping is

"White". Within the Huyton Station Area, the ward of Longview has above district average counts of BME population particularly "Asian/British Asian" persons.

### **Whiston**

Age Structure: The Whiston Station Ground has a mix of age groups depending on the ward. The wards of Rainhill and Whiston North primarily have older populations whilst the wards of Prescot East and Whiston South have younger populations.

Socio Economic: There are no negative Socio Economic factors in the Whiston station ground.

Racial Profile: Within the Station Ground the predominant ethnicity grouping is "White". However BME populations are more diverse within this station ground with above average populations of "Asian/British Asian" in each ward and above average populations of "Black /African /Caribbean/ Black British" within Prescot East.

### **St Helens**

Age Structure: The St Helens Station Ground has a mix of age groups depending on the ward. The wards of: Parr, Bold, Sutton, Thatto Heath, Town Centre tends to have younger populations - particularly Parr and Thatto Heath. By contrast the wards of: Billinge & Seneley Green and Blackbrook have older populations

Socio Economic: The wards of: Parr, Thatto Heath, Sutton and Moss Bank have higher than average levels of adult unemployment as well as having above average levels of disability / long-term illness in these wards.

Racial Profile: Within the Station Ground the predominant ethnicity grouping is "White". The wards of Town Centre and Thatto Heath (in particular) are the most culturally diverse with well above average counts particularly of "Asian/British Asian" residents. Both Wards also have above average counts of "Black /African /Caribbean/ Black British" people, though this is to a lesser extent to "Asian/British Asian" residents. St Helens has a significant Gypsy and Traveller community.

### **Eccleston**

Age Structure: The Eccleston Station Ground has a mix of age groups depending on the ward. The wards of Eccleston and Rainford (Rainford has one of the highest average population ages in Merseyside) have older populations whilst the wards of West Park and Windle have younger populations.

Socio Economic: The wards of Eccleston and West Park have slightly above average levels of unemployment within the Eccleston station ground. West Park also has slightly above average levels of long term sickness / disability.

Racial Profile: Within the Station Ground the predominant ethnicity grouping is "White", Rainford and West Park have particularly low levels of BME residents. Within the Station Area the Ward of Eccleston has slightly above average BME population "Asian/British Asian" for and West Park has slightly above average counts "Black /African /Caribbean/ Black British" residents.

### **Upton**

Age Structure: The Upton Station Ground has a mix of age groups depending on the ward. Pensby & Thingwall, Greasby, Frankby - Irby and Claughton have older than average populations.

Socio Economic: Generally within the Upton Station there are no particularly significant Socio Economic issues, with the Exception of the Bidston & St James ward which primarily rests within the Upton Station Ground. Bidston and St James have well above average adult unemployment and levels of long term health

problems / disability.

Racial Profile: Within the Station Ground the predominant ethnicity grouping is "White". Claughton and Bidston & St James have the most diverse populations with above average counts of "Asian/British Asian" residents.

**West Kirby**

Age Structure: The West Kirby Station Ground has a mix of age groups depending on the ward. The demographic for the wards of Hoylake & Meols and West Kirby & Thurstaston is much older than the Wirral average.

Socio Economic: There are no negative Socio Economic factors in the West Kirby station ground.

Racial Profile: Within the Station Ground the predominant ethnicity grouping is "White".

**3.3- Staff Demographics for Operational Staff**

95% of operational uniformed staff are Male and 5% are Female

65% of operational uniformed staff are aged 41 to 50

5% of Operational staff have declared a Disability or Long term health condition

3% of MF&RS staff are Black Minority Ethnic the remainder are classed as White

**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 FRAs, etc*

**What research have you considered?**

4.1 A review of the Access Audit report - results for the stations affected by options

**What did it show?**

The Equality Act 2010 replaced and enhanced the Disability Discrimination Acts (DDA) 1995 & 2005. It sets out the legislation for Public Bodies to make reasonable adjustments to premises to enable disabled people to access all services and fully participate in public life. MF&RA has conducted access audits for all its stations (except new builds) and is in the process of reporting on the results and recommendations to the Authority in December 2013.

The Audits have highlighted significant access issues for the stations identified in the mergers and closures options with a total of **£ 267,875** cost for making them more accessible Community Fire Stations. It has been an important factor when considering the options and proposals for station mergers and closures

<p>Review of MF&amp;RA Community Profiles for station areas affected by proposals to help understand the type of communities who may be affected by the options and consider their needs.</p> <p>A review of current Partnership agreements for stations affected by proposals to help understand the impact of station closures /mergers on those service users</p>	<p>and the building of new stations.</p> <p>Currently being worked on ready for Stage 2 of the EIA</p> <p>Currently being worked on ready for Stage 2 of the EIA</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></p> <p><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>No Consultation has taken place at Stage 1 of this EIA, however consultation is proposed to take place in two stages to scrutinise the OPTIONS and consider others. As such it is proposed to enter into consultation comprising of a) a more open-ended listening and engagement phase on the OPTIONS and b) a Formal consultation process on the eventual PROPOSALS. Part of the consultation process will take into account the needs and experiences of those equality protected groups who have been deemed to be affected by the mergers and closures.</p> <p>Consultation specifically with Protected Groups (as required by the Equality Act 2010) in relation to this EIA and its assessment of the mergers and closures report /options is currently being planned by the Diversity and Consultation Manager. A number of cost effective options are being considered within the time frame available including :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of a new MF&amp;RA Diversity Consultation Forum ; a public voice for diverse groups across each district</li> <li>• Using the 2 stage consultation process mentioned above to consult on the EIA with representative groups from those protected groups affected by the Options and subsequent proposals (where representation is available )</li> <li>• Consultation with Community Groups currently using the Stations identified as potentially being closed and merged – Impact on equality</li> <li>• Making the EIA accessible via the Staff Portal and MF&amp;RS Webpage to enable staff , stakeholders and the public to make comments and provide feedback easily</li> </ul>	

**What did it say?**

To follow with Stage 2 and 3

**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 needs of different Age groups, especially those minority age groups, in relation to station mergers and closures options and proposals are difficult to fully assess at this early stage of the EIA. Section 3 and 4 sets out the current age profiles which should be considered when taking into account possible options for closures and mergers. Engagement and consultation will provide more opportunities to assess negative and positive impacts and results will be used to inform Stage 2 and 3 of this EIA.

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

The building of new stations will be positive for the disabled communities affected by the station mergers as the development of new high functioning stations will enable disabled people to access community services delivered from Fire Stations.

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

*As a) above but in relation to Race and Minority ethnic groups*

**(d) Religion or Belief**

*As a) above but in relation to Religion and Belief and minority faith groups*

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

*As a) above but in relation to Gender and Gender Reassignment*

**(f) Sexual Orientation**

*As a) above but in relation to the needs of minority sexual orientation groups*

**(g) Socio-economic disadvantage**

*As a) above but in relation to the needs of those most affected financially (if at all) by any mergers and closures.*

**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.*

**EIA Stage 1 – Decisions**

On reviewing the research and data available for stage 1 of this EIA, there are no significant equality Impacts established so far with the exception of Disability, where current stations earmarked for mergers are currently not fully accessible for disabled community groups.

It is important to note that the impact of the Mergers and Station Closure Options and subsequent Proposals will not impact on any members of the public disproportionately in relation to the current level of service received by these groups e.g. response times and fire safety , prevention and protection services

**EIA Stage 2 – Decisions**

To follow

**EIA Stage 3 – Decisions**

To Follow

**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**

**Signed off by:**

Wendy Kenyon

**Date:**

19.11.13- EIA Stage 1

<b>Action Planned</b>	<b>Responsibility of</b>	<b>Completed by</b>
<b>Actions Identified during EIA stage 1</b>		
9.1 Consultation with Staff , Stakeholders and Communities , in relation to the EIA and its assessment of the Mergers and Closures Options and subsequent Proposals ; specifically those Protected groups and the potential impact ( both negative and positive )	Diversity and Consultation Manager (DCM) with Support from IRMP Officer	Jan-April14
9.2 Analysis of Community Profiles for station areas affected to understand the types of communities affected by the	Business Intelligence Manager and DCM	TBC

Mergers and Closures Options and subsequent Proposals		
9.3 Equality analysis of those staff affected by the Options and subsequent Proposals to see if any particular protected group are affected disproportionately.	DCM with support from POD	TBC
<b>Actions Identified during EIA stage 2</b> TBC		
<b>Actions Identified during EIA Stage 3</b> TBC		
<p>For any advice, support or guidance about completing this form please contact the <a href="mailto:DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk">DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk</a> or on 0151 296 4237</p>		



## Appendix A – ONS Demographic Equality Data by Station Ward

### Age Structure

District	Station Affected	2011 ward	All usual residents	Mean Age	District Average
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000870 : Longview	8,726	36	39
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000872 : Page Moss	7,076	38	39
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000875 : Prescott West	6,535	44	39
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000876 : Roby	7,254	44	39
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000878 : St Gabriels	6,565	39	39
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000879 : St Michaels	6,920	39	39
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000881 : Stockbridge	6,018	40	39
Knowsley	Whiston	E05000874 : Prescott East	7,604	38	39
Knowsley	Whiston	E05000883 : Whiston North	6,908	41	39
Knowsley	Whiston	E05000884 : Whiston South	7,355	39	39
St Helens	Whiston	E05000926 : Rainhill	10,853	46	41
St Helens	St Helens	E05000916 : Billinge and Seneley Green	11,080	44	41
St Helens	St Helens	E05000917 : Blackbrook	10,639	41	41
St Helens	St Helens	E05000918 : Bold	9,759	38	41
St Helens	St Helens	E05000922 : Moss Bank	10,682	42	41
St Helens	St Helens	E05000924 : Parr	12,199	37	41
St Helens	St Helens	E05000927 : Sutton	12,003	41	41
St Helens	St Helens	E05000928 : Thatto Heath	12,280	38	41
St Helens	St Helens	E05000929 : Town Centre	10,978	39	41
St Helens	Eccleston	E05000925 : Rainford	7,779	47	41
St Helens	Eccleston	E05000920 : Eccleston	11,525	45	41
St Helens	Eccleston	E05000930 : West Park	11,392	40	41
St Helens	Eccleston	E05000931 : Windle	10,690	41	41
Wirral	Upton	E05000955 : Bidston and St James	15,216	36	41
Wirral	Upton	E05000959 : Claughton	14,705	42	41
Wirral	Upton	E05000961 : Greasby, Frankby and Irby	13,991	45	41



Wirral	Upton	E05000966 : Moreton West and Saughall Massie	13,988	42	41
Wirral	Upton	E05000969 : Pensby and Thingwall	13,007	46	41
Wirral	Upton	E05000973 : Upton	16,130	42	41
Wirral	West Kirby	E05000975 : West Kirby and Thurstaston	12,733	45	41
Wirral	West Kirby	E05000963 : Hoylake and Meols	13,348	44	41

### Ethnicity Table

Above District Average

District	Station Affected	2011 ward	All categories: Ethnic group	White: Total	White: %	Mixed/multiple ethnic group: Total	Mixed/multiple ethnic group: %	Asian/Asian British: Total	Asian/Asian British: %	Black African/Caribbean/Black British: Total
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000870 : Longview	8,726	8,414	96.4%	140	1.6%	112	1.3%	5
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000872 : Page Moss	7,076	6,947	98.2%	75	1.1%	36	0.5%	1
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000875 : Prescott West	6,535	6,388	97.8%	58	0.9%	61	0.9%	1
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000876 : Roby	7,254	7,148	98.5%	50	0.7%	30	0.4%	1
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000878 : St Gabriels	6,565	6,434	98.0%	49	0.7%	49	0.7%	2
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000879 : St Michaels	6,920	6,768	97.8%	82	1.2%	55	0.8%	
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000881 : Stockbridge	6,018	5,843	97.1%	90	1.5%	33	0.5%	3
Knowsley	Whiston	E05000874 : Prescott East	7,604	7,300	96.0%	109	1.4%	160	2.1%	2
Knowsley	Whiston	E05000883 : Whiston North	6,908	6,604	95.6%	60	0.9%	203	2.9%	2
Knowsley	Whiston	E05000884 : Whiston South	7,355	7,144	97.1%	113	1.5%	73	1.0%	2
Knowsley Average			7,096	6,899	97.2%	83	1.2%	81	1.1%	2
St Helens	Whiston	E05000926 : Rainhill	10,853	10,498	96.7%	83	0.8%	240	2.2%	
St Helens	St Helens	E05000916 : Billinge and Seneley Green	11,080	10,948	98.8%	67	0.6%	46	0.4%	
St Helens	St Helens	E05000917 : Blackbrook	10,639	10,474	98.4%	49	0.5%	90	0.8%	

St Helens	St Helens	E05000918 : Bold	9,759	9,618	98.6%	65	0.7%	50	0.5%	1
St Helens	St Helens	E05000922 : Moss Bank	10,682	10,568	98.9%	46	0.4%	50	0.5%	1
St Helens	St Helens	E05000924 : Parr	12,199	11,972	98.1%	97	0.8%	97	0.8%	2
St Helens	St Helens	E05000927 : Sutton	12,003	11,837	98.6%	87	0.7%	63	0.5%	1
St Helens	St Helens	E05000928 : Thatto Heath	12,280	11,829	96.3%	120	1.0%	270	2.2%	3
St Helens	St Helens	E05000929 : Town Centre	10,978	10,684	97.3%	69	0.6%	191	1.7%	1
St Helens	Eccleston	E05000920 : Eccleston	11,525	11,302	98.1%	76	0.7%	121	1.0%	1
St Helens	Eccleston	E05000925 : Rainford	7,779	7,682	98.8%	34	0.4%	43	0.6%	1
St Helens	Eccleston	E05000930 : West Park	11,392	11,183	98.2%	79	0.7%	88	0.8%	2
St Helens	Eccleston	E05000931 : Windle	10,690	10,564	98.8%	50	0.5%	58	0.5%	1
<b>St Helens Average</b>			<b>11,203</b>	<b>10,991</b>	<b>98.1%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>1</b>
Wirral	Upton	E05000955 : Bidston and St James	15,216	14,659	96.3%	238	1.6%	270	1.8%	3
Wirral	Upton	E05000959 : Claughton	14,705	14,147	96.2%	163	1.1%	344	2.3%	2
Wirral	Upton	E05000961 : Greasby, Frankby and Irby	13,991	13,685	97.8%	112	0.8%	146	1.0%	2
Wirral	Upton	E05000966 : Moreton West and Saughall Massie	13,988	13,722	98.1%	87	0.6%	134	1.0%	2
Wirral	Upton	E05000969 : Pensby and Thingwall	13,007	12,744	98.0%	109	0.8%	132	1.0%	1
Wirral	Upton	E05000973 : Upton	16,130	15,587	96.6%	123	0.8%	352	2.2%	3
Wirral	West Kirby	E05000963 : Hoylake and Meols	13,348	13,019	97.5%	139	1.0%	139	1.0%	1
Wirral	West Kirby	E05000975 : West Kirby and Thurstaston	12,733	12,326	96.8%	170	1.3%	168	1.3%	1
<b>Wirral Average</b>			<b>14,140</b>	<b>13,736</b>	<b>97.1%</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>2</b>

Disability Table

Above District Average

District	Station Affected	2011 ward	All categories: Long-term health problem or disability	Day-to-day activities limited a lot	Day-to-day activities limited a lot %	Day-to-day activities limited a little	Day-to-day activities limited a little %	Day-to-day activities not limited	Day-to-day activities not limited %
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000870 : Longview	8,726	1,367	15.7%	904	10.4%	6,455	74.0%
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000872 : Page Moss	7,076	1,239	17.5%	802	11.3%	5,035	71.2%
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000875 : Prescott West	6,535	1,007	15.4%	828	12.7%	4,700	71.9%
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000876 : Roby	7,254	829	11.4%	722	10.0%	5,703	78.6%
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000878 : St Gabriels	6,565	893	13.6%	666	10.1%	5,006	76.3%
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000879 : St Michaels	6,920	1,042	15.1%	692	10.0%	5,186	74.9%
Knowsley	Huyton	E05000881 : Stockbridge	6,018	1,206	20.0%	730	12.1%	4,082	67.8%
Knowsley	Whiston	E05000874 : Prescott East	7,604	1,025	13.5%	817	10.7%	5,762	75.8%
Knowsley	Whiston	E05000883 : Whiston North	6,908	890	12.9%	701	10.1%	5,317	77.0%
Knowsley	Whiston	E05000884 : Whiston South	7,355	893	12.1%	739	10.0%	5,723	77.8%
Knowsley Average			7,096	1,039	14.6%	760	10.7%	5,297	74.6%
St Helens	Whiston	E05000926 : Rainhill	10,853	1,312	12.1%	1,212	11.2%	8,329	76.7%
St Helens	St Helens	E05000916 : Billinge and Seneley Green	11,080	1,192	10.8%	1,243	11.2%	8,645	78.0%
St Helens	St Helens	E05000917 : Blackbrook	10,639	1,298	12.2%	1,146	10.8%	8,195	77.0%
St Helens	St Helens	E05000918 : Bold	9,759	1,176	12.1%	976	10.0%	7,607	77.9%
St Helens	St Helens	E05000922 : Moss Bank	10,682	1,433	13.4%	1,235	11.6%	8,014	75.0%
St Helens	St Helens	E05000924 : Parr	12,199	1,864	15.3%	1,319	10.8%	9,016	73.9%
St Helens	St Helens	E05000927 : Sutton	12,003	1,569	13.1%	1,253	10.4%	9,181	76.5%
St Helens	St Helens	E05000928 : Thatto Heath	12,280	1,658	13.5%	1,250	10.2%	9,372	76.3%
St Helens	St Helens	E05000929 : Town Centre	10,978	1,656	15.1%	1,252	11.4%	8,070	73.5%
St Helens	Eccleston	E05000920 : Eccleston	11,525	1,201	10.4%	1,233	10.7%	9,091	78.9%
St Helens	Eccleston	E05000925 : Rainford	7,779	850	10.9%	907	11.7%	6,022	77.4%
St Helens	Eccleston	E05000930 : West Park	11,392	1,362	12.0%	1,209	10.6%	8,821	77.4%

St Helens	Eccleston	E05000931 : Windle	10,690	1,140	10.7%	1,082	10.1%	8,468	79.2%
St Helens Average			10,917	1,367	12.5%	1,175	10.8%	8,375	76.7%
Wirral	Upton	E05000955 : Bidston and St James	15,216	2,441	16.0%	1,748	11.5%	11,027	72.5%
Wirral	Upton	E05000959 : Claughton	14,705	1,940	13.2%	1,556	10.6%	11,209	76.2%
Wirral	Upton	E05000961 : Greasby, Frankby and Irby	13,991	1,233	8.8%	1,536	11.0%	11,222	80.2%
Wirral	Upton	E05000966 : Moreton West and Saughall Massie	13,988	1,782	12.7%	1,413	10.1%	10,793	77.2%
Wirral	Upton	E05000969 : Pensby and Thingwall	13,007	1,528	11.7%	1,539	11.8%	9,940	76.4%
Wirral	Upton	E05000973 : Upton	16,130	2,408	14.9%	1,778	11.0%	11,944	74.0%
Wirral	West Kirby	E05000963 : Hoylake and Meols	13,348	1,296	9.7%	1,337	10.0%	10,715	80.3%
Wirral	West Kirby	E05000975 : West Kirby and Thurstaston	12,733	1,187	9.3%	1,361	10.7%	10,185	80.0%
Wirral Average			14,140	1,727	12.2%	1,534	10.8%	10,879	76.9418%

**Example consultation programme - 12 weeks**

**Scenario - Merger of stations 1 and 2 in one council area at a third location in the same council area**

**note: Programme would be coordinated by Strategy and Performance**

	Consultation	Communication				Consultation														
Type	Presentation to Council	Marketing of consultation events	Staff communication Station 1	Staff communication Station 2	Staff communication - other stations in the council areas	Online surveys staff	Online surveys Public	Rep body consultation	Station users consultation	Public Focus Group Station Area 1	Public Meeting Station Area 1	Public Focus Group Station Area 2	Public Meeting Station Area 2	Public Focus Group NEW Station Area	Public Meeting NEW Station Area	Joint Stakeholder Business Breakfast	Joint Forum (using members of the existing IRMP forums)	Staff meeting - Station 1	Staff meeting - Station 2	Staff Meeting - other stations in the council areas
Date	Wk 1	Weeks 1-5	Week 1	Week 1	Week 2-4	Week 1 - 12	Week 1 - 12	Week 1 - 12	Week 1 - 12	Week 4	Week 4	Week 5	Week 5	Week 6	Week 6	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 8	week 9-11
Officer representing MFRS	Principal Officer	NA	District Manager	District Manager	District Manager	NA	NA	NA	District Manager	Principal Officer	Principal Officer	Principal Officer	Principal Officer	Principal Officer	Principal Officer	Principal Officer	Principal Officer	District Manager	District Manager	District Manager
External Facilitator (where applicable)									TBC	Yes	TBC	Yes	TBC	Yes	TBC	Yes	Yes			

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**AGENDA ITEM:**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE &amp; RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> DECEMBER 2013</b>
<b>REPORT NO.</b>	<b>CFO/138/13</b>
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	<b>CHIEF FIRE OFFICER</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT GROUP</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>DCLG CONSULTATION ON FITNESS AND CAPABILITY – MFRA RESPONSE</b>

**APPENDIX A**

**LETTER FROM BRANDON LEWIS -  
CONSULTATION ON FITNESS AND  
CAPABILITY**

**APPENDIX B**

**LETTER FROM CFRA – DRAFT  
PRINCIPLES ON FITNESS AND  
CAPABILITY**

**APPENDIX C**

**MFRA CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

Purpose of Report

1. To request that Members approve the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) response to the consultation initiated by the Fire Minister Brandon Lewis on the draft set of principles advanced in relation to Firefighter fitness and capability.

Recommendations

2. That Members approve the MFRA response to the consultation initiated by the Fire Minister Brandon Lewis on the draft set of principles advanced in relation to Firefighter fitness and capability.

### Introduction & Background

3. On 17<sup>th</sup> May 2013 the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) advised the Fire Minister that a national trade dispute existed between the FBU and Ministers over the issue of reform of the Fire and Rescue Service pension scheme. The FBU also notified Fire and Rescue Authorities (including Merseyside) of their position at that time. A ballot for industrial action was called on 12 July 2013.
4. The ballot concluded on 29<sup>th</sup> August and returned a 76% yes vote in favour of strike action. Since that time 4 periods of strike action have been undertaken by the FBU.
5. On 1<sup>st</sup> November the Fire Minister Brandon Lewis wrote to all Fire and Rescue Authorities announcing a consultation on a draft set of principles relating to fitness and capability. A copy of this letter is attached at Appendix A. This letter was accompanied by an additional letter from the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor which listed the draft principles (attached at Appendix B). It is the intention of the Minister to consult on this set of principles and then afford the principles the status of national guidance through reference within the Fire and Rescue National Framework.
6. Whilst many of the principles reflect what is accepted as good employment practice there are none the less a number of concerns for the Authority. The proposed MFRA response is attached at Appendix C and articulates all of those concerns (which were also raised by the Chair of the Authority at the meeting of the National Employers in London on 24<sup>th</sup> October called to discuss this issue).

### Equality & Diversity Implications

7. There are some potential Equality and Diversity implications arising from the proposed principles particularly around redeployment and pay parity.

### Staff Implications

8. There are direct and indirect staff implications associated with the proposed principles contained within this report with respect to firefighter fitness and capability, the details of which are contained within Appendix C.

### Legal Implications

9. If anyone is dismissed due to capability or there are equal pay claims or claims of sex discrimination, this could lead to a challenge in the employment Tribunal which would bring a potential cost to the Authority whether a case is “won” or “lost”.

### Financial Implications & Value for Money

10. The financial implications associated with the adoption of the principles remains unclear. The MFRA consultation response suggests that the government should pick up any additional costs as a new burden.



Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

11. There are no Health, Safety or Welfare implications contained within this report.

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

12. There is no direct contribution to the Mission resulting from this report.

**Glossary of Terms**

FBU - Fire Brigades Union

CFRA - Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor

MFRA - Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

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**Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government**

**Brandon Lewis MP**  
*Parliamentary Under Secretary of State*

***Department for Communities and Local  
Government***

Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU

To: Chairmen of fire and rescue authorities in  
England  
Chairman of the LGA's Fire Service Management  
Committee  
Chief Fire Officers and Chief Executives of fire  
and rescue authorities in England  
Fire service representative bodies  
CFOA

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[www.gov.uk/dclg](http://www.gov.uk/dclg)

1 November 2013

Dear Colleagues

## **CONSULTATION ON FITNESS AND CAPABILITY**

The national employers and the Fire Brigades' Union have been unable to come to agreement on some basic principles regarding promoting fitness and managing capability in fire and rescue authorities.

To attempt to resolve the area of disagreement between them, I have indicated to both sides that I will consult on a set of draft principles with the intention that they become national guidance, to be adopted and elaborated upon by individual fire and rescue authorities. It is my intention to commission an independent review of the adopted principles three years after they have been issued to assess whether they are fit for purpose and being properly implemented. I will also reference agreed principles in the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework.

I have asked the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser to prepare and administer a consultation on these principles. This consultation is attached, and closely follows the principles provided by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the Scottish Government to the Fire Brigades Union, and also by the employers in their letter to the Fire Brigades Union on the 17 October.

I believe that the working of these principles, along with robust management systems and existing employment law, will ensure that no conscientious firefighter will leave the service without access to a job or a pension after they are age 55. Dr Williams in his independent report, found that 100 per cent of firefighters, following an appropriate exercise regime, should be able to maintain fitness to the age of 60. Naturally, where there is a genuine permanent medical condition, ill-health arrangements will provide access to a pension. I also believe that there is considerable scope for authorities to implement workforce management policies that provide for alternative operational roles. These include driving, pump operating, small fires units, specialist external rescue and fire safety.

I would also like to reiterate that these are not new issues. The 2006 scheme introduced a normal pension age of 60. It is also the case that there are very strong transitional protections in place for the existing workforce, and the new arrangements for those continuing work over

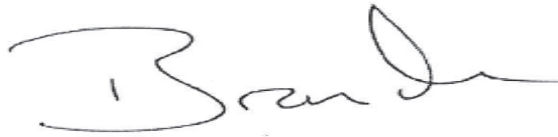
55 years of age, will not impact for at least a further nine years. As a consequence there will be a considerable amount of time to get appropriate arrangements in place across all fire and rescue authorities, including developing the right and most accurate regimes for fitness and tests, and the development of alternative operational roles.

I should also point out that there is a considerable amount of experience in dealing with older workers in fire and rescue authorities, as over 500 operational firefighters are already 55 and over, and we are not aware of any capability issues putting them at risk of dismissal.

It is also a fact that firefighters would not have to retire at 55 without a job or a pension. All firefighters will have the right to access an actuarially reduced pension at 55. All pension earned before transfer to the 2015 scheme will be fully protected.

A firefighter who earns £29,000, and retires after a full career aged sixty, will get a £19,000 a year pension, rising to £26,000 with the state pension. An equivalent private pension pot would be worth over half a million pounds and require firefighters to contribute twice as much.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brandon Lewis', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**BRANDON LEWIS**



1 November 2013

## **FITNESS AND CAPABILITY CONSULTATION**

The fitness of employees is a matter of paramount importance to all employers – not least in the fire and rescue service. It is also vitally important that individual firefighters take responsibility for their own fitness, and take the appropriate amount of exercise. We think that a good employer would expect their employees to be diligent in maintaining fitness, while at the same time offering appropriate support to those whose fitness falls below required levels. I know that many of you have made good progress in this area, and have evidence of existing good practice.

It is with these points in mind that the Minister for Fire, Brandon Lewis MP, has asked me to conduct a consultation with a view to agreeing some core, basic principles on fitness and capability across the fire and rescue service in England. The intention is to provide a framework within which each fire and rescue authority can adopt its own particular policies; provide reassurance to individual firefighters; and be transparent with local communities regarding the treatment of fitness and capability issues in individual fire and rescue authorities.

To assist in ensuring a standardised response, I have set out the annex in the form of a questionnaire. However, please do not feel restricted by this, and provide any additional information you feel might be helpful. Please provide attachments if you feel that this would be useful.

I would be grateful if you could complete the attached questionnaire and provide any further comments you have on this to: [Melanie.Gillett@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Melanie.Gillett@communities.gsi.gov.uk) by Friday 6 December. If you have any queries please contact Melanie on: 030344 41047.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Peter Holland'.

PETER HOLLAND  
Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser

## TEXT BEING CONSULTED ON

### **Firefighter Fitness Standards and Assessments: Key Principles**

All parties recognise the importance of physical fitness for operational firefighting personnel. All parties have a role to play in ensuring that firefighters remain fit throughout their career, in particular the firefighter themselves. However, should the firefighter conscientiously follow a programme of development and support, not have an underlying permanent medical condition, and yet still cannot maintain their fitness, then they should begin the authority initiated early retirement process. If the following principles are agreed, then this should never happen, or only happen in the rarest of circumstances.

The following key principles provide the foundation upon which a fitness assessment policy and associated processes will be based:

1. Firefighting is a physically demanding occupation and it is essential that firefighters have sufficient levels of fitness to enable them to carry out their tasks as safely and effectively as possible. As such, this requires higher levels of fitness than most other occupations and therefore the NJC role maps set out a specific requirement for operational personnel to maintain levels of personal fitness.
2. Fitness standards must reflect the occupational demands of firefighting and the Department commits to working with all parties with equal representation through a Joint Working Party, to determine safe standards.
3. A process of fitness assessment and development is required in each fire authority to ensure that operational personnel maintain a minimum standard of personal fitness in order to safely perform operational duties.
4. Fitness levels may decline with age and whilst this may be mitigated by fitness training, diet and other lifestyle changes it is acknowledged that there may be a general decline in fitness as a result of the ageing process. All operational personnel will be provided with support to maintain their levels of fitness for the duration of their career.
5. There will be periodic reviews with an independent chair to ensure that appropriate fitness standards, training, testing, monitoring and management policies and procedures are in place in each fire and rescue authority and working effectively to deliver the principles contained within this document. The first review will commence three years after the adoption of these principles.
6. Fire and Rescue Authorities, as good employers, should not put operational personnel in a situation where they face “no job, no pension” and no individual will automatically face dismissal if they do not achieve the minimum standard required. It is recognised that firefighters from the age of 55 can retire and claim a pension.
7. Where operational personnel do not achieve the minimum agreed fitness standard consideration will be given to whether an individual is able to continue on full operational duties or should be stood down, taking into account the advice provided

by the authority's occupational health provider. In making this decision the safety and well-being of the individual will be the key issue.

8. Fire and rescue authorities commit to providing a minimum of 6 months of development and support to enable individuals who do not achieve the minimum agreed standard to regain the necessary levels of fitness.
9. Where underlying medical reasons are identified that restrict/prevent someone from achieving the necessary fitness then a referral will be made to occupational health and the individual will again receive the necessary support to facilitate a return to operational duties.
10. Where the medical condition does not allow a return to operational duties, Fire and Rescue Authorities will fully explore opportunities for reasonable adjustments or redeployment within role. In those circumstances where there are no opportunities for reasonable adjustments or redeployment within role then the fire authority will commence an assessment for ill-health retirement through the IQMP process.
11. If no underlying medical issues are identified and following a programme of development and support it becomes apparent that an individual will be permanently unable to regain the necessary levels of fitness, then a fire authority will fully explore opportunities for reasonable adjustments and/or redeployment within role. In those circumstances where there are no opportunities for reasonable adjustments or redeployment within role, a fire authority will commence the authority initiated early retirement process.

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QUESTIONS

1. Do you think that these principles, supplemented by an independent review in three years, provide an acceptable framework for you to take forward issues of fitness and capability?

No

Please comment on your response below

*Views on the Proposals*

*For the most part the principles are in line with what any good employer would do and what Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) already have in place to support staff.*

*The significant concerns for MFRA are:-*

*Status of Guidance – What is the legal status of this document and what are the expectations of government as to how local authorities should follow the guidance / exercise local discretion? This needs to be absolutely clear for all parties.*

*Principle 6 – This should be removed in its entirety or amended to state clearly that a Firefighter aged 55 or over can retire on an actuarially reduced pension.*

*Principle 7 – Remove the reference to 'be stood down'. A Firefighter in these circumstances would be redeployed and/or subject to the Authority capability procedure.*

*Principle 10 – All parties must realise that because of a number of issues including the unprecedented financial pressures faced by authorities resulting in the downsizing of the workforce and equal pay considerations that the options for redeployment within role are extremely limited if not non-existent.*

*Principle 11 – It is not clear if an authority commences an authority initiated early retirement process whether or not there is an expectation that the authority initiated early retirement would be awarded. All parties must have a clear and unambiguous understanding on what this means in practice and whether any discretion remains with the authority. It must also be made clear that there is no cost to the authority incurred and that any costs will be met by Government.*

*Potential Costs of the Proposal*

*In general terms if someone retires early under the new scheme proposals then they would receive an actuarially reduced pension. At present the authority has the discretion to award a non- actuarially reduced pension if they initiate the local authority initiated early retirement process. However this comes at a cost.*

*Where a pension is paid under rule 6 of Part 3 (authority-initiated early retirement), an amount equal to the difference between the amount of the pension paid and the amount that would have been paid had a pension been payable from the same date under rule 5 of that Part (member initiated early retirement), shall be transferred to the FPF from any other fund maintained by the authority. The FPF is the Firefighter Pension Fund maintained by the Authority. All pension payments to retired firefighters are charged to this fund, the employer and employee contributions are paid over into the fund and any net deficit is funded by a top up grant from government*

*It is not clear if there would be an expectation of staff/government that in every such case a non-actuarially reduced pension would be paid. If that were to be the case in the absence of any statement/guidance to the contrary it would seem the costs would fall to the employer as a new burden. These costs are potentially very high.*

**There needs to be absolute clarity provided that there is no cost to the employer arising from these principles and in relation to how government is funding any such costs.**

*There are concerns that having such an arrangement in place might undo the good work authorities have undertaken in recent years in managing ill-health within the service since there might be an 'incentive' for staff to seek to retire once beyond the age of 55 if there was likely to be no penalty in relation to pension costs.*

2. Do you have fitness policies and standards already in place in your authority, including policies to support those who become unfit?

Yes

Please give details and attach policies if available.

*The current fitness standard is derived from the Firefit Steering Group guidance – 42V02MAX.*

*With Firefighters remaining 'on the run' if they fall between 35V02MAX and 41V02MAX  
Anyone performing below 35V02MAX is taken off the run immediately – in both scenario's  
the firefighter is provided with a fitness plan, objectives and support to return to full fitness.*

3. If yes to the previous question, do these draft proposals differ from the policies, processes and principles already in operation in your Fire and Rescue Authority?

Yes

Please comment on your response below

*The Policy and supporting Service Instruction is under review based on the changing landscape and the proposed introduction of a capability procedure.*

*A copy of the revised DRAFT Policy and Service Instruction is attached*

4. Do you believe that there can be 'national fitness standard' or should this be left to local discretion.

Yes

Please give reasons for your answer below

*A National Fitness Standard should be adopted – The current firefighter rolemap includes such a focus (FF2) and the importance of remaining fit for duty.  
The work of the Firefit Steering group has suggested an appropriate standard which is supported through academic research. The Authority recognises that a firefighter has to be fit and capable of undertaking their role.*

*Having differing standards across the UK makes FRA's extremely vulnerable should the decision to dismiss on capability grounds be challenged.*

*Whilst authorities may need to discharge the responsibility differently there should not be a difference in the level of fitness expected – both in relation to the performance of the necessary operational duties of a firefighter but also in the context of ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of the employee.*

5. Do you have policies on authority initiated retirements under the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2006?

No

Please provide details below

*The authority currently has no formal policy on this matter and considers every case upon its merits. It should be noted that the authority does not currently employ members of the 2006 scheme who have retired or are near retirement.*

6. What operational roles for firefighters can be developed and would be suitable for people with lower levels of fitness.

Please list below:

*None*

*All parties must realise that because of a number of issues including the financial pressures, the downsizing of the workforce and equal pay issues that the options for redeployment within role are limited if not non-existent.*

*A number of possible roles are quoted in the consultation paper but MFRA have serious concerns about the practicalities of all of them. For example - why would any reasonable local authority employ an unfit firefighter just to drive an appliance when they can employ a green book member of staff just to drive the fire appliance at a much reduced cost? This could also be unfair to operational firefighters who would continue to maintain fitness and therefore continue operationally without the same opportunities.*

*Equally and as importantly it should be noted that as an integral component of a fire crew the driver does not just drive the fire appliance – they pump operate, run out hose, fetch and carry equipment and at a large scale incident fulfil operational roles which could include the wearing of breathing apparatus. If a firefighter who is unable to carry out these roles was accommodated on the appliance it could only be as an extra (unnecessary) role that would incur cost the public purse.*

*If any authority were to employ a firefighter to undertake Protection (Legislative Fire Safety) or Prevention (Community Fire Safety) duties they would be undertaking that work alongside green book staff who are on less favourable terms and conditions making the authority susceptible to equal pay claims or sex discrimination claims (given the vast majority of firefighters will be white male).*

*Firefighters are rewarded to reflect their working and operating effectively in a dynamic and risk critical environment – if they can no longer operate in that environment they become a very expensive alternative to fulfil other roles.*

*We are all striving for the maximum productivity out of the 'fixed cost' that we employ - the minimum number of operational responders to manage the risks in our IRMP. In many other sectors multi skilling has been the way to achieve maximum productivity to ensure that companies can keep all their human resources fully employed for the time they are at work. Paring down the operational role to one or two 'light work' functions is not going to improve productivity; rather it will significantly reduce it.*

I would be grateful if you could complete the attached questionnaire and provide any further comments you have on this to: [Melanie.Gillett@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Melanie.Gillett@communities.gsi.gov.uk) by Friday 6 December. If you have any queries please contact Melanie on: 030344 41047.

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## AGENDA ITEM:

REPORT TO: Meeting of the	MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
DATE:	TUESDAY 3 <sup>rd</sup> DECEMBER 2013
REPORT NO.	CFO/137/13
REPORTING OFFICER:	DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
CONTACT OFFICER:	DEB APPLETON, DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE, EXTN; 4402
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	JACKIE SUTTON, IRMP OFFICER, x 4563
SUBJECT:	STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2013

APPENDIX (A) TITLE Statement of Assurance 2013

#### ATTACHED –HARD COPY

#### Purpose of Report

1. To request that Members consider and approve the Authority's Statement of Assurance 2013 for publication on the website.

#### Recommendation

2. That Members approve the Statement of Assurance attached at Appendix A.

#### Introduction & Background

3. The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework published in 2012 sets out a requirement for fire and rescue authorities to publish Statements of Assurance. It says:

***'Fire and rescue authorities must provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and show how they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their integrated risk management plan and the requirements included in the Framework. To provide assurance, fire and rescue authorities must publish an annual statement of assurance'.***

2. The National Framework goes on to say that one of the principal aims of the statement of assurance is to provide an accessible way in which communities, Government, local authorities and other partners may make a valid assessment of their local Fire and Rescue Authority's performance. The statement of assurance will also be used as a source of information on which to base the Secretary of State's biennial report under section 25 of the *Fire and Rescue Act 2004*.
3. Where Fire and Rescue Authorities have already set out relevant information that is clear, accessible, and user-friendly within existing documents, they may wish to include extracts, or links to these documents within their statement of assurance.
4. With this in mind, this first MFRA Statement of Assurance has been prepared in a way that does not substantially duplicate existing plans, reports and other documents, but instead includes links to existing documents held on the website, or in some cases to documents held by other organisations or the Government.

#### Equality & Diversity Implications

5. Accessibility has been considered and although the Statement is designed to be read as an electronic document with links to other material copies of documents will be provided on request.

#### Staff Implications

6. There are no staff implications arising from this report.

#### Legal Implications

7. The publication of a Statement of Assurance is a requirement of the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework, which is itself a requirement of the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004.

#### Financial Implications & Value for Money

8. There are no financial implications arising from this report. The Statement gives details on financial performance and future challenges.

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

9. There are no risk management, health and safety or environmental implications arising from this report.



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

10. Producing the Statement will ensure that the Authority complies with legal requirements but will also provide accessible information to any stakeholders who wish to learn more about MRFA.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2012 onwards

**\*Glossary of Terms**

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

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# Statement of Assurance

## 2012/13



**SAFER, STRONGER COMMUNITIES; SAFE  
EFFECTIVE FIREFIGHTERS**

[www.merseyfire.gov.uk](http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk)

## Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority

### ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2012/13

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## Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority

### ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2012/13

#### 1. Foreword

Fire and Rescue Authorities are accountable for their performance and as such, information regarding effectiveness and value for money should be accessible, transparent and accurately reported to the communities they serve. Along with legislation which governs how FRA's provide their services, the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2012](#) requires Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) to produce this Annual Statement of Assurance.

The aim of this Statement of Assurance is **'to provide an accessible way in which communities, Government, local authorities and other partners may make a valid assessment of their local fire and rescue authority's performance.'**

*DCLG Guidance on Statements of Assurance for FRA's in England'*

Merseyside FRS has faced budget cuts on an unprecedented scale over the course of the Comprehensive Spending Review. These cuts have had a significant impact on organisational capacity and have resulted in a 33% reduction in available appliances (from 42 to 28). This will have an impact on the speed and weight of attack when responding to incidents and in the ability of the Service to maintain the levels of community safety intervention delivered over the last decade. Whilst the Service will continue to deliver excellent standards of response it will not be at the levels delivered prior to the cuts.

We hope that you find this Statement of Assurance useful. It is intended to direct reader to other published reports, rather than repeating existing material and as a result it contains several hyperlinks. If you require copies of any documents or have any comments or questions please contact Jackie Sutton – Integrated Risk Management Planning Officer on 0151 296 4563 or by email on [jackiesutton@merseyfire.gov.uk](mailto:jackiesutton@merseyfire.gov.uk)

#### 2. Introduction

Merseyside is a metropolitan county in the north west of England, which straddles the Mersey Estuary and includes the metropolitan districts of Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral.

Merseyside spans 249 square miles (645 Km<sup>2</sup>) of land containing a mix of high density urban areas, suburbs, semi-rural and rural locations, but overwhelmingly the land use is urban. It has a focused central business district, formed by Liverpool City Centre, but Merseyside is also a polycentric county with five metropolitan districts, each of which has at least one major town centre and outlying suburbs.

Merseyside has a population of approximately 1.4 million residents but this is changing over time. Between 2001 and 2011 the overall population has increased by only 1 per cent (13,400 people in real terms) but the Asian/Asian British ethnic group has seen an 82.61 per cent increase between 2001 and 2007. Our [Profile of Merseyside Demography, Equality and Diversity](#) report outlines the communities we serve.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority continues to face a challenging financial future following cuts in our Government Grant that require £10m of savings to be delivered over the period 2013-15. The Government grant is our main source of income and the latest cut follows cuts requiring savings of £9.2m in the previous two years.

The organisation is, however, meeting these challenges from a position of strength following a period in which we have significantly reduced fires, fire deaths and injuries and made Merseyside a safer place. In addition, we have worked hard over the last year to anticipate the impact of the cuts and reduce the effect they will have on our communities by identifying options that will keep all our community fire stations open.

Our prevention work has been widely acknowledged and has been duly replicated around the world; however we are going to have to get even smarter, sharing risk data and intelligence to ensure we target our efforts towards the most vulnerable and most at risk. We will still give universal help and advice, but free smoke alarms will only be fitted in high risk homes or properties which we have not visited previously.

It is impossible for the requirement to make £19 million savings over the four years of the spending review not to have an impact on our services but we are confident we can make better use of the resources that remain to continue to deliver a high quality Fire and Rescue Service that compares favourably with any other in the Country.

MFRA published the [Service Delivery Plan 2013-14](#) and [IRMP 2013/16](#) in June 2013 to respond to the changing risks and needs within our communities. The Service Delivery Plan establishes the standards of performance expected. The Integrated Risk Management Plan sets out how we will continue to deliver our services. It describes a noticeably leaner but dynamic Service delivered in the most effective and efficient way. Anyone who needs us in an emergency will still receive one of the fastest responses in the country.

### **3. Governance arrangements**

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority was established on 1st April 1986 by the Local Government Act 1985 which made provision for joint authorities to be established in the major metropolitan areas following the abolition of the metropolitan county councils.

Although the Authority does not have all the miscellaneous powers of a district authority, it is nonetheless a local Authority in its own right, separate and distinct from the constituent councils. It is therefore subject to the same rules and regulations which govern other local authorities.

#### **The Authority**

The Authority is made up of 18 Members, all of whom must be a councillor elected to one of the five constituent district councils within Merseyside (Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral).

Members of the Authority have a responsibility to the whole community of Merseyside and are directly accountable to the people of Merseyside for the running of the Fire and Rescue Service. All Members meet together as the Fire and Rescue Authority. Meetings of the Authority are normally open to the public.

The Authority has ultimate responsibility for decision making but has delegated many decisions to committees as part of their Terms of Reference (available to view in the Constitution) and Officers.

Members work closely with Officers (the staff employed by the Authority) in developing policies, plans and strategies to give direction to the Service and to ensure that services are delivered in line with the Authority's objectives.

There are a number of organisations which are independent from the Authority, but have an impact on its service areas. In order that the Authority can maintain effective partnerships with a number of these organisations, Members of the Authority sit on the various committees and forums that are responsible for them:

- Association of Metropolitan Fire & Rescue Authorities
- Fire Support Network
- Local Government Association
- Merseyside Brussels Office
- National Joint Council
- North West Employers' Organisation
- North West Partnership Board

### **Our legal responsibilities**

The full [Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority](#) Constitution and Governance can be found on our website and details how the Authority conducts its business and includes detailed procedures and codes of practice including:

- Members code of conduct
- [MFRA Constitution 2013/14](#) and allowances
- Meetings, agendas and decisions
- [Complaints Procedure](#)

The Authority has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework [CIPFA Delivering Good Governance in Local Government](#). The key principles of the Authority's Code of Corporate Governance are outlined below;

Three high level principles underpin Corporate Governance:-

- Openness and inclusivity
- Accountability
- Integrity

### **The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework**

The Government has a responsibility to ensure that the public is adequately protected. For fires and other emergencies it does this by providing significant financial resources, giving authorities the power to raise additional local funding, and maintaining a statutory framework within which your local fire and rescue authority should operate.

The [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2012](#) sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for FRA's in England. It recognises that operational matters are best determined locally by FRA's in partnership with their communities.

The priorities are:

- To identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their area may face, make provision for prevention and protection activities and respond to incidents appropriately.
- To work in partnership with their communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally to deliver their service
- To be accountable to communities for the service they provide.

## **4. Overview of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service**

### **Our Mission, Aims and Values**

Our Mission; "Safer, stronger communities; safe, effective fire fighters", our aims and our values run as a golden thread through MFRA.

### **Our Aims**

#### **Excellent Operational Preparedness**

We will provide our fire fighters with the training, information, procedures and equipment to ensure they can safely and effectively resolve all emergency incidents.

#### **Excellent Operational Response**

We will maintain an excellent emergency response to meet risk across Merseyside with safety and effectiveness at its core.

#### **Excellent Prevention and Protection**

We will work with our partners and our community to protect the most vulnerable through targeted local risk reduction interventions and the robust application of our legal powers.

#### **Excellent People**

We will develop and value all our employees, respecting diversity, promoting opportunity and equality for all.

We plan our actions by embedding our core values into the way we deliver our services:

- Make a positive difference to our community;
- Provide an excellent and affordable service
- Everyone matters
- Respect our environment
- Our people are the best they can be.

An overview of the structure of MFRA is available in our [Organisational Structure chart](#)

### **Responsibility & accountability of the Chief Fire Officer**

The Chief Fire Officer is the Head of Paid Service in law under S. 4 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989. The Chief Fire Officer is responsible for;



- *Ensuring that the staffing needs of the organisation are adequate to perform the Authority's statutory functions*
- *Ensuring that the discharge of the Authority's functions is efficiently and effectively co-ordinated*
- *Arranging for and ensuring the proper appointment and management of the Authority's staff.*
- *Arranging for and ensuring the effective organisation of the Authority's staff in an appropriate structure with relevant departments.*

Details of the powers delegated to the Chief Fire Officer (and in their absence the Deputy Chief Fire Officer,) who may further delegate to any member of either the Executive Team or the Strategic Management Group as appropriate, can be found on page 43 of the [MFRA Constitution 2013/14](#).

The success of our service provision is largely dependent on the skills, abilities and dedication of our staff. That is why we invest resources in ensuring that our people are the best they can be through training and development, appraisal, health and wellbeing. Our aim at MFRA is to have Excellent People:

***'We will develop and value all our employees, respecting diversity, promoting opportunity and equality for all'.***

Staffing levels, including the number of Officers, can be found on the [DCLG](#) (Department for Communities and Local Government) and [CIPFA](#) (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) websites. A log in is required.

### Organisational Development

Performance appraisal and personal development reviews are based on MFRA's personal values. Each member of staff has their individual training, learning and development needs identified by their line manager. This in turn informs an annual training needs analysis. This is used to identify new equipment, methods of working, health and safety risks, and compliance with legislation or succession planning which have arisen, or may, arise in the coming year.

### Leadership Development

MFRA recognises the huge contribution our managers and leaders can make to our organisation. To support their development, and that of emerging managers, and to ensure the changing requirements of the organisation are being met, we invest both time and training hours in these individuals.

Leadership courses such as CMI (Chartered Management Institute) Levels 3 and 5, Institute of Occupational Safety and Health) IOSH and National Examination Board of Safety and Health (NEBOSH) are attended by both uniformed and non-uniformed staff.

Operational managers are offered courses aimed at developing their knowledge, skills and values to enable them to effectively take over command on the incident ground.

### Staff consultation - Representative Bodies

Uniformed staff are represented by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and the Fire Officers Association (FOA), non-uniformed staff by UNISON, UNITE and GMB. All are invited to take part in consultation around changes to staffing levels or conditions of service, the IRMP and any changes to the service MFRA provide. All are active members of Joint Secretaries, which is a meeting which brings together the representative

bodies with the Authority's Consultation Manager and our Director of People and Organisational Development.

## Equality and Diversity

The public sector Equality Duty, of the Equality Act 2010, requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. MFRA is committed to considering equality and diversity in the way we provide our services and the [MFRA Equality and Diversity Statement](#) and supporting documentation is available on the website.

## 5. [The risks we face in Merseyside](#)

[Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#) requires every fire and rescue authority to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan [link] to develop services to respond to those risks and help prevent incidents occurring. [The Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#) also places a legal duty on local emergency responders to carry out assessments on the risks to their area and publish them. The [Merseyside Community Risk Register 2013](#) identifies the areas of potential risk to the population and infrastructure of Merseyside and the nature of that risk. The likelihood of an event occurring has been assessed using historical evidence and projected occurrence data relating to the risk occurring over a five year period at the magnitude reflected within the outcome description. The potential impact of such an emergency has been assessed with regard to health, social, economic and environmental effects in accordance with national guidance.

### Social Risk

We know that deprivation and environment can increase risk from fire and other emergencies. In Merseyside there are some areas of affluence, for example in West Wirral and North Sefton, but large areas of Merseyside fall within the highest ratings of social deprivation. The indices of multiple deprivation indicate that 40 per cent of the wards in Merseyside are ranked in the top 5 per cent of the most deprived wards in England with high levels of social exclusion and crime. In addition, all the local authorities in Merseyside are within the top 20 per cent of the most income deprived in England. We consider this when we plan our services and target those services at people we identify as most at risk.

### Environmental & Economic Risks

There are other types of risk too. Other risks within the Merseyside area include:

- Coastline bordering the west of the MFRA area.
- John Lennon Airport
- Under and over ground rail links, including under the River Mersey
- Two road tunnels under the River Mersey
- Two premier league football stadia
- Liverpool City Centre and many heritage buildings
- Dock estates in Liverpool and Birkenhead
- Beaches and areas of natural beauty such as Freshfield Pinewoods, Hilbre Island, Carr Mill Dam
- RAF Woodvale airfield, Altcar Army camp and rifle range.

- Industrial estates accommodating large factories down to small industrial units.
- Ten COMAH sites
- Large shopping areas including Liverpool One in the City Centre.
- Two Universities with large blocks of student accommodation both in and outside the city centre.

### 6. [Risks beyond our borders](#)

#### National & Local Resilience

Over recent years large scale emergency incidents have increased in the UK. This has been due to climate change and terrorist activities. As a direct result of this the Government introduced the 'National Resilience' project.

MFRA provides a substantial commitment to National Resilience by hosting an Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team, a USAR canine team, USAR Subject Matter Advisors (SMA's), a High Volume Pump (HVP), a Detection, Identification and Monitoring (DIM) team, Incident Response Unit (IRU) and Mass Decontamination Disrobe unit (MDD). We also have a total of 5 type B flood rescue teams declared on the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) national flood rescue asset register and one SMA. All of these assets are available at all times for national deployment.

In 2012 MFRA extended its USAR role, becoming a member of the UK International Search and Rescue Team (UKISAR), the internationally deployable International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) heavy classified USAR team. This team is available for deployment to incidents anywhere in the world.

Under Sections 13 and 16 of the [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#) MFRA are required to have in place mutual assistance arrangements with neighbouring FRA's. These agreements are regularly reviewed.

#### Management of Risk

The fire and rescue service is a 24 hour a day, 365 days a year operation and as a result MFRA produces plans that enable it to respond to any events that could threaten service delivery in Merseyside. These plans include:

- Service Delivery Plan 2013/14
- IRMP 2013/16
- Budget 2013/14
- [Corporate Risk Register 2013](#)

All serve to identify and plan for new and potential risks to the Authority's assets and services.

Our [Business Continuity Management Policy](#) provides clear and defined strategies to address the following:

- Total loss of any Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Department.
- Significant/partial damage to any Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Department.
- Significant/partial Failure of the Information Technology system.
- Loss of /damage to information/data
- Loss of/disruption to primary utilities.
- Loss of staff/Pandemic.
- Loss of suppliers.

Functional Business Continuity Plans can be found on the internal MFRA portal.

## 7. [Our Services to the Community](#)

MFRA operates within clearly defined statutory and policy framework requirements as set out in the:

- [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)
- [The Fire and Rescue Services \(Emergencies\) \(Order\) 2007](#)
- [The Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#)
- [Localism Act 2011](#)
- [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)
- [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2012](#)

The [Service Delivery Plan 2013-14](#) highlights MFRA's commitment to delivering an excellent service to the communities of Merseyside. This document brings together actions from the [IRMP 2013/16](#), District and Station Community Safety Delivery Plans, Functional and [Equality and Diversity](#) planning. All these plans are available to view through the MFRA Portal [Service Delivery Plan Link](#).

### [Excellent Operational Response](#)

The Authority's priorities clearly stated in the [Service Delivery Plan 2013-14](#) are:

- To maintain an effective emergency response to meet risk across Merseyside with safety and effectiveness at its core
- The [Operational Response](#) function ensures that the Authority, on behalf of the public, is assured with regard to the readiness of its operational workforce, appliances, stations and equipment to respond appropriately and timely to emergencies, and that when we do respond our firefighters, procedures and equipment are safe and effective.
- The Operational Response function is led by an Operational Area Manager who is responsible for the operational element of the MFRA workforce. This is currently approximately 810 people across the 26 Fire Stations, our Mobilising and Communications Centre (MaCC) and Officer Groups. It should be noted however, that our IMRP proposed reductions in the number of firefighters to achieve the £3m savings we are required to make from our frontline service resulting in an anticipated establishment of 764 people by the end of this current round of cuts.

### [Prevention and Protection](#)

Priorities for the [Prevention and Protection](#) function are:

#### [Excellent Prevention](#)

- Working with partners and our community to protect the most vulnerable
- The four key drivers for the MFRA's Prevention Strategy are; Home Safety, Road Safety - RTC Reduction, Arson/Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction and Youth Engagement
- The Prevention Team is led by the Area Manager for Prevention and Protection. The work is led by teams out in the five districts of Merseyside and each of these key areas also has a functional co-ordinator with responsibility for joining up prevention activity and improved outcomes for communities, including seasonal campaigns such as the bonfire period and community reassurance following incidents.

#### [Excellent Protection](#)

- Working in partnership to reduce risk in the built environment

- MFRA has duties to enforce, consult and provide fire safety advice on matters relating to Community Fire Protection. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 is most commonly associated with Fire Authority enforcement; additional relevant legislation includes sub-surface railways, petroleum, fireworks and explosives, and building regulations.
- The Community Fire Protection (CFP) Policy was refreshed in October 2013 to:
- Provide the rationale and basis of the Authority's risk based audit approach to CFP;
- Provide strategic direction on the extent to which fire safety legislation applies;
- Direct resources to ensure levels of fire protection are met and enforced as required in the relevant fire safety legislation;
- Provide overarching direction for all CFP priorities, instructions and guidance

### 8. Our Performance

The MFRA [Service Delivery Plan 2013-14](#) reports on performance for 2012/13 and establishes the Local Performance Indicators (LPI's) and service delivery standards for 2013/14. Performance against the LPI's is reported to Authority in a [quarterly performance report](#), Strategic Management Group and the Performance Management Group (PMG) on a monthly basis.

Budget cuts of £10m have meant that we have had to become smarter about how we target our prevention and protection work. This is reflected in both our planning and performance with fewer Home Fire Safety Checks delivered to specifically targeted people identified in need of our intervention. Likewise we have reviewed and introduced a new Unwanted Fire Signal Strategy which has seen the number of incidents of this type attended drop by 50%.

All Districts and stations produce and report on a Community Safety Delivery Plan, in consultation with partners and stakeholders, to agree local targets for priorities within in each district. These plans are available to view in all community fire stations and on each community fire station page on our website [www.merseyfire.gov.uk](http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk)

Performance is managed and reported on at all levels and in all functions with staff working hard to reduce the number of emergency incidents that occur in Merseyside. The table illustrates the number of incidents attended by type, for an average day between 2006/07 and 2012/13. The table identifies that during 2012/13 44 (43.06) incidents were attended on a daily basis against 87 (86.66) during 2006/07. This reduction provides evidence that working with local partners and MFRA's own initiatives and campaigns has had a beneficial impact on the peoples and communities of Merseyside.

Incident Type	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Accidental Fires in the Home	3.75	3.6	3.57	3.55	3.28	3.27	3.11
Other Building and Property Fires	5.8	4.75	4.24	3.93	3.26	3.16	2.46
Vehicle Fires	5.44	4.15	3.72	3.3	2.61	2.20	1.97
All Antisocial Behaviour Fires	36.84	29.63	22.85	21.88	20.72	18.52	11.79
False Automatic Fire Alarms	14.7	15.02	16.57	16.31	16.21	15.23	12.40
Other False Alarms	9.88	8.71	7.4	6.83	5.70	4.96	4.77
Road Traffic Collisions	2.45	2.08	1.99	1.78	1.53	1.39	5.27
Other Special Services	7.8	6.59	5.97	5.46	5.90	5.25	1.28
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>86.66</b>	<b>74.52</b>	<b>66.31</b>	<b>63.05</b>	<b>59.21</b>	<b>53.99</b>	<b>43.06</b>

### What others have said about our performance?

During November 2012 MFRA voluntarily took part in an [Operational Peer Assessment](#), carried out by Senior Managers from other Fire and Rescue Services, the Police and Local Government. This assessment has a strong operational focus, comprising both self-assessment and peer challenge. The [Final Fire Peer Challenge Report](#) was presented to a full Authority meeting and is available to view on the MFRA website.

The team commented on our “**strong position to meet the financial challenge**” and a “**credible political and managerial leadership, a loyal, committed and motivated workforce and a very strong track record in service delivery**”. The team also commented on the strength of MFRA’s ‘effective **joint working**’ with partner agencies such as the Police, Ambulance, local authorities and neighbouring FRA’s.

In May 2013 the MFRA USAR team was subject to the USAR assurance process undertaken by the National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT). The [USAR Capability Assurance Report](#) identified no areas of non-conformance against the key areas of assessment and many areas of exemplar best practice.

## 9. [Financial Performance](#)

In accordance with the statutory requirement under the [Accounts and Audit \(England\) Regulations 2011](#) MFRA published a [Statement of Accounts 2012/13](#) and [Annual Governance Statement 2012/13](#) to illustrate that business is being conducted transparently and in accordance with the law and ‘that public money is being properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively’. *Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999.*

### Internal Audit

The Authority procured its internal audit service under a service level agreement from Liverpool City Council and the arrangement and service was in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government 2006.

The Annual Review of Internal Audit Report concluded that:

***“the Authority’s internal control environment is adequate and effective, bearing in mind that any control system can provide only reasonable assurance and not absolute assurance. Based on the audit work carried out in 2012/13 we are not aware of any significant control weaknesses within MFRA which impact on the Annual Governance Statement”***

### External Audit

External audit services are carried out by the Grant Thornton who replaced the District Auditor during 2012/13, on behalf of the Audit Commission.

External Audit will comment upon the Authority’s 2012/13 statutory financial statements and make a Value for Money conclusion during the 2013/14 financial year in the Annual Governance report and Annual Audit and Inspection Letter. These documents reflect the Auditor’s findings and conclusions from auditing the Statement of Accounts.

The Annual Governance Report and District Audit Annual Letter covering 2012/13 have been available on the MFRA website. The document confirmed the Authority’s overall performance continues to be strong and the Authority received an unqualified opinion on the 2012/13 financial statements.

### Our budget for 2013/14

The Authority is on track to deliver the planned savings in relation to the £9m target for 2011/12 – 2012/13 and the Authority approved a financial plan on 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2013, that will deliver the required additional £10m savings over 2013/14 2015/16 period. A summary of the budget challenges and plans for 2013/14 is available in both the [Service Delivery Plan 2013-14](#) and [IRMP 2013/16](#)

### Financial Management

The Authority produces a five year financial plan that takes into account Revenue, Capital, Reserves and Prudential Borrowing forecasts. The Authority has a history of strong and effective financial management, as confirmed in the 2012/13 Annual Governance Report by the Audit Commission.

### Our long term financial challenges and commitments

The Authority is seriously concerned about the Government’s announcement over further grant cuts in 2015/16 and 2016/17. Plans will need to be developed to deal with these further budget cuts requiring major savings of around a further £10m on top of savings already achieved. It will be impossible to make these savings without impacting on service delivery.

## 10. Our Future Plans

Detailed in the [IRMP 2013/16](#) and [Service Delivery Plan 2013-14](#) our future plans will be focused on delivering an excellent service to the residents and businesses of Merseyside with less resources, making more efficient use of resources we have. The planning process for the Service Delivery Plan and Community Safety Delivery Plans will begin shortly and will include some challenging targets. The Authority are about to commence planning for further budget cuts of around £9.1m for the years 2015-17.



It will be impossible to make these savings without impacting on service delivery and MFRA will be commencing consultation on possible station mergers or closures.

### **Community Engagement & Communication**

MFRA undertake extensive consultation around all aspects of planning including the IRMP and any changes to how we provide our services. All relevant IRMP documentation is available in the Authority section - [Consultation Reports for IRMP 2013/16](#)

We consult with our communities at independently facilitated public consultation events in the five districts. Principal Officers and district management teams deliver briefings and consultation exercises with staff, representative bodies, Councillors, partners, stakeholders and Local Authority leaders. The [Corporate Communication Policy](#) presents a co-ordinated approach to delivering information.

Extensive [Consultation](#) with stakeholders within the community is embedded within all aspects of planning in MFRA with all relevant documentation available on the MFRA website and in the [IRMP 2013/16](#). We host a wide variety of consultation and engagement forums including:

- Public consultation facilitated by an independent partner organisation – [ORS Public Consultation Report 2013 Appendix B to IRMP 2013/16](#)
- Staff consultation
- Local authority and strategic partner consultations
- Staff representative bodies (trade unions)

**Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority wishes to continue to be provided with assurance in relation to its fire and rescue service including financial health, governance arrangements and service delivery performance. It will be necessary in 2014 to consult with all interested parties and make difficult decisions around service delivery. However the communities of Merseyside can be assured of the Authorities absolute commitment to continuing to deliver the best service it possibly can.**

**The Statement of Accounts and Governance Statement will form the basis of the Statement of Assurance in the future.**

### **Access to Information Held by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service**

Government Legislation has been introduced to make public sector organisations more open and accountable to the public. There are primarily three key Acts of Parliament that have been put in place. These consist of:-

- The Data Protection Act 1998 which allows people to have access to their personal information that is held by the Authority.
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000, which broadens people's access to information that is held by public authorities, for example: reports, minutes of meetings etc.
- The Environmental Information Regulations which gives the public increased access to environmental information held by public authorities, for example: reports, readings, research findings etc.

How to gain [Access to information](#) held by MFRA and details of how the legislation above governs what information can be released can be found on the MFRA website.



## Authorisation

This Statement of Assurance is signed on behalf of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority as approved at the Authority meeting on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2013.

Councillor Dave Hanratty.  
Chair of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

## Glossary of Terms

CFP	Community Fire Protection or Prevention
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
CMI	Chartered Management Institute
COMAH	Control of Major Accident Hazard
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DEFRA	Department for Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs
DIM	Detection, Identification and Monitoring
FBU	Fire Brigades Union
FOA	Fire Officers Association
FRA	Fire and Rescue Authority
HVP	High Volume Pump
INSARAG	International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
IOSH	Institute of Occupational Safety and Health
IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Plan
MACC	Mobilising and Communication Centre
MDD	Mass Decontamination Disrobe
MFRA	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
NEBOSH	National Examination Board of Safety
SMA	Subject Matter Adviser
SOLACE	Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
UKISAR	UK International Search and Rescue Team
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue

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**AGENDA ITEM:**

<b>REPORT TO:</b> Meeting of the	<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE &amp; RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>3<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER 2013</b>
<b>REPORT NO.</b>	<b>CFO/134/13</b>
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	<b>CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>JANET HENSHAW</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>MFRA REPRESENTATION ON THE BOARD OF THE FIREFIT HUB</b>

**THERE ARE NO APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT**

Purpose of Report

1. To ask Members to approve the change of nominations from the Authority for representation as a Director/Trustee of the Fire Fit Hub Charitable Company

Recommendation

2. That Members;
  - a) Approve a change in nomination to the Fire Fit Board of Directors/Trustees from Councillor Hanratty to Councillor Newman.
  - b) Instruct the Clerk to the Authority to nominate Councillor Newman and deal with the resignation of Councillor Hanratty through the Board and Companies House.

Introduction & Background

3. Members will recall that at the Annual General meeting of this Authority on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2013, it was resolved that Cllr. Dave Hanratty would be nominated to sit as a Director of the Fire Fit Hub Company.
4. This Company was incorporated as a Private Limited Company on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2013 and has since been awarded charitable status and registered with the

Charity Commission. The Directors of the Company are consequently also trustees and both roles carry significant responsibility.

5. The Board meets bi-monthly although it is in the process of considering the creation of two committees and possibly reducing the number of Board Meetings.
6. The Hub is doing very well with a large Membership from the local area and a very wide range of activities for children and young people. The Board is committed to the Hub and an away day and training for Directors / Trustees is being planned.
7. Cllr. Hanratty as the Chair of the Fire & Rescue Authority has a large number of commitments particularly in view of the financial situation that the Authority finds itself in along with overseeing the strategic direction of the Authority in light of significant external pressures.
8. It was recognised as part of the recent governance restructure agreed at the Annual meeting that lead members appointed to various roles would take on other responsibilities within their capacity. It is therefore proposed that Cllr. Newman who is lead Member for Collaboration & Partnerships, be nominated to undertake this role, subject to approval by the Board, so that Cllr. Hanratty may resign.

#### Equality & Diversity Implications

9. The Board of the Fire Fir Hub is committed to Equality & Diversity and has its own policies & procedures to this effect.

#### Staff Implications

10. There are no direct staff implications contained in this report.

#### Legal Implications

11. The Clerk to the Authority is the Company Secretary to the Company, in a voluntary capacity and will liaise with Companies House and the Board in respect of Director resignation and nomination.

#### Financial Implications & Value for Money

12. There are no financial implications related to this report.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

13. There are no implications within this report in relation to risk management, health & safety or the environment.

Contribution to Our Mission – To Achieve; Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Fire fighters”

14. Continued representation of elected Members from MFRA on the Fire Fit Board will assist in ensuring that the Company serves the local community as best it can.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

List any supporting documents/evidence here

**\*Glossary of Terms**

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

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**AGENDA ITEM:**

<b>REPORT TO:</b> Meeting of the	<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE &amp; RESCUE AUTHORITY FULL AUTHORITY</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>3<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER 2013</b>
<b>REPORT NO.</b>	<b>CFO/135/13</b>
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	<b>DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>MYLES PLATT – AREA MANAGER OF PREVENTION &amp; PROTECTION, EXTN: 4644</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	<b>GM GUY KEEN</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>FIRE RISK MANAGEMENT IN RESIDENTIAL BLOCKS</b>

**THERE ARE NO APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT**

### **Purpose of Report**

1. To request that the Authority approve the recommendations of this report relating to Fire Risk Management in residential accommodation blocks in Merseyside.

### **Recommendation**

2. That the Authority approve the provision of capital funding to support the installation of fire suppression and engineered solutions to enhance the safety of Firefighters and residents in purpose built blocks of flats.

### **Introduction and Background**

3. In England, around 10 per cent of the population live in a purpose-built flats yet, during 2009-2010, around 25 per cent of dwelling fires occurred within purpose-built blocks of flats. As a result, in that year, 23 per cent of all fire deaths in dwellings occurred in these blocks.

*Source: UK Fire Statistics 2008*

*Source: 2001 Census and English Housing Survey (2009-2010)*

4. The likelihood of fire is strongly influenced by social and lifestyle factors. It is these factors, more than any other, that result in the disproportionate number of fires (and fire deaths) in blocks of flats. This highlights the importance of fire prevention and protection within the individual flats. It is also clear that much can be done by landlords, other housing providers and the Fire and Rescue Service to reduce the risk to all residents. This is particularly true in the case of the most vulnerable, such as the elderly, disabled, those who suffer from social deprivation; and those affected by drug or alcohol issues.
5. On 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2009, six people died in a fire at Lakanal House, which was a council-owned tower block in South London. The inquest into their deaths found opportunities to prevent the tragedy were missed. The Coroner Judge Frances Kirkham made various recommendations to Southwark Council, DCLG and London Fire Brigade at the end of the inquest in a series of letters, known as Rule 43 Recommendations. These included ensuring that residents know what to do in a fire, and that guidance on both the scope of fire risk assessments and the building regulations related to fire safety were made clearer.
6. On 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2005, two firefighters, Michael Millar and Jeffrey Wornham tragically died trying to save occupant Natalie Close at an intense fire at Harrow Court, which is a residential high rise block in Stevenage. Following the investigation into the incident the Coroner ruled that "Social housing providers should be encouraged to consider the retro-fitting of sprinklers in all existing high rise buildings in excess of 30 metres in height, particularly those identified by Fire and Rescue Services as having complex designs that make fire-fighting more hazardous and/or difficult. It is noted that current legislation requires that all newly built high rise buildings in excess of 30 metres in height must be fitted with sprinkler systems".
7. On 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010, two Firefighters James Shears and Alan Bannon tragically lost their lives fighting an intense fire at Shirley Towers, which is a residential high rise block in Hampshire. Following the investigation the coroner ruled: "Firefighters Alan Bannon and James Shears died from sudden exposure to initially intense heat from 20.38 to 20.41 and thereafter to excessive heat while dealing with a fire in a flat on the 9th floor of the high-rise tower block Shirley Towers. Obvious precautions to prevent the fire occurring were not taken in addition, operating conditions for all Firefighters involved became extremely difficult and dangerous and this significantly contributed to the deaths of Firefighters Alan Bannon and James Shears. Numerous factors have been identified as being relevant in the chain of causation which could have affected the eventual outcome and which, where appropriate, will form the basis of recommendations to improve safety in the future." Again the Coroner ruled that "*Social housing providers should be encouraged to consider the retro-fitting of sprinklers in all existing high rise buildings in excess of 30 metres in height, particularly those identified by Fire and Rescue Services as having complex designs that make fire-fighting more hazardous and/or difficult. It is noted that current legislation requires that all newly built high rise buildings in excess of 30 metres in height must be fitted with sprinkler systems*".



8. In 2004 the British Research Establishment (BRE) produced a report followed by subsequent reports to evaluate the effectiveness of sprinklers in residential properties. The report highlighted the effectiveness of sprinklers in reducing fire spread and the life risk in the compartment where the fire started - the "Room of Origin". In addition the report concluded that it would be cost effective to retro fit sprinklers into high rise accommodation blocks.
9. In September 2012 the Authority hosted a conference on Fire Risk Management in Purpose Built Blocks of Flats attended by local authority partners and representatives of Registered Social landlords, registered and private landlords. The conference included a presentation from Sheffield Housing who, in collaboration with the British Automatic Fire Sprinkler Association (BAFSA), retro fitted sprinklers in a high rise block, "Callow Mount". The project highlighted that retro fitting of sprinklers can be achieved, in partnership, at relatively low cost for the benefit of residents and Firefighters.
10. Since that conference Managers from each district have engaged with several Registered Social Landlords (RSL.s) who have expressed an interest in the retro fitting of sprinklers in purpose built blocks of flats. The premises being identified are those that house vulnerable residents, such as the elderly, and those that pose the greatest risk to Firefighters.
11. Whilst at an early stage, RSL's have expressed an interest in entering into a partnership to initiate projects to install sprinklers which would include MFRA making a capital contribution to the installation and an in kind contribution to support the project team. The subsequent revenue burden would be met by the RSL.
12. The recommendation of the Chief Fire Officer is that the Authority makes a capital sum of £200k available to be allocated across each of the districts, the project would be centrally managed by the Area Manager for Prevention and Protection.
13. The aim will be to provide a range of engineered solutions including sprinklers, tannoy and intercom and firefighting equipment in one block which represents best practice in fire risk management.
14. Additional projects will include sprinkler provision in other purpose built blocks of flats based on the identified risk.
15. Each project will be delivered by the District Management Team and coordinated by the Community Fire Protection Team.
16. Each project will be designed to bring together previous initiatives such as "Adopt a Block" and "High Rise Champions" which were undertaken by station based crews in partnership with residents and will support the Site Specific Risk Information work stream managed by Operation Preparedness.

### Equality & Diversity Implications

17. Each project will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. It is recognised some of the most vulnerable residents are the elderly which will be considered when identifying which premises to target.
18. Engagement with residents who reside in blocks of flats as part of this project will enable the Authority to understand their needs, and as such make them safer in their homes.

### Staff Implications

19. Staffing contribution for each project will be met from existing resource.

### Legal Implications

20. There is no legal obligation to fit sprinklers in existing purpose built blocks of flats, however RSL's and MFRA recognise the benefits of making that provision.
21. The Authority has powers under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything it considers appropriate for the purposes of the carrying out of any of its functions, so long as this is not illegal. The provision of sprinklers as recommended by this report, would constitute such a functional purpose.
22. Each project will be considered by Legal Services to ensure that any arrangements put in place do not expose the Authority to any legal or reputational risk.

### Financial Implications & Value for Money

23. In order to pump prime this proposal, it is suggested that the Authority set aside £200k specifically in reserves (this is expected to part fund about 5 or 6 initial installations). It is assumed that this will only be as a contribution towards the cost, which would be jointly funded by the property owner.
24. Members will recall that they set aside £1m in a firefighter safety reserve. It is proposed that £0.2m of that reserve is specifically earmarked for this proposal.

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

25. The provision of sprinklers will limit the spread and intensity of fire in the room or compartment of origin and mitigate fire spread beyond to other parts of the building.
26. The provision of a tannoy/intercom system allows residents to be informed of their actions in the event of a fire. For example, if a "stay put" policy is in place then this can be reinforced to prevent residents entering areas of risk.
27. The risk to Firefighters and to residents will be the major consideration in selecting which premises will be involved in the project.

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28. The integrated approach to Fire Risk Management for purpose built blocks of flats by the provision of fixed Installations such as sprinklers and intercom will have a positive impact upon the making those premises safer for residents and Firefighters.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

N/A

**\*Glossary of Terms**

SMG - Strategic Management Group

MFRA - Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

BAFSA- British Automatic Sprinkler Association

DCLG – Department of Communities and Local Government

BRE - Building Research Establishment

SHQ - Service Headquarters

SSRI – Site Specific Risk Information

RSL - Registered Social Landlord

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**AGENDA ITEM:**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE &amp; RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> December 2013</b>
<b>REPORT NO.</b>	<b>CFO/140/13</b>
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	<b>CHIEF FIRE OFFICER</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>AM SEARLE</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	<b>SM MARTIN, SM EVANS (BA TELEMETRY 4G/INTERFERENCE PROJECT).</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>MFRS BREATHING APPARATUS ASSET REFRESH</b>

**THERE ARE NO APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT**Purpose of Report

1. To request that Members approve the asset refresh of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Breathing Apparatus sets ahead of the planned schedule in order to access funding from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport Spectrum Clearance Award Panel.

Recommendation

2. That Members;
  - a) Approve the purchase of new Breathing Apparatus set excluding telemetry at an estimated cost of £219,000 s ahead of the planned schedule in order to access funding from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport Spectrum Clearance Award Panel.and note that the telemetry is expected to be funded by government grant (£133,000)

Introduction & Background

3. Under Government direction, Ofcom auctioned the 800 MHz frequency band to be used for "4G" telephony services. In [telecommunication systems](#), **4G** is the *fourth generation* of [mobile phone mobile communication](#) technology standards This was completed in January 2013. Due to the close proximity of the 4G services bandwidth to the bandwidth the UK Fire and Rescue Service telemetry equipment uses, a potential for interference has been identified.
4. Telemetry is an automatic electronic breathing apparatus control system which monitors the status of individual BA wearers from outside the risk area. A standard Entry Control Board (ECB) is augmented with a "radio base station",

with additional electronic displays, which is required for use with the telemetry equipment. This base station is referred to as an Entry Control Unit (ECU). Radio technology is used to connect "portable units" with "base stations". A "portable unit" is a radio unit attached to the firefighter's BA set which is used to transmit and receive data at pre-set intervals. The equipment provides a number of functions including :

- a) individuals "logged-on" to a base station at an incident. This is achieved by inserting an ID encoded tally key into the Entry Control Board (ECB);
  - b) The transmission of a distress alarm signal from a "portable unit" to any ECB in range;
  - c) The transmission of an alarm signal from a "portable unit" to any ECB in range indicating that the user is withdrawing from the incident for reasons of personal safety;
  - d) The transmission of an alarm signal from an ECB to all "portable units" logged on to the base station to cause an audible alarm on the "portable units" and initiate an emergency evacuation;
  - e) The transmission of an alarm signal from an ECB to a selected "portable unit" to cause an audible alarm and initiate an emergency evacuation of the "portable unit" wearer and any other members of the wearer's team;
5. Due to the potential interference, a Working Group led by the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) with additional representatives from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Office of Communications (Ofcom), was set up. The group have assessed the existing safety measures and subsequently developed a two phased solution which will manage the potential interference. This solution has been endorsed by both CFOA and DCLG. The Working Group also concluded that the loss of telemetry does degrade the safety measures provided for Firefighters.
6. The two phased solution includes,
- The initial re-tune of all current telemetry units to an interim frequency. This reduces the risk of interference from 4G technology. However this is an interim solution as there still remains a risk of interference from other short range devices.
  - Secondly, the Working Group recommended the requirement to secure another licensed allocation which will involve the development of new equipment (Technical Refresh).

#### MFRA Current Position

7. MFRA currently operate the Draeger PSS100 Breathing Apparatus set. This model was purchased in 2006/7 by MFRA and would normally have an asset life of about 12 years.
8. The scheduling of an asset refresh is based on a combination of the following factors;

- Statutory legislation: New or existing.
  - Manufacturers' recommendation/warranty: Manufacturers do not guarantee that the equipment will be fit for purpose after a definitive lifespan.
  - Obsolescence: emergence of new technology; existing technology no longer supported by manufacturers.
  - Lifelong condition/End of Life: wear and tear/fit for purpose
9. BA however is not regarded as a single piece of equipment for asset refresh. It comprises of five related elements, which can all have the above criteria applied to them;
- Back-plate & harness: Lifelong condition
  - Facemasks: Lifelong condition
  - Regulators: Manufacturers requirement; every 6yrs (fully swapped out in 2012).
  - Pneumatic hoses: Statutory Legislation; 12yrs; Due to be replaced in 2018.
  - Telemetry batteries; Manufacturers guidance/End of life; 6yrs; being replaced on a rolling programme.
10. Notwithstanding life cycles of individual parts of the breathing apparatus, the complete asset refresh for MFRA BA is scheduled for 2018 to coincide with the swap out of pneumatic hoses and the second swap out of regulators.
11. Breathing Apparatus Telemetry (BAT) successfully retuned all MFRA telemetry units to the interim frequency in March 2013.

#### BAT Working Group Current Position

12. BAT recommended a solution based on a licensed and protected bandwidth allocation. The Working Group is currently working with the telemetry and BA set suppliers to develop a telemetry solution operating on 469.875 MHz.
13. Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) are the lead Government department for the sale of spectrum for 4G services. They have established a Spectrum Clearance Award Panel (SCAP) to facilitate funding the process for all affected parties. (This includes UK FRS).
14. Based on the initial considerations of the working group it was proposed for government to pay for the replacement of telemetry alone. Merseyside would have got funded new telemetry but it would have a life of just 3-4 years since MFRA would expect to replace the whole of its Breathing apparatus assets in 2018 including the new telemetry (although the replacement in 2018 would not be funded)
15. Merseyside have been liaising closely with the working group to consider if it would be more cost effective to bring forward the procurement of the Breathing Apparatus to coincide with the new telemetry. The upshot of this is that MFRA would receive a full "set" with an approximate full life of 12 years.

16. MFRA does not currently have the year 2018 in its five year capital programme. The estimated cost of procuring full sets in that year is £352,000. The estimated cost of this Breathing apparatus without telemetry is £219,000. It is anticipated that the DCMS would pay the cost of the telemetry £133,000

### Proposals

17. That MFRA;
- Bring forward the BA asset refresh from 2018 to 2015.
  - Synchronise the procurement strategy for BA with the Breathing Apparatus Telemetry (BAT) Working Group technical refresh of BA telemetry.
  - Purchase BA only without telemetry installed.
  - Collaborate with BAT Working Group to provide, finance and install telemetry on the new BA.
  - Include BA Telemetry Entry Control Boards in the asset refresh.
  - Utilise the existing BA procurement framework(s) as the preferred route to market.
18. Members will recall that they have already approved a planned BA cylinder replacement programme (1800L/207bar to 2400L/300bar) This is unaffected by these proposals.

### Rationale

19. By adopting this approach, MFRA would;
- Secure funding for the telemetry installations through the BAT Working Group which draws the funding from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Spectrum Clearance Award Panel (SCAP). This funding will not be available in 2018.
  - Avoid replacing existing telemetry units in 2015 on BA that would then, require replacement within three years.
  - Include the current (Entry Control Boards) ECB's in the proposed asset refresh therefore opening up the market to other suppliers. The current Merlin Telemetry ECB's are not compatible with any other make of BA Telemetry currently on the market. Consequently, if Draeger (the supplier of the current ECB) do not win the procurement process MFRS would be left with Telemetry systems which are not compatible.

### Equality & Diversity Implications

20. There are no Equality and Diversity implications resulting from this report.

### Staff Implications

21. There would be training implications for;
- a) All operational personnel in the new BA set.



- b) All BA technicians to enable the testing, maintenance and repair of the new BA. If MFRS opted for a 'total care' package, the training requirement on BA Technicians will be less.

#### Legal Implications

- 22. Advice will be sought from Legal, Procurement and Democratic Services regarding the procurement process.

#### Financial Implications & Value for Money

- 23. The growth required in the capital programme for 2014/15 would be £219,000 for the purchase of full BA including ECB.
- 24. The estimated cost of the new telemetry is £133,000 and would be funded by the DCMS.
- 25. If just the telemetry was replaced now the authority would need to fund the full cost of the new telemetry in only 4-5 years time when the BA is replaced.
- 26. The growth in the capital programme would ordinarily be funded by additional borrowing. However given the relative small scale of this investment the DCE considers that this can be maintained within the current capital programme because of variations in other areas with no increase in anticipated borrowing. The DCE will report in more detail in the budget process on the overall capital programme
- 27. In order to qualify for funding under this approach the government has indicated Merseyside must:-
  - a) Costs are only allowable up to an agreed fixed ceiling figure.
  - b) Implementation must be inside the project time-line of March 2015.
  - c) Replacement BA equipment must include telemetry and the unit numbers must not increase as a result of the procurement.
  - d) All redundant telemetry units will be returned to the supplier, for possible future use by the project team. If these units are not required, they can be disposed of by the supplier.
- 28. In order to ensure that procurement timescales are met it is expected to make use of existing framework arrangements.

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

- 29. MFRA has been operating BA telemetry successfully for six years.
- 30. The revised TB 1/97 and the national guidance for BA operations that is due to be published acknowledge that BA telemetry enhances Firefighter safety.
- 31. The provision of new BA with integrated BA telemetry will assist MFRS in creating 'Safe, Effective Firefighters'.

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32. The purchase of new BA sets with Telemetry which operate on a new frequency will eliminate the risk of interference and enhance the safety of our Firefighters.

Glossary

BA Breathing Apparatus

ECB Entry Control Board

CFOA Chief Fire Officers Association

SCAP Spectrum Clearance Awards Panel

DCLG Department for Communities and Local Government

OfCOM Office of Communications

BAT Breathing Apparatus Telemetry

TB Technical Bulletin