

Public Document Pack



To: All Members of the Authority



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<http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk> - About Us > Fire Authority.

J. Henshaw
LLB (Hons)
Clerk to the Authority

Tel: 0151 296 4000
Extn: 4112 Helen Peek

Your ref:

Our ref HP/DM

Date: 18 February 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are invited to attend the **MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY BUDGET MEETING** to be held at **1.00 pm** on **THURSDAY, 26TH FEBRUARY, 2015** in the Temporary Meeting Room at Service Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle, L30 4YD.

Yours faithfully,

Clerk to the Authority

Encl.

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY BUDGET MEETING

26 FEBRUARY 2015

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 - 6)

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Authority, held on 29th January 2015, are submitted for approval as a correct record and for signature by the Chair.

3. Local Government Subscription 2015/16 (Pages 7 - 14)

(CFO/006/15)

To consider Report CFO/006/15 of the Deputy Chief Executive, concerning continuation of the Authority's membership of the Local Government Association.

4. INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN SUPPLEMENT 2015/17

(Pages 15 - 128)

(CFO/007/15)

To consider Report CFO/007/15 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning the outcomes of public consultation on the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Supplement 2015/17; and the publication of the final post-consultation version of the IRMP 2015/17 Supplement.

5. Allerton Fire Station Consultation Outcomes (Pages 129 - 242)

(CFO/008/15)

To consider Report CFO/008/15 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the outcomes of the twelve week public consultation process regarding the draft proposal to close Allerton Fire Station.

6. **Operational Response Savings Options 2015/16 - Liverpool District**
(Pages 243 - 292)

(CFO/010/15)

To consider Report CFO/010/15 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning operational response savings options for Liverpool, following the consultation process (which commenced on 1st November 2014 and concluded on 26th January 2015) over the proposal to close Allerton fire station and relocate the Allerton appliance to Old Swan to be crewed on a wholetime retained basis on a 30 minutes recall.

7. **Interim Measures to be Taken Under Delegated Authority to Ensure Appliance Availability** (Pages 293 - 296)

(CFO/013/15)

To consider Report CFO/013/15 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning interim measures taken by the Chief Fire Officer under delegated authority to ensure appliance availability, prior to the structural changes required as a result of ongoing cuts to the Authority's budget, are implemented.

8. **financial review 2014/15 - April to December** (Pages 297 - 332)

(CFO/005/15)

To consider Report CFO/005/15 of the Deputy Chief Executive, concerning a review of the financial position, both revenue and capital, for the Authority for 2014/15, covering the period April to December 2014.

9. **MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PLAN 2015/2016 - 2019/2020** (Pages 333 - 400)

(CFO/014/15)

To consider Report CFO/014/15 of the Deputy Chief Executive, concerning the setting of a medium term financial plan – both capital and revenue – that allocates resources in line with the Authority's strategic aims and ensures that the Authority delivers an efficient, value for money service. This will allow the Authority to determine a budget for 2015/16 and a precept level, in line with statutory requirements.

10. **Part 2 Minutes , 29/01/2015 Authority** (Pages 401 - 402)

The Part 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting, held on 29th January 2015, are submitted for approval as a correct record and for signature by the Chair.

11. **Disposal of Derby Road (MACC Building)** (Pages 403 - 406)

(CFO/009/15)

This report contains EXEMPT information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

To consider Report CFO/009/15 of the Deputy Chief Executive, concerning the sale of the Derby Road site.

12. **Facilities Maintenance Contract** (Pages 407 - 460)

(CFO/011/15)

This report contains EXEMPT information by virtue of Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

To consider Report CFO/011/15 of the Deputy Chief Executive, concerning the market testing of an alternative Estates service model and results of the Facilities Management (FM) Tender.

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.

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

29 JANUARY 2015

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Dave Hanratty (Chair) Councillors Les Byrom, Linda Maloney, Robbie Ayres, Peter Brennan, Roy Gladden, Ted Grannell, Ray Halpin, John Kelly, Jimmy Mahon, Barbara Murray, Steve Niblock, Lesley Rennie, Denise Roberts, James Roberts, Tony Robertson, Jean Stapleton and Sharon Sullivan

Also Present:

Apologies of absence were received from:

CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prior to the start of the meeting, information regarding general housekeeping was provided by the Chair to all in attendance.

The Chair requested that any members of the press or public present, with the intention of recording proceedings of the meeting, make themselves known to the Chair.

The Chair confirmed to all present that Mr and Mrs Brace would be filming the proceedings.

The Authority were informed that Cllr Tony Newman had requested that his thanks be conveyed to the Authority for the gifts he received following his retirement from the Authority.

The Chair then explained that the previous meeting of the Authority on 16th December 2014 had been adjourned, to enable the Authority to reconvene should a further meeting be required to deal with issues surrounding the ongoing Firefighters pension dispute.

The meeting was then declared open and the recording of proceedings commenced.

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) The following items of business required the exclusion of the press and public during consideration thereof, due to the possible disclosure of exempt information:
 - **Appendix F to Agenda Item 5 – “West Wirral Operational Response Considerations (Post Consultation)”**
 - **Agenda Item 6 – “Review of Remuneration for LLAR Firefighters”**

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Authority, held on 16 December 2014, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

3. Corporate Risk Register Update

Members considered Report CFO/004/15 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning the current risks contained within the Corporate Risk Register, the status of the risks and associated control measures – including reference to any new risks introduced or any risks that no longer apply and can be removed.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided Members with an overview of the report, highlighting some of the key risks contained within it.

Members Resolved that:

The updated Corporate Risk Register, be approved.

4. Wirral Fire Cover Consultation Outcomes

Members considered Report CFO/001/15 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the outcomes of the twelve week public consultation process regarding the draft proposal to merge Upton and West Kirby fire stations at a new station on Frankby Road, Greasby as an alternative to an outright closure of West Kirby Fire Station.

Members were provided with a comprehensive overview of the report by the Chief Fire Officer, who highlighted the consultation process that was previously agreed by Members at the meeting of the Authority on 2nd October 2014. The Chief Fire Officer also highlighted the various consultation meetings which took place and provided a summary of the responses received and views raised throughout the consultation process.

The Chief Fire Officer described the significant public opposition to the Greasby site, expressed during the public meetings; and explained that in the opinion of Officers, most respondents focused on issues relating to the location of the site rather than considering the reasonableness of the station merger proposal from an operational response perspective.

It was explained that at other consultation events opinion was broadly supportive of a merger, with the majority of respondents agreeing that the principle of a merger was reasonable in the context of the financial situation.

The Chief Fire Officer further explained that once the Frankby Road site had been withdrawn as an option by Wirral MBC, the majority of responses received to the consultation, were supportive of a merger. Also, there was no significant opposition to the closure of West Kirby or Upton fire stations expressed by West Kirby or Upton residents during consultation events in these areas.

The Chief Fire Officer then highlighted the costs associated with the consultation process, explaining that the figure quoted within the report does not account for costs in officer time, which have been significant.

Discussion took place around the need to ensure that changes are made in a timely manner to enable the savings required to be achieved.

The Chair informed all present that the correspondence received during the consultation period was available to view, should anyone present wish to do so.

Members expressed their thanks to the Chief Fire Officer and all Officers involved in facilitating the Consultation process.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The outcomes of the comprehensive and informative Wirral public consultation, be noted.
- b) The outcomes of the Wirral public consultation be carefully and fully taken into account when considering report CFO/003/15, relating to the possible future options for fire cover in Wirral.

5. West Wirral Operational Response Considerations (Post Consultation)

Members considered Report CFO/003/15 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the options for structural savings to the operational response model for West Wirral in order to deliver the necessary savings to meet the budget assumptions

for 2015/16, following the outcomes of the twelve week public consultation regarding the proposed station merger in Wirral.

The Chief Fire Officer provided a detailed overview of the report and the various options considered therein.

Members were provided with a summary of the financial situation and the requirement to make savings through structural changes to the emergency response model.

The Chief Fire Officer re-iterated that when the number of Firefighters and therefore fire appliances have to reduce as a result of the continued cuts to the Authority budget, there is nothing which can be done to improve performance, meaning that the proposals are those considered to be “least impactful”. In the interest of completeness, the report includes all of the options for savings considered, with an explanation as to why these options were not put forward as proposals. The Chief Fire Officer stated that in his professional opinion, he would recommend that Option 3a be approved.

The operational logic behind the station merger option was detailed to Members. This highlighted the rationale for merging two stations at a central location; and using wholetime firefighters on retained contracts to maintain the availability of the second appliance when required. It also detailed the potential impact upon response times as a result of the proposals.

The Chief Fire Officer then informed Members that following the withdrawal of the Frankby Road site in Greasby, Wirral MBC has made Officers aware of another potential site on Saughall Massie Road. It is the view of the Chief Fire Officer that the new proposed site represents a more optimum location than the Greasby site, however as this site is on Green Belt land, the Authority would need to demonstrate special circumstances in order to obtain planning permission.

The Chief Fire Officer proceeded to show the Authority maps detailing the proposed site; and explained that a report concerning the interim measures during the consultation process will be submitted to the next meeting of the Authority.

Discussion took place around the report with Members from each political party expressing support for recommendation 3a.

Members Resolved that:

- 1) In respect of all the available options, due to the Authority seeking to avoid firefighter redundancy using natural turnover; and as a result of current absence and other duties rates, it be noted that there are insufficient available operational personnel to maintain all 28 fire appliances in advance of any structural changes through strategic mergers and station closures being implemented. This will mean that the West Kirby fire appliance will be only be available on a wholetime

retained basis for significant periods during the consultation process and will only be staffed on a wholetime basis should sufficient personnel be available.

- 2) The Chief Fire Officer be instructed to provide a further report to the Authority dealing with the operational implications of recommendation 1 (above).

A decision on the closure of West Kirby Fire Station, be deferred and twelve weeks' public consultation (to commence on 2nd March) be approved, which will consider the alternative option of:

- 3) the closure of West Kirby and Upton fire stations, the building of a new station on Saughall Massie Road and the re-designation of one of the two existing wholetime appliances as "wholetime retained" (with a 30 minute recall), whilst also inviting suggestions for other suitable alternative options
- 4) The requirement for Wirral Borough Council (WMBC) to agree to transfer the land on Saughall Massie Road into Authority ownership, prior to any new build on the site, be noted.
- 5) In order to establish whether there is potential for the Saughall Massie Road site to be utilised as a location for a new fire station, it be noted that officers have already approached Wirral MBC to request a decision on land transfer. Officers will also need to engage with Wirral planning officers as the proposal relates to building a new community fire station on green belt land.
- 6) Should Wirral MBC agree to transfer the land, it be noted that this would allow the Authority to fully consider the feasibility of the proposal. It also be noted that the approach will ensure that Members are fully informed in relation to the views of the public and the feasibility of building a fire station at that location prior to making any decision.

6. **Review of Remuneration for LLAR Firefighters**

This Minute contains EXEMPT information by virtue of Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

INFORMATION

- At the end of business, the Chair reminded Members of the Station Visits scheduled to take place on 18th February 2015, covering Wirral Stations. The Chair requested that the opportunity be taken to show Members the proposed site for the new station on Saughall Massie Road; and encouraged Members to attend the visits and familiarise themselves with the proposed new site.
- The Chair informed Members that he would be meeting with the various Representative Bodies to discuss some of the difficult decisions that will need to be made at the Budget Authority Meeting on 26th February 2015.

- On behalf of the Authority, the Chair presented a gift to Helen Peek– Democratic Services Manager, following her decision to leave the Authority after 22 years of service. Helen was thanked for all her support and assistance; and Members wished her well for the future.

Meeting closed.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday 26 February 2015

Signed: _____

Date: _____

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY BUDGET MEETING		
DATE:	26 FEBRUARY 2015	REPORT NO:	CFO/006/15
PRESENTING OFFICER	KIERAN TIMMINS		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	JANET HENSHAW	REPORT AUTHOR:	HELEN PEEK
OFFICERS CONSULTED:			
TITLE OF REPORT:	LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUBSCRIPTION 2015/16		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A:	LGA LETTER FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE RE: LGA SUBSCRIPTION 2015/16
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Purpose of Report

1. To request that Members consider continuing Authority membership of the Local Government Association

Recommendation

2. That Members;
 - a. Consider if the Authority wish to continue membership with the Local Government Association (LGA);
 - b. Note the freeze of the LGA subscription fee for a further year and the 2.5% loyalty discount to all Fire and Rescue Authorities not on notice, alongside the 2.5% prompt payment discount to Authorities who pay the annual subscription in full by 30th June 2014, and;
 - c. Consider if the Authority wish to take up the offer of the discounted subscription, for 2015/16, of £10,460 plus VAT, and instruct the Democratic Services Manager to raise purchase order and make subscription payment in full, before 30th June 2015.

Introduction and Background

3. Members will be aware that the Authority has been a long standing member of the LGA and the purpose of this report is to advise that notification of the fees for 2015/16 has been received, and seek approval for continued affiliation and payment.
4. The LGA have previously stated that they are committed to keeping the cost of membership as low as possible. The LGA Leadership Board agreed in

November 2014 to freeze membership subscriptions for a further year, and are again offering a 2.5% loyalty discount for Fire and Rescue Authorities who are not on notice. This is alongside an offer of 2.5% prompt payment to Authorities who pay the subscription fee in full, before 30th June 2015, and equates to the same fees paid for 2013/14, and 2014/15.

5. The Authority is asked to consider the value of being a member of the LGA and if it wishes to continue affiliation with the LGA for 2015/16, consider taking advantage of the discounted subscription for early payment
6. A letter from Carolyn Downs, LGA Chief Executive is attached (Appendix A) details the wide range of issues which the LGA have worked with Fire and Rescue Authorities, to address.

Equality and Diversity Implications

7. Membership with the LGA is a network for sharing views and discussing issues amongst similar organisations, to assist in the influencing of national LGA policy.
8. A network of this type allows equality and diversity considerations to be taken into account before national policies are set.

Staff Implications

9. There are no direct staff implications relating to this report.

Legal Implications

10. The National Fire Lawyers Group, of which the Clerk is a member, receives regular updates from the LGA and therefore continued membership would assist this valuable service

Financial Implications & Value for Money

11. If the Authority gives approval to take advantage of the discounted loyalty fee and prompt payment discount, the cost of this £10,460 subscription can be met from existing budgets.
12. This would see value for money with a freeze of subscription matching that of 2013/14 and 2014/15, compared to higher membership charges in previous years in excess of £10,735
13. It is important to note that additional costs are likely to be incurred for travel and accommodation (if required) when attending LGA Conferences, but these costs are usually contained within existing budgets and are covered by the Members Allowance Scheme.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

14. There are no direct implications within this report relating to risk management, health and safety or the environment.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

15. Membership of the LGA allows Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority to contribute to, and benefit from the work of the LGA in championing the local government sector.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

LGA **Local Government Association**

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From the Chief Executive
Carolyn Downs

Dan Stephens
Chief Fire Officer
Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority
Merseyside Fire Service Headquarters
Bridle Road
Bootle L30 4YD

10 December 2014

Dear Dan

LGA Subscription 2015/16

The coming year will be a challenging one for all of us and we are committed to keeping the cost of LGA membership as low as possible. Last month, LGA Leadership Board agreed to freeze LGA membership subscriptions for a further year.

This means that for 2015/16 your subscription, including all the discounts will be £10,460 (plus VAT).

We are once again offering the 2.5% loyalty discount for all fire and rescue authorities not on notice, alongside the 2.5% prompt payment discount for those authorities which pay in full by 30 June 2015.

In the last year, we have worked closely with fire and rescue authorities on a wide range of issues, and have secured some significant wins. These include:

- delivering a fire pay settlement within the parameters set by stakeholders
- continuing to support all fire authorities with retained duty system staff in managing the resolution of the 12,000 plus Employment Tribunal cases linked to the part-time workers regulations
- securing employer and employee agreement within the NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services to jointly take forward wide-ranging work on the future role of firefighters to support the changing role of the fire service
- submitting evidence to the DCLG Select Committee on the Knight Review and Councillor Hammond gave oral evidence along with a number of Chief Fire Officers
- Championing and winning the argument for a bottom up approach to governance reforms
- contributing to Adrian Thomas's Independent Review of Terms and Conditions and providing a number of opportunities for Members to speak direct to Adrian Thomas
- contributing to the LGA's Independent Finance Commission to ensure fire funding is factored into discussions

- continuing to influence the strategic direction and operation of the Fire Service College through political influence on both the Management Board and Customer Boards
- continuing support for the residual Firecontrol Projects, identifying risk and taking supporting action to ensure all 22 projects are on track
- achieving a manageable timeframe for the implementation of the Primary Authority Scheme
- supporting the first ever Fire Sprinkler Week from 3 to 9 February 2014
- through the LGA/CFOA/LFB National Operational Guidance strategy board, successfully secured a £1 million grant for 2015/16 to match Authorities' contributions for the next phase of the programme
- with CFOA, developing a fire-specific 'First 100 days' document to provide a foundation for influencing a future government
- investing in actuarial and legal advice in response of the retained firefighters' pensions scheme on behalf of the sector
- providing advice and support, and training for Members, on the new Pensions Boards in early 2015
- facilitating an extended discussion with the Fire Minister at the House of Commons to enable Members to hear about Government priorities, and put questions to the Minister
- lobbying to ensure the whole £75 million Transformation Fund was allocated to 37 projects
- supporting 13 fire authorities to resolve local employee relations difficulties through the national dispute resolution processes; and providing training where requested
- Publicly raising concerns of the service eg extensive media coverage in the national press and interviews raising the issue of the dangers of chargers for e-cigarettes
- engaging all fire and rescue authorities in the Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge programme with 42 delivered since 2011 and the remaining 4 confirmed. The programme has been evaluated by Cardiff University and confirmed as a structured and consistent way to drive continuous improvement and an effective way of ensuring the sector as a whole improves
- delivering an effective and popular Fire Leadership Essentials Programme: we have now delivered 3 free fire leadership essentials programmes with attendance from 32 councillors across 22 authorities, with a further programme planned for February 2015
- 48 out of 49 Fire and Rescue Authorities in England and Wales attended the LGA Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition in Cardiff on 11-12 March with a total of 236 delegates.
- publishing *Any Fire*, a report in the re-wiring local government suite that set out the case for reform to the financing of the fire sector
- next year's Conference and Exhibition is being held at the Hilton, Gateshead on 10-11 March, with delegate fees held once again at 2008 prices
- holding a dedicated fire service breakfast session at the LGA Annual Conference
- publishing a quarterly fire bulletin, which has over 1500 subscribers.

In terms of working more broadly with local government, further achievements which will be of interest to you include:

- recovered over 95% of the money councils originally deposited with the failed Icelandic Bank Landsbanki, bringing the total sum retrieved to **over £1 billion**
- established for councils, Public Sector Auditor Appointments Ltd, to continue to deliver **savings in excess of £100 million** over the next 2 years in the fees paid by councils to external auditors
- devolution of **£50 million** of Youth Contact underspend for councils to run local youth employment initiatives

- devolution of **£330 million** of Further Education capital spending to Local Enterprise Partnerships
- a **£168 million** “pothole fund”
- ensuring that the new burdens grant for localised Council Tax Support continued to be paid in 2015/16
- an additional **£270 million** for flood defences over the next 3 years, **£184 million** for road repairs and **£135.25 million** for recovery schemes
- ensuring the Government **withdrew dangerous plans to relax taxi licensing rules** within the Deregulation Bill
- an **amendment to the Serious Organised Crime Bill** to safeguard councils against criminalisation

The new Chair of the Fire Services Management Committee, Councillor Jeremy Hilton, has set out 5 strategic priorities going forward, all of which have been endorsed and agreed by the Committee and the Commission. These include: pressing for a fair finance settlement for FRAs; work to assist resolution in the current industrial action; participation in the Adrian Thomas review; political engagement; and blue light interoperability.

In early 2015, we will also be running a fire-specific perceptions survey which will enable all FRAs to give views on the LGA fire offer. It will aim to quantify members’ understanding of the LGA, and investigate what our member FRAs want from the LGA, and how they want to engage and provide a timely opportunity for us to review our services to ensure they are relevant and in tune with local FRAs.

The current trade dispute between the FBU and the Government is providing an on-going challenge in terms of business continuity and resilience. We have supported fire authorities in managing the industrial relations implications and are continuing to try to resolve fitness issues related to the dispute, representing the clear and shared position of fire authorities in doing so.

Your subscription invoice will be sent out in April. To streamline the process could you ask your office to arrange for a purchase order number to be sent to andrea.gillian@local.gov.uk in my office.

I look forward to continuing to work with you over the coming year.

Yours sincerely



Carolyn Downs
Chief Executive

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY BUDGET MEETING		
DATE:	26 FEBRUARY 2015	REPORT NO:	CFO/007/15
PRESENTING OFFICER	DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DEB APPLETON	REPORT AUTHOR:	JACKIE SUTTON IRMP OFFICER
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT GROUP		
TITLE OF REPORT:	POST CONSULTATION REPORT - INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN SUPPLEMENT 2015/17		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX 1: IRMP SUPPLEMENT 2015/17 APPENDIX 2: ORS CONSULTATION REPORT APPENDIX 3: WEBSITE CONSULTATION RESULTS APPENDIX 4: LIST OF PARTNERS CONSULTED APPENDIX 5: LETTER FROM POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER APPENDIX 6: REPRESENTATIVE BODIES SUMMARY APPENDIX 7: FBU RESPONSE APPENDIX 8: FOA RESPONSE APPENDIX 9: UNISON RESPONSE APPENDIX 10: UNITE RESPONSE APPENDIX 11: LOG OF AMENDMENTS APPENDIX 12: EIA
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Purpose of Report

1. To request that members consider the outcomes of public consultation on the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Supplement 2015/17 and approve the publication of the final (post-consultation) version of the IRMP 2015/17 Supplement.

Recommendation

2. That Members;
 - a. Consider whether the responses to consultation have been adequately considered and are reflected within the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2015/17 Supplement, where appropriate.
 - b. Approve the IRMP 2015/17 Supplement for publication on 26th February 2015.

- c. Note that this document is a supplement to the IRMP 2013/16 and continues to reflect the challenging budget position. In order to set a balanced budget further savings of £6.3m will need to be made by 1st April 2016 (£2.9 from support staff, £3.4 from front line fire stations).

These savings will be made by:

- A reduction of approximately 90 Firefighter posts
 - Merging fire stations – 3 pairs of stations have been identified for potential merger
 - Closing fire stations – initially Allerton but potentially other sites in the future
 - Loss of 40+ support staff posts
- d. Reaffirm their commitment to ensuring that the impact of the changes on the communities of Merseyside should be minimised and firefighter safety maximised, noting there are areas of the IRMP that will have significant impact upon our staff. In line with all staffing matters these will be the subject of additional staff consultation/negotiation. Likewise fire station mergers and closures have been, and will continue to be, subject to extensive public consultation.
- e. Request that the Chief Fire Officer reports the outcomes of these consultations separately to the Authority, as appropriate.
- f. Prior to any implementation (and in line with normal practice) instruct the Chief Fire Officer to exercise his full delegated responsibility for completing those consultations/negotiations and managing the implementation of any changes.

Introduction and Background

3. It is a statutory requirement of the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2012 to produce an IRMP. This document has been written to ensure compliance with the National Framework.
4. Merseyside FRA's IRMP is a medium term plan that evaluates progress made as a result of previous IRMP's and captures future aspirations and the strategic direction for the Authority in order to deliver its Mission: Safer, Stronger Communities; Safe Effective Firefighters.
5. Members will be aware that the published IRMP 2013/16 is still current. However due to the effect of Government grant cuts for 2015/16 it was considered appropriate to publish a Supplement to the existing IRMP 2013/16 covering a 2 year period 2015/17.
6. The Supplement deals in a strategic way with the implications of the budget cuts on the provision of prevention, protection and response services including

proposals to merge and close fire stations. Future reports to the Authority will contain the detail on these matters.

Consultation

7. Since the draft IRMP Supplement was approved by the Community Safety and Protection Committee on 23rd October 2014 a twelve week consultation process has taken place. The outcomes of this process this are summarised below and reported within Appendix 2 to 11.
8. Amendments made as a result of the consultations are included at Appendix 11.
9. The consultation process included the following:
 - a) One joint consultation forum
 - b) Distribution of the IRMP to over 150 strategic partners and other interested parties
 - c) Meetings with Representative Bodies – Fire Brigades Union, Fire Officers Association, UNISON and UNITE.
 - d) District Managers meeting Local Authorities and community partners
 - e) An on line questionnaire on our website for the public and staff

Public Forum

10. Opinion Research Services (ORS) were commissioned to facilitate an all-Merseyside forum to consider the Authority's draft IRMP. ORS's role was to recruit and facilitate the meeting and report outcomes. ORS worked with Officers to prepare stimulus material for the meeting with the fullest possible information for participants.
11. MFRA has had an extensive programme of 'engagement' with residents for a number of years and, in this context, ORS has facilitated district-based and all-Merseyside forums regularly. Within this on-going framework, MFRA has conducted both 'listening and engagement' and 'formal consultation' meetings on a regular cycle.
12. The consultation forum followed earlier all-Merseyside 'listening and engagement' meetings that considered hypothetically a wide range of policies and options for MFRA in the context of reduced budget due to grant cuts. The forum considered the operational methodology applied in reaching the proposals and the adequacy of the consultations process. The full ORS Consultation Forum Report can be found at Appendix 2.
13. Although there have been minor changes made to the IRMP as a result of the consultation process, this has not materially affected the proposals contained within the plan.
14. In general, the public consultation to the IRMP was supportive of the proposals; understanding that they were driven by necessity due to the budget cuts. The

outcomes from the consultation would suggest that the public were reassured that the Authority, whilst not wanting to make many of the proposed changes, had carefully considered the associated risk to our communities and were satisfied that MFRA would strive to keep any impact on service delivery to a minimum.

On-line Questionnaire

15. An on-line questionnaire was available on the MFRA website. The full report is attached at Appendix 3. The majority of respondents (61.1%) felt the IRMP proposals were very reasonable and 36.1% felt they were fairly reasonable. 100% agreed the IRMP was clear and easy to understand. Comments included:

“The Service provides considerable support to other organisations which is worthy of mention”

“Paints a stark picture of the impact of cuts on the Fire Service and what that means for residents”

“Very comprehensive”

Staff Representative Bodies

16. Consultation with representative bodies generally accepted that while the changes were not welcome, decisions made by the Authority were made with the safety of staff and the people of Merseyside. There was some concern from UNISON about the extent of support staff cuts and when staff would be advised they were at risk. In a comprehensive response (attached as Appendix G) the Fire Brigades Union expressed opinions on matters related to the reduction in the number of appliances, closure of fire stations and the increase in attendance times, unwanted fire signals and productivity. There was a query about the target for Equality Objective 4 of reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions by 37.5% by 2020. This is a United Nations road safety target. No specific changes have been requested.

Consultation with Partners

17. District Managers distributed the draft IRMP widely among the partners they work with on District. Partners are invited to complete the survey on the MFRA website. A list of partners the document was distributed to is attached as Appendix 4. No specific changes were requested.

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside, Rt. Hon Jane Kennedy, wrote to the Chief Fire Officer, at Appendix 5, supporting the IRMP Supplement while understanding the challenge presented by the budget cuts. She stated she was keen to work together in partnership to lessen the impact of the cuts and commented:

“It is reassuring to see that regardless of the cuts, overall fire incidents in Merseyside have reduced by 54% over the 10 year period 2004/05 and 2013/14. This reduction is testament to the excellent and dedicated work of the MFRS and its personnel”

Equality and Diversity Implications

16. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the IRMP and is attached as Appendix 12.
17. An Equality Impact Assessment will also be completed for actions within the plan prior to implementation.
18. The all-Merseyside forum discussed equalities issues and focused on MFRA’s recruitment – reaching the conclusion that MFRA should not adopt formal recruitment targets for minority groups, but instead should use positive action to encourage diverse applicants. By a ratio of two to one the participants opposed formal recruitment targets, but welcomed positive encouragement of minority group applications.

Staff Implications

19. It should be noted in order to minimise the impact on services to the community and to ensure Firefighter safety the Authority recognises that in light of the capacity reductions it is essential that there are changes to the way in which we work as an organisation. The IRMP supplement that the Authority is now being asked to approve makes reference to specific issues that will have significant impact on staff. In line with all staffing matters these are the subject of additional staff consultation/negotiation prior to any implementation. These are:
 - Loss of 40+ support staff roles,
 - Reduction of 90 Firefighters posts,
 - Merger and closure of fire stations.
20. In line with normal Authority management arrangements and the specific budget resolution of the Authority (26th February 2013 and reaffirmed at the AGM on 26th June 2014) the Authority will note that the Chief Fire Officer has full delegated responsibility for completing those consultations/ negotiations and managing the implementation. To deliver the savings and efficiencies in a timely manner and in a way that minimises risk.
21. It is recognised that that some of the changes proposed may be challenging for staff. This may mean that agreement may not be reached with all representative bodies and the CFO will need to consider the appropriateness of the resolution processes as set out in the grey book and indeed the full range of processes available to the Authority as employer in order to achieve the required outcome.

22. The outcomes from the detailed consultations on all these matters will be reported back to the Authority at a later date in line with normal practice.

Legal Implications

23. This report is the last stage of the process to fully discharge statutory duties placed upon the Authority to produce and publish an IRMP and Action Plan as required by the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2012.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

24. The full financial implications were established during the development of the IRMP proposals which have been designed to meet the cuts in Government Grant. No alternative proposals were suggested during the consultation period that would still allow the Authority to meet their obligation to set a balanced budget. Resources are allocated in line with the IRMP in the Authority budget and financial plans.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

25. This document details the strategic approach to risk management, encompassing what has been done to manage risk and what will be done in the next two years.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

26. The IRMP is the key document by which Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority manage its resources with full consideration of the impact on risk to life for the people of Merseyside. This document details the actions we intend to take to achieve our Mission.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/074/13 IRMP 2013/16 Post Consultation Report IRMP 2013/16

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
FRA	Fire and Rescue Authority
IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Plan



Integrated Risk Management Plan

SUPPLEMENT 2015 - 2017

Safer, Stronger Communities
Safe, Effective Firefighters

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CFO/007/15 Appendix 1

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Introduction

Welcome to our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Supplement for 2015/17. This supplement outlines what we have done to minimise the impact of the cuts on the people of Merseyside and explains how we have continued to keep the safety of the public and the effectiveness of firefighters as our priority.

Fire and Rescue Authorities are required to produce a medium-term plan that sets out the ways in which it will deal with local risks and challenges. We published our current three-year IRMP in June 2013 and we are using this document to update our stakeholders on the progress we have made against our objectives for 2013/14 and how we intended to deal with any future challenges.

Page 23 On top of £19.2 million of cuts to our budget between 2011/12 and 2014/15, we are required to make a further £6.3 million of savings by 2016/17, with more cuts expected in 2020. This presents the Authority with significant challenges as it seeks to minimise the impact of these cuts on the levels of service it provides to the public.

Merseyside has seen significant reductions in the total number of incidents over the last decade meaning that the demand for our emergency response has fallen. This is largely due to the success of our fire prevention and protection services (such as Home Fire Safety Checks) particularly focused on those people most at risk of suffering a fire. These interventions require significant resources. All of our firefighters and many non-operational frontline staff carry out these services every day. We have also invested heavily to ensure the safety and effectiveness of our staff, ensuring that they undertake high quality training and are provided with the best equipment to do the job. Despite the reduction in incident volumes, finding the savings isn't easy. To make

savings of this magnitude without having an impact on fire stations and fire appliances is no longer possible, despite continued cuts to “back office” and support services, which includes the staff working to protect people in their own homes.

In previous IRMPs we have introduced the concept of a single Merseyside-wide 10-minute response standard (although the actual average response time is almost half that, at 5 minutes 24 seconds, giving Merseyside one of the fastest response times in the country).

Recent cuts have seen the Authority having to incrementally reduce the number of fire appliances from 42 to 28 over the period and we are, at the time of writing, consulting on proposals to close pairs of outdated stations and, where possible, replace them with one new community fire station in a more central location. Feedback so far suggests that the public, businesses and partner organisations understand our reasons for doing this and are supportive; recognising that we would not be making many of these changes if we were not compelled to do so.

More hard decisions will no doubt follow if the Government continues to cut public spending. So far, we have managed to maintain a very fast response and by targeting our prevention activity and working smarter, we are still having a real impact on the safety of Merseyside.

You can be assured that despite significant changes we will continue to provide the best possible service to the public of Merseyside.

**Chief Fire Officer Dan Stephens,
Chair of the Fire Authority Councillor Dave Hanratty.**

Our Mission & Aims

Our Mission; to achieve:

**Safer, Stronger Communities —
Safe Effective Firefighters**

Our Aims;

Excellent Operational Preparedness

We will provide our firefighters 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.

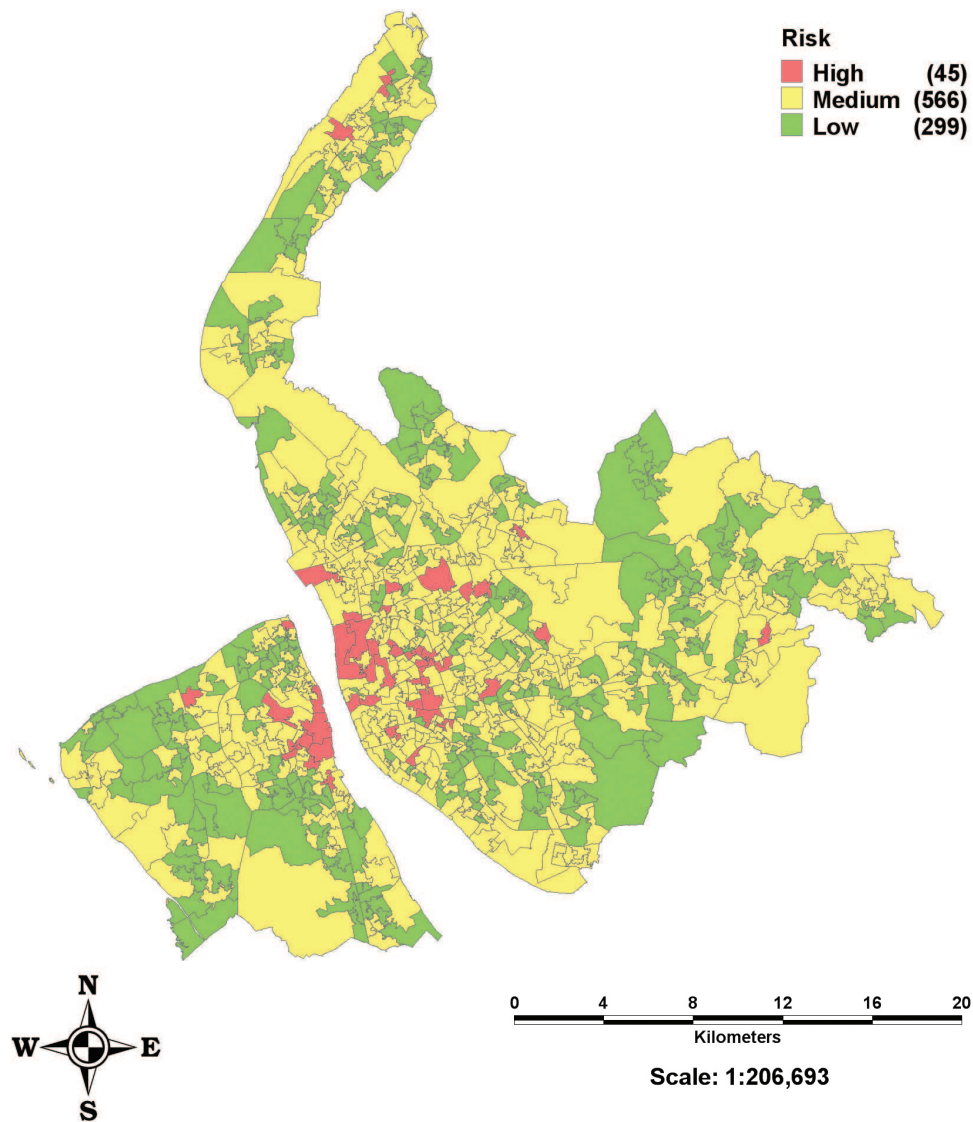


Risk Map of Merseyside 2014

The Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) approach to identifying and reducing risk examines where emergencies occur and the factors that have the greatest impact on risk to life for the people of Merseyside. Allowing us to respond efficiently and effectively, where an emergency does occur, and intelligently target the individual needs of our communities.

Maps are created to illustrate the areas where risk factors are most concentrated. The red areas contain some of the most hard to reach and high risk residents of Merseyside. To develop these maps we use data sets including the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, local information from partners who share data with us and historical response data. All this information is collated to produce the Risk Map on this page:

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Risk Map 2015

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Author: Gary Crosbie
Date: 24.04.2014
Produced Using: MapInfo v11.0
Strategy and Performance

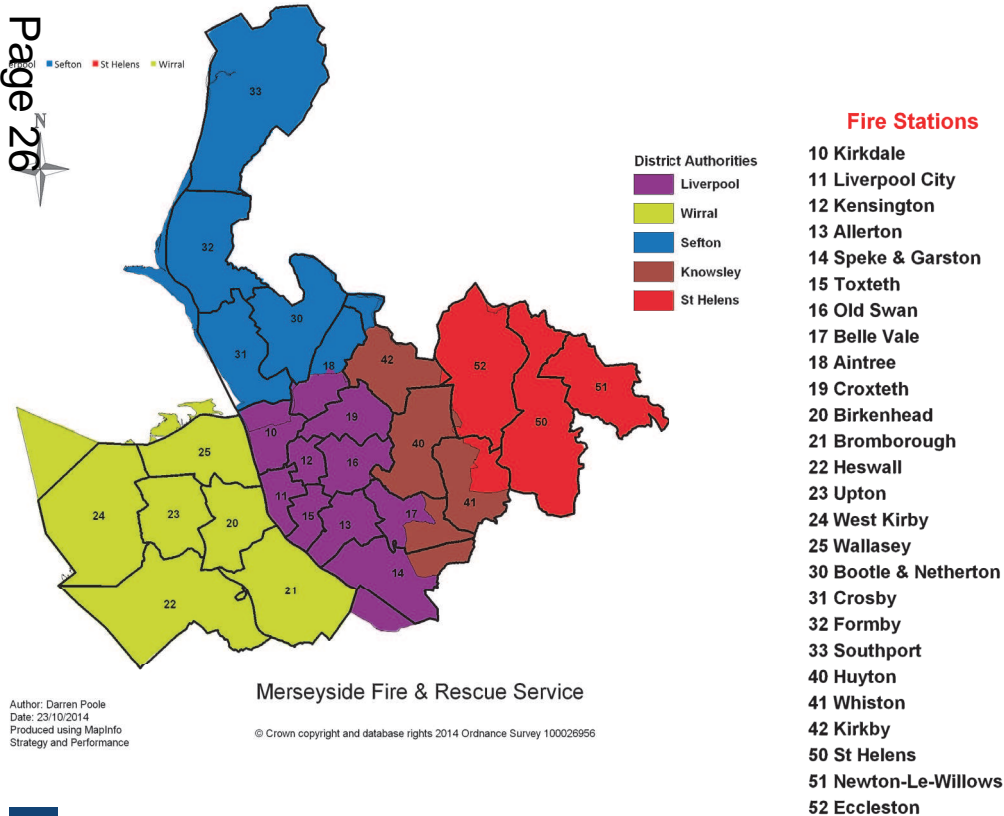
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Risk Map Data 01042011_31032014\MapInfo\
RiskMap 2015_NoMapbase_Land.png

Our Communities

Merseyside has a population of 1.4 million residents and spans 249 square miles (645 Km²) and is made up of five Districts:

- Liverpool
- Wirral
- Sefton
- Knowsley
- St Helens

The map shows where our Fire Stations are currently located (October 2014).



Mid-2013 estimated figures showed Merseyside had a population total of 1,386,589 which is a 0.39 % increase on the 2011 Census population. The last Census in 2011 showed the population is split into 48.6% males and 51.4% females. Merseyside has a lower proportion of children (16.5%) and higher proportions of working age residents (66.3%) and older people (17.2%) than the North West averages. (Census 2011)

Ethnicity

(Census 2011 data)

Ethnicity	Merseyside	%
White	1,305,303	100.00%
Mixed	20954	1.6%
Black and Black British	14552	1%
Asian and Asian British	18851	1.4%
Chinese and Other	21529	1.5%
Total	1,381,189	100.00%

Age

Children and people over pension age make up over 34% of the population of Merseyside. (Census 2011)

Age	Merseyside	%
0-14	228,290	16.5%
15-64	915,042	66.3%
65+	237,857	17.2%
Total	1,381,189	100.00%

Our Districts

Wirral

Population:
320,295

Households:
142,197

Key Risks include:-

- M53 motorway.
- Wallasey & Birkenhead Tunnels.
- River Mersey & Coastal risks.
- Clatterbridge & Arrowe Park hospitals.
- COMAH Top Tier Sites.
- Underground & Overground Railways.

Sefton

Population:
273,207

Households:
121,072

Key Risks include:-

- M57 & M58 Motorways.
- Dock & Freeport complex.
- National Trust and Site of Specific Scientific Interest & Natura 2000 Site.
- RAF Base & Altcar Rifle Range & Barracks.
- Southport Hospital.
- Merseyrail track to Southport.

Liverpool

Population:
470,780

Households:
199,743

Key Risks include:-

- Liverpool John Lennon Airport.
- Dock Estate & River Mersey.
- Liverpool One shopping centre & City Centre.
- Liverpool, Hope & Liverpool John Moores universities.
- Royal Liverpool, Broadgreen, Aintree, Walton Neurological & Alder Hey Hospitals.
- Anfield & Goodison Football Stadia.

St Helens

Population:
176,221

Households:
78,014

Key Risks include:-

- M6 & M62 motorways.
- East Lancashire Road.
- Rail links & canals.
- St Helens Hospital.
- St Helens RLFC stadium.

Knowsley

Population:
146,086

Households:
63,171

Key Risks include:-

- M57 & M62 motorways.
- Rail links.
- Top Tier COMAH Sites.
- Large Industrial Estates.
- Whiston Hospital.

Our Financial Challenge

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority made £19.2 million of savings to deliver a balanced budget between 2011/12 – 2014/15. The major saving required in the frontline service was a reduction of frontline fire engines from 42 to 28.

The Government has now announced the settlement figure for 2015/16. The Authority will need to make savings of £6.3 million to balance the financial plan for 2016/17. To deliver these savings the Authority have prepared a comprehensive plan which will deliver further savings from Back Office and Support Staff of £2.9m. This has placed a large number of non-uniformed staff at risk of redundancy. Many of these posts provide front line services to the community notably within Prevention and Protection.

This still leaves £3.4m of cuts to be identified from front line fire stations. The Chief Fire Officer examined the options for delivering the operational savings required including station mergers, closures, wholetime retained and community retained firefighters and identified station mergers as the 'least worst option'. Public consultation has endorsed this approach.

The financial plan at the time of setting the budget assumed that it will be possible to save £3.4m, equivalent to about 100 firefighter posts, through at least 4 station mergers. These include:

- Huyton and Whiston at Prescot.
- Upton and West Kirby at Greasby
- Eccleston and St Helens at St Helens Town Centre.
- A fourth merger in Liverpool District if suitable sites can be identified or outright closure if not.

Based on the current firefighter retirement profile, to deliver that scale of saving will take until 2016. The Authority has always used natural turnover rates from firefighters to make savings and to avoid compulsory redundancy in that part of its workforce.

Looking beyond 2015/16

Based on statements by all the major political parties about their strategies for dealing with the current position of the public finances, it is anticipated that the financial climate will remain very tough for the Authority over the next few years, perhaps as long as to 2020, and further tough choices will be required over the next few years.

Reserves

The Authority has prudently planned to meet financial risks over the medium-term by holding reserves to be used:

- To have monies available to give time to deliver savings through natural retirement of firefighters to avoid redundancy.
- As a hedge against pay rises and other risks in the short-term as plans assume pay bill restraint.
- To support capital projects like station mergers to avoid borrowing.
- To manage limited recruitment.

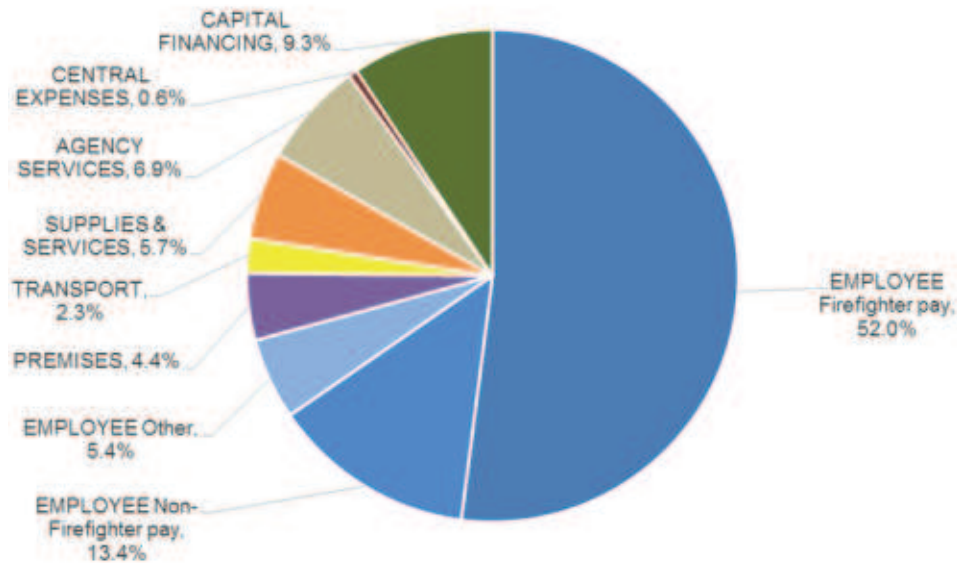
Post 2015/16, balancing competing risks will become more difficult as the aim is to use much of the reserves for the proposed station mergers project to avoid additional borrowing costs.

Council tax

The Authority has assumed that it will be allowed to increase council tax levels in line with inflation in the next few years and has done so in recent budgets with increases at 2% in 2013/14 and 2014/15 which was below inflation in those years. The current council tax is £68.70, which is equivalent to £1.32 per week for a band D household.

How our money is spent

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Our Performance

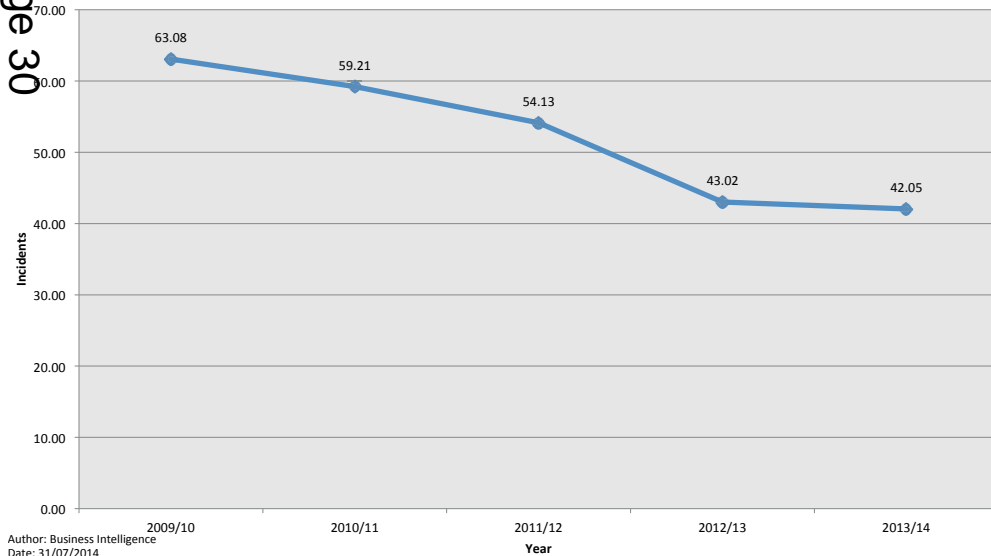
Despite the financial challenges Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority faces, we are committed to providing the best service possible to the people of Merseyside. Performance in all areas is consistently monitored through Key Performance Indicators (Outcomes) and Local Performance Indicators (Outputs) published in the annual Service Delivery Plan.

Targets for outcome related Key Performance Indicators are set using forecasting and historical data to reflect expected improvements to performance.

The following illustrations give a snapshot of MF&RS's performance to the end of March 2014.

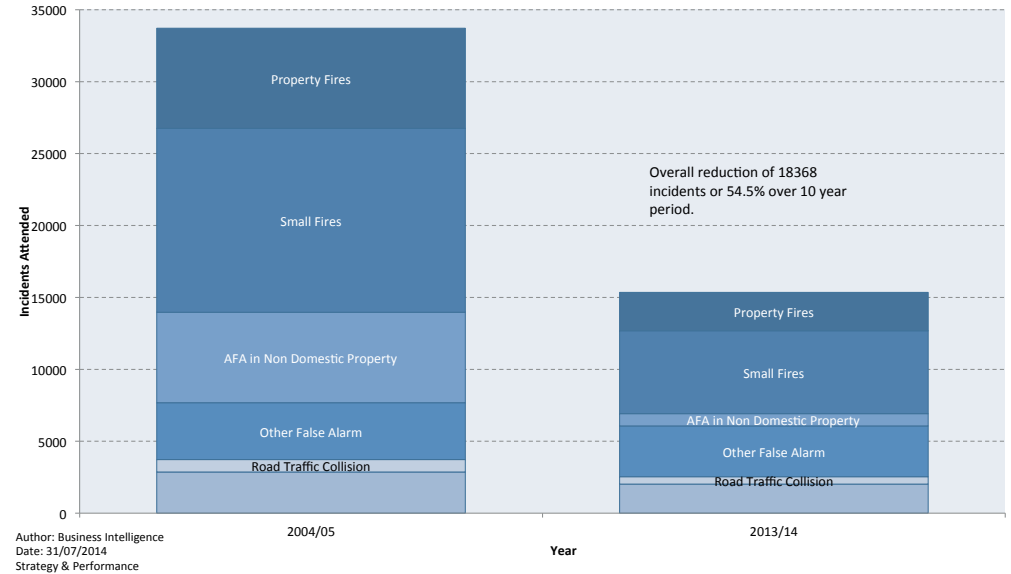
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Average Incidents Attended per Day between 2009/10 and 2013/14



Author: Business Intelligence
Date: 31/07/2014
Strategy & Performance

Breakdown of Total Incidents Attended between 2004/05 and 2013/14

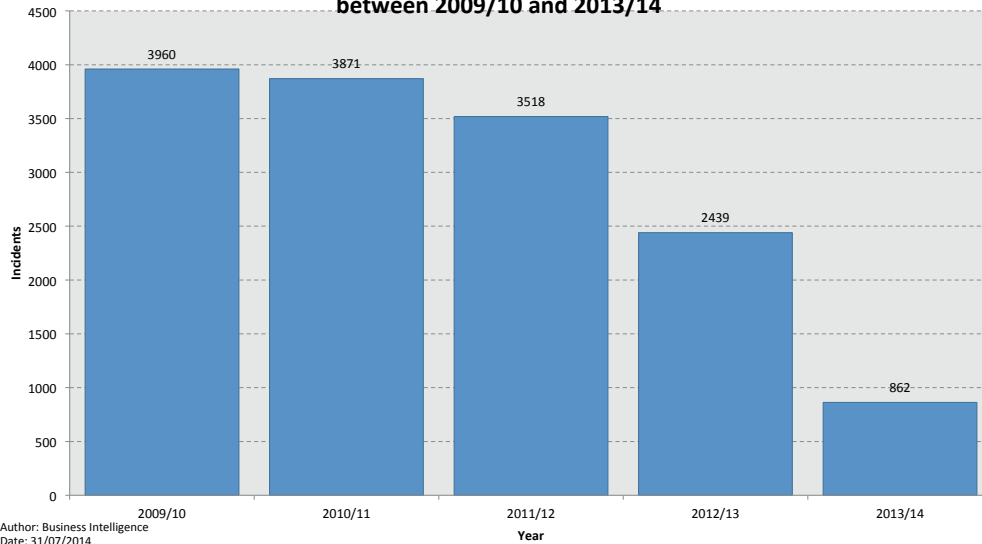


Author: Business Intelligence
Date: 31/07/2014
Strategy & Performance

Overall incidents have been reduced by 54.5% over the 10-year period illustrated by the two charts. This is 18,368 incidents less in 2013/14 than in 2004/05. The largest reduction was in small anti-social behaviour fires. In 2004/05 12,785 small fire incidents were attended but by 2013/14 this had fallen to 5,755 incidents. Our work with partner agencies and the Youth Engagement work we undertake contribute to this massive reduction.

The number of Road Traffic Collisions attended have been reduced from 864 in 2004/05 to 514 in 2013/14. We continue to deliver road safety interventions to schools, colleges and any interested groups to educate residents about driver and pedestrian safety.

Automatic False Alarms in Non Domestic (including commercial premises) between 2009/10 and 2013/14

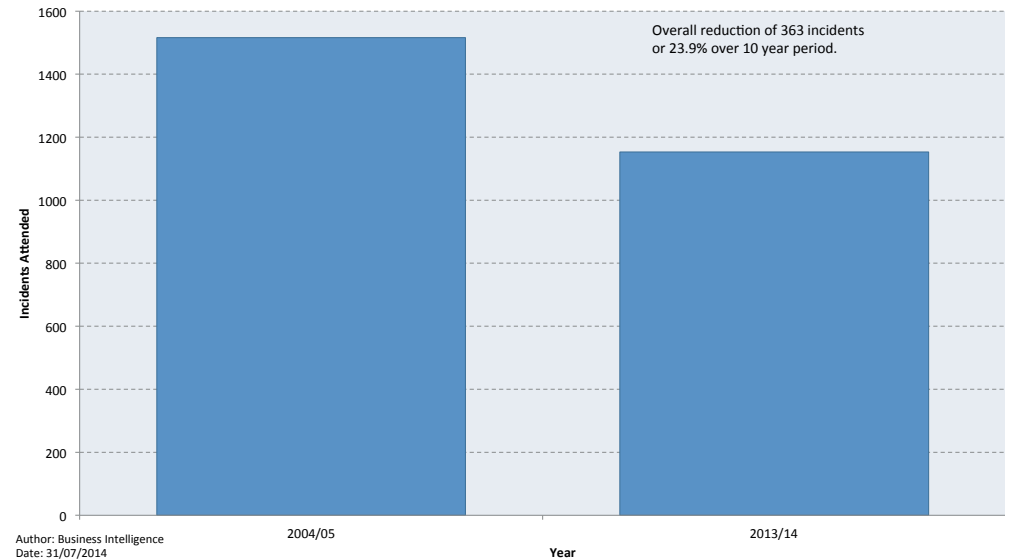


Author: Business Intelligence
Date: 31/07/2014
Strategy & Performance

The Automatic Fire Alarm Strategy introduced in 2012 changed our approach to attending what we call Unwanted Fire Signals. To introduce this strategy we educated and informed owners of non-domestic properties about management of their fire alarm systems and the impact on our reducing resources when attending false alarms. In 2004/05 we attended 6,284 incidents while in 2013/14 we attended just 824 such incidents.

There were 363 fewer accidental dwelling fires in 2013/14 than in 2004/05. Home Fire Safety Checks have consistently reduced the number of accidental dwelling fires year on year. We continue to deliver this service but in a more targeted way. Through the use of our Vulnerable Person Index we are able to identify those most at risk of fire and deliver appropriate interventions. Re-assurance campaigns are delivered to specific areas following incidents.

Comparison of Accidental Dwelling Fires between 2004/05 and 2013/14



Author: Business Intelligence
Date: 31/07/2014
Strategy & Performance

Excellent Operational Preparedness

Update on IRMP 2013-16 Actions

Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) Review

Ensures Incident Commanders are provided with flexible local risk specific operational guidance aligned with national operational guidance. Local SOPs are produced to ensure that hazards presented by operational activity are identified and that guidance is available to the Incident Commander on how to control the associated risks and effectively resolve the incident.

Command and Control & Command Competence Training

Technical Command Assessment (TCA) applicants now complete an internal command training course prior to undertaking a TCA to ensure they have underpinning incident command knowledge. Command training and development is aligned to National Occupational Standards and the Qualifications & Credit Framework (QCF).

Safe Person Assessments

The Safe Person Assessments (SPAs) are now fully embedded within MFRS's assessment framework. Improved performance & efficiency at operational level can be directly linked back to SPAs. The reporting features allow Service Managers to accurately plan and forecast training and assessment in line with the training planner.

High Rise & other Local Infrastructure Changes

Our High Rise Project, will ensure any equipment provision and/or procedural requirements are aligned to the overall firefighting media strategy and national guidance.

COMAH

Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) is managed through attendance at the COMAH Mets Forum, liaison with the Health and Safety Executive, consultation with partners regarding SEVESO III consultation document, COMAH site operators' quarterly forums and work with Network Rail and Merseyrail to develop Introduction to COMAH training packages for rail employees.

Planned Developments

MF&RS Operational Planning team use a variety of different methods to identify emerging issues including:

- Liaison with internal departments e.g. Protection— for identification of timber framed buildings.
- Local Resilience Forums e.g. Liverpool Super-Port, National Risk Register, MRF Community Risk Register, MRF Hazards & Risks Sub-Group.
- Quarterly meetings with Merseyrail & Network Rail which have produced rail mapping for the appliance mobile data terminals.
- Links with John Lennon Airport Fire Service & Civil Aviation Authority.
- Attendance at planning meetings for major events on Merseyside e.g. Open Golf Championships, Giants visit and Southport Air Show.

Equipment

MFRA continually reviews its firefighting tactics, media and equipment to ensure it learns from local and national events and keeps pace with technological innovations. This has included the introduction of:

- New cutting equipment & door rams for faster entry to buildings.
- Piercing branches & wall cutting equipment for suppression of compartment fires prior to firefighter entry.
- Improved Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) including Road Traffic Collision (RTC) gloves, personal issue respirators and fire kit.
- 300 bar cylinders & equipment for new breathing apparatus procedures in line with new guidance.
- New e-draulic heavy cutting/spreading equipment for RTC response.
- New Breathing Apparatus Support Unit vehicle.
- Incident Command and Control Unit.
- A specialist Hazmat Unit.

The Authority continues to provide the highest quality Personal Protection Equipment and operational equipment for its workforce.



Excellent Operational Preparedness Plans for 2015 and Beyond

JESIP—National Resilience

The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) ended on 30th September 2014. There will now be a JESIP transitional period from 1st October 2014 to March 2015 where a programme report will be completed. During this period the JESIP team will continue to work from the Home Office. The transition has been divided into a number of key workstreams: Doctrine, Training, Testing & Exercising and Joint Organisational Learning which will shape the legacy of JESIP.

From 1st April 2015 the JESIP legacy will commence and move from the Home Office to Cabinet Office and be supported by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat. Recommendations from the transition team will shape the JESIP legacy and there will continue to be a strategic board and ministerial oversight of JESIP. Work will continue with emergency services and Local Resilience Forums throughout transition and legacy arrangements to embed JESIP into business as usual activities.

A key branding change from 1st October is that JESIP will be known as Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles.

Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme

The Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) is a cross-governmental programme to deliver mobile voice and data communications to the emergency services based on a review of the anticipated operational demands, technical opportunities and commercial options. The service delivered will be known as Emergency Services Network (ESN).

The Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) aspects of the programme, including fire control and vehicle installation, data preparation, systems integration and migration planning, form part of the ongoing activities whose timescales and funding mechanisms have yet to be agreed by the Home Office. The system will potentially be the framework for FRS communications through to 2030 and beyond. Transition to the new service is expected to begin late 2016. The transition period for Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service (MF&RS) will begin late 2017.

Hazard and Risk Control Training

Hazard and risk control knowledge and understanding will be embedded within internal incident command input and training aligned to the guidance contained within the Health, Safety and Welfare Framework.

Command & Control / Command Competence Training

In alignment to the Qualifications Credit Framework (QCF) a programme of informative and assessable exercises will be provided to ensure incident command in all roles and levels is quality assured. Consistent and uniform assessment criteria for training and developmental purposes will be adopted.

Safe Person Assessments (SPAs)

Building on the success of the initial 20 SPAs we aim to provide additional assessments aligned to core training and risk critical activity. These will include Gas Tight Suits & Defibrillators. The enhanced level of reports will allow the training teams to analyse performance across the Service and react to the needs of the organisation. The software developed in house will also offer analysis across all core training courses.

High Rise & other local infrastructure changes

Preliminary research is being undertaken with a view to providing a high rise training rig at the Training and Development Academy in order to provide realistic training experiences.

MF&RS is constantly horizon scanning to identify new and future risks. At present we are aware of the High Speed 2 (HS2) rail link and the impact of increased rail traffic on Merseyside. We will identify training venues for operational personnel to utilise simulated rail incidents for familiarisation with rail procedures and interoperability with rail personnel.



Resilience

National Resilience Capabilities

Following the terrorist attacks in the USA on 11th September 2001 the Government of the day initiated the New Dimensions programme in order to improve national response arrangements to deal with similar events here in the UK.

The New Dimensions programme has resulted in the delivery of the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Conventional Explosive (CBRN (E)), High Volume Pumping (HVP) and Command and Control (C&C) capabilities. All of these capabilities are provided primarily for use at national incidents through separate funding and support arrangements from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service hosts a USAR team including 2 search dogs and handler, an Incident Response Unit for Mass Decontamination and a Detection, Identification and Monitoring (DIM) vehicle which make up the CBRN (E) capability and a HVP. Whilst these assets are provided primarily for national deployment they are all utilised locally to enhance our response to incidents.

USAR and NWAS Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) station - Croxteth

The MF&RS Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team and the North West Ambulance Service's (NWAS) Liverpool Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) are co-located at Croxteth Community Fire Station in the only arrangement of its kind in the country.

The operational response to technical rescue incidents is significantly enhanced through this arrangement as the personnel from each team work and train together using the facilities at the Training and Development Academy which is situated adjacent to the station.

JESIP—National Resilience

The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) was established to address the recommendations and findings from a number of major incident inquiries. The initial phase of the Programme ran from September 2012 to September 2014 with the aim of improving the ways in which police, fire and rescue and ambulance services work together at major and complex incidents.

This has been achieved through joint training and exercising and through the adoption of Joint Doctrine. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service officers supported the initial JESIP roll out and are now an integral aspect of the legacy arrangements which will serve to embed the JESIP principles as core business across the three emergency services.

Joint Command and Control Centre (JCC)

The Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Fire Control and Merseyside Police "999" call handling and dispatch capabilities are co-located on the ground floor of the JCC at the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters.

The first floor of the JCC hosts the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Operational Planning and Policy Team and the Merseyside Police Force Operations Department. It also hosts the strategic and tactical command suites from which all major incidents and events occurring on Merseyside are managed.

Excellent Operational Response

Update on IRMP 2013-16 Actions

New work routine

On 3rd January 2014 the duration of a firefighter's shifts were equalised in a move from 9 hour days and 15 hour nights to 12 hours days and nights. The new equalised shifts required a change to start and finish times. The duty system remains unchanged as a compressed hours system based upon 2 days and 2 nights worked consecutively, followed by 4 consecutive days off.

In conjunction with the shift change we introduced a new work routine for our firefighters that would maintain performance with fewer resources.

The new work routine has reduced stand down time and increased the number of productive hours in the working day by six hours per firefighter for each 48 hour period or tour of duty. The work routine includes one hour per shift for physical training for station-based operational personnel.

Reduction in the number of Appliances

Following the fundamental review of fire cover undertaken by the Chief Fire Officer, on 9th September 2013 the number of immediately available appliances was reduced from 42 to 28. This was a 33% cut.

10-minute response time

The introduction of the 10-minute response standard commenced in April 2013. Performance has been very high with an average of 97% achievement of the standard over the period. Where attendance times are not met these instances are reviewed by the relevant District Manager to improve performance or mitigate future occurrence.

Replace Dynamic Reserve with Strategic Resilience

The Authority has endeavoured to introduce wholetime retained strategic resilience appliances. In order to encourage staff to volunteer to undertake these roles retained contracts have been advertised to staff at a higher remuneration rate and less hours cover required than that stipulated in Firefighter's National Conditions of Service. Unfortunately staff uptake has been very poor and not at the level required to implement this change. The Authority continues to explore ways of implementing wholetime retained crewing.

Key station methodology

Ten key stations have been identified that form the basis of our tactical cover model for our control room. By ensuring all 10 stations have an appliance in their station ground, MFRA can meet its 10-minute response standard.

New fire stations and fire appliances

MFRA opened the last of the seven new Private Finance Initiative (PFI) stations in 2013. The stations boast state-of-the-art facilities for our staff and for the community, making them true community fire stations which are accessible to all. The Fire Appliance Replacement Strategy means that our fire appliances are replaced every ten years to ensure they are fit for purpose and reflect improvements in safety and innovation.

Station Mergers

No fire stations have been closed to date, all 26 remain staffed with at least one fire engine although this position is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain due to the cuts applied and the resulting Authority decision to transition from 26 stations to 22 stations through mergers or outright closures.

Excellent Operational Response Plans for 2015 and Beyond

Shift pattern changes

Due to further financial pressures new, more efficient shift patterns and duty systems will continue to be considered. Whilst firefighter safety and productivity was increased by the changes made to the existing working patterns (2 days, 2 nights), a more efficient and effective shift system model may be able to increase safety and productivity further.

Non Operational duty systems

We will review non-operational duty/shift patterns to ensure ways of working compliment frontline service delivery and maximise the benefits of increased productivity delivered by changes to the default operational duty pattern.

New ways of crewing appliances

Whole-time and Community Retained will continue to be investigated as a way of providing additional resilience to supplement our whole-time workforce.

Additional Voluntary Hours (AVH)

The Service will continue to review its plans with regard to staffing in order to provide the most efficient and effective emergency response to Merseyside.

Flexi officer duty system review

The current Officers flexi duty system will be subject to a risk assessment to ensure an appropriate number of operational officers available 24/7 for attending incidents; whilst ensuring we are maximising the managerial hours available in the workplace.

Develop & implement a comprehensive Fatigue Risk Management System (FRMS)

Following the realignment of shift times and the review of the work routines, the Authority will ensure that arrangements are in place to manage the risk presented to operational Firefighters of fatigue in the workplace and review welfare at incidents if appliances have to remain in attendance longer due to less appliances being available.

To carry out a review of the current fire ground analytical risk assessment (ARA) process

We will ensure our ARA process fully meets the requirements of the Fire and Rescue Service Framework and can be fully cross mapped to the outcomes of the Operational Procedure review. We will aim to develop a suitable ICT solution and methodology for this activity.

Command and Control at Incidents

We are reviewing the provision of Command Support to Incident Commanders. The Incident Management Team will be relocated to Toxteth fire station and move to a more efficient complimentary crewed system. To ensure we improve our Command Support resilience, we will train identified support stations in addition to Toxteth.

Station Mergers

Following consultation, the Authority has approved a proposal to merge two fire stations in Knowsley (Huyton and Whiston) into one newly built, strategically situated site in Prescot. Mergers options are also being progressed in Wirral and St Helens, subject to public consultation. The merger solution is less viable in Liverpool, where the Authority has been forced to consider the outright closure of Allerton Fire Station in order to meet the required savings, again subject to public consultation.

Excellent Prevention and Protection

Update on IRMP 2013-16 Actions

Restructure of Prevention & Protection Team

The Prevention teams have been restructured at a District Level and at Service Headquarters. The restructure categorises Prevention into 4 key areas:

- Home Safety.
- Road Safety.
- Arson/Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).
- Children and Young People (CYP).

District-based teams have been restructured and given the objective of reducing high levels of risk in homes and communities.

Managing risk

Each Policy for Prevention and Protection focuses on a risk based methodology which is being applied to ensure that front line resources are operating effectively in places and with people that are most vulnerable. This is reflected in the use of our Vulnerable Person Index to target risk in the home based on factors we know make people more vulnerable to fire, and the introduction of the Risk Based Fire Protection Inspection Programme (Legislative Fire Safety).

Intelligence lead targeting

Information from partner agencies continues to be shared with the Service which allows us to identify those people who are most at risk from fire. We feed this information into our Vulnerable Person Index which produces anonymised lists of addresses for our fire crews to target for Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) delivery. Information sharing

agreements are in place with a number of agencies including local councils and the NHS.

RTC Strategy

MF&RS are now embedded in road safety partnerships across Merseyside and nationally including the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA), BRAKE and Road Safety GB. Education and engagement has been agreed with Local Authorities and developed in schools and colleges through the delivery of our “Suddenly from Nowhere” package, and national campaigns such as the CFOA’s Road Safety Week are supported in full within each district. We are delivering Road Safety education to all MF&RS staff.

Enhance youth engagement programmes

Our Youth Engagement teams continue to deliver the Prince’s Trust Team programme for young people, with additional more cost effective delivery models being piloted in partnership at more venues. Merseyside has some of the most successful course retention rates for young people in the region.

The highly successful Beacon Project programme, which focuses on helping 13-16 years olds to develop life skills and enhance team working as an alternative to the school curriculum, relies solely on external funding. We continue to work with public and private sector partners to fund such opportunities for our young people – particularly those at risk of exclusion from school.



Protection

The revised Fire Protection Policy has been published following consultation, supported by the Risk Based Inspection Programme which aims to target risk and offer support to the business community. The Policy incorporates the changes in legislation including the Primary Authority Scheme for Fire Protection, where individual Fire and Rescue Authorities lead on fire protection matters for specific commercial organisations.

Unwanted fire signals

The Authority has now fully embedded the Risk Based Strategy for responding to Unwanted Fire Signals resulting in a reduction of over 70% in the actuations of fire alarms that we class as unwanted.

Excellent Prevention and Protection Plans for 2015 and Beyond

Home Safety - Vulnerable People and Places

The Home Safety Strategy is being refreshed to enhance capacity and engage with more people who are vulnerable in their homes, with a particular focus on those residents who are over 65. Officers continue to develop data sharing protocols with partner agencies and referral pathways so operational staff, specialist advocates and volunteers can carry out targeted interventions to reduce risk in the home. We feed this information into our Vulnerable Person Index which produces anonymised lists of addresses for staff to target for Home Fire Safety Check delivery. Consideration is being given to collaborative partnerships to enhance our capacity to carry out interventions in the Home.

Management Information Systems are being developed to support the intelligence led approach to targeting risk and delivering positive outcomes for our communities (associated with the Service's Key Performance Indicators).

The 20/20 vision for Prevention and Protection will include a review of working arrangements with partners such as Fire Support Network and the Fire Fit Hub and consider collaborative partnerships that enhance the management of risk and those most vulnerable.

Road Safety

MF&RS will develop the Road Safety Strategy to include delivery of road safety education to Year 7 pupils in Liverpool, a new MF&RS motorcycle road safety approach and Roadshows with our partners using the new MF&RS Road Safety Vehicle. We will link nationally with the Chief Fire Officers' Association to standardise and support their Road Safety Strategy.

Children and Young People (CYP)

Our Youth Engagement teams will continue to deliver the Prince's Trust (PT) programmes. MF&RS have been commissioned to deliver a refreshed Beacon Programme tailored to suit the needs of the customer and national funding has been secured to expand the provision of Fire Cadets across each District of the County. The strategy for CYP engagement in Merseyside will be reviewed to consider the future delivery of existing programmes and a review of interventions for young fire setters, activity carried out by operational staff and safeguarding.

Arson/Anti-social Behaviour

MF&RS continue to establish more premises as Safe Havens and will continue to seek funding for frontline interventions to reduce Anti-social Behaviour. District-based advocate provision will be aligned to Merseyside Police structures to ensure the impact of partnership working is maximised. We will develop and build on the success of site specific and seasonal campaigns to minimise the effect of anti-social behaviour and arson in the community.

Protection

The Protection Team will be restructured to reflect the National Competency Framework for Business Safety Regulators and will consider future efficiencies in that restructure.

A new Management Information System for Protection will be purchased to support business safety across the county. We will continue to work with commercial partners to develop the Primary Authority Scheme.



Unwanted Fire Signals

Protection officers are working collaboratively with businesses to further reduce the impact of false alarms caused by unwanted fire signals.

High Rise Strategy

The Authority has provided capital funding to support local authorities in providing sprinklers in high rise blocks of flats, aimed at reducing risk to occupants and firefighters in those premises. The publicity campaign including the Sprinkler Symposium has been completed and applications for funding to deliver sprinkler projects have been received and will be assessed on a risk basis. The programme will be delivered into and beyond 2015.

Excellent People

Update on IRMP 2013-16 Actions

Firefighter Fitness Policy

The appointment of a Fitness and Rehabilitation Co-ordinator to work in conjunction with Occupational Health, and the District Management Teams has proved to be a successful asset, addressing and resolving a number of fitness issues and ensuring an earlier return to operational duties for a number of staff. The introduction of specific training time within the new work routine has been supported by this role, alongside the creation of operational training programmes.

Other duties personnel have been assigned to meaningful work projects whilst working with Occupational Health and the Fitness Advisors to ensure a return to operational duties as soon as possible. The Authority is in the process of changing the current Absence Procedure, introducing a specific Capability Procedure which will be embodied within the suite of policies to address sickness absence and support individual attendance at work.

Staff Survey

The Authority undertook a "Your Service, Your Voice" staff survey in 2014 to better understand the needs and aspirations of its staff and to use it as a spring board for continuous organisational improvement. An action plan is being produced, at the time of writing, to respond to the comments made, in order to maximise the levels of engagement across the Service.

Support Service Review

The Service has used voluntary severance and natural staff turnover to manage the necessary reductions in the number of back office and support service roles in order to protect frontline services and avoid the need for compulsory redundancies as part of the last Support Service Review. All roles have been reviewed as part of this process to ensure that only essential activities are delivered. A further review of the support services is planned in 2014/15.

Change Management

The Authority has adopted a set of Organisational Values that are embedded across the Service and underpin all that we do. They are an integral part of our current development strategy and future recruitment and promotion for all staff. The introduction of the Development Gateway for all uniformed roles provides accredited development, coaching and mentoring for those employees seeking progression within the Service and is aligned to core and command competency.

Support Staff Review 2013/15

The Support Services Review 2013/15 has been completed, having delivered the required savings figure. Implementation of Department and role redesign, natural wastage, and voluntary severance/early retirement initiatives has taken place with the support of the representative bodies and without the need for any compulsory redundancies.

Excellent People Plans for 2015 And Beyond

Working with the representative bodies (e.g. trade unions) we will explore all options to ensure the most efficient systems of work continue to deliver a high quality service to the communities of Merseyside. This will explore the development of national conditions of service including the design and delivery of unique local work routines and reward structures that deliver the efficiencies required by the Government's Spending Review in conjunction with an engaged and productive workforce.

Recruitment

The Authority intends to recruit over the period 2015-17 to ensure that it is able to meet the challenges faced by the Service now and in the future. This is only achievable through the development of a competent and engaged workforce. The Workforce Strategy will incorporate flexible recruitment and leadership development.

Absence Management

The Authority is implementing a Capability procedure to replace the Absence and Attendance procedure. The new procedure will allow local management of sickness absence that will be supplemented by a range of occupational health initiatives, management advice and guidance and early interventions to support all employees in their attendance at work.

Productivity

In conjunction with the representative bodies, the Authority will introduce new ways of working, utilising revised working practices and contractual stipulations. The Authority will use national and local reward structures to address the extreme financial restrictions placed on the Authority whilst attempting to retain continuity of service delivery and employee engagement.

Change Management

The Authority will continue to utilise and support the reduced resources it has to ensure optimum output and service delivery. The revised shift and work routine will continue to be supported by a range of training and development opportunities. Full implementation of a Development Gateway process will offer those employees who wish to seek development or career advancement that opportunity, and assess their potential transparently against the organisational values and operational expertise. This ensures we are staffed by motivated employees who share the same organisational values.

Redundancy

To date the service has reduced its employee numbers to address the budgetary reduction placed on the Authority through natural wastage and voluntary severance/early retirement. We will address future staffing reductions endeavouring to avoid compulsory redundancy. However the options are severely limited and it is unlikely this can be guaranteed in the future. A review of strategy and practices will address staffing change whilst fully supporting those staff involved in any further redundancy situation.

Support Staff Review 2015-17

The Authority will use the previous strategy to review its support structures and seek the required savings. A set of criteria will ensure all roles are evaluated and decisions made based on the continued growth of the Service within the parameters of the financial restrictions placed on it. Assessment will be based on the future requirement of services, how they can be delivered either locally, collaboratively or externally, as well as the implications if roles are no longer undertaken.

Medium-Term Strategy 2012-17

Our Medium-Term Strategy covers a 5-year period and we will review our performance against this strategy on an annual basis. The aim of our strategy is to ensure that our Action Plans are focussed on the achievement of our Mission;

Safer, Stronger Communities - Safe Effective Firefighters

The IRMP Medium-Term Strategy for the development of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service is:

Objective 1

To reduce accidental dwelling fires and the deaths and injuries which result from these fires in Merseyside.

Action: To analyse our performance on an annual basis using the Performance Indicators (PI's) which relate to fire deaths, injuries and accidental dwelling fires. We will introduce measures as necessary to ensure the reduction in all figures.

Target: We will reduce accidental fires in homes and the deaths and injuries they cause on Merseyside by 5% by 2017.

Current Progress 2013/14: *While the number of accidental dwelling fires is within 10% of the target, sadly injuries and fatalities have increased. We are working more intelligently to target the most vulnerable people in Merseyside through targeted Home Fire Safety Checks to reach those most in need of our help.*

Objective 2

To achieve an appropriate speed and weight of attack in emergency response to fires and road traffic collisions.

Action: To analyse our performance against our emergency response standards and to introduce standards and measures as necessary to improve performance.

Target: To achieve a 90% attainment level against our response standards to all life risk incidents.

Current Progress 2013/14: *We reduced the number of appliances from 32 to 28 and following consultation introduced a 10 minute response standard for all emergency incidents. On average we are attending emergency incidents in 5.13 minutes. We are monitoring appliances booking mobile to incidents within 1.9 minutes of being alerted. On average we are achieving this target on 92.2% of occasions, this is closely monitored by District Teams.*

Objective 3

To reduce fires caused by anti-social behaviour in those areas of Merseyside identified as most at risk.

Action: To analyse risk to ensure we target our intervention activity to reduce anti-social behaviour in those areas where risk is highest across Merseyside.

Target: To reduce anti-social behaviour fires by 5% by 2017.

Current Progress 2013/14: *We have continued to make improvements in relation to this objective. In particular, the way in which we work with partners has brought us excellent results over the bonfire period, with incidents reducing by 50%.*

Objective 4

To reduce the impact of fire on commercial enterprise and the wider community.

Action: We aim to use all available resources to ensure we minimise the risk to commercial property from accidental and deliberate fires and to help affected businesses recover to normality as soon as possible.

Target: To reduce fires in commercial premises by 5% by 2017.

Current Progress 2013/14: *Deliberate and accidental fire in non-domestic premises are below target. We have continued to work closely with local businesses to reduce these incidents.*

Objective 5

To reinforce our role in fire prevention by improving fire safety within the public and commercial buildings of Merseyside.

Action: We will work with all businesses and stakeholders to educate and inform the business community about their responsibilities for fire safety in the workplace and to protect the public to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform Order (Fire Safety) 2004.

Target: We will improved regulatory compliance rates by 5% by 2017.

Current Progress 2013/14: *Our risk based approach to meeting our legislative fire safety duties and responsibilities will assist us in continuing the improvement to Objective 4.*

Objective 6

To ensure that the operational workforce operate safely and effectively in the resolution of all emergency incidents.

Action: We will continue a programme for assessment of competence which reflects the evolving risks facing the Fire and Rescue Service in Merseyside and nationally and assess all staff within the operational workforce.

Target: We will assess the operational workforce across all areas of generic risk annually by 2013 and beyond.

Current Progress 2013/14: *We continue to assess operational personnel through the use of operational monitoring during incidents and through a structured audit of station training, which is on-going through the year. Any areas of improvement or best practice are actioned through the Operational Improvement Group.*

Objective 7

To ensure that we can respond safely and effectively to all emergency incidents locally, regionally and nationally.

Action: We will maintain a programme to test operational plans and procedures using internal and multi-agency exercises.

Target: We will test the effectiveness of all operational plans and procedures annually by 2014 and beyond.

Current Progress 2013/14: *We have reviewed and exercised against Operational Plans which will continue with our multi agency partners against risks identified within the National Risk Assessment (NRA), the Merseyside Resilience Forum (MRF), Community Risk Register (CRR) and site specific risks.*

Equality Objectives 2012-17

Equality Objective 1

In the past ten years Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service has reduced accidental fires in the home by 37%.

Action: We will continue to build on this work through the use of our customer insight (Vulnerable Person Index) modelling and our station planning process to target individuals at risk.

Target: To reduce accidental fires in the home and the deaths and injuries they cause on Merseyside by a further 5% by 2017.

How this impacts on Equality and Diversity: Protected Characteristic – Age and Disability: We know through extensive research that some of the people at highest risk from fire are also covered by the nine protected characteristics that form part of the Equality Act 2010, for example elderly and disabled people. Our activity focuses on reducing risk for vulnerable people.

Current Progress

At the end of 2013/14, the Equality and Diversity target for Accidental Dwelling Fires (fires in the home) has been narrowly missed by 20 incidents (2%). High levels of accidental dwelling fires during the first three quarters of the year have contributed to missing the target of 1,136. A review of the Home Fire Safety Strategy will take into account this Equality & Diversity objective. This includes working to target our Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs) at the most vulnerable people in our communities.

Equality Objective 2

We will reduce risk for people who live in rented properties across Merseyside.

Action: By continuing to build productive relationships with Registered Social Landlords.

Target: To cut accidental kitchen fires in social housing by 5% by 2017.

How this impacts on Equality and Diversity: Protected Characteristics – Age and Disability, Socio-Economic Disadvantage: We know that people who live in rented properties often have other needs and fall within the protected characteristics. We've worked well with Registered Social Landlords to protect their residents, but some of the higher risk people live in privately rented accommodation and we want to help them too.

Current Progress

At the end of 2013/14 there were a total of 219 accidental fires in properties owned by registered social landlords, and the Equality & Diversity target of 237 has been met.

Equality Objective 3

We will continue to engage with young people in vulnerable areas.

Action: Through our award winning youth engagement programmes.

Target: Reducing deliberate anti-social behaviour fire setting by 5% by 2017.

How this impacts on Equality and Diversity: Protected Characteristics – Age, Socio-Economic Disadvantage: The anti-social behaviour of a minority of young people can impact most on the elderly and on other young people too. We want to help young people become good role models for others in their area and help older people feel safer in their homes.

Current progress

For the second year running, MFRA have achieved the Equality & Diversity target of 5,767 incidents, current incidents are down to 512, 640 incidents less than the target.

Equality Objective 4

We will work with at-risk groups and local partners to contribute to the reduction in the number and severity of road traffic collisions across Merseyside.

Action: To work towards achieving the local target of reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions.

Target: Reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions by 37.5% by 2020, as set out by the United Nations.

How this impacts on Equality and Diversity:

Protected Characteristic – Age: Young people are at a particularly high risk of being killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions. We want to have a positive impact on this group and help to keep them safer on the roads, whilst also monitoring road traffic collision risks in relation to young and old across all five districts and responding accordingly.

Current progress

The target in relation to road traffic collisions has been achieved for the third year running. However, the number of injuries was 97 over the target. We are currently delivering a programme of engagement with schools, presenting our “Suddenly from Nowhere” education package. We also work with all the young people we come into contact with through Prince’s Trust and Beacon Project programmes to instil road safety messages.

Equality Objective 5

Our aim is to create a strong cohesive organisation which is positive about rising to the future challenges we face.

Action: Our aim is to increase the representation of all minority groups within the communities of Merseyside in the Fire and Rescue Service.

Target: To increase the diversity of our workforce and volunteers to reflect the local community we serve.

How this impacts on Equality and Diversity: Protected Characteristic

– Gender and Ethnic Origin: We’d like our workforce to better represent the make-up of our communities and we will work to encourage applications from under-represented groups when we carry out any recruitment.

Current progress

No uniformed recruitment has taken place over the life of the previous IRMP but a Positive Action recruitment programme will take place in 2014/15 when we plan to recruit firefighters.

Our workforce (both uniformed and non-uniformed) equality analysis shows that there has been a 1% change in our gender split since last year, with 1% more females working at MFRA than last year, making a whole workforce split of 79% Male and 21% females.

MFRA are committed to tackling inequality, tailoring our services to meet the needs of our diverse communities and treating our staff and service users fairly.

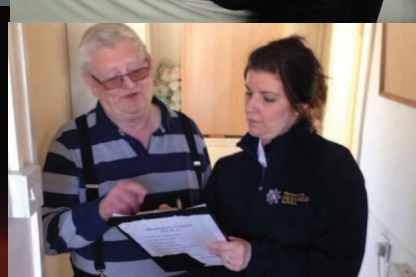
The MFRA Equality & Diversity Report 2013/14 can be found on our website www.merseyfire.gov.uk .

If you would like to learn more about our work, or have any questions, please contact:

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Glossary of Terms

ARA	Analytical Risk Assessment.	MFRA	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority.
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour.	MF&RS	Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service.
C&C	Command and Control.	MRF	Merseyside Resilience Forum.
CBRN(E)	Chemical, Biological, Radiation, Nuclear and Conventional Explosives.	NHS	National Health Service.
COMAH	Control of Major Accident Hazards.	NRA	National Risk Assessment.
CRR	Corporate Risk Register.	NWAS	North West Ambulance Service.
ESMCP	Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme.	PFI	Private Finance Initiative.
ESN	Emergency Services Network.	PPE	Personal Protective Equipment.
FRMS	Fatigue Risk Management System.	QCF	Qualifications Credit Framework.
FRS	Fire and Rescue Service.	RTC	Road Traffic Collision.
HART	Hazardous Area Response Team (Ambulance).	SOP	Standard Operational Procedures.
HFSC	Home Fire Safety Check.	SPA	Safe Person Assessment.
HVP	High Volume Pump.	TCA	Technical Command Assessment.
ICT	Information Communication Technology.	USAR	Urban Search and Rescue.
IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Plan.		
JCC	Joint Control Centre.		
JESIP	Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme.		

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Integrated Risk Management Planning

Report of Consultation by a Forum with Members of the Public

January 2015

Opinion Research Services
Spin-out company of Swansea University



As with all our studies, findings from this research are subject to Opinion Research Services' Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract.

Any press release or publication of the findings of this research requires the advance approval of ORS. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misrepresentation.

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Acknowledgements

Opinion Research Services (ORS) is pleased to have worked with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) on the IRMP public consultation forum reported here. The participants engaged with the issues under consideration and discussed their ideas readily, so we trust this report will contribute to service planning by MFRA at a time of serious financial constraints.

We thank MFRA for commissioning the project as part of its on-going programme of public and stakeholder engagement and consultation about its risk management planning. We particularly thank the four senior officers and staff who attended the session to listen to the public's views and answer questions. Such meetings benefit considerably from the readiness to answer participants' questions fully and frankly, as in this case.

We are grateful to all the members of the public who took part in the meeting and shared their views readily with us. They were patient in listening to background information before entering positively into the spirit of open discussions about challenging topics, with some controversial aspects in some cases.

At all stages of the project, ORS's status as an independent organisation consulting the public as objectively as possible was recognised and respected. We are grateful for the trust, and we hope this report will contribute usefully to thinking about MFRA's development in difficult times. We hope also that ORS has been instrumental in continuing to strengthen MFRA's public engagement.

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Introduction and Executive Summary

The Commission

1. ORS was commissioned by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) to convene and facilitate an all-Merseyside forum to consider the authority's draft IRMP plan. ORS's role was to recruit and facilitate the meeting and to report the outcomes. To conduct the meetings based on the fullest possible information for participants, ORS worked with MFRA to prepare informative stimulus material for the meeting before facilitating the discussions and preparing this independent report of findings.

Consultation Framework

2. The context and status of the meeting is important. MFRA has had an extensive programme of 'engagement' with residents for a number of years and, in this context, ORS has facilitated both district-based and all-Merseyside forums regularly. Within this on-going framework, MFRA has conducted both 'listening and engagement' and 'formal consultation' meetings on a regular cycle.
3. The consultation forum reported here followed earlier all-Merseyside 'listening and engagement' meetings that considered hypothetically a wide range of policies and options for the MFRA in the context of its reduced budget due to public expenditure reductions. Having taken account of those earlier meetings, and all the other available evidence, MFRA has recently drafted and consulted on proposals for station mergers in the Wirral and Knowsley, and the closure of Allerton station in Liverpool. The IRMP forum reported here also considered the methodology for selecting Allerton and the adequacy of the consultation process.

Deliberative Forum

4. The consultation meeting reported here used a 'deliberative' approach to encourage members of the public to reflect about the fire and rescue service, while both receiving and questioning background information and discussing the IRMP issues in detail. The meeting lasted for over two-and-a-half hours and 22 diverse participants from across Merseyside – as the table below shows.

MEETING	TIME AND DATE	NUMBER OF ATTENDEES
Merseyside-wide Forum	18.00 – 20.45 Tuesday 12 th January 2015	22

5. The attendance target for the forum was 15-20 – so it is pleasing that the attendance was 22. As usual, the participants were recruited by random-digit telephone dialling from the ORS Social Research Call Centre. Having been initially contacted by phone, they were written to – to confirm the arrangements; and those who agreed to come then received telephone or written reminders shortly before each meeting. Such recruitment by telephone is normally the most effective way of ensuring that all the participants are independently recruited.
6. In recruitment, care was taken to ensure that no potential participants were disqualified or disadvantaged by disabilities or any other factors, and the venues at which the forums met were readily accessible. People’s special needs were all taken into account in the recruitment and at the venues. The random telephone recruitment process was monitored to ensure social diversity in terms of a wide range of criteria – including, for example: local authority area of residence; gender; age; ethnicity; social grade; and disability/long-term limiting illness (LLTI). There was a diverse range of participants and, as standard good practice, they were recompensed for their time and efforts in travelling and taking part. The profile of the participants is shown below.

	Gender	Age	Social grade	Ethnicity	Limiting long-term illness
All-Merseyside Forum	Male: 14 Female: 8	16-34: 5 35-54: 10 55+: 7	AB: 7 C1: 6 C2: 4 DE: 5	Non-White British: 2	Yes: 2 No: 20

7. Although, like all other forms of qualitative consultation, deliberative forums cannot be certified as statistically representative samples of public opinion, the meeting reported here gave diverse people the opportunity to comment in detail on MFRA’s risk management planning. Because the participants were diverse, the outcomes of the meeting (as reported below) are broadly indicative of how informed opinion would incline on the basis of similar discussions.

Background and Discussion Agenda

The Context

8. ORS worked in collaboration with MFRA to agree a suitable agenda and informative stimulus material for the meeting. The first part of the meeting began, for the sake of context, with a review of the background issues, including the:

Meaning of integrated risk management planning (IRMP)

Importance of prevention and risk-management policies – particularly via home fire safety checks

Trend showing a reduction in risk when measured in terms of the number of critical and other incidents per year

Sources of funding of MFRA – from the government and from council tax

Still favourable government funding and level of resources that MFRA still enjoys when compared with other combined and metropolitan fire authorities

Impact of public spending reductions on MFRA – including the previous reduction of fire engines from 42 to 28, and the corresponding reduction of 180 fire fighter and 90 support staff posts

Current financial constraints faced by MFRA in the context of public spending reductions for the next few years.

9. The meeting was also informed of the wide range of options considered by MFRA in order to reduce its expenditure, including the introduction of:
 - More low-level-activity-and-risk (LLAR) fire stations
 - Day-crewed fire stations
 - Community retained (RDS) fire stations
 - Merging some fire stations
 - Closing fire stations.
10. In passing, it is worth noting that the (several months) earlier wide-ranging ‘listening and engagement’ meetings had demonstrated that, when faced with a broad choice between *either* keeping all stations and changing to cheaper duty systems *or* reducing stations while protecting current wholetime duty systems, the participants clearly favoured the latter option. That is, they made at least an implicit choice in favour of reducing stations rather than changing the way Merseyside is crewed. These ‘conclusions’ of the earlier meetings were to a degree re-tested in the forum reported here (see below).
11. The meeting also briefly reviewed the implications of funding reductions that MFRA faces, including the:
 - Projected budget deficit of £6.3 million by the end of 2015/16, based on projections of current expenditure levels and known financial information
 - Projected deficit of £9.1 million by the end of 2017/18, based on projections of current expenditure levels and plausible financial assumptions.
12. These financial challenges were explained neutrally as constraints requiring substantial reductions in spending to be made on a progressive basis; but, in order to encourage free discussion, the financial position was not used as a repeated justification of particular proposals. Participants were invited to assess various risk management planning issues on their general merits, albeit within a constrained position.

The Report

13. This report concisely reviews the sentiments and judgements of participants about MFRA's risk management planning. Some verbatim quotations are used, in indented italics, not because we agree or disagree with them – but for their vividness in capturing recurrent points of views. ORS does not endorse the opinions in question, but seeks only to portray them accurately and clearly. While quotations are used, the report is obviously not a verbatim transcript of the sessions, but an interpretative summary of the issues raised by participants in free-ranging discussions.

Executive Summary

Review of Evidence for Allerton Closure

14. The forum was unanimous that (a) in principle, the closure of fire stations is a reasonable policy (in appropriate circumstances) and (b) that the choice of Allerton for closure was justified by the evidence. There was some caution about the possible future implications of spending reductions and the closure of stations, but the forum was also unanimous that the choice of Allerton had been fair and evidence-based.

Review of MFRA's Consultation Processed

15. MFRA's consultation methodology was unanimously and readily endorsed by the forum as conscientious, fair and accessible. Some were concerned that consultations should include as many of the affected people as possible through a quantitative approach, but the overall the balance of opinion favoured methods which were: deliberative; targeted towards informed stakeholders and agencies; inclusive of professionals with relevant interests in the issues; and cost-effective and relatively economical. The forum was also keen that consultations should provide the fullest possible information.

Demand-led Crewing

16. The forum readily accepted the importance of 'demand-led' crewing and 'risk-based planning'. The principle that MFRA should explore the implications and applicability of demand-led crewing was accepted readily and almost unanimously.

Importance of Prevention

17. Almost unanimously, the forum endorsed the importance of prevention work in principle, but there were differences of opinion about how this should best be delivered in the context of spending reductions.

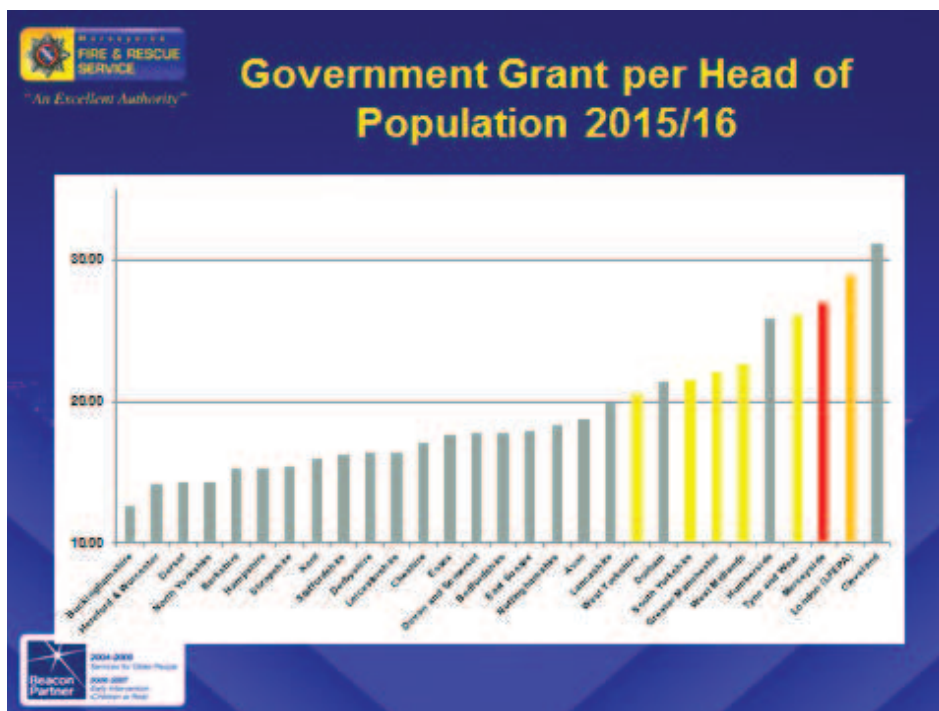
Equality and Diversity

18. The forum discussed MFRA's recruitment policies – reaching the conclusion that the Authority should not adopt formal recruitment targets for minority groups, but instead should use positive action to encourage diverse applicants. By a ratio of two-to-one, the participants opposed formal recruitment targets, but welcomed positive encouragement of minority group applications.

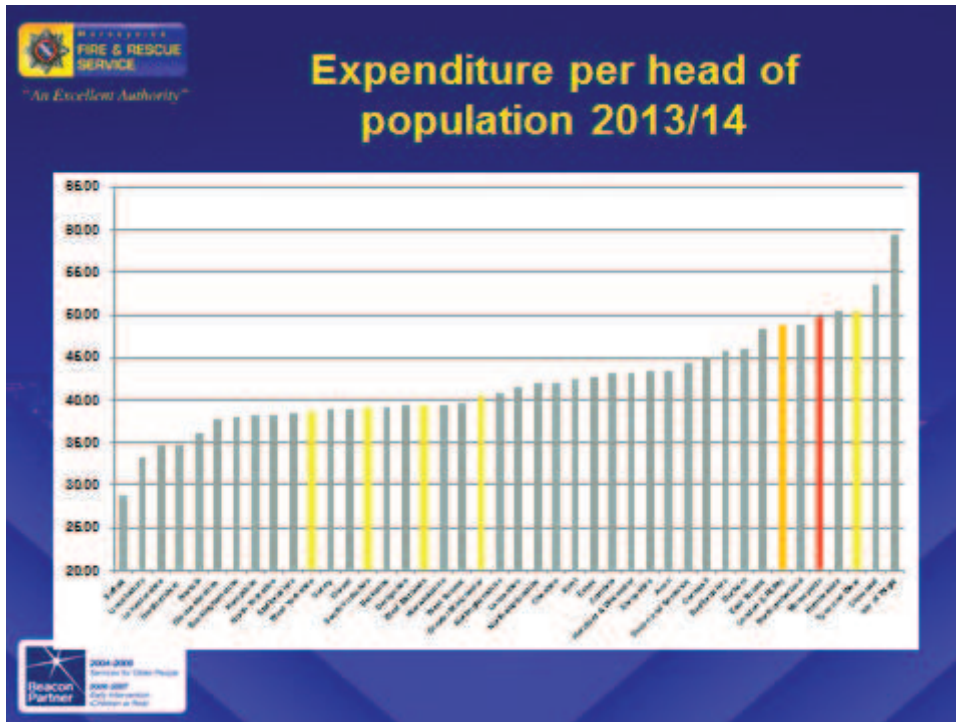
Taking Stock

MRFA Resources and Funding

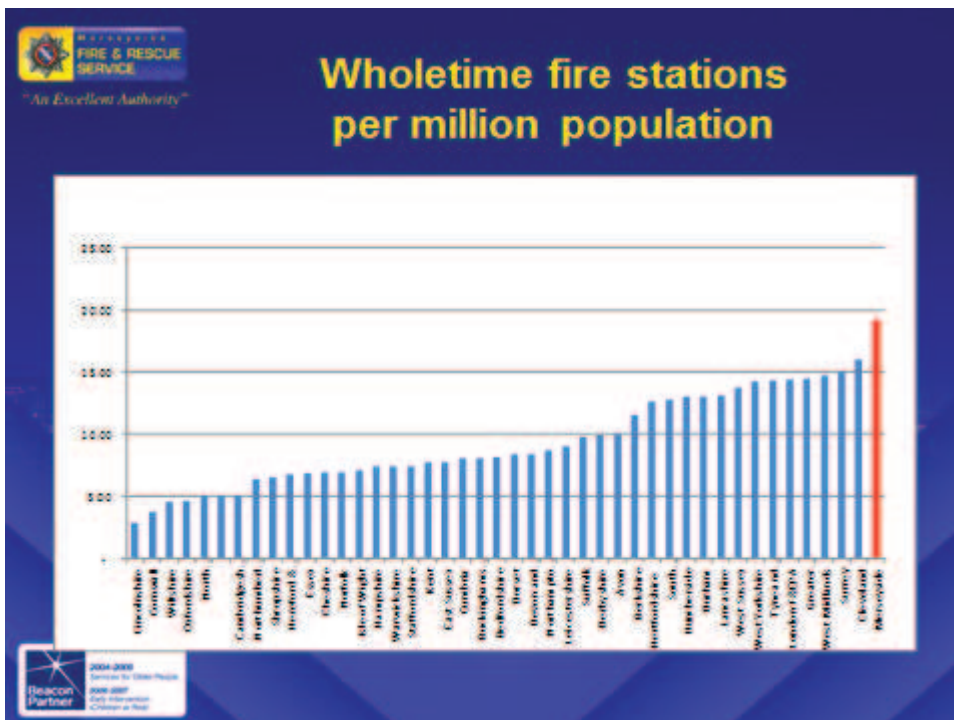
19. The ORS introduction to each meeting tried to 'take stock' of MFRA in terms of its much reduced risk levels (reduced by 53% over the last nine years) when measured in terms of the number of critical and other incidents, strategic roles and allocation of resources. Participants were shown comparative data on the (still relatively high) levels of government funding and the emergency cover resources that MFRA (and the other metropolitan fire and rescue services) continue to enjoy relative to other combined fire authorities.
20. For example, the following graphics were explained, with Merseyside highlighted in red and the other big metropolitan authorities in yellow. The chart below shows that, relative to most other fire authorities, Merseyside still receives a high proportion of its total funding from the government and raises a relatively small proportion through council tax.

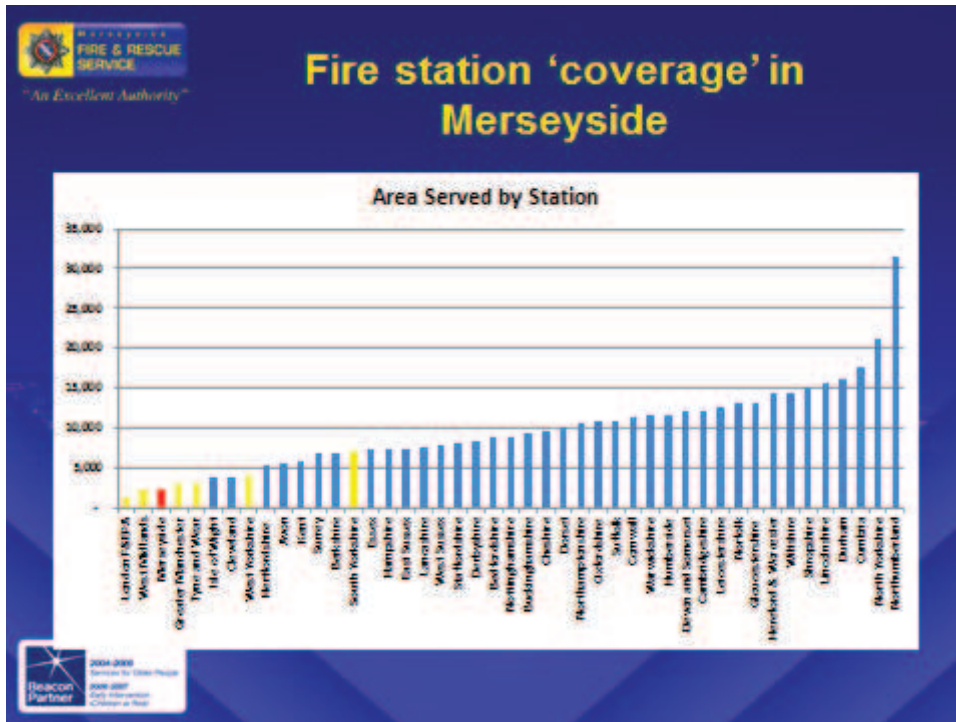


21. Therefore, even in recent years, MFRA has been able to maintain a relatively high level of expenditure per head of population – as the next chart shows.



22. Due to its funding, and due to historical assessments of risk deriving from intensive bombing in WW2, Merseyside has had a large number of closely located fire stations (especially in Liverpool and the Wirral) in order to meet the statutory response time standards that prevailed from the 1950s to 2004 – as the two charts below illustrate.

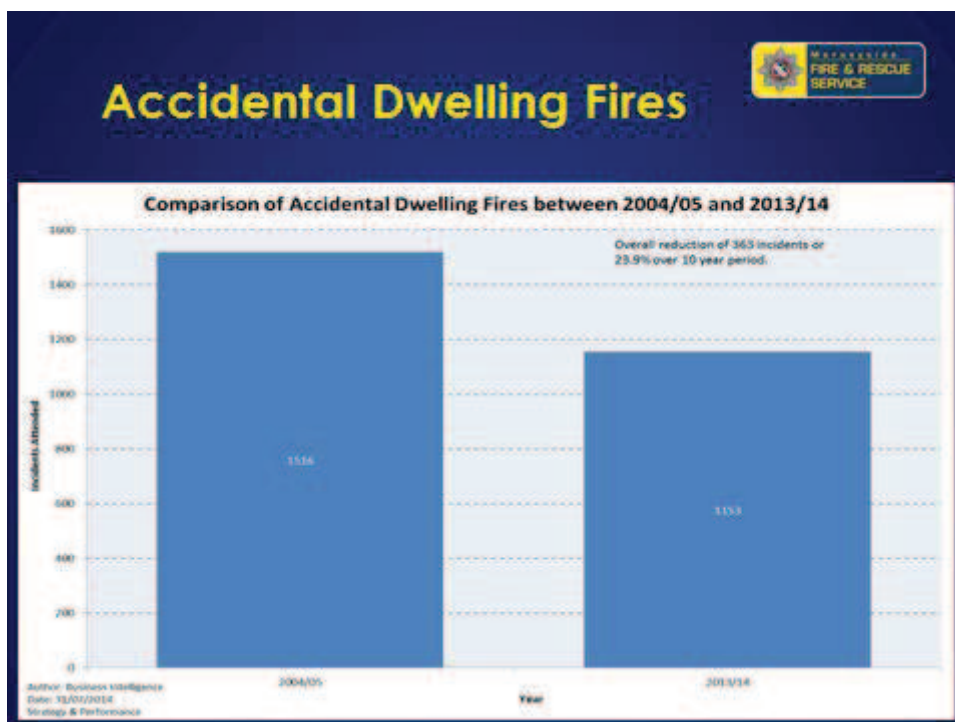
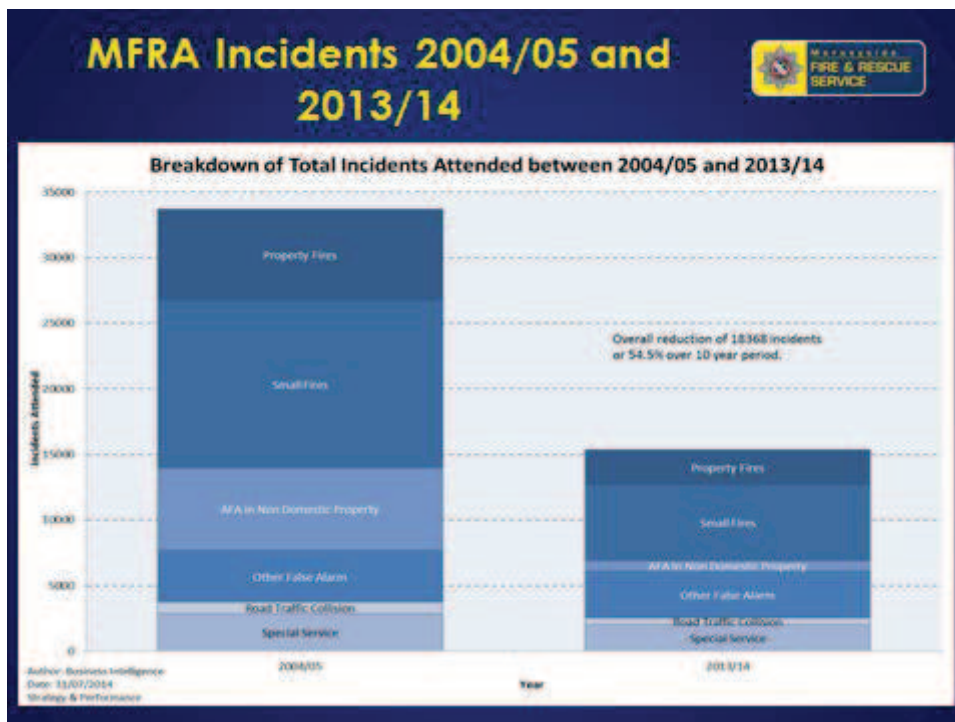


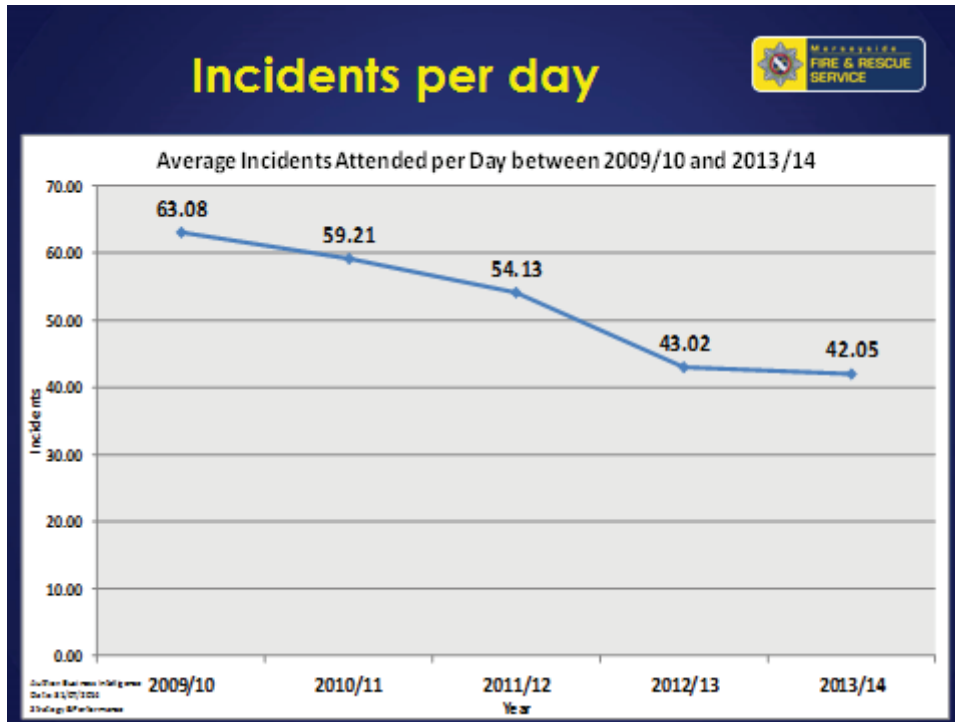


23. Indeed, on the basis of its population of about 1.4 million people, MFRA has more wholtime fire stations than any other area of the country, including London – and so, as the chart above shows, each of its 26 current stations covers a relatively small area.
24. Given its many fire stations and engines, MFRA has managed to maintain a relatively large number of wholtime firefighters compared with most other combined fire authorities – as the next chart shows.

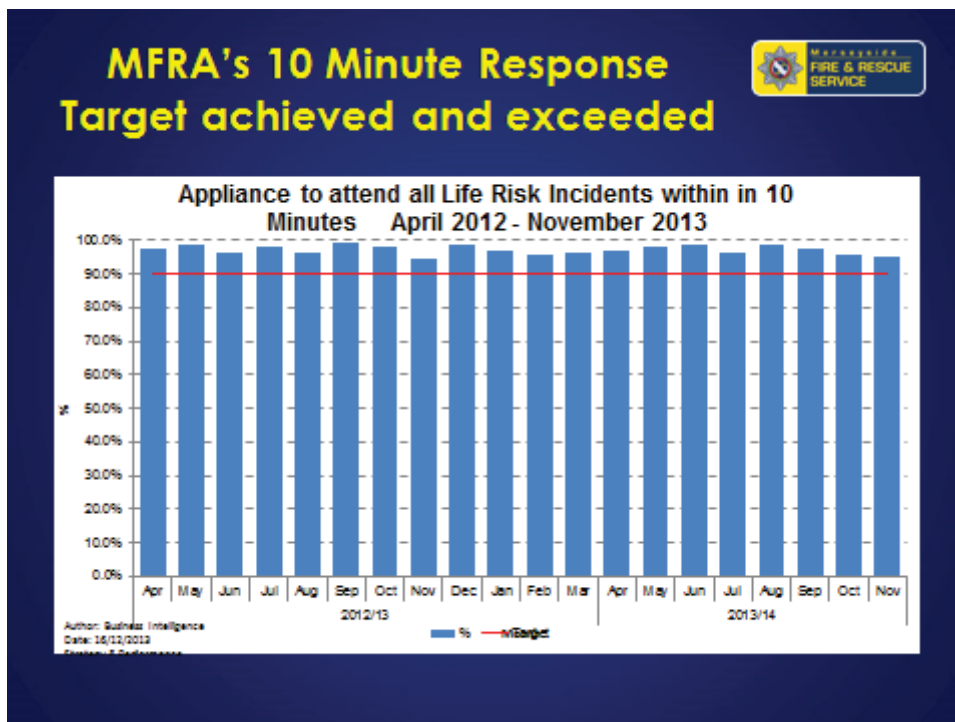


25. Partly as a result of MFRA’s very active preventative and educational work, all categories of incidents have reduced very significantly in Merseyside over the last nine years, as the next three charts below show.

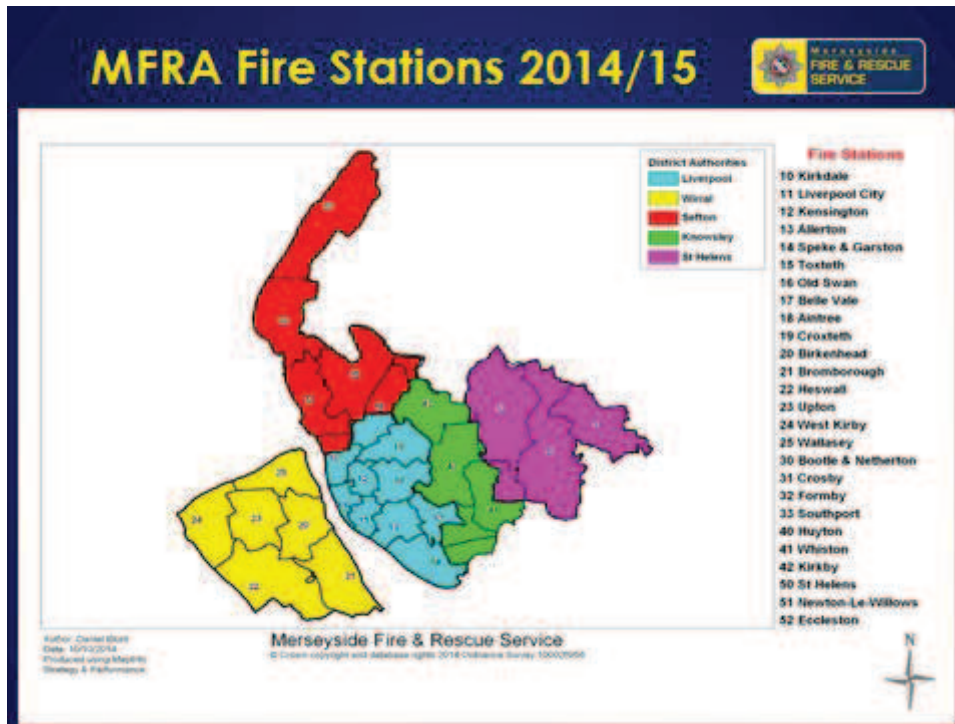




- 26. Not surprisingly, then, given the reduction in risk when measured in terms of emergency incidents, all of MFRA’s fire stations deal with many fewer incidents each year than they used recently to do (see later).
- 27. Moreover, despite having reduced its wholetime fire engines by one-third – from 42 to the current 28 – over the last six years, MFRA has been able to exceed its response time standard of attending 90% of critical incidents within 10 minutes. The following chart shows the MFRA currently does even better than its demanding target.



28. In the context of all the above data, the meeting reviewed the current distribution of MFRA’s fire stations with the following map.



Main Findings

Allerton Fire Station Proposal

Introduction

29. Within the context of a deliberative forum on IRMP issues, it was deemed appropriate to review the methodology and consultation that had used in connection with the still draft proposal to close Allerton station. In fact, the forum reviewed the case for Allerton's closure in relation to both the *methodology* and *evidence base* that MFRA had used in reaching its conclusion that Allerton might be closed.
30. Of course, this review was important because its significance was not just retrospective, but also prospective, or forward-looking – in considering whether the same approach should be adopted for future possible reviews and station closures – which the forum was told were likely in the current financial context.

Allerton Proposal

31. The meeting was reminded that the draft Allerton proposals were as follows:

Closing the one-pump stations at Allerton

Moving the fire engine to the Old Swan station – but also

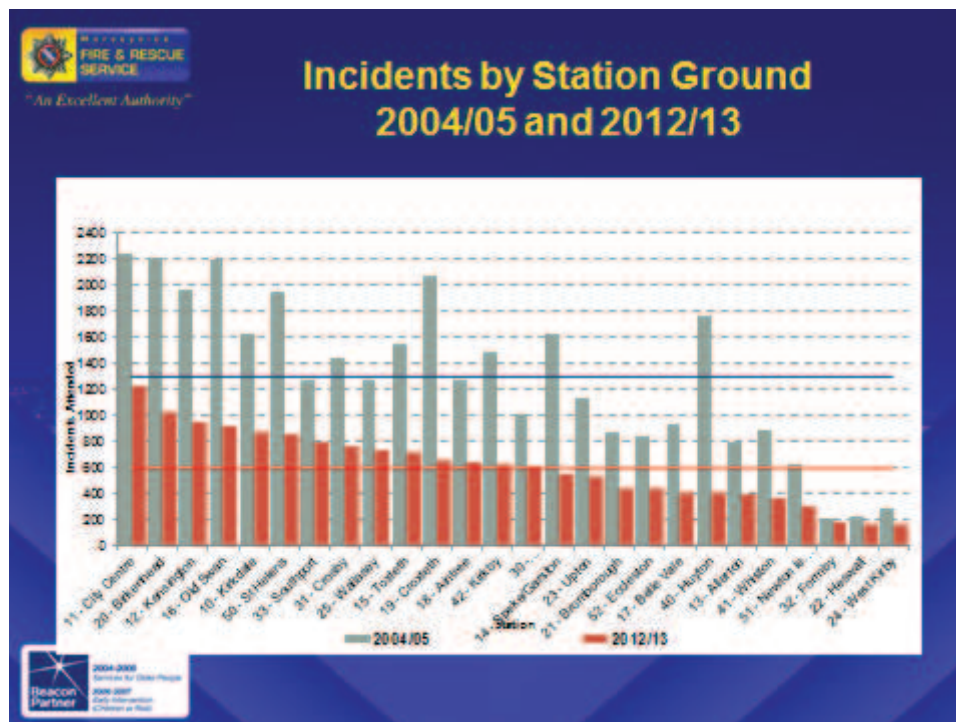
Designating the former Allerton fire engine as a reserve or resilience vehicle which would not normally be crewed – but with its back-up crew subject to recall within 30 minutes, in the event of exceptional incidents or spate conditions

Crewing the reserve second pump with wholetime firefighters who would have supplementary retained contracts to provide the support cover duties when required.

32. It was made clear that there were *two distinct issues*: (a) closing the one-pump Allerton fire station *and also* (b) reducing the total number of wholetime fire engines by one – by re-designating Allerton's former engine as a reserve or resilience back-up vehicle for periods of exceptional demand. In the meeting great care was taken to ensure that participants understood how the second (reserve) fire engine would be crewed and used as only a back-up reserve vehicle in the context of the closure of the two stations and their replacement by a new one.

Review of the Evidence Case

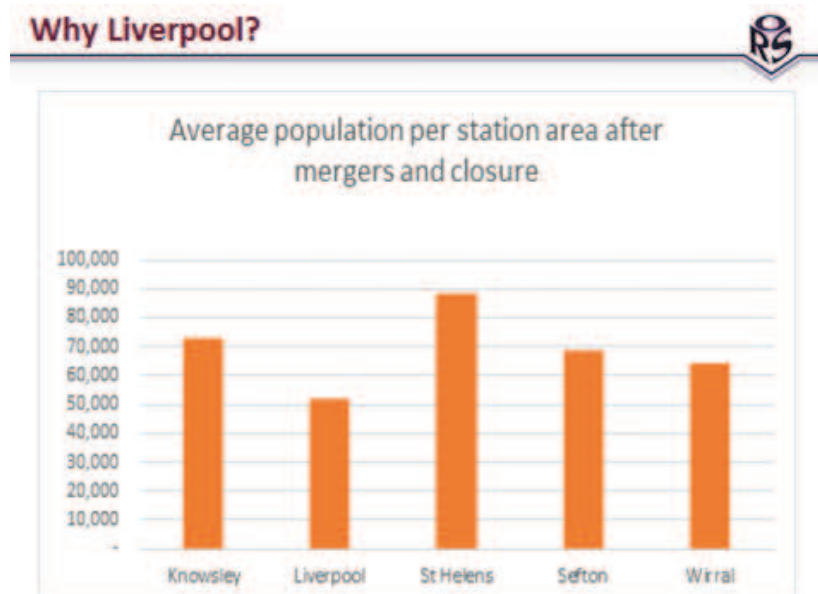
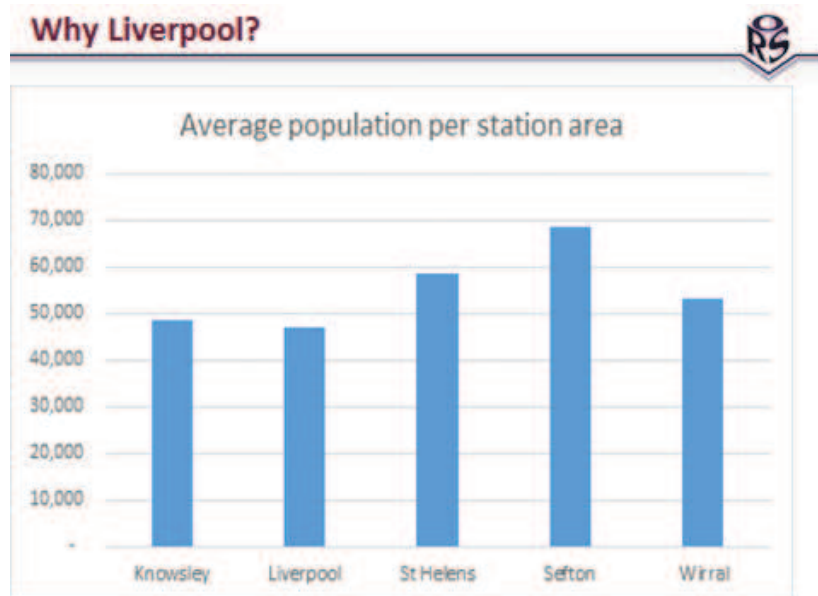
33. In reviewing the evidence for the Allerton proposal (and for proposed mergers), the forum recognised the relevance of the *Taking Stock* evidence above – including Merseyside’s reducing risk levels and MFRA’s excellent response times.
34. The forum also reviewed and accepted the data showing that the reduction in risk, measured by the number of emergency incidents, has resulted in far fewer calls-out for all MFRA fire stations, as shown in the next chart below.



35. The forum also noted MFRA’s response time target (to attend critical incidents within 10 minutes on at least 90% of occasions (see above)) and also appreciated the comparison of national average response time for domestic fires (7 minutes, 24 seconds) with MFRA’s average response time for critical incidents (5 minutes, 23 seconds).
36. In connection with this evidence, the forum was informed about the impact on response times of closing Allerton station. Currently, the average response time in Allerton for critical incidents is 5 minutes, 9 seconds; but, with the local station closed, the average response time for the Allerton station area would be increased to 5 minutes, 56 seconds. The forum found this information reassuring in contextualising Allerton and also future possible changes in MFRA.

Why Liverpool? Why Allerton?

37. Next the forum reviewed the evidence base for the proposed closure of Allerton. Slides were used to prompt discussion of (a) why station reductions were more appropriate in Liverpool than elsewhere and (b) why Allerton was (marginally) the most appropriate station when compared with other Liverpool stations with relatively few emergency incidents. The following two slides show that currently Liverpool has the lowest population per fire station and that the city will continue in the same relative position following the implementation of three station mergers the closure of Allerton.



38. The forum also reviewed the position of Allerton alongside two other stations which might be considered for closure Allerton – by examining the following comparative data. The first table shows the number of incidents in recent years for Allerton, Aintree and Kensington; the second shows the number of appliance mobilisations from each station; and the third shows the trend over nine years. Allerton has the lowest number of incidents, the lowest number of mobilisations and the biggest reduction since 2004/05.

Station	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Grand Total
13 - Allerton	513	396	280	1,189
18 - Aintree	875	641	569	2,085
12 - Kensington	1,137	946	929	3,012

Appliance Mobilisations	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Grand Total
13 - Allerton	611	724	717	2,052
18 - Aintree	909	982	1,021	2,912
12 - Kensington	2,103	1,040	956	4,099

Difference from 2004/05 to 2013/14

Station	2004/05	2013/14	Difference	% Difference
13 - Allerton	791	280	-511	-65%
18 - Aintree	1,267	569	-698	-55%
12 - Kensington	1,962	929	-1,033	-53%

39. In this context, the meetings were asked to consider if the selection of Allerton for possible closure was reasonable or if there was a case for closing Aintree and/or Kensington instead. Unanimously, the forum concluded that Allerton had been the appropriate station to choose.

Balance of Opinion

40. Following detailed discussions of the above evidence case, the forum decided unanimously that (a) the closure of fire stations is a reasonable policy (in appropriate circumstances) and (b) that the choice of Allerton for closure was justified by the evidence. Some typical questions about the closure of Allerton were:

Can you keep the money from the site sales?

Does Allerton help to cover Liverpool airport?

Do you spend quite a lot on PFI interest payments for some stations?

41. There was some caution about the possible future implications of spending reductions and the closure of stations:

There comes a time when enough is enough, so there could be potential risk in the future if you have to keep reducing the budget indefinitely – but where is that line?

Will there be other cases coming up due to budget limits – so are there obvious candidates – and will risk rise to unacceptable levels?

42. Overall, though, there was unanimous agreement that:

It is reasonable in some cases to close stations

If they are uneconomical then yes – it is not just the wages but the bigger picture too.

43. The forum also concluded unanimously that the choice of Allerton had been fair and evidence-based.

Allerton and Wirral Consultation Programmes

Introduction

44. The consultation programmes undertaken by MFRA in Wirral (in connection with the proposed merger of two stations) and in Liverpool (for the proposed Allerton closure) were reviewed. Essentially, MFRA has adopted a rolling consultation programme based on the following main elements:

Listening and engagement forums at an early, formative stage

Formal consultation at the district and all-Merseyside level using:

Community newsletters

Press briefings

Deliberative forums

Public meetings

Stakeholder forums

Focus groups

On-line and paper consultation questionnaires

Website briefing paper and FAQs

Social media communications.

Balance of Opinion

45. Overall these methods were unanimously and readily endorsed by the forum as collectively conscientious, fair and accessible. Some were concerned that consultations should include as many of the affected people as possible through a quantitative approach, but overall the balance of opinion favoured methods which were: deliberative; targeted towards informed stakeholders and agencies; inclusive of professionals with relevant interests in the issues; and cost-effective and relatively economical. The forum was also keen that consultations should provide the fullest possible information. Some typical comments were:

The consultation should be targeted towards specific local stakeholders and other agencies with a legitimate and informed professional opinion about the issues – based on their local knowledge

The Birkenhead forum was a fair process that led to the west Wirral proposals

With the benefit of hindsight, it would have been better to say where a fire station might have been located?

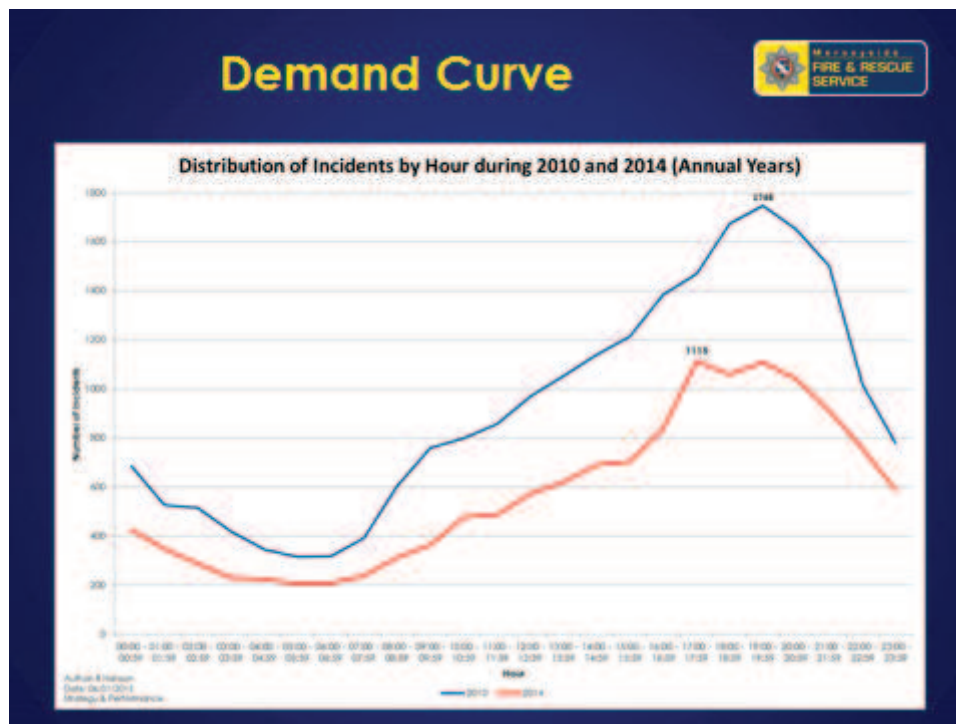
The media reported the public meetings simplistically

Do you take any notice of the consultation?

Demand-led Crewing

Matching Emergency Cover Resources to Varying Risk Levels

46. The forum was very interested in the possibility of developing policies based upon what was called 'demand-led crewing' – which was explained as 'matching resources to varying risk levels'. To explain the issue, the following chart was used and the facilitator explained how, on the basis of such data some other metropolitan fire and rescue services had adjusted substantially their levels of night-time emergency cover – in one case by taking 13 of 62 fire engines off the run initially for 8 and then for 12 hours overnight.
47. The chart on the following page also interested the participants and they appreciated its significance in indicating significant variations in demand – as well as the reduction in demand over the period.



48. The graph above shows how risk, understood as the demand for the fire and rescue service, varies substantially at different times of the day and night. Emergency and other incidents are much more likely to happen from mid-afternoon to late evening, when people come home from school or work and become active by cooking or other pursuits.

Balance of Opinion

49. In the context of the above data, the forum readily appreciated the ‘paradox’ of fire and rescue services deploying the same level of resources over a 24-hour period regardless of the big variations in the number of incidents per hour. Therefore, the principle that MFRA should explore the implications and applicability of demand-led crewing was accepted readily and almost unanimously. One representative comment was:

You need to take account of variations in risk, like for bonfires?

50. More specifically, in terms of how this might be done, the forum was interested in a range of possible options which the facilitator used to explain how risk-based planning might be implemented in practice. These included day crewed stations with wholetime firefighters on retained contracts overnight; day crewed stations with community retained firefighters at night; day only stations with cover at night from other stations; and the conversion of some quieter wholetime stations to community retained. However, these illustrative options were not discussed in detail or prioritised relative to each other.

Importance of Prevention Work

Introduction

51. It was explained to the forum that potential reductions in support staff (to make savings) could potentially affect the amount of preventative education and community fire safety work that MFRA does through its advocates and other staff. They were asked for their opinions on these possibilities.

Balance of Opinion

52. Almost unanimously (with only one 'don't know') the forum endorsed the importance of prevention work in principle. Some typical comments were:

The figures show the importance of prevention work – it's essential to protect it

Prevention and working with anti-social behaviour will be more important as some other children's services reduce.

53. However, there were a range of comments that revealed a range of opinions on how community fire safety might be delivered in the context of funding reductions.

The firefighters do a lot of prevention work - so some prevention work could still be done

*How many support staff are there and how many do prevention work?
Not all the support staff do fire safety*

Prevention should be protected, but there is a need for shared services that can save money – like HR and finance, and so on

Computer games have reduced kids' anti-social behaviour! It's not just prevention work

People should be charged for irresponsible behaviour to refund the FRS.

Equality and diversity issues

54. Finally, the all-Merseyside forum discussed equalities issues and focused on MFRA's recruitment – reaching the conclusion that MFRA should not adopt formal recruitment targets for minority groups, but instead should use positive action to encourage diverse applicants. By a ratio of two-to-one, the participants opposed formal recruitment targets, but welcomed positive encouragement of minority group applications.

IRMP Supplement 2015-2017 Feedback

The purpose of this survey is to assist with the current consultation on our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Supplement 2015 - 2017.

It will be greatly appreciated if you could complete the below survey which should take you no longer than 10 -15 minutes.

If you have any problems with accessing this survey please email jackiesutton@merseyfire.gov.uk or call 0151 296 4563.

Please respond to this survey before 15th January 2015, which is when our consultation ends.

Fire and Rescue Authorities are required to produce a medium term plan that sets out the ways in which it will deal with local risks and challenges. We published our current three year IRMP in June 2013 and we are using this document to update our stakeholders on the progress we have made against our objectives and how we intend to deal with any future challenges.

On top of £9.2 million of cuts to our budget between 2011 and 2013, we are required to make a further £6.3 million of savings before April 2015 with more cuts expected until 2020. This presents the Authority with significant challenges as it seeks to minimise the impact of these cuts on our levels of service to the public.

To make savings of this magnitude without having an impact on fire stations and fire appliances is no longer possible, despite continued cuts to 'back office' and support services, which includes staff working to protect people in their homes. Full details are available in our IRMP.

Link to IRMP on Website: www.merseyfire.gov.uk/asp/pages/IRMP/pdf/IRMP%202013-16.pdf

Having read and considered our IRMP:

- Q1** In view of the risks in the area and the savings Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority have to make.
- How reasonable do you think our IRMP 2015/17 proposals are?
- Very reasonable
- Fairly reasonable
- Fairly unreasonable
- Very unreasonable
- If you feel this proposal is "unreasonable" in any way please explain why you think that: _____
- Q2** The information within the IRMP Supplement 2015/17 is clear and easy to understand?
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree / nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Q3** If you have any further comments concerning the MFRA Integrated Risk Management Plan, please complete the following:
- _____
- _____
- Q4** For the purpose of monitoring returns by district please provide your full home Postcode: _____
- Q5** Would you be prepared to assist MFRA with future consultation?
- Yes
- No

Q6 If yes please provide your contact details

Name:

Address Line 1:

Address Line 2:

Town:

Postcode:

Telephone

Email:

OPTIONAL: Monitoring Data

Please complete the following section which is optional.

This data will be used for monitoring purposes only.

MFRA ask for this information as the Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into effect in April 2011, requires MFRA 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 encourages public bodies to understand how different people will be affected by their activities, so that their policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different peoples needs. By understanding the effect of their activities on different people public bodies can be more efficient and effective.

Q7 Gender:

Male

Female

Q8 Which age group do you belong to?

Under 25

25 - 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

55 or above

Q9 Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes

No

(Under the Equality Act 2010a person is considered to have a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment or illness such as HIV, cancer, diabetes, heart condition etc. which has a sustained and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities).

- Q10** **Ethnicity:**
- White British*
 - White Irish*
 - Other White Background*
 - Mixed White & Black Caribbean*
 - Mixed White & Black African*
 - Mixed White & Asian*
 - Other Mixed Background*
 - Asian or Asian British - Indian*
 - Asian or Asian British - Pakistani*
 - Asian or Asian British - Bangladesh*
 - Any other Asian Background*
 - Black or Black British - African*
 - Black or Black British - Caribbean*
 - Any other Black Background*
 - Chinese*
 - Any other Ethnic Group*
 - Prefer not to say*
 - Not Stated*

- Q11** **Status:**
- Elected Member*
 - Member of the public*
 - Representative of a business*
 - Member of Staff (MFRA)*
 - Representative of a community group*

Thank you for your time, please click submit to complete

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In total there were 37 responses to the survey.

Given that not all questions were completed by respondents only valid responses are calculated with this analysis

In view of the risks in the area and the savings Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority have to make.

How reasonable do you think our IRMP 2015/17 proposals are?

Response	Count	Valid %
Very reasonable	22	61.1%
Fairly reasonable	13	36.1%
Fairly unreasonable	1	2.8%
Valid Total	36	

If you feel this proposal is "unreasonable" in any way please explain why you think that:

No further Comments

The information within the IRMP Supplement 2015/17 is clear and easy to understand?

Response	Count	Valid %
Strongly Agree	18	48.6%
Agree	19	51.4%
Neither agree Nor Disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Valid Total	37	

If you have any further comments concerning the MFRA Integrated Risk Management Plan, please complete the following:

Very comprehensive

The service provides considerable support to other organisations which is worthy of a mention e.g. work with LSCBs

We are planning to offer access to one of our high rise blocks to allow MSFRS to carry out exercises in the near future.

Paints a stark picture of the impact of the cuts on the Fire Service and what that means for residents of Merseyside.

Relationships with Cheshire & Wirral Partnership are strong and emphasis of the membership on Wirral Public Service Board and Health and Well Being Board and local strategic partnership would strengthen the document

All comments were in response to "Strongly Agree" and "Agree"

Gender by Age Group				
Age	Female	Male	No Response	Grand Total
Under 25		1		1
25 - 34	1	2		3
35 - 44		4	1	5
45 - 54	3	7		10
55 or above	6	7		13
No Response	1	1	3	5
Grand Total	11	22	4	37

Count of Gender by age group based on valid responses only			
Age	Female	Male	Valid Total
Under 25	0	1	1
25 - 34	1	2	3
35 - 44	0	4	4
45 - 54	3	7	10
55 or above	6	7	13
Valid Total	10	21	31

Gender by age group based on valid %'s			
Age	Female	Male	Valid Total %
Under 25	0.0%	4.8%	3.2%
25 - 34	10.0%	9.5%	9.7%
35 - 44	0.0%	19.0%	12.9%
45 - 54	30.0%	33.3%	32.3%
55 or above	60.0%	33.3%	41.9%
Valid Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?		
Response	Count	Valid %
Yes	3	9.7%
No	28	90.3%
Grand Total	31	

Ethnicity		
Ethnicity	Count	Valid %
White British	30	93.8%
Chinese	1	3.1%
Prefer not to say	1	3.1%
Valid Total	32	

Distribution of responses by District		
District	Count	Valid %
Knowsley	6	17.6%
Liverpool	6	17.6%
Sefton	11	32.4%
St Helens	5	14.7%
Wirral	6	17.6%
Valid Total	34	

Liverpool

CLlr Spurrell		
Mayoral Lead		LCC
C. O'Brien	Director	CYP Services
C.Martin	Assistant Director	
J.Ewels	Head of	Safer, Stronger Communities
C.Griffiths	Divisional Manager	Targeted Services
C.Jenkins	Chief Inspector	MERPOL
G.Lambert	Chief Inspector	MERPOL & Citysafe
D.Herron	Inspector	MERPOL
A.Warren	Crime Analyst	LCC
C.Finch	Prevent Co-ordinator	LCC
M.Garlick	Officer	Pol & Crime Commissioner
K.Dawson	Officer	Pol & Crime Commissioner
T.Forshaw		CCG
J.Marlow		Probation Service
K.Rooney		M'side Community Rehabilitation
R.Cook		M'side Community Rehabilitation
C.Green		M'side Community Rehabilitation
J.Lalland		L'pool Mutual Homes
J.Anderson	Mayor	
G.Fitzgerald	Chief Superintendent	MERPOL
C.Howarth	Chief Superintendent	MERPOL
J.Ward		
G.Croll		
T.Okotie		
P.Fishwick		
S.O'Lonney		

WIRRAL

B.Griffiths		MERPOL
V.McGee		NHS
D.Veevers		JCP Birkenhead
J.Martin		
R.Woolfall		Magenta Living
D.Blundell	Tenants Services	Magenta Living
R.Cooper		NHS CCG
C.Grainger		NHS CCG
A.Hayes		NHS CCG
Dr P Naylor	Doctor	NHS CCG
J.Lancaster		NHS
F.Everest		WMC
D.Taylor		Wirral CAB
Z.Rogers		VCA Wirral
K.Smith		Environmental Health
K.Sheppard		Community Action
K.Traynor		
P.Collins		Library/One Stop
M.Gray	Officer	Neighbourhood Engagement
M.Withy		Sports dev unit
P.Jackson		Housing Standards
I.Batman		CWP NHS
P.Baines		NHS
J.Bennett		CWP NHS
D.Gill		NHS
A.Hutchinson		Public Health
A.Pyke		ASB Wirral Council
A.Rigby		CCG
A. Allen		DWP
A.Roberts		VCAW
C.Laing	Constituency Manager	Wirral Council
C.Hooper		ASB Wirral Council
Chris Jones		Streetscene
C.Campbell		CCG NHS
C.Clayton		Environmental Health
D.Dawson		Environmental Health
D.Bird		Riverside Housing
D.Decorte		Youth Support WBC
D.Swales		Riverside Housing
D.Payet		Trading Standards
G.Vicary		Trading Standards
P.Kolokotroni	Inspector	MERPOL
J.Harvey		Wirral Public Health
M.O'Donnell		Licensing
M.Quigg		Leasowe Community Homes

Sefton

M.Armstrong	Communication Officer	Liverpool & Sefton Chambers of Commerce on their intranet
J.McGill	Consultation, Engagement & Performance Assistant	Sefton Council
J.Harris		MERPOL
A.Irwin		Sefton CVS
B.Bradshaw		Merseyside PCC
J.Currie		Merseyside PCC
D.Robinsons	Councillors	Sefton
J.Southern		Sefton CVS
M.Homfray		
N.Ashtons	Councillors	Sefton
P.Bell	Councillors	Sefton
R.Driver		
D.Riley		MERPOL
Partners at:		
	Chief	Sefton Council
	Dep Executive	Health & Wellbing Board
		MERPOL
		Registered Social Landlords
		Wildlife Trust
		National Heritage
		National Trust
		Probation Service Sefton
		Sefton CVS
		Sefton DISARM
		Peel Ports
		Troubled Families

Knowsley

M.Harden	Knowsley Council
T.Bedford	
A.Thomas	
A.Pryor	
M. Ashton	
B.Taylor	
P.Boyce	
C.Carroll	
D.Johnson	
J.Duncan	
C.Hogan	
S.Jarvis	
M.Harrison	
L.Marton-Wright	Knowsley Council
P.Sumner	Knowsley Council
J.Thompson	Knowsley Council
P.Peng	Knowsley Council
J.Greaves	KDC
P.Ball	Knowsley CVS
E.Perry	
T.Cahill	FIRSTARK
J.Harris	Knowsley
M.Berry	PCC
M.Butterworth	Knowsley
K.Wellens	MERPOL
K.Harrison	Knowsley

St Helens

St Helens MBC

All contacts within Council via their intranet, Facebook and Twitter feeds

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The Office of the
Police Commissioner for Merseyside
Allerton Police Station
Rose Lane
Liverpool
L18 6JE

Tel: 0151 777 5155

Chief Fire Officer Dan Stephens,
MF&RS Headquarters,
Bridle Road,
Bootle,
Merseyside,
L30 4YD.

16th December 2014

Dear Dan

I am writing in response to the consultation on your Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Supplement 2015 – 2017. I am in support of the proposals set out in the IRMP and fully understand the challenge you are presented with in respect of budget cuts.

It is reassuring to see that regardless of cuts, overall fire incidents in Merseyside have reduced by 54% over the 10 year period between 2004/5 and 2013/14. This reduction is testament to the excellent and dedicated work of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MF&RS) and its personnel.

As Police and Crime Commissioner, I share your frustrations in having to review risk management against a background of budget cuts. This is not an easy task for any emergency service. Merseyside Police have also been forced to review every aspect of their estate, workforce and activities to minimise the impact of these cuts on the levels of service they provide to the public.

One way in which we can lessen the impact is to work in partnership. I am keen to work together to solve shared local risks and challenges

Rt Hon Jane Kennedy

Police Commissioner for Merseyside

Office for Police & Crime Commissioner, Allerton Police Station, Rose Lane, Liverpool, Merseyside L18 6JE.

Tel 0151 777 5188 Email: info@merseysidepcc.info

where possible. The Joint Command and Control Centre between MF&RS and Merseyside Police is an excellent example of this. The Merseyside Community Safety Partnership, which the Deputy Chief Fire Officer Phil Garrigan attends, is also a good opportunity to discuss any upcoming issues.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to respond to your consultation. I look forward to building on our already strong partnership in the future. If there are any opportunities you would like to consider or discuss relating to further future collaboration, be it for estate or other purposes, let me know.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane', with a large loop at the start of the first letter.

Jane Kennedy
Police Commissioner for Merseyside

Cc: Cllr Dave Hanratty, Chair of the Fire Authority

Sir Jon Murphy QPM, Chief Constable Merseyside Police

Rt Hon Jane Kennedy

Police Commissioner for Merseyside

Office for Police & Crime Commissioner, Allerton Police Station, Rose Lane, Liverpool, Merseyside L18 6JE.

Tel 0151 777 5188 Email: info@merseysidepcc.info

Brief Summary of Comments from Representative Bodies	
FOA	<p>Review of Senior Officers Duty System The Association will engage fully in this review but must stress that the Officer membership currently provides significant and working flexibility within the current system and there is a great deal of work provided through discretionary activity during non-rostered hours.</p> <p>The system has been reviewed several times in the past ten years with changes to the number and working patterns of the Officers, we continue to manage with a relatively small team of Officers. The Association would be committed to ensure that any working pattern would not negatively impact on the work life balance of our members or increase workloads beyond reasonable limits.</p>
	<p>Fitness Policy We feel any fitness standard should be nationally agreed; however for any locally determined elements and/or any local implementation we would request detailed consultation to ensure our members are fully engaged in all aspects of the process and the required trust and confidence can be built and maintained.</p>
UNITE	We accept the document and its findings, and do not wish to submit any changes to the document
UNISON	Concerns about the potential reduction in staff in the Prevention and Protection Dept.
FBU	<p>In summary the FBU are calling for a moratorium nationally on reduced crewing levels on pumping appliances, reduction of fire appliances and fire station closures.</p> <p>The FBU calls for risks and resilience to be assessed nationally as well as locally, to guarantee standards are maintained and improved.</p>

	<p>It remains the belief of the FBU that MF&RSs policy in relation to AFAs will lead to increased property damage and increased loss of life due to the delay in dispatching the initial response to the initial call for assistance through the AFA system. The Fire Brigades Union urges MF&RS to reconsider this policy and to reverse the strategy as a matter of urgency to better protect firefighters and communities.</p>
<p>The Full Responses can be found in Appendix 8 -11</p>	



Merseyside Fire Brigades Union
Response to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
Integrated Risk Management Plan Supplement
2015

Forward

The Fire Brigades Union welcomes and fully supports the principle of a risk based approach to Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) and indeed have previously endorsed this approach into FBU Conference Policy.

The FBU can support the majority of the IRMP Supplement 2015 - 2017 and seek to support Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority as it comes to terms with the devastating cuts applied to the Service.

The dedication and professionalism of all employees of MF&RS is beyond question and it is the employees who, throughout continued cuts to services and pay, have consistently delivered for the people of Merseyside.

The Fire Brigades Union represent the overwhelming majority of uniformed employees of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service. We offer this document as part of the required consultation process. This document has been compiled utilising the vast wealth of expertise, knowledge and experience of those personnel who provide the emergency response and other vital services to the people of Merseyside.

The key principle of a risk based approach to Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) is the introduction of the **Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)** which all Fire and Rescue Authorities are required to undertake.

The stated aims of this approach, as laid out by Government, is to produce IRMP's that improve public safety and consequently improve Fire and Rescue Services by reducing deaths, injuries and other consequences of fire and other emergencies such as Road Traffic Collisions (RTC's). This is set out in the Governments Guidance Note 1 to IRMP's at paragraph 1.2, in that:

'The government thinks that a modern and effective fire and rescue service should serve all sections of our society fairly and equitably by;

- ***reducing the number of fires and other emergency incidents occurring;***
- ***reducing loss of life in fires and other emergency incidents;***
- ***reducing the number and severity of injuries occurring in fires and other emergencies;***
- ***reduce the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergency incidents;***
- ***safeguarding the environment and heritage (both built and natural); and providing communities with value for money.'***

IRMP's are plans for determining future Fire and Rescue Service activity aimed at keeping people safe from fire using a 'risk-based' approach which is built on the pillars of Intervention (Emergency Cover), Prevention (Community Fire Safety) and Protection (Legislative Fire Safety) activity as follows:

- **Prevention:** Stop fires before they start (education) and give early warning of fires if they do (e.g. smoke detectors), coupled with fire escape plans (what to do if a fire starts in your home to maximise your chances of escape/rescue). Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service offer this to each resident through the practice of operational firefighters and designated community fire safety officers undertaking Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC's).
- **Protection** - (in buildings covered by Fire Safety Legislation) stop fires before they start, give early warning of fire through automatic fire detection (AFD) equipment and limit fire spread through building design and building management so that people can get out safely if a fire does start.
- **Intervention** - have sufficient emergency resources (firefighters/ emergency fire control operators / fire engines etc.) available to deal with fires (and other emergencies) when they do occur.

The provision to some Merseyside residents of free smoke detectors and to others of the fitting of smoke detectors provides all Merseyside community members the real opportunity for early detection and escape from death and injury in the event of fire.

With early detection must come swift intervention, and consequently with earlier detection must come swifter intervention. A real potential to save more lives.

Mark Rowe
Brigade Secretary

Kevin Hughes
Brigade Chair

For and on behalf of Merseyside FBU Brigade Committee

Executive Summary

Merseyside Fire Brigades Union have found much to agree with in the Fire and Rescue Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan Supplement for 2015 - 2017.

The FBU submitted an extensive response to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authorities IRMP 2013/16 in 2013. The majority of the FBU submission is still relevant and current as it deals with the years 2015 and 2016.

This Union has always been at the forefront in campaigning for improvements to the Service which over the years have saved many lives both of the public and firefighters. However the Fire Brigades Union wholly reject the concept of cost as the main driver for change.

The FBU warns the reader that nationally firefighter deaths are at an all time high. This is unacceptable and steps must be taken to ensure the causes of those deaths be addressed with immediate effect.

The FBU believes that the consequences of the fiercest attacks against the Fire and Rescue Service by a Coalition Government intent on slashing away at public services, and the Fire and Rescue Service in particular by reducing budget provision to a dangerously low level, places firefighters and community members at peril and that cannot be allowed to continue.

It is alarming that after many years of reductions in injuries and fatalities caused by accidental dwelling fires that injuries and fatalities have now increased. The question has to be asked:

'Is the increase in injuries and fatalities caused by accidental dwelling fires as a result of increased attendance times and the reduction in appliance numbers and Fire Station closures?'

The FBU have consistently warned that a reduction in front line fire cover will result in an increase in Fire deaths.

The FBU also supports Chief Fire Officer Dan Stephens's comments when he stated that:

'The grant cut will lead to more fires, fire deaths and injuries on Merseyside. Reductions in stations, appliances and firefighters will have a significant impact on our frontline emergency response and prevention work'

Sadly both the Fire Brigades Union and CFO Stephen's warning's remain unheeded.

Fewer fires and fire deaths nationally do not justify these relentless cuts. New FBU research shows a consistently high level of rescues carried out by firefighters every day, reinforcing the vital role of emergency intervention. Around 40,000 people were rescued from all incidents by firefighters in the UK last year 2013-14 - over one hundred rescues a day. Firefighters still make a significant intervention at fires - over 4,000 people are rescued annually at fires by firefighters - similar to levels a decade ago.

Excellent Operational Preparedness

Merseyside FBU Officials meet daily with Service managers across Merseyside. Our Health and Safety Representatives continue their essential collaborative work with Service managers to ensure that our firefighters and their work places are the safest they can possibly be. A large portion of FBU Officials' time and resource is committed to the consultation and negotiation processes to deliver an operational response that safeguards public and firefighter safety. This collaborative approach has seen the best possible operational response delivered in the face of the worst cuts that Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service has ever had to endure. Whilst the FBU have individual concerns which we will pursue through the agreed mechanisms we can broadly support the following, as contained within the IRMP Supplement:

- Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme
- Hazard and Risk Control Training
- Safe Person Assessments (SPA's)
- High Rise & other local infrastructure changes

The FBU make the following comments in relation to:

- Command & Control/Command Competence Training

The FBU agree with MF&RS that Command and Control competencies should be an absolute priority and that the delivery and training of such competencies should be constantly reviewed and improved upon. To deliver a process that provides the necessary skill sets and also deliver a consistent and uniform criteria for training and development purposes, the FBU make the following comment.

The FBU believe that a fair, open and transparent promotion system is essential to building the confidence of managers in all aspects of their work. Historically an independent examiner from a neighbouring FRS was utilised to oversee the process. This proved popular with candidates who had put themselves forward for promotion and as such is something that the FBU believe should be considered. A written assessment/examination, before a practical assessment, to give underpinning knowledge before promotion should also be considered. The FBU have highly competent Watch Managers who are trained assessors who would be willing to observe the process to give back the confidence to the process that appears to be lacking amongst FBU members.

Excellent Operational Response

- Shift pattern changes
- New ways of crewing appliances
- Voluntary Additional Hours (VAH)
- Develop & implement a comprehensive Fatigue Risk Management System (FRMS)

FBU comment: These issues have been discussed at length with Service management and are all currently the subject of productive dialogue. As this dialogue is ongoing and proposals that seek to improve morale and employees work life balance whilst continuing to deliver a first rate Fire and Rescue Service are being actively pursued by all parties, it is difficult to comment as the situation is fluid and dynamic, with many of the FBU's concerns being addressed. However it must be stated that the change to the 12/12 duty shift system was a change not welcomed by the vast majority of operational staff. This shift pattern has now been in operation for over 12 months and is as unpopular now as it was at its inception.

- Reduction in the number of appliances
- 10 minute response time
- Replace Dynamic Reserve with Strategic Resilience
- Key Station methodology
- New fire stations and fire appliances
- Station mergers

It is a sad reflection of where Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service currently finds itself that the 6 items (listed above, all dealing with cuts) are incorporated under the heading 'Excellent Operational Response'. The irony of this we hope is not lost on the reader.

The FBU simply cannot support the reduction of fire appliances, the closure of stations or the increase in attendance times. The FBU however do not put any blame on Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority for this latest round of cuts meted out by an out of control Conservative led Coalition in Westminster, the public of Merseyside are undoubtedly suffering the consequences of their unnecessary and ideologically driven cuts.

The FBU and MF&RS are in agreement that should the financial position improve then all efforts will be jointly undertaken to return the frontline emergency operational appliances that have been removed back to Wholetime operational availability.

Excellent Prevention and Protection

- Managing Risk

The FBU are pleased to see the introduction of the Risk Based Fire Protection Inspection Programme (Legislative Fire Safety) incorporated in the Action point.

The FBU broadly support the following Action points and commit to full engagement, through consultation/negotiation, to deliver them for the benefit of firefighters and the public alike.

- Restructure of Prevention & Protection Team
- Intelligence led targeting
- RTC Strategy
- Enhance youth engagement programmes
- Protection

The FBU offer the following comments on the Action point:

- Unwanted fire signals

“The Authority has now fully embedded the Risk Based Strategy for responding to Unwanted Fire Signals resulting in a reduction of over 70% in the actuations of fire alarms that we class as unwanted”

FBU response: The previous IRMP 2013-2016 stated that in 2011/12 crews responded to 5573 calls to AFA’s and that on 89.7% of those occasions they were false alarms. If we take the statistics as valid for these purposes, the IRMP identifies that out of the 5573 incident figure quoted, 574 of them were incidents requiring MF&RS intervention.

In 2014 the Chief Fire Officers Association published a document titled: ‘Guidance for the Reduction of False Alarms & Unwanted Fire Signals’.

The following are direct quotes from that document:

Background (page 5)

“The clear benefits that AFA systems can offer is not disputed. The early warning of fire is essential to protect both life and property and research has proved that AFA-detected fires tend to be smaller than person detected fires and generally require less effort to extinguish when the FRS response arrives. This also assists with protecting business assets, business continuity and community resilience”.

Introduction (page 6)

“The guidance outlined in this document has been widely consulted and developed with stakeholders representing the fire alarm industry and FRS in order to reduce the occurrence of false alarms from automatic fire detection and fire alarm systems and to manage the appropriate FRSs response to UwFS.”

“It is essential that FRS operate within a framework to reduce UwFS. This can be achieved through the widespread adoption and implementation of this guidance.

Co-operation and understanding cannot be expected from companies operating across various regions in the UK when each FRS operates a local policy which details the resource response to AFA systems.”

“Widespread implementation will encourage our fire industry partners to work with us in the development and review of the Fire Alarm Monitoring Organisations (FAMOs) elements of guidance.

This guidance provides a clear and structured strategy that will, where adopted, lead to sustained reductions in false alarms and UwFS and provides a framework for all FRS, and Fire Industry and Business in which to operate".

FBU comment: Clearly the aims of this guidance issued by CFOA is to promote best practices that should be adopted by all Fire and Rescue Services.

Summary of Guidance Processes Required for Effective UwFS Reduction (page 9)

"NB: Where FRS employ a nil response to groups of premises by type as opposed to targeting of specific system poor performance, they must recognise that it will not be possible to appreciate the full benefits of the holistic approach. FRS that engage with Responsible Persons (RPs) through responding to UwFS will be able to influence these key processes.....this will be supported by the uniform adoption of this Guidance by FRS".

FBU comment: The fact that within this paragraph CFOA again mention a 'uniform adoption of this guidance by FRS' shows that CFOA believe an operational response to AFA's is necessary.

The next quote from the guidance is unequivocal in defining an 'appropriate response' by FRS to AFAs.

Guidance Operation - A Tool Kit Approach (page 12)

"The FRS has a number of options which it can consider in deciding how AFA calls will be handled.

"A call challenge or filtering process - Use of this system will allow the FRS to gain additional information about the cause of the alarm, following which a decision is made about what, if any, response is made. Development of such a process will be determined by the specific FRS in line with an assessment in their Integrated Risk Management Plan."

This call challenge procedure is explained further on page 13 which states:

"FRS must be careful not to recommend the investigation of an alarm during an emergency call. If investigation was possible it should have already have been carried out as part of their existing procedures before the emergency call was made. An unplanned investigation at this stage may jeopardise the safety of the investigator".

The consideration of what is an appropriate response continues stating:

"Reduced attendance - The FRS may select to send a reduced attendance to any call resulting from an AFA system actuation where there is no confirmation of a fire or signs of a fire. In line with adoption of this approach, the 'responsible person' for any site will need to consider what arrangements they will put in place to provide this confirmation.

Full attendance - The FRS may select to send a full attendance to any report of an AFA sounding. Whilst this is likely to mean no change to the service's existing control measures, the implications should be considered in the wider context of the service's Integrated Risk Management Plan."

FBU comment: Note that no attendance is not an option in the CFOA policy document.

CFOA add further clarity to response levels to AFAs:

FRS Attendance Levels (page 10)

"In order to protect resources, FRS response policies may alter the response to premises where calls are based on unreliable AFA systems. This may include anything from the reconsideration of any 'enhanced response' options through to not sending any attendance in the case of persistent false alarms".

Definition of what would constitute a 'persistent false alarm' is given within the footnote on page 14 which states:

"FRSs considering applying a reduced response (or charge) option should ensure UwFS can be considered 'persistent'. This would include a recent history of multiple calls to false alarms and a failure to adopt reasonable practises recommended by the FRS to assist them in reducing UwFS."

The 'Aims of this Guidance' continue on page 14:

"It is recommended that any reduction in response is applied to premises on an individual assessment basis and that suitable notification is provided in advance of any change."

"If adjusting FRS standard response attendance to premises the process must be applied in accordance with this section and section 11 where applicable."

The final paragraph of section 11 referred to above states:

"FRS employing a reduced response option will consider the individual circumstances of the premises management and alarm performance in order to determine the level of response appropriate to the level of UwFS being produced."

CFOA then detail what they consider to be the three principal response options to AFAs:

*"**Attendance Level One** is an immediate emergency response, resulting in an initial attendance based on a risk assessment of the firefighting requirements that will be not less than one appliance.*

***Attendance Level Two** in the absence of a confirmation call via the 999 system; the FRS will make an attendance based on a risk assessment of the firefighting requirements. The attendance may be made under non-emergency conditions, thereby maintaining the availability of the resources for confirmed emergencies and protecting the public from the risk that arises from fire appliances responding under emergency conditions.*

***Attendance Level Three** no emergency response, until a confirmation of fire is received from the premises via the 999 system or from some other acceptable source. Such confirmation will result in a full or enhanced emergency response, dependent on the information received."*

The above 'response options' MUST be taken in context to the final paragraph of the chapter which again gives very clear guidance:

"It is recommended that these response options should only be applied if there is experience of persistent false alarms from specific premises. It should not be the case that it is applied generically e.g. to all premises of a certain type."

Action under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) is discussed on page 19 of the document. This section deals with reducing attendance for persistent offenders and unacceptable premises performance in relation to UwFS. In essence the CFOA guidance within this chapter informs that once a FRS determines that an unacceptable rate of UwFS has occurred at an individual premises, and a reduced attendance of FRS resources has been instigated, then the FRS will need to determine how long the reduced attendance will last, when it will be reviewed to see if performance has improved, and how normal attendance is reinstated and notified to the premises

FBU comment: Government (CLG) has also investigated this issue extensively and produced a report in 2008. The report was entitled 'Costs and Benefits of Alternative Responses to Automatic Fire Alarms - Fire Research Series 2/2008.'

This document reports that the average number of actual fires per year attended in England 'other buildings' (hospitals, schools, shops, factories etc) over a nine year period is approximately 26,600 of which nearly 6,600 fires were detected by AFA systems. The CLG report also states that 'It is

important to note, however, that AFA systems can be shown to offer clear benefits in terms of providing early warning of fire' the FBU agree with this statement.

CLG looked at a number of options in reducing unwanted fire signals and concluded that a strategy of only responding to an AFA if a confirmation call is received, such as the MF&RS policy, is the only strategy, amongst many looked at, that will result in a significant cost to the community and business because of high property damage associated with attending AFA calls only following the receipt of a confirmation call.

CLG go further and concluded that:

“Strategies which involve delays in a response being sent to a call (eg call challenging and responding only if a confirmation of a fire was received) were the least favoured strategies as the increases in property damage caused by fires due to the delay outweighed those benefits accrued in the reduced response and those arising out of the reallocation of resources to fire prevention work. This conclusion would also apply to circumstances where a response was sent only after confirmation of a genuine fire following attendance of a fire service motorcycle.”

The FBU stress that this is a Government conclusion that mirrors exactly the historical position of the Fire Brigades Union on such matters.”

CLG go on to state that:

“A potential downside of strategies involving reduced initial attendance may be that a real fire cannot be tackled as effectively and quickly. These tradeoffs need to be made on the basis of sound risk assessment and analysis, but very often the data is not necessarily available at a local level to make these decisions based upon qualitative evidence.”

This again reinforces the FBU's opposition to blanket policies A view on blanket policies in relation to AFAs that appears to be mirrored by the Chief Fire Officers Association and also effectively supports our concerns that the MF&RS AFA strategy increases risk to firefighters as we now attend fires that are potentially more developed as a result of non-attendance. Which along with diminishing resources and our concerns in relation to LAG, (the time take for second and subsequent appliances to provide sufficient resources in terms of firefighter number for safe systems of work to be properly implemented) significantly increases risk to firefighters.

It remains the belief of the FBU that MF&RSs policy in relation to AFAs will lead to increased property damage and increased loss of life due to the delay in dispatching the initial response to the initial call for assistance through the AFA system.

The Fire Brigades Union urges MF&RS to reconsider this policy and to reverse the strategy as a matter of urgency to better protect firefighters and communities.

Excellent People

- Staff Survey

The FBU are fully supportive of the actions being taken to address the results of the 'Employee Engagement Survey' and are fully committed to ensuring that MF&RS provides the best possible working environment for its employees. The FBU have, and are, currently undertaking meetings with Service managers and FBU members to best address all the issues raised as a result of the survey.

- Recruitment

The FBU fully support the current recruitment strategy and applaud Service managers and the Fire Authority in their decision to move away from disgraceful zero hour contracts, contracts that had previously been used to recruit firefighters within Merseyside. We hope that this mind-set continues and that firefighters are continued to be recruited onto the same 42 hour contracts as their potential colleagues.

- Productivity

Whilst the FBU fully understand that maintaining our operational response for the public of Merseyside is paramount, we warn against the over use of targets to determine productivity. Our firefighters have already considerably increased their workload due to over a decade of cuts to firefighter numbers. Our firefighters have embraced the ethos of 'doing more with less' but that mantra has its limits and must be carefully managed so as not to alienate and disenfranchise the workforce. The results of the employee engagement survey show a deeply unhappy and already disenfranchised workforce. This may be due to a number of factors but we cannot ignore the fact that firefighters see no financial reward whatsoever for increasing their workload. To manage the workforce whilst keeping them engaged is something that should be an absolute priority.

- Absence Management

The Capability procedure being introduced to better manage sickness absence has been agreed with the FBU and is a testament to the commitment of all parties to reach agreement rather than imposition. The policy allowing local management of sickness absence that will be supplemented by a range of occupational health initiatives, management advice and guidance and early interventions is designed to support all employees in their attendance at work. This policy is seen as a supportive rather than punitive approach to sick or injured employees and as such can be supported by the FBU.

Medium Term Strategy 2012 - 2017: Objectives

The FBU fully support Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority's mission statement of:

“Safer, Stronger Communities - Safe Effective Firefighters”

As such we support the following objectives as defined within the medium term strategy. The FBU commit to fully engage in any work streams that arise from the pursuit of these objectives.

- To reduce accidental dwelling fires and the deaths and injuries which result from these fires in Merseyside.
- To achieve an appropriate speed and weight of attack in emergency response to fires and road traffic collisions.
- To reduce fires caused by antisocial behaviour in those areas of Merseyside identified as most at risk.
- To ensure that the operational workforce operate safely and effectively in resolution of all emergency incidents.

The FBU offer the following comments on the remaining objectives:

- To reduce the impact of fire on commercial enterprise and the wider community.
- To reinforce our role in fire prevention by improving fire safety within the public and commercial buildings of Merseyside.

In relation to the above objectives the FBU refer the reader to our previous comments contained within this response over MF&RS's Automatic Fire Alarm strategy. The FBU believe that our response and comments will enhance the delivery of these objectives.

The final objective contained within the medium term plan that the FBU wish to comment on is:

- To ensure that we can respond safely and effectively to all emergency incidents locally, regionally and nationally.

Whilst it is entirely admirable that operational personnel would rush to the aid of people requiring emergency intervention wherever they reside in the UK it is however a stark fact that MF&RS is the Authority that has seen the severest budget cuts in the UK.

This Authority in adjusting to the budget cuts has seen the reduction in front line fire cover of almost half of its front line appliances (42 appliances to 24 appliances). This Authority has seen its operational firefighter numbers almost halved in a little over a decade. This Authority is having to merge and close fire stations that will result in a net loss of four of its community fire stations. Other Fire and Rescue Authorities remain relatively unscathed from these budget cuts.

With the public of Merseyside bearing the brunt of Government cuts to their Fire and Rescue Service the FBU call for a full review of the national and international response capability provided by MF&RS.

With limited resource and finance it is time for other Authorities less affected by the cuts to 'pick up the slack' whilst MF&RS focus on utilising its limited resources to provide the best fire cover possible in these difficult times.

Equality Objectives 2012 - 2017

It is a fact that the Austerity agenda being pursued by Government is disproportionately impacting on the most vulnerable individuals and groups within our societies. It is also a fact that Merseyside has some of the highest areas of social deprivation. It is these individuals and groups who will consequentially suffer the most at the hands of this Government. Areas of social deprivation are recognised as having the highest risk due to fire and therefore these areas require immediate and adequate intervention from emergency services, more so than affluent areas. When Governments increase social deprivation and decrease the funding for Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, forcing the Authority into drastically removing fire appliances and closing community fire stations, then this is a recipe for disaster for our communities.

It is essential therefore that equality objectives feature at the forefront of our thinking in identifying and subsequently reaching the most vulnerable within our communities. Merseyside FBU fully support MF&RS in identifying the priorities that should feature as our equality objectives.

However, whilst MF&RS have placed Equality objectives high on its agenda the FBU believe that nationally the equality agenda in the fire and rescue service has stalled badly since 2010. The FBU calls on government to instigate and implement a new equality and diversity strategy, developed in consultation with key stakeholders.

The abolition of the equality and diversity strategy for England early in this parliament, along with cuts to firefighter jobs (including recruitment freezes in most brigades), has made the battle for a more diverse and representative workforce increasingly difficult. Equality and diversity has been largely ignored at Westminster, by senior civil servants and others within the fire and rescue service. While progress has been made, the presence of sexist, racist and homophobic bullying and discrimination has not been totally eradicated. This needs to be addressed across the UK.

Conclusion

There is a great deal that the Fire Brigades Union can, and do support within the IRMP Supplement. However, the FBU can never support the loss of fire cover for the people of Merseyside. Although we do recognise that it is the Conservative led coalition that has put Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority in this disgraceful position.

In conclusion, we reiterate our point that the Fire Brigades Union believes that MF&RS was an extremely cost effective service providing the people of Merseyside with an excellent and quality value for money FRS before the latest round of cuts, despite what CLG Ministers and Sir Ken Knight says.

The FBU encourages the Authority and the Service to redouble our joint efforts in making the case for a return of the reduced fire cover lost through the devastating attack on our Fire and Rescue Service and that together we can ensure that we can return the Fire and Rescue Service in Merseyside to the position it once was before the continuing budget cuts to a public service whose objective is to save life.

The FBU continue to lobby all Cllrs, MPs and anybody who will listen. This is a continuous and ongoing body of work for Merseyside FBU Officials who attempt to ensure that politicians of all parties understand what firefighters and the public of Merseyside deserve, which is/are:

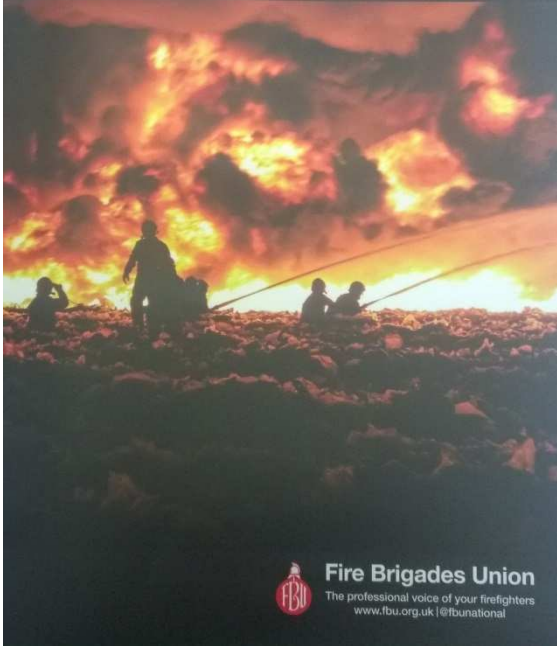
- Fire and rescue services needs investment, not cuts
- Firefighters provide an irreplaceable service. More firefighters are needed to meet the range of threats, risks and emergencies now and going forward
- The FBU seeks that firefighters wider contributions to society such as dealing with flooding and terrorism is recognised, resourced and rewarded accordingly
- Consistent national standards backed by a national inspectorate are the best way to improve the fire and rescue service, level up performance and deploy resources efficiently

To these ends the FBU are calling for a moratorium nationally on reduced crewing levels on pumping appliances, reduction of fire appliances and fire station closures.

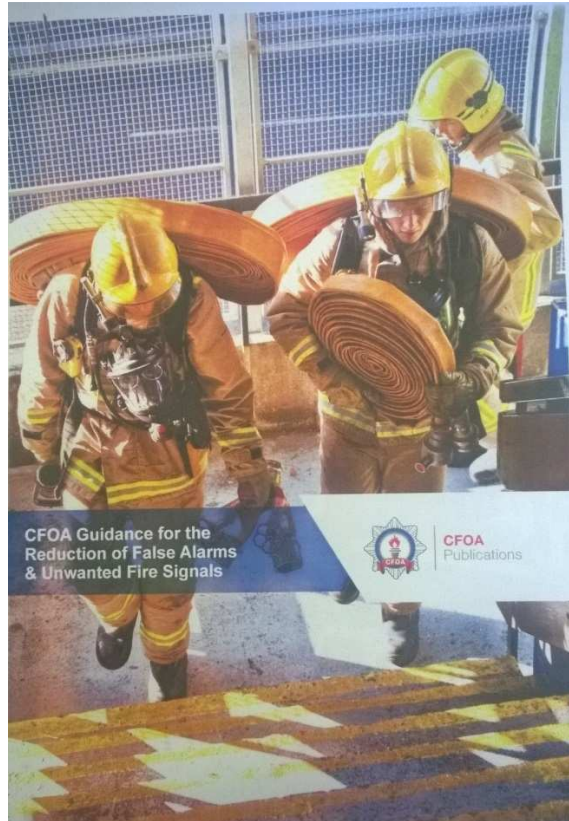
The absence of central guidance and oversight of integrated risk management planning has led to the fragmentation of the fire and rescue service. Local Resilience Forums are not functioning as they should. The FBU calls for risks and resilience to be assessed nationally as well as locally, to guarantee standards are maintained and improved.

MF&RS might have to attend less numbers of incidents today than it did 10 years ago but with a consequential drop in firefighter numbers we remain a Fire and Rescue Service with more workload per community member, more workload per firefighter and a more efficient Fire & Rescue Service than almost anywhere else in the country.

Sounding the alarm:
*the future of our
fire and rescue service*



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**CFOA Guidance for the
Reduction of False Alarms
& Unwanted Fire Signals**



CFOA
Publications

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Mr N Mernock (MFRS Joint Sec)
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
Bridle Road
Bootle
Merseyside
L30 4YD

Date: 28th January 2015

Dear Nick,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment of the proposed Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2015 – 2017.

The Association continues to sympathise with the position the Fire Authority finds itself in, the speed and depth of the grant cuts imposed by central government have placed the Authority in an almost impossible position and we applaud the continued wish to avoid compulsory redundancies through the savings process.

With regards specific points in the IRMP, we would offer comment on the following points -

We note that there is a proposal to review the Senior Officers Duty System –

'The current Officers flexi-duty system will be reviewed to ensure an appropriate number of operational officers available 24/7 for attending operational incidents; whilst ensuring we maximise the managerial hours available in the workplace'.

The Association will engage fully in this review but must stress that the Officer membership currently provides significant and working flexibility within the current system and there is a great deal of work provided through discretionary activity during non-rostered hours.

The system has been reviewed several times in the past ten years with changes to the number and working patterns of the Officers, we continue to manage with a relatively small team of Officers. The Association would be committed to ensure that any working pattern would not negatively impact on the work life balance of our members or increase workloads beyond reasonable limits.

With regards the Firefighter Fitness Policy (Page 23) –

The Fire Officers Association are engaged nationally as are other the representative bodies, CFOA and the Chief Advisor over this subject. We feel any fitness standard should be nationally agreed; however for any locally determined elements and/or any local implementation we would request detailed consultation to ensure our members are fully engaged in all aspects of the process and the required trust and confidence can be built and maintained.

We maintain excellent links in terms of industrial relationships with our fellow representative bodies and the management of the service, we will continue to consult, negotiate and discuss matters through these links so endeavouring to safeguard our members.

Yours sincerely

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The I.R.M.P. has been circulated and digested and whilst it does not improve the events on the imminent (or far off) horizon of the service, with regards to Unite the Union, its standpoint or that of its members , we accept the document and its findings, and do not wish to submit any changes to the document .

Thanks

Darren McCann

Unite the union workshop rep

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Amendments to IRMP 2015-17

Date	Page Nos	Amendment Requested	Agency making request	Officer approval	Amendment Complete
	3	3 rd paragraph amend '£9.2m between 2011-13' to '£19.2m over the last 4 years' <i>as on hardcopy</i>	DA		
	5	Add photo under text	DA		
6/11/04	7	St Helens – change St Helens Rugby Ground to St Helens RLFC Stadium	GM Case		
20/1/15	7	Sefton – Change 'English Heritage Coastline' to 'Site of Specific Scientific Interest & Natura 2000 Site'	Natural England		
	8	2 nd paragraph, 2 nd sentence – amend to read 'savings of £6.3m to balance the financial plan during 2015/16' <i>as on hardcopy</i>	DA		
	12	Insert line space after COMAH paragraph	DA		
	12	Last line capital S on Air Show	DA		
	14	Hazard & risk control – 'aligns' change to 'aligned'	DA		
	14	Command & Control – change 'formative' to 'informative'	DA		
	16	2nd paragraph change 'discreet' to "	DA		
	18	Flexi duty officer review – change wording in paragraph from 'reviewed' to 'subject to a risk assessment'	FOA		
	23	Support Service Review – change 'service' to 'Service'	DA		
	25	Objective 2 - Current Progress change time from '5.03 secs' to '5.13 minutes' for 13/14	DA		
	27	Last word on last line 'targe' to 'target'	DA		
	28	Equality Objective 4 – query where the 37.5% target came from – this is a UN Road Safety Target	FBU		
13/1/15	21 24	Include paragraph about Apprenticeship scheme in P&P and People plans	UNISON	<i>Does this need adding</i>	<i>Very short of space on both plans</i>
13/1/15	21	Final paragraph add a line about 'looking at staffing' and 'further changes to P&P staffing'	UNISON	<i>Covered in support staff review</i>	

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APPENDIX C

Equality Impact Assessment

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

**Integrated Risk Management Plan 2013/16
Supplement 2015/17**

1. Integrated Risk management Plan (IRMP) Supplement 2015/17 Equality Impact Assessment report

Title of policy/report/project:	Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2013/15 Supplement 2015/17
Department:	Strategy and Performance
Date:	22.9.14
1: What is the aim or purpose of the IRMP and proposed changes it contains	
<p>The IRMP is MFRA’s primary planning document. It is a statutory requirement of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and is compiled in line with the National Framework 2012. The plan presents MFRA’s short and medium term aims in relation to managing and reducing risk in Merseyside and the contribution made by MFRA to regional and national resilience. The Supplementary plan to IRMP 2013/16 is based on the risks and the needs of our local communities and sets specific actions for the years 2015/16 and 2016/17.</p> <p>The IRMP has been developed in conjunction with the outcome of the Public Spending Review, which ultimately affects MFRA with a cut of £10 million to its 2013/14 - 14/15 budget, £6.3m from 2015/16 and an anticipated cut of £9.1m for 2016/17 and our IRMP Budget Principles.</p> <p>The IRMP has been developed to address the key risks and challenges facing local communities and sets out the approach we aim to take in order to deliver the most effective fire and rescue service to the local communities of Merseyside whilst considering the public’s views, where possible to; minimise station closures, maintain the same levels of service and avoiding compulsory staff redundancies. These were the key outcomes of the public consultation events held in 2012, 2013 and 2014, where members of the community across Merseyside’s 5 districts were invited to provide their opinions in relation to forthcoming budget cuts and our broad proposals in relation to these cuts in funding.</p> <p>The IRMP has established the following proposals to help the MFRA to respond to the cut in it’s budget :</p> <p>1. Fire Station Proposal</p> <p>It is now necessary to close or merge fire stations to meet the budget challenges. This process commenced in 2014/15 and will need to continue up to 2020. Full public</p>	

consultations will take place on each proposed change. MFRA will endeavour to maintain 28 appliances but some will be crewed on a wholetime retained basis.

2. Capability Policy

The Authority is implementing a Capability procedure that will replace the Absence and Attendance procedure. This will provide a revised approach to sickness management. The procedures will allow local management of sickness absence that will be supplemented by a range of occupational health initiatives, management advice and guidance and early interventions to support all employees in their attendance at work. This Policy has been consulted on widely with key stakeholders and has undergone an EIA.

3. Duty Systems

Due to further financial pressures new, more efficient shift patterns and duty systems will continue to be considered. Whilst firefighter safety and productivity was increased by the changes made to the existing working patterns (2 days, 2 nights), a more efficient and effective shift system model may be able to increase safety and productivity further. An individual EIA was completed.

4. Home Safety Strategy

The Home Safety Strategy is being refreshed to enhance capacity and engage with more people who are vulnerable in their homes with a particular focus on those residents who are over 65. Officers continue to develop data sharing protocols with partner agencies and referral pathways so operational staff, specialist advocates and volunteers carry out targeted interventions to reduce risk in the home. A full individual EIA was undertaken for the Home Safety Strategy.

2: Who will be affected by the changes proposed in the IRMP

All communities on Merseyside
Visitors to Merseyside
MFRA Employees
Authority Members
Local Authorities and other Emergency Services
Other Community Partners

3. What monitoring data have you considered

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

What monitoring data have you considered?

What did it show?

The report shows that there are almost 1.4 million residents in

<p>Equality data and Demographics report for Merseyside - http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/asp/asp/pages/equality/pdf/Profile_of_Merseyside_Demography_Equality_and_Diversity.pdf</p>	<p>Merseyside , an increase of 1% since 2001 (13,400 people) The population is split into 48.6% males and 51.4% females. Merseyside has a lower proportion of children (16.5%) and higher proportions of working age residents (66.3%) and older people (17.2%) than the North West averages. The trend shows an aging population with older groups increasing and younger age groups decreasing.</p> <p>Merseyside is not as religiously diverse as the rest of Northwest with the biggest proportion of residents being Christian at 74%.</p>
<p>MFRA Customer Insight Data and MFRA Risk Maps: 1 to 5</p>	<p>Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service has developed a risk model, which focuses on the risk to life and is based on the factors which we know have most impact upon risk. This approach uses relevant data sets, including the Indices of Multiple Deprivation as well as local, historical incident response data. Weightings have then been used to represent the differing influence of these data sets on risk. All of these factors are then totalled, banded and then mapped by area to establish the MF&RS risk map. These themed maps help us to understand the likelihood of a particular event occurring in a given area, which in turn forms a part of the risk assessment process. It ensures we target our resources at locations with identified risks.</p> <p>There are some large areas of Merseyside that fall within the highest levels of social deprivation. There remain large pockets of deprivation with high levels of social exclusion and crime; 40% of wards in Merseyside are ranked in the top 5 percentage of the most deprived wards in England.</p>
<p>MFRA Performance Indicators 2013/14</p>	<p>Merseyside is safer and stronger as a result of the actions that the Service has taken since 1999 to prevent fires and other incidents. In particular our performance indicators show that :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overall incidents have fallen from 23,023 to 15,348 in the last 5 years ▪ On an average day we attend 33% fewer incidents – showing our prevention work is effective at preventing fires and other rescues ▪ Accidental dwelling fires have reduced by 11% and Knowsley in particular has seen the largest reduction at -11% or 37 incidents.

4: Research

Summarise the findings of any research you have considered regarding this policy/report/project. This could include quantitative data and qualitative information; anything you have obtained from other sources e.g. CFOA/CLG guidance, other FRSs, etc.

What research have you considered?

Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004 and National Fire and Rescue Framework 2012

Appropriate legislation as it applies to the Fire and Rescue Service e.g. Equality Act 2010

Integrated Risk Management Plan Consultation 2012 onwards reports

Previous MFRA EIAs carried out Key Policies

What did it show?

Establishes the powers and duties of the FRS and sets out the requirement to undertake an IRMP and what needs to be covered.

Sets out the legal framework which the MFRA needs to comply with in relation to assessing the impact of any changes to services on different equality groups

Describes the public consultation process, approach and outcomes for the 5 district forums. (See section 5 Consultation and specific merger and closure consultations for more detail) this intelligence has been our guiding principles for making proposals for change to services to meet the budget cuts imposed by the government.

Help to identify any Equality Issues to consider when making any changes to service provisions to the public and the impacts on different groups of staff.

5. Consultation – Background on the IRMP 15-17 consultation process

The current National Framework for the Fire and Rescue Service sets out the expectations on Fire and Rescue Services to engage with communities regarding the decisions it makes about service provision when stating:

“Fire and rescue authorities are accountable to their communities for their actions and decision making. They need to have transparent processes in place to deliver this and engage

with their communities to provide them with the opportunity to influence their local service. Local accountability is a vital check on the services provided by fire and rescue authorities.”

MFRA is also aware when developing consultation plans of the Localism Act, which provides a greater opportunity for the public to scrutinise and challenge the decisions made by local authorities. For this reason that MFRA began consultation with the public early in June 2012 to enable the public to shape the proposals for change as a result of the funding cuts from government.

In addition, The Public Sector Equality Duty sets out arrangements for public bodies (including FRA) to consider the needs of different Protected Groups¹ in the way it designs its services and policies. It is therefore of great importance to ensure that consultation on the IRMP involved people from all diverse groups. The decisions made by MFRA have been able to reflect the needs of communities and be supported by them and this resulting in greater transparency and accountability, and members of the community will have a stake in the development of levels of service that affect them.

What Consultation has taken place and what did it say?

The reports on the outcomes of the January 2014 IRMP, Merger and closure consultation forums are attached at **Appendix C**. The forums were very successful and resulted in some high quality comments and views that members and officers found useful in making decision about the needs and the priorities of different community groups.

In summary there were 5 public IRMP consultation forums held across the 5 districts. Each forum had a good representation of all protected groups. Likewise for the Merger Consultations a public focus group, public meeting, joint public forum, stakeholder business breakfast, staff communications and presentations to councils and politicians were held in areas with an interest.

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

1. “Reducing the number of fire stations (and thus fire-fighters and fire engines)”

The forums were asked to select the criteria they believed to be most important. Participants considered Emergencies and Special Risks to be the most important criteria, followed by Deprivation, Volume of Incidents, and Demographics and, lastly, Distance from Other Stations. Also, when looking at the maps of fire stations and relative risk across Merseyside, participants noticed the varying numbers of fire stations in each area.

2. “Maintaining 26 Fire Stations”

Participants were asked whether MFRA should maintain its current 26 (mainly 1 pump) fire stations or opt for 16 (mainly 2 pump) stations. Financial efficiency due to less site costs, sale of sites and crewing economies were explained. Overall there was overwhelming support for maintaining 26 fire stations.

¹¹ The Equality Act 2010 covers Protected Characteristics of : age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation and marriage & civil partnerships.

3. “Response Time Standards”

Pre 2004 National Response Standards were discussed at length, isochrome maps were used to illustrate response standards from each station, participants were reminded that the previous 5 forums had very much supported the principle of an MFRA response of ‘attending at least 90% of life risk incidents within a given time period’. People were concerned about the slower response of the second appliance but accepted it was not unreasonable. Unanimous support was recorded for “the first appliance to attend at least 90% of all life risk incidents within 10 minutes”.

4. “Shift System, Work Routine and Firefighter Productivity”

The 2 2 4 shifts system was explained and the inefficiencies of the considerable ‘downtime’ on a 15 hour night shift. The 1800hrs shift change time disrupts late afternoon presentations and protection work. Participants were almost unanimous the current shift system should be changed and the 12 and 24 hour options be considered.

5. Knowsley Merger & Closure Consultation

The meetings were informed of the wide range of options considered by MFRA to reduce expenditure including LLAR, day crewed stations, community retained, station closures and mergers. Financial constraints, reducing incident numbers, fire station coverage and populations were illustrated and discussed.

Proposal to merge 2 stations into one new centrally located purpose built site with one wholetime and one wholetime retained appliance was explained. Discussion made clear that MFRA would not be considering these proposals if not facing an urgent need to reduce funding. An overwhelming majority supported the proposals.

Those who participated were keen that MFRA still maintain targeted Prevention and Protection work targeted at those most in need. This will remain a priority for MFRA.

Where we cannot meet the ten minute response standard in areas where we are proposing mergers we will:

Increase Prevention and Protection intervention for vulnerable people

Enter into reciprocal agreements with neighbouring FRS eg. Cheshire FRS in Cronton area.

6. Further Merger & Closure Consultations

Consultation is about to commence, in October 2014, on merging Upton and West Kirby Fire Stations into a new centrally located station in Greasby and in November on the closure of Allerton Fire Station in Liverpool.

Consultation will take place in the future on the merger of St Helens and Eccleston Fire Stations to a new location in the Town Centre and possible further mergers or closures in Liverpool District.

All stakeholders including local residents, staff, partner agencies and Local Councils will be fully consulted in a similar format to the Knowsley Consultations.

IRMP 2013/16 Consultation Points

7. “Re-defining response times (for example, adopting a single response standard of, say, ‘attending 90% of life incidents with at least one fire engine within eight minutes’)”

eight-in-ten participants supported the adoption of a single response standard of **“attending 90% of life incidents with at least one fire engine within eight minutes “providing it continues to endeavour to get to incidents as quickly as possible**

8. “Introducing alternative crewing systems to match variations in ‘demand’”

The vast majority of participants across all five forums thought that MFRA should consider more flexible crewing systems to match variations in demand

9. “Reducing support services (including prevention and protection activities)”

A majority of participants agreed that, given its diminishing resources, MFRA should target its prevention work towards higher risk areas, higher risk people (in low risk areas), and areas that have slower response times.

Charging for providing smoke alarms in low risk/affluent areas was also endorsed by a large majority, who felt that those who can afford to pay should expect to have to do so *(note this is dealt with in more detail in the EIA document “Support Staff Review to EIA” attached to this report)*

10. “Raising council tax levels beyond the capping level.”

Although several participants felt that they themselves could support a large council tax rise, it was widely felt that the population at large would not do so in the current economic climate

There was also concern that a large Council Tax increase could set two undesirable precedents – that is, it could:

- Be a precedent for other authorities to make similar increases in Merseyside
- Encourage central government to think that more central taxation could be transferred to the local level.

Even those participants who supported the idea of an increase felt that the MFRA would not win the five referendums needed to authorise such a policy

(note this is dealt with in more detail in the EIA document “Proposals to raise Council tax EIA” attached to this report)

The outcomes of the public consultation have been taken into consideration when developing proposals in the IRMP. The key points raised by the public were :

- No closure of fire stations
- Change crewing and rotas to be more flexible to meet demand
- Standardise response times and be transparent about remote areas with slower response times

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

6. Conclusions

On reviewing the research, data and consultation together with the proposals outlined in section 1 above, it is envisaged that there will be very little negative impact on any particular protected group and no perceived disproportionate service delivery compared to the current level of service received by these groups currently.

We will increase prevention and protection work in areas affected by mergers and closures by intelligently targeting those people identified as vulnerable.

We will explore possibilities of working with our neighbouring partners to assist with Fire and rescues in areas where mergers and closures are proposed.

(a) Age

Service Delivery in relation age :

- The majority of Merseyside population will see little or no difference to the way in which we are planning to deliver our service compared to their levels of service they currently receive; regardless of our chosen option.

Community risks in relation to age :

- Older people have been identified as more at risk from fire. As a result, prevention activity will continue to be targeted towards them.
- Middle aged men living alone have been identified as more risk from fires. As a result, prevention activity will continue to be targeted towards them.
- Young people are more likely to be involved in fires relating to anti-social behaviour. As a result, prevention activity will continue to be targeted towards them.

Delivery plans and service plans will continue to plan for innovative and efficient ways to engage with different communities of different ages to ensure that all emergencies receive the same high level of response.

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

Service delivery in relation to disabled people

- It is not envisaged that the impact of the changes on either proposal 1 or proposal 2 will have any significant detrimental impact on disabled people. Option 1 would ensure that disabled vulnerable people at risk of fire and life risk incidents will get the fastest and most efficient response which is critical to those with significant health complications. The ability to maintain community fire stations and link closely with disabled community groups is key

- The way in which MFRA classifies disabled people as high risk will not change and we will ensure that their needs in relation to Fire and Rescue services will be met. Services and policies will continue to take into account their needs of this group.

Community risks in relation to Disability

- People with disabilities have been identified as more at risk from fire occurring and in some cases, less able to escape when a fire does occur. Further consultation with Disabled People will be carried out during the lifespan of the IRMP to establish their experiences and impacts of the service changes.
- Hate crime involving fire as a weapon targeted at people with mental and physical disabilities will be monitored throughout the life of this IRMP to establish where further prevention and protection can be targeted

Community delivery plans and service plans will continue to plan for innovative and efficient ways to engage with different disability groups and support agencies to ensure that all emergencies receive the same high level of response.

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

Service delivery in relation to race

- It is not envisaged that the impact of the changes in either proposal 1 or proposal 2 will have any significant detrimental impact on different ethnic groups. Option 1 would ensure that those at risk of hate crime and fire and life risk incidents will get the fastest and most efficient response. The ability to maintain community fire stations and link closely with different ethnic minority groups is key to ensuring the service we provide meets the needs/risks of the communities.

Community risks in relation to race

- Some minority ethnic communities have been identified as being at greater risk from fire and where we identify this we will work with those communities to target prevention activity.
- Racial differences can place people at increased risk of hate crime and this can include the use of fire as a weapon. Our prevention and protection work with the police and other partners helps people to protect themselves and assists in the prevention of such crimes. Monitoring of such incidents will be key to understanding the needs and experiences of these community groups.

Community delivery plans and service plans will continue to plan for innovative and efficient ways to engage with different ethnic minority groups and support agencies to ensure that all emergencies receive the same high level of response.

(d) Religion or Belief

Service Delivery in relation to Religion/belief

- Merseyside is predominantly Christian (79%) and less diverse in terms of religion

than the rest of UK. We are not aware of any particular religious groups that will be affected disproportionately either by either option 1 or 2 or changes to the response time.

Community risks in relation to religion/belief

- Some religious groups have been identified as being at greater risk from fire and where we identify this we will work with those communities to target prevention activity.
- Religious differences /tensions between groups can place people at increased risk of hate crime and this can include the use of fire as a weapon. Our prevention and protection work with the police and other partners helps people to protect themselves and assists in the prevention of such crimes. Monitoring of such incidents will be key to understanding the needs and experiences of the different faith groups.

Community delivery plans and service plans will continue to plan for innovative and efficient ways to engage with different faith groups and support agencies to ensure that all emergencies receive the same high level of response.

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

Service Delivery in relation to Gender

- It is not envisaged that the impact of the changes in either proposal 1 or proposal 2 will have any significant detrimental impact on different genders. Option 1 would ensure that those at risk of fire and RTC will get the fastest and most effective response. The ability to maintain community fire stations and link closely with different gender groups is key to ensuring the service we provide meets the needs/risks of the communities.

Community risks in relation to Gender

- There is evidence to suggest that men are generally more at risk from fire and road traffic collisions. We regularly monitor the fires where people die and older women tend to be the highest risk group. As a result, prevention activity will continue to targeted towards these groups at risk

Community delivery plans and service plans will continue to plan for innovative and efficient ways to engage with different gender groups and support agencies to ensure that all emergencies receive the same high level of response.

(f) Sexual Orientation

Service delivery in relation to Sexual Orientation

- It is not envisaged that the impact of the changes to service delivery in either proposal 1 or proposal 2 will have any significant detrimental impact on people from different sexual orientation. Option 1 would ensure that those at risk of fire and RTC will get the fastest and most effective response. The ability to maintain community fire stations and link closely with different LGBT groups is key to ensuring the service we provide meets the needs/risks of these communities.

Community risks in relation to Sexual Orientation

- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual people can be at an increased risk from hate related crime and this might include the use of fire as a weapon. Our prevention and protection work with the police and other support agencies helps people to protect themselves and assists in the prevention of such crimes.

Community delivery plans and service plans will continue to plan for innovative and efficient ways to engage with different LGBT groups support agencies to ensure that all emergencies receive the same high level of response.

(g) Socio-economic disadvantage

We have extensive business intelligence which shows that socio-economic disadvantage is significant risk factor in relation to all types of fire. As a result many of our prevention activities focus on those areas with the highest levels of deprivation (40% of Merseyside is in the top 5% most deprived areas in England)

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.

The information provided in sections 1 to 6 explain the ways in which different protected groups may be affected by the aims and objectives set out in the IRMP, specifically the proposed changes to service as a result of the significant reduction in funding by the government.

Option 1 provides the best support for all protected groups and helps to maintain and increase community engagement whilst maintaining current standards in responses to fire and rescue.

8. Equality Improvement Plan

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

9. Equality & Diversity Sign Off

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

Signed off by:

Wendy Kenyon

Date:

15/10/14

Comments :

Action Planned	Responsibility of	Completed by
1.Ensure that Low Risk HFSC's are carried out as a priority to the areas where 10 minute response time may not be fully met 2. Consider increasing	Knowsley Community Safety Teams	

<p>community interventions early in 14/15 for the areas where 10 minute response times may not be met :</p> <p>3. Engage with neighbouring FRA's to establish opportunities to cover areas affected by rescue responses.</p> <p>4. Continue to establish innovative and efficient ways to engage with all the protected groups</p> <p>5. Monitor hate crime in relation to fire and each protected group</p>		
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For any advice, support or guidance about completing this form please contact the DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk or on 0151 296 4237

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

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY BUDGET MEETING		
DATE:	26 FEBRUARY 2015	REPORT NO:	CFO/008/15
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	PHIL GARRIGAN	REPORT AUTHOR:	DEB APPLETON
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT GROUP		
TITLE OF REPORT:	ALLERTON FIRE STATION CONSULTATION OUTCOMES		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A:	CONSULTATION NEWSLETTER
	APPENDIX B:	2 ND CONSULTATION DOCUMENT
	APPENDIX C:	CORRESPONDENCE
	APPENDIX D:	QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS REPORT
	APPENDIX E:	FOCUS GROUPS/FORUM REPORT
	APPENDIX F:	QUESTIONS FROM MEETINGS
	APPENDIX G:	EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the outcomes of the twelve week public consultation process regarding the draft proposal to close Allerton fire station.

Recommendation

2. That Members:
 - a) Note the outcomes of the comprehensive and informative Allerton public consultation
 - b) take full and carefully considered account of those outcomes when considering report CFO/010/15 relating to the proposals for fire cover in Liverpool.

Introduction and Background

3. On 2nd October 2014 the Authority approved:

“..... a 12 week public consultation on the proposed closure of Allerton fire station and the relocation of the Allerton fire appliance to Old Swan to be crewed on a wholetime retained basis.”
4. The Authority also approved a detailed consultation plan. The plan included an online questionnaire, an externally facilitated deliberative focus group and a forum, two open public meetings, a stakeholder meeting and several staff

consultation meetings. The Integrated Risk Management Plan consultation event on 12th January 2015 also considered the methodology behind the proposed closure and the Authority's approach to the consultation, adding another level of public scrutiny to the Authority's proposals.

5. The consultation closed on 26th January 2015.

Summary of outcomes

6. Very low numbers of the public responded to this consultation compared to the Wirral merger consultation with 28 people attending the two public meetings, 4 partners attended the Business Breakfast and 65 responding to the questionnaire.
7. The deliberative focus group and forum (25 people) agreed that the proposed closure of Allerton fire station was reasonable given the financial challenges facing the Authority.
8. In addition, the IRMP Forum attendees (22) also thought that the methodology for the selection of Allerton and the consultation process was logical and reasonable under the circumstances.
9. The Stakeholder (public/private sector) meeting was broadly supportive of the closure proposal.
10. The number of the people that attended the public meetings was very low (20 attended the first meeting, 8 the second). Although there was some support for the Authority's situation (particularly at the second meeting), several attendees appeared to be generally opposed to the proposal. However, it is important to note that some of those opposed focused on the station as a perceived heritage site because of its connection with the Beatles' song 'Penny Lane'. Some said that they understood the financial imperative, reduced number of incidents and relative over provision in Liverpool, but were still opposed because of the Beatles connection or because they generally opposed cuts to public services.
11. The 65 people that responded to the questionnaire were in the main opposed to the proposal (61.5%), but again, there were very few responses in relation to the population of the Allerton station area. Survey respondents accounted for 0.1% of the population of the total station area.

Promoting and marketing the consultation

12. On 1st November 2014 an initial consultation newsletter (Appendix A) and on-line survey were published on the Merseyfire website. Facebook, Twitter and a press release were used to launch the consultation. The press release was used by the Liverpool Echo. Use of social media continued throughout the consultation period.

13. On 15th November Officers from the Service attended Allerton Farmers' Market to disseminate information regarding the consultation proposal.
14. Consultation documents were printed and distributed in the area.
15. Public meetings were held on 9th December 2014 and 15th January 2015. A focus group, forum and stakeholder meeting were also held.
16. A second consultation document was published on 2nd December 2014 specifically to address some of the frequently asked questions arising from the consultation and provide detailed information on the other options considered by the Authority. A copy of this consultation document is attached at Appendix B.
17. Some queries have been received from members of the public and have been responded to by the Chief Fire Officer and other MFRA Officers (these are attached at Appendix C).

Media Interest

18. The consultation process attracted media interest with Liverpool Echo reporting on developments and carrying readers' letters on the subject (examples available for Members to view at the meeting). The Chief Fire Officer was interviewed on Radio Merseyside to promote the consultation process and the public meetings in particular.

The consultation events

19. The consultation events that took place are detailed below. All the meetings took place at Bluecoat School on Church Road. The focus groups and public meetings took place in the evening.

2014

- 15th November – Allerton Farmers' Market
- 1st December – Focus Group
- 4th December – Forum Meeting
- 8th December – Stakeholder Breakfast Meeting
- 9th December – Public Meeting

2015

- 15th January – Public Meeting (all local councillors were emailed to inform them of this meeting)

20. The focus groups and forum were deliberative meetings (see paragraph 34 for more detail), facilitated by Opinion Research Services (ORS), the contractor for MFRA's IRMP Forums. Participants were randomly selected from the Allerton station area and invited to attend.
21. The stakeholders' breakfast meeting was promoted amongst public and private sector partners in the Allerton station area.

22. The public meetings were open meetings which anyone could attend. No one was recruited or specifically invited. They were however widely publicised as detailed above. The public meetings were listening events where people could offer their views. No vote was taken on whether or not people agreed with the proposals, because public meetings cannot be guaranteed as statistically representative of the population.
23. The breakfast meeting and open public meetings were organised, promoted and delivered by MFRA staff. MFRA staff were also heavily involved in the organisation of the ORS facilitated focus groups and several uniformed and non-uniformed employees attended each meeting to provide advice and organisational support.
24. In addition, the Chief Fire Officer and other Officers met with councillors and local MPs prior to the consultation period.
25. The Chief Fire Officer also met representatives of the Allerton Residents Association.

Outcomes from the consultation

On line survey

26. Full analysis of the online questionnaire results can be found at Appendix D. The following paragraphs provide an overview:
27. In total there were 65 responses to the survey
28. It is worth noting that over 51,384 people live in the Allerton station area, so the response rate to the questionnaire is a little over 0.1% of the overall population.
29. The majority of respondents (61.5%, 40 from 65) felt that the proposal to close Allerton station was unreasonable, 36.9% (24 from 65) felt proposals were reasonable.
30. When feedback from solely members of the public (rather than MFRS staff or partners) is taken into account the proportions change to 58.2% (32 from 55) of respondents stating the proposed closure was unreasonable and 40% (22 from 55) feeling the proposal was reasonable.
31. Based on the postcode submitted by only 45 respondents, the majority of respondents (20) lived within the L18 post code area which is where the station is sited. Following this with 7 responses each were the L25 and L19 postcodes. The L17 postcode area which makes up a large part of the western fringe of the Allerton station area received zero responses.

Focus groups and forum

32. Full information about the focus groups and forums can be found at Appendix E. The following paragraphs provide an overview:
33. As Members will recall, the consultation meetings reported here followed an earlier all-Merseyside ‘listening and engagement’ process held in January 2014 that considered a wide range of options for MFRA in the context of significant cuts to its budget over the course of this Parliament. Having taken account of those earlier meetings and all the other available evidence, MFRA formulated the current draft proposals for Liverpool.
34. The Liverpool consultation meetings used a ‘deliberative’ approach to encourage members of the public to reflect in depth about the Fire and Rescue Service, while receiving and questioning background information and discussing the proposals in detail. Each of the meetings lasted for at least two-and-a-half hours and in total there were 47 diverse participants (22 at the IRMP Forum).
35. The attendance at the focus group was not as high as that seen in Knowsley with fewer people attending than expected. Forum attendance compared well with attendance at other similar meetings.
36. Within the on-going programme of consultation by MFRA low attendance is unusual, since attendance expectations are normally exceeded and there seems no single or simple explanation of why focus group attendance was lower in this particular programme. As usual, the participants were recruited by random-digit telephone dialling from the ORS Social Research Call Centre. Having been initially contacted by phone, they were written to – to confirm the arrangements; and those who agreed to attend then received telephone or written reminders shortly before each meeting. Such recruitment by telephone is normally the most effective way of ensuring that all the participants are independently recruited.
37. Despite the lower than normal attendance for the focus group, there was a diverse range of participants from the local areas.

Meeting	Number of attendees
Allerton Focus Group	4
Liverpool Forum	21
Merseyside IRMP Forum	22

38. Although, like all other forms of qualitative consultation, deliberative forums cannot be certified as statistically representative samples of public opinion, the meetings that took place gave diverse groups of people from Liverpool, the opportunity to comment in detail on MFRA’s proposals for the City’s fire stations. As a result, ORS are satisfied that the outcomes of the meeting (as summarised below) are broadly indicative of how informed opinion would incline on the basis of similar discussions.
39. A significant part of the meetings explored any proposals that the participants might have for alternative ways of making the savings. MFRS’s response to

these alternatives is captured in the second consultation document (Appendix B).

40. The key overall findings regarding the draft proposals (a) to close the fire station and (b) to reduce the number of fully-crewed wholetime engines by moving the Allerton fire engine to Old Swan while also making it a reserve or resilience vehicle available for recall (subject to a 30-minute delay) in exceptional conditions are shown below.

In the Liverpool forum

In each case by a ratio of two-to-one, the participants accepted the proposals, namely that:

It is reasonable and acceptable to close a fire station in principle Allerton is the most appropriate station to close. It is reasonable and acceptable to make Allerton's fire engine a reserve or resilience vehicle while moving it to Old Swan. No specific equality and diversity issues were raised.

In the Allerton focus group

The participants all accepted that it is reasonable and acceptable to close a fire station and that Allerton is the most appropriate. They were not quite unanimous about the fire engine, for there was one 'don't know'.

In the all-Merseyside forum

The participants unanimously accepted that:

It is reasonable and acceptable to close a fire station in principle Allerton is the most appropriate station to close It is reasonable and acceptable to make Allerton's fire engine a reserve or resilience vehicle while moving it to Old Swan MFRA's evidence base for its conclusions was appropriate and properly used The methodology used for considering the selection of possible stations for closure was appropriate and should continue to be used.

Overall assessment

While the Allerton focus group was small, it is significant that the members were almost totally unanimous about all the proposals, after being given every opportunity to understand and question the information on which the draft plans were based.

While a third of the 21 Liverpool forum members were opposed, two-thirds accepted all the proposals readily after discussing the evidence.

The all-Merseyside forum accepted the proposals for Allerton unanimously and endorsed the evidence-base and methodology used in selecting that particular station.

Stakeholder meeting and open public meetings

41. The format for the public meetings and stakeholder meetings was a formal presentation giving the reasons for the changes being proposed and details of the actual merger process and its likely impact on MFRA operational activities.

42. This was followed by an invitation for people to ask questions of the MFRA managers who attended the event. Appendix F details the questions raised at the meetings and the responses given.
43. The stakeholders meeting was attended by 4 people and generated a number of questions (see Appendix F for details)
44. The public meetings were not particularly well attended, 20 people attended the first meeting and 8 attended the second (with at least 2 people attending both).
45. Most of those people attending the meetings did express concern that the Authority should be in the position of having to propose a station closure in Liverpool and some also felt that Allerton station had cultural significance due to the Beatles' connection. A number of staff attended the first meeting in particular and were opposed to the proposal. However, some people (particularly at the second meeting) said that the case presented made it difficult to oppose the proposal, even though they did not want to see any stations close.

Other meetings with interested groups and individuals

46. The Chief Fire Officer and other Officers held a number of meetings with the local MP's and councillors before the consultation period to ensure they were fully sighted on the proposals and the financial reasons as to why they were necessary. This included the following:

19 th Sept.	Mayor Anderson
29 th Sept.	Telephone call Luciana Berger MP
29 th Sept.	Ward Councillors (Cllrs R O'Byrne, I Jobling, D Hughes)
30 th Sept./17 th Oct.	Cllr Kemp
3 rd Oct.	Telephone Call Maria Eagle MP

Correspondence and requests for information

47. Unlike the Wirral consultation, the Service received only six individual requests for information from the public and 2 from MPs. There were no Freedom of Information requests received. The questions and the responses provided are attached at Appendix C.

Staff consultation

48. The Liverpool District Management Team consulted with staff in the District during the consultation period. This included setting up a section of the Intranet Portal where relevant documents and information was posted for staff to access. Meetings took place between managers on the District and each watch where the Chief Fire Officer's public meeting presentation was used.

49. This resulted in crews having a full understanding of the proposals when they engaged with the public during the period (they also distributed consultation documentation). In general the staff, although not supportive of station closures themselves, understood the reasons behind the proposals. Some staff also attended the public meetings.

Equality and Diversity Implications

50. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached at Appendix G.

51. One respondent to the survey expressed concern about the potential for hate crime in relation to the area's Jewish community. This has been taken forward as an action in the EIA.

52. Demographic data regarding the questionnaire and ORS facilitated meeting attendance is detailed below:

Questionnaire:

53. Concerning **age** and **gender** 61 valid responses were analysed with 37 (60.7%) male respondents and 24 female (39.3%). Concerning age there was a wide distribution of ages to have responded to the survey with the 40-49 being the most common group with 16 responses, followed by the 50-59 and 60-69 groups. There were zero responses from the below 19 group.

54. Of the 60 valid responses to the question concerning **disability**, 7 of the 60 (11.7%) declared they were disabled.

55. Concerning ethnicity 95.2% (60 from 63) of respondents were from a White background with 4.8% (3 from 63) preferring not to say.

Focus Group and Forums:

	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Limiting long-term illness
Liverpool Forum	Male: 12 Female: 9	16-34: 3 35-54: 6 55+: 12	Non-White: British: 1	Yes: 7 No: 0
Allerton focus group	Male: 3 Female: 1	16-34: 1 35-54: 1 55+: 2	Non-White: British: 0	Yes: 1 No: 0

All-Merseyside Forum	Male: 14 Female: 8	16-34: 5 35-54: 10 55+: 7	Non-White British: 2	Yes: 2 No: 20
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Staff Implications

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

Legal Implications

57. The extensive twelve week consultation in the manner that it has been conducted ensures that MFRA has fully complied with legal requirements and best practice guidelines.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

58. The total costs associated with the consultation were as follows:

Room hire and refreshments (four meetings)	£1550
British Sign Language interpreters	£100
Allerton Farmers' Markets stall	£35
Focus group and forum facilitation	£7258.75

Total – £8943.75

59. All costs were met from existing budgets and there was no additional (direct) cost arising from staff attendance at evening meetings.

60. As detailed above, it is considered that the deliberative forums offer value for money as it is considered that relying solely on open public meetings and the survey would not have provided Members with sufficient information about the views of the public of Liverpool to enable them to make an informed decision about how to proceed.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

61. It is considered that MFRA has reduced corporate risk by carrying out extensive consultation and considering the outcomes of that consultation before making any final decisions on the proposals. There are no health and safety or environmental implications arising from this report.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

62. Entering into a period of twelve weeks meaningful consultation in Liverpool has allowed the public and other stakeholders to carefully consider the

implications of budget cuts on the Authority and contribute valuable opinions that will be considered by the Authority when it makes its final decision.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service



Allerton Fire Station Consultation

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) is responsible for providing fire and rescue services for Merseyside's 1.4 million people. This currently includes delivering fire and rescue services in Liverpool from 10 stations: Aintree, Allerton, Belle Vale, Liverpool City, Kensington, Kirkdale, Croxteth, Old Swan, Speke / Garston and Toxteth.

Over the last four years MFRA has had to make savings of £20 million as a result of Government cuts. MFRA is required to make a further £6.3 savings in 2015/16. It is possible that future savings required as a result of ongoing Government cuts –whichever party is in power - might reach £9.1 million in 2016/17 and up to £20 million in total by 2020. We now have to make more changes to meet this new financial challenge.

MFRA has already had to make significant reductions in its management structures, support services, and back office staff. The number of firefighters MFRA employs has reduced from 1,400 to 764, with fire appliances reducing from 42 to 28 across the county. All but two stations have only one appliance. What has not changed in more than 20 years is the number of community fire stations (26) and this cannot continue in the future.

To save £6.3 million in 2015/16 the Authority has assumed it will be able to deliver £2.9 million savings from support services such as Finance, Human Resources and Estates management as well as technical areas such as debt financing. The remaining £3.4 million will have to come from our emergency response and this will require at least four station mergers or outright closures.

Three proposed mergers have been identified as an alternative to outright closure which offer an opportunity to replace old buildings with new facilities in locations which offer the best incident coverage possible in the circumstance: 1. Huyton/Whiston at Prescot; 2.Upton/West Kirby at Greasby instead of outright closure of West Kirby; 3. Eccleston/St Helens at St Helens Town Centre.

Allerton proposals

Consideration was given to a fourth merger in Liverpool but after detailed analysis it is proposed that outright closure of Allerton would be the most sensible option.

Merseyside has a greater density of fire stations than any other fire and rescue service and this density is most evident in Liverpool which has ten stations in a relatively small geographic area.

The analysis demonstrates that neighbouring stations are so closely located together that they already provide good cover for Allerton. Merger of other stations would also be less beneficial as there are no pairs of older stations which could be closed and a new one built to replace them.

Subject to consultation, the proposal is the closure of Allerton Fire Station and the relocation of the Allerton appliance to Old Swan Fire Station to be crewed on a wholetime retained basis.

Over the last ten years, incidents across Merseyside have reduced by 55% (18,428 incidents). Allerton has seen a fall of 64.6% (from 791 incidents in 2004 to 280 incidents in 2014).

Allerton is one of the Service's older buildings and would require significant expenditure (over £340,000) to bring it up to the standard of our newer fire stations.

The closure of Allerton station would see the average response to a life-risk incident in its station area increase from the current 5 minutes 10 seconds to a predicted 5 minutes 59 seconds. The national average response time for life risk incidents is 7 minutes 24 seconds.

New building and furniture design has greatly reduced the risk from fire over the last 20 years. Merseyside has also undertaken one of the most comprehensive fire prevention strategies in the country and now focuses on helping the elderly and most vulnerable members of our communities who are most at risk from fire.

The proposal, therefore, is to close Allerton Fire station and relocate the appliance to Old Swan Fire Station where it will be crewed on a wholetime retained basis. This will involve our wholetime firefighters also providing cover to enable the appliance to be mobilised to major incidents or during periods of exceptionally high demand.

The Authority is interested in how reasonable the public and other stakeholders consider our plans for Allerton are given the major cuts we continue to face. We are now embarking on an extensive consultation programme in Allerton before any final decisions are made.

This will involve a public meeting at 7pm on 9th December to be held at Bluecoat School, Church Road, Allerton L15 9EE. There will also be a focus group, a meeting of our Liverpool consultation forum and a stakeholders meeting. In addition, representatives from the Fire and Rescue Service will be attending the Allerton Farmers Market on Saturday, November 15th, to provide information.

An on-line survey is on www.merseyfire.gov.uk .



Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

Liverpool Fire Cover Consultation

Consultation Document 2

December 2014

Introduction

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) is consulting on a draft proposal to close Allerton fire station and relocate its fire appliance to Old Swan fire station. The consultation began on the 1st of November and will close on the 26th of January 2015. A newsletter was published on the 1st of November and this second document provides additional information to help people respond to the consultation.

Why the Fire and Rescue Service has to change

MFRA is responsible for providing fire and rescue services for Merseyside's 1.4 million people at 26 fire stations across the five districts. This currently includes delivering fire and rescue services in Liverpool from ten stations; Kirkdale, Liverpool City, Kensington, Allerton, Speke & Garston, Toxteth, Old Swan, Belle Vale, Aintree and Croxteth.

Over the last four years MFRA has had to make savings of £20 million as a result of Government spending reductions and now the Authority is required to make a further £6.3 million of savings in 2015/16. It is also possible that future savings will be required – whichever party is in power: possibly up to £9.1 million in 2016/17 and up to £20 million in total by 2020.

MFRA has already had to make significant reductions in its support services and back office staff. The number of firefighters MFRA employs has reduced from 1,400 to 764, with fire appliances reducing from 42 to 28 across the county. All but two stations have only one appliance. What has not changed in more than 20 years is the number of community fire stations (26) and the Authority will not be able to afford to maintain all of them in the future.

To save £6.3 million in 2015/16 the Authority aims to deliver £2.9 million from support services (such as Finance, Human Resources and Estates management) and technical areas such as debt financing. The remaining £3.4 million would then come from our emergency response and this will require the equivalent of at least four station mergers or outright closures.

The Authority is making these changes reluctantly, but the situation is such that the existing number of fire stations cannot be maintained in the future.

The options considered

Before making proposals to change fire cover in Merseyside the Authority considered a number of other options and consulted with the public about them.

The options were:

- Some outright station closures.
- Increasing the number of “Low Level of Activity and Risk” (LLAR) stations.

- Some station mergers.
- Crewing some stations only during the day.
- Using community retained firefighters to crew some stations.

The merger of stations was recognised by the public as the best option given the circumstances; with least impact on operational response. The closure of stations was preferred over changes to the way fire stations and fire engines are crewed (because they understood that it is firefighters and fire engines that save lives, not the fire stations).

Following this consultation, three possible mergers were identified as offering opportunities to replace old buildings with new facilities in locations which offer the best incident response coverage possible in the circumstances. The draft proposals were to:

1. Close the stations at Huyton and Whiston while building a new station at Prescott;
2. Close the stations at Upton and West Kirby while providing a new station at a central location (initially the Frankby Road site);
3. Close the stations at Eccleston and St Helens while providing a new station in the proximity of St Helens Town Centre.

Each of these merged stations would have two fire engines. In each case, one fire engine would be crewed 24/7 (as now) while the other would be a “reserve”, or “back-up” vehicle to be crewed by “wholetime retained” firefighters on a 30-minute recall basis for periods of exceptionally high demand.

A fourth merger in Liverpool has also been considered but, given the age and proximity of stations, it is proposed that outright closure of a station would be the most sensible option.

The Fire and Rescue Authority believes that each of these changes may be made safely and will provide significant savings. The information on the next page gives more detail about why the Authority has approved the draft proposal for Allerton.

The information below is a detailed explanation of the alternative options to station mergers or outright closure and the operational rationale as to why these have been considered and discounted by the Chief Fire Officer at this time.

Context

1. Paragraph 3.2 of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority scheme of delegation places the following responsibilities on the Chief Fire Officer:

To control all matters of the day to day administration of the Fire & Rescue Service which shall include taking and implementing decisions that are:-

*(a) Concerned with maintaining the operational effectiveness of the Service,
(b) Matters incidental to the discharge of the Authority's functions which fall within a policy decision taken by the Authority.*

2. *The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England directs that "The Fire and rescue authority must hold their Chief Fire Officer to account for the delivery of the fire and rescue service".*
3. *The Chief Fire Officer is therefore responsible for all operational matters and is held to account by the Authority for decisions taken in this regard.*
4. *In 2015/16 the Authority must make savings of £6.3 million in addition to the £20 million savings required as a result to cuts in the Authority budget over the period 2011/12 – 2014/15.*
5. *The Authority has increased its council tax by the maximum amount it can (2%) without undertaking a referendum. A referendum is estimated to cost £1m.*
6. *The Authority has also identified all the non-operational savings available to it and adopted them in full. These total £2.9m. However, this still means that of the £6.3m savings, £3.4m must be delivered from operational response. This equates to a reduction of around 90 wholtime equivalent (WTE) Firefighter posts. These posts will be lost through natural turnover as firefighters retire.*
7. *The Authority currently has 26 fire stations and 28 fire appliances. Of the 26 fire stations, 24 have one fire appliance and two, Kirkdale and Southport, have two fire appliances. Kirkdale is the Operational Resource Centre for the Authority housing all of the non-Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) special appliances (which are located at Croxteth with the USAR team). The second appliance at Kirkdale operates as a support appliance to the special appliances. Southport has two fire appliances because of its geographic location and the travel distances involved for additional appliances responding from elsewhere on Merseyside.*

8. *Of our 26 stations, 10 are designated as Key Stations. From these stations we can provide a 10-minute response to all areas of Merseyside on 90% of occasions (our response standard).*
9. *The number of wholetime Firefighters employed directly equates to the numbers of fire appliances that can be staffed for an immediate response by fully trained Firefighters and therefore the numbers of fire stations the Authority can operate.*
10. *The removal of 90 Firefighter posts will result in the loss of 4 wholetime fire appliances. It is the view of the Chief Fire Officer that the Authority should maintain two appliances at Kirkdale and Southport, because of the location of Southport and the fact that Kirkdale is the Operational Resource Centre for Merseyside. In maintaining two appliances at Kirkdale and Southport the Authority can only staff enough appliances to maintain 22 fire stations on a wholetime basis. The Authority could, as an alternative, maintain 26 stations through altering the crewing arrangements on specific stations or across the Service. The reasons why these options have been discounted by the Chief Fire Officer in favour of station mergers or outright closures are detailed in paragraphs below.*
11. *The operational logic for station mergers is to close two adjacent stations (which each currently house one appliance on a wholetime basis) and build a new station (that would house one wholetime appliance and one appliance staffed on a wholetime retained basis). Building the new station at a location in between the two existing stations would deliver the best response times achievable in the circumstances from the one remaining wholetime appliance. Such an option is possible in Knowsley, Wirral and St Helens due to the age and proximity of the stations.*
12. *In each of the merged stations, the second appliance would be crewed on a “wholetime retained” basis. “Wholetime retained” crewing in this instance means wholetime Firefighters having a second retained contract whereby they provide cover on their days off to respond and crew the second appliance within 30 minutes of an alert - because a 30-minute response time delay would attract volunteers from sufficient numbers of existing staff to make the system viable.*
13. *The retained (second) appliance would only be called in during periods of high operational demand and they would not be used for immediate response to incidents in the station area. Its function is as part of a strategic reserve, not as a first-line response until such time as the crew had been called in, which would take up to 30 minutes. The advantage of this option is that it uses wholetime firefighters rather than community retained firefighters (see paragraphs 33 – 39 below).*
14. *There are no viable merger options in Liverpool due to the age and proximity of the stations across the city. An outright closure and the relocation of the wholetime appliance to be crewed on a wholetime retained basis at a*

neighbouring station has been proposed in these circumstances as it delivers the least impact on response times of all of the achievable options.

Low Level of Activity and Risk

- 15. The Low Level of Activity and Risk (LLAR) duty system is currently in operation at four of the Authority's 26 stations. The system consists of a 12-hour wholetime day shift followed immediately by a 12-hour retained night shift (spent off the station) where the crew must respond to an incident within 1 minute 54 seconds of an alert thus maintaining a comparable alert to mobile time as achieved by other wholetime staff during their night-time rest period.*
- 16. Changing the crewing at a station from wholetime to LLAR would deliver a saving of 8 wholetime equivalent (WTE) posts. In order to deliver the same savings as for a station merger, 3 wholetime stations would need to convert to LLAR. Whilst this option would maintain an immediate emergency response (assuming it was possible to secure accommodation for the night-time retained period separate from the station but within a 1 minute 54 seconds alert to mobile time) it is less resilient than wholetime crewing as the same staff cover the 12-hour wholetime period and the 12-hour retained period. For example, if a crew attends incidents during the night-time period they will then require a period of stand down time to recover during the day shift, meaning they are either not available to provide operational response or unable to undertake prevention work or normal scheduled duties. As the number of appliances reduces the ability for Fire Control to not mobilise LLAR appliances during the retained period is also reduced meaning they will attend more incidents and potentially no longer meet the Low Level of Activity and Risk threshold.*
- 17. To make the £3.4m savings required from operational response, the Authority would need to convert 12 wholetime appliances to LLAR in addition to the existing 4 LLAR appliances. This would result in 16 of the Authority's 28 appliances being crewed in this way.*
- 18. In order to comply with working time regulations the Authority would be required to provide separate accommodation for the retained duty period that is within a 1 minute 54 second response from the stations in question. The cost of building accommodation at existing LLAR stations has been around £300k. Converting 12 appliances to LLAR would therefore require a capital spend of around £3.6m for accommodation. Of the 10 key stations only one, Formby, is currently crewed LLAR which is as a result of its geographic location and the very low numbers of incidents on the station ground and number of appliance mobilisations. In any other circumstances a key station would not be crewed on the LLAR duty system. Of the stations not designated as "key" a number have appliance mobilisation numbers which exceed the LLAR threshold of 825 incidents to the station area agreed in 2006 (Kirkdale, Kensington, City Centre and Birkenhead). A number also do not have sufficient space within the curtilage of the station to build separate accommodation necessary to make the 1 minute 54 seconds alert to mobile time during the retained period (Toxteth and Aintree).*

19. *There is a very low likelihood indeed that the Authority could attract and indeed retain sufficient volunteers from existing staff to crew an additional 12 LLAR appliances. Whilst the Authority could recruit Firefighters directly on to the LLAR system this would result in crews on LLAR stations with a disproportionately high number of inexperienced Firefighters until such time as they were able to demonstrate competence in role. It would also invariably result in existing wholetime firefighters who did not wish to volunteer for the LLAR duty system being placed at risk of compulsory redundancy.*
20. *It is for these reasons that LLAR has not been proposed by the Chief Fire Officer as an option to maintain operational effectiveness at this time.*

Day Crewing

21. *The Authority does not currently operate the Day Crewing duty system at any station on Merseyside. This system consists of a wholetime day shift (typically 10 hours duration) immediately followed by a 14-hour retained night shift where a response is made by a Firefighter from home within 5 minutes of an alert.*
22. *Changing the crewing at a station from wholetime to Day Crewing would deliver a saving of 10.8 wholetime equivalent (WTE) posts (assuming a 10% retaining fee). In order to deliver the same savings as a station merger would, 2 wholetime stations would need to convert to Day Crewing.*
23. *To make the £3.4m savings required from operational response the Authority would need to convert 8 wholetime appliances to Day Crewing in addition to the existing 4 LLAR appliances. This would result in 12 of the Authority's 28 appliances either on Day Crewing or LLAR crewing. Day Crewing is less resilient than wholetime crewing for similar reasons as for LLAR as the same staff cover the 10 hour wholetime period and the 14-hour retained period. As the number of appliances reduces the ability for Fire Control to not mobilise LLAR or Day Crewing appliances during the retained period is also reduced.*
24. *This option would introduce a 5-minute delay in responding from 8 appliances for 14 hours each day. 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 be able to attend an incident in at least the same time as the Day Crewing appliance if not quicker during the retained period.*
25. *There is a very low likelihood indeed that the Authority could attract and indeed retain sufficient volunteers from existing staff to crew 8 Day Crewing appliances. Whilst the Authority could recruit Firefighters directly on to the Day Crewing system this would result in crews on Day Crewing stations with a disproportionately high number of inexperienced Firefighters until such time as they were able to demonstrate competence in role. It would also invariably result in existing wholetime firefighters who did not wish to volunteer for the Day Crewing duty system being placed at risk of compulsory redundancy.*

26. *It is for these reasons that Day Crewing has not been proposed by the Chief Fire Officer as an option to maintain operational effectiveness. If, as expected, the Authority faces further cuts beyond 2015/16 this option may have to be reconsidered as a means of maintaining capacity during the daytime period.*

Day only crewing

27. *The Authority does not currently operate day only crewing at any station on Merseyside. This system involves Firefighters crewing the station for a 12-hour wholetime day shift only in order to maintain capacity to undertake training and community safety activities.*

28. *Changing the crewing at a station from wholetime to day only crewing would deliver a saving of 12 wholetime equivalent (WTE) posts. In order to deliver the same savings as the station merger option, 2 wholetime stations would need to convert to day only crewing.*

29. *To make the £3.4m savings required from operational response the Authority would need to convert 8 wholetime appliances today only crewing in addition to the existing 4 LLAR appliances. This would result in 12 of the Authority's 28 appliances either on day only crewing or LLAR crewing.*

30. *Whilst an immediate response to incidents would be achieved during the 12-hour day shift there would be no response at all during the 12-hour night-time period from day only crewed stations.*

31. *There is a very low likelihood indeed that the Authority could attract and indeed retain sufficient volunteers from existing staff to crew 8 days only appliances. Whilst the Authority could recruit Firefighters directly on to day only crewing this would result in crews on day only stations with a disproportionately high number of inexperienced Firefighters until such time as they were able to demonstrate competence in role. It would also invariably result in existing wholetime firefighters who did not wish to volunteer for day only crewing being placed at risk of compulsory redundancy.*

32. *It is for these reasons that day only crewing has not been proposed by the Chief Fire Officer as an option to maintain operational effectiveness at this time. If, as expected, the Authority faces further cuts beyond 2015/16 this option may have to be reconsidered as a means of maintaining capacity during the day time period. It should be noted that these appliances would in all likelihood be used as a pan-Merseyside resource to, for example, stand in at key stations to facilitate the key appliance crew attending the Training and Development Academy for crew-based training. It would make more financial sense therefore to relocate the day crewed only appliance permanently to a key station thus allowing the Authority to make permanent savings on premises overheads (on average around £100k per year) through closing the non key station.*

Retained

33. *The Authority does not currently operate retained only crewing at any station on Merseyside. This system involves members of the community who live or work within 5 minutes of a fire station volunteering to be available for up to 120 hours per week for a retaining fee equivalent to 10% of a wholetime Firefighter's salary.*
34. *Changing the crewing at a station from wholetime to retained would deliver a saving of 22 wholetime equivalent (WTE) posts. In order to deliver the same savings as for a station merger 1 wholetime station would need to convert to retained crewing.*
35. *To make the £3.4m savings required from operational response the Authority would need to convert 4 wholetime appliances to retained in addition to the existing 4 LLAR appliances. This would result in 8 of the Authority's 28 appliances either on retained or LLAR crewing.*
36. *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.*
37. *There is a very low likelihood indeed that the Authority could attract and indeed retain sufficient volunteers from existing staff to crew 4 wholetime retained appliances on a 5-minute recall. That being so, the Authority would need to recruit almost a full crew of retained Firefighters. It is the view of the Chief Fire Officer that a retained Firefighter does not have sufficient contact (training) time within the Grey Book (Firefighters' nationally agreed conditions of service) retained contract to acquire and maintain the skills of an existing Merseyside wholetime Firefighter. Also, the Merseyside Trainee Firefighter course is currently 40 weeks long and the wholetime work routine allocates in excess of 20 hours per week to on station training. A retained firefighter has approximately 2/3 hours per week contact time at station for training, development and maintenance duties). 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.*
38. *With 3 hours contact time each week retained Firefighters would not be able to undertake any amount of community safety work.*
39. *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*

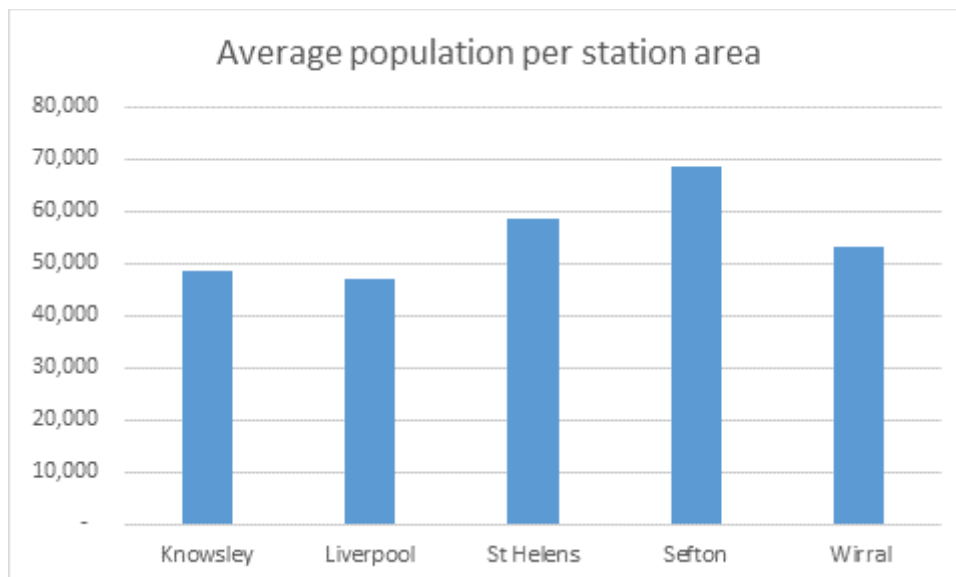
would attend an incident in at least the same time as the retained crew if not quicker.

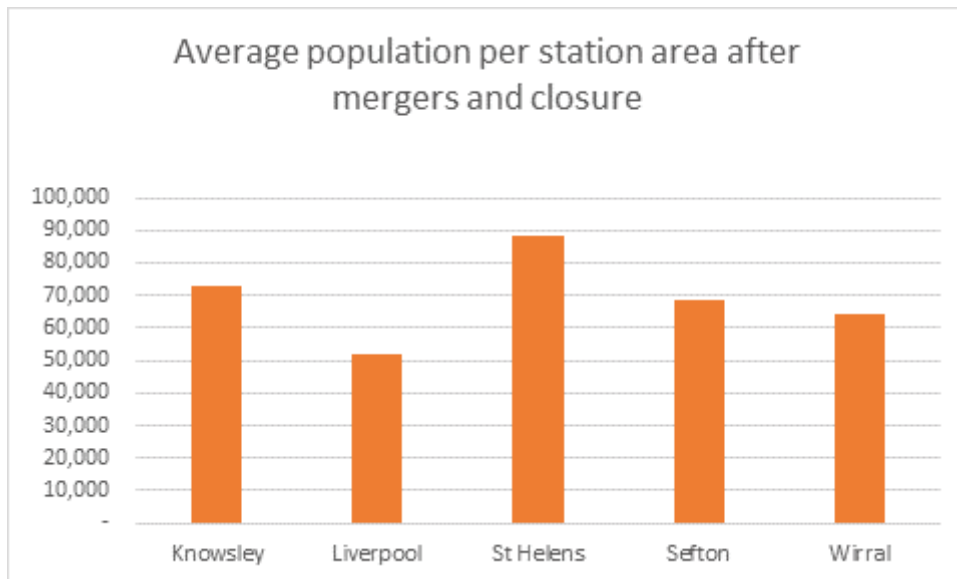
It is for these reasons that retained crewing has not been proposed by the Chief Fire Officer as an option to maintain operational effectiveness at this time.

Why Allerton is the Authority's proposed option for closure.

The draft proposal is to close Allerton Fire Station and relocate the Allerton fire appliance to Old Swan Fire Station, where it would be crewed on what is known as a whole-time retained basis. More detail on this system has been provided earlier in this document, but in summary, this would involve our existing whole-time firefighters providing cover on two of their days off, providing a 30-minute response to stations. This fire appliance would only be used during periods of very high demand and will not offer an immediate emergency response.

Merseyside has a greater density of fire stations than any other fire and rescue service and this density is most evident in Liverpool which has 10 stations in a relatively small geographic area. Liverpool stations also provide services to fewer people per station than in any other Merseyside district, as is shown in the graph below:





Our analysis of Liverpool stations shows that because Liverpool has so many stations and those are located so close to each other, the closure of any station makes little or no difference to overall emergency response performance.

Of the ten stations, however the closure of Kensington, Aintree or Allerton would have the least impact on operational response. There is no discernible difference between these three stations in terms of overall performance.

Because the effect on performance is minimal whichever of the three stations is closed, we then considered the number of calls in each station area. Kensington has a greater number of incidents occurring in the station area and the fire appliance is used more than the appliances at Aintree and Allerton.

Aintree has a greater number of incidents occurring in the station area and the fire appliance is used more than the appliance at Allerton.

The tables below illustrate this:

Incident Numbers by Station Ground

Station	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Grand Total
13 - Allerton	513	396	280	1189
18 - Aintree	875	641	569	2085
12 - Kensington	1137	946	929	3012

Appliance Mobilisations

Appliance	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Grand Total
13 - Allerton	611	724	717	2052
18 - Aintree	909	982	1021	2912
12 - Kensington	2103	1040	956	4099

Difference Between 2004/05 and 2013/14

Station	2004/05	2013/14	Difference	% Difference
13 - Allerton	791	280	-511	-64.60%
18 - Aintree	1267	569	-698	-55.09%
12 - Kensington	1962	929	-1033	-52.65%

The analysis also demonstrates that neighbouring stations are so closely located together that they already provide good cover for Allerton and would continue to do so if Allerton was closed.

In Liverpool, the merger of stations would be less beneficial as there are no pairs of older stations which could be closed and a new one built to replace them.

Allerton is also one of the older fire stations and would require significant expenditure to bring it up to modern standards.

The potential impact on response times to life risk incidents

Over the last decade, incidents across Merseyside have reduced by 55% (18,428 incidents). Allerton has seen a fall of 64.6% (from 791 incidents in 2004/5 to 280 incidents in 2013/14 – the highest reduction across all three stations).

If Allerton station is closed, our most up-to-date analysis shows that the average response to life risk incidents (such as house fires and road traffic collisions) in the station area would increase from the current 5 minutes 9 seconds to a predicted 5 minutes 56 seconds*. The national average for house fires is 7 minutes 24 seconds.

But when an incident does occur, particularly where there is a risk to life, the Authority wants to continue to provide the fastest response possible.

Allerton station area is well covered by Old Swan, Speke Garston, Belle Vale and Toxteth.

How you can share your views during the consultation period

The Authority is interested in how reasonable the public and other stakeholders consider our plans for Allerton are given the major cuts we continue to face. We are continuing with our extensive consultation programme in Allerton before any final decisions are made.

This will involve public meetings at 7pm on the 9th of December and 7pm on the 15th of January, both to be held at Bluecoat School, Church Road, Allerton, L15 9EE.

There will also be a focus group, a meeting of our Liverpool consultation forum and a stakeholders meeting. In addition, representatives from the Fire and Rescue Service attended an Allerton Farmers Market on Saturday the 15th of November to provide information.

Our online survey remains available on www.merseyfire.gov.uk on the page: <http://surveys.merseyfire.gov.uk/surveys/allerton/allerton.htm> and you can also email consultation2@merseyfire.gov.uk or write to us at Allerton Consultation, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, Bridle Road, Bootle, L30 4YD.

***The attendance times have been revised from those previously published to include data up to 31st October 2014. The results are a marginal improvement on those previously published.**

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Appendix – Allerton Responses:

I am the person requesting assistance from the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service website. Here are my details as entered on the form.

Response –

Dear

Thanks for your comments, which will be considered by the Fire and Rescue Authority when they meet in February to discuss the outcomes of the consultation. You might not be aware that there will be another public meeting held at the Blue Coat School (clock tower entrance) on 15th January at 7pm should you wish to attend. The consultation itself closes on 26th January.

We have further information and a questionnaire on our website and I've included a link below if you would like to look at that.

<http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/asp/pages/LatestNews/NewsDetail.aspx?id=680>

Question: please can you step in to STOP THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF ALLERTON RD FIRE STATION. In my opinion some statistics are being made to place this Key site at the top of the list for closing. Old swan station has been put forward as the best place to keep open while our station which is the more central in fact and at the same time a KEY HERITAGE PLACE for BEATLE TOURISM IE it's on the map and visited every day by the tourists who bring MILLIONS OF pounds into this city. It has been suggested that the land is of more value to develop and therefore number one to be sold. We are being told it does not matter and that it is of no great importance if the Allerton rd station closes. We the residents totally DISAGREE. The so called essential cuts being made by that tory lib dem lot to the fire services , road traffic accident emergencies and the ambulance service call out times to gravely ill people is an outrage and pure evil in my opinion. Please can you step in and prevent the closing of our fire station. It seems the fire service chief in Liverpool is not doing enough to stand up and speak out and REFUSE TO MAKE ANY FURTHER LIFE THREATENING CUTS. In fact he is happy to recommend the closure. The firemen's union has stated that and i quote there will be fatalities due to closing the fire station. PLEASE STOP HIM AND THOSE WHO MAY BE CONTENT TO CONTINUE BEING DICTATED TO AND BRAINWASHED BY THE IDEAS THAT THESE CUTS MUST FALL ON THE PEOPLE AND THE RESIDENTS OF OUR AREA AND IN FACT ANY AREA IN THE CITY OR COUNTRY WHEN NONE OF THE SO CALLED FINANCIAL STATE THE COUNTRY MAY OR MAY NOT BE IN IS ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE PEOPLE OF THIS CITY.You have done great good since you became mayor and we thank you sincerely. PLEASE stop the evil actions of that government and refuse to allow any more cuts to the fire service of this city and in particular ALLERTON RD FIRE STATION. The PENNY LANE station. Thank you for all your help. If am confident YOU can do something to stop this manipulation. Please excuse typing.

Response:

Many thanks for your email regarding the closure of Allerton Road Fire Station.

Whilst we appreciate your concerns, I'm afraid the Council has no jurisdiction over Merseyside Fire & Rescue Services.

I have spoken to their office today and they have said if you wish to contact their office and they will endeavour to answer your concerns.

Best Wishes

I am concerned about your proposed closure of Allerton Fire Station. I live in Garston, which has, over the years seen the closure of Speke Road Fire Station which was bad enough, but now to hear you are closing another station

is just too much. You say removing this will only add 49 seconds to the time of callouts, I find this hard to believe in today's traffic and state of roads.

Have the government thought about the firemen and associated staff that will be made unemployed and the money this will cost the welfare system. I suppose it is not a concern now that there is a general election within site as long as they show a saving.

£6.3 million is "loose change" to the bankers that helped caused the austerity measures we now face, they could help pay this out of their bonuses alone. If we got out of other peoples wars, there would be billions available. Stop sending aid to nations that do not need it etc etc.

I know all this is probably out of your hands but I hope you can realise the frustration felt by most people to know that the funds are available if only the government could be bothered to try to recover it, but then why should they when cutting services to the ordinary "man/woman in the street" is preferred to targeting getting a fair tax from big companies who keep well in with the government.

I know this has been a futile process for me and that the safety of the public comes secondary to saving money, but I believe that if I don't make my feeling known, then I cannot complain later when Allerton Fire Station and staff are put out to waste.

Response:

Thank you for your questions about the proposal to close Allerton Fire Station. I hope the response below will explain the reasons behind the proposal and the comments we receive will be considered by the Authority when they meet to discuss the outcomes of the consultation..

On 2nd October the Fire and Rescue Authority approved a proposal to close Allerton Fire Station subject to the outcomes of twelve weeks public consultation. The full report and its appendices can be found on the link below. The report is item 11. Also on that agenda were reports recommending the closure of Huyton and Whiston fire stations and the building of a new station to replace them in Prescot and a proposal to close West Kirby and Upton Fire stations, with a new build in Greasby. The Knowsley recommendation has already been out to public consultation and the Authority is currently consulting on the Wirral proposal. Knowledge of these other reports might help set the Allerton proposal in a Merseyside wide context and explain the challenges faced by the Authority.

<http://mfra.merseyfire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&MId=562&Ver=4>

Over the course of the current spending review and for the financial year 2015/16 Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority has sustained a 35% cut to the grant it receives from Government. The Authority has also had its Council Tax precept limited to increases of no more than 2%. This has given rise to a requirement to make savings of over £26m. Despite our best efforts to protect front line services it simply isn't possible to make this level of saving and not substantially reduce the numbers of wholetime Firefighters employed by the Authority.

The numbers of wholetime Firefighters we can afford to employ directly correlates to the numbers of appliances we can staff and therefore the numbers of stations we can operate. We are now at the point where the numbers of wholetime Firefighters we can afford to employ is no longer sufficient to keep our existing 26 stations open.

As outlined above, the Authority has sought to minimise the impact of the cuts by seeking to replace two older stations that are close together with one new one. Unfortunately, this isn't possible in Liverpool for a number of reasons, such as the close proximity of the stations and how new some of them are. Despite full analysis, it is not possible to identify a merger in Liverpool that would not involve closing at least one new station to build another new station. As a result closure is the only option open to the Authority. Merseyside has a greater density of fire stations than any other Fire and Rescue Service in the country and this density is most evident in Liverpool which has 10 stations, (whether measured against area or population size). As a result any single emergency incident occurring in Liverpool can be attended within our 10 minute response standard by appliances from several stations

You will see from Appendix B in the report that full analysis of the options for Liverpool has been undertaken and the closure of Allerton has been identified as having the least impact on performance. It would also realise a larger saving in building running costs. Allerton is not a key station (one of ten stations from which we can reach all of

Merseyside in 10 minutes) therefore the fire appliance is on occasion unavailable for full shifts due to insufficient staffing caused by high numbers of personnel on other duties (in work but not fit enough to ride fire appliances). This situation will become more acute over time to the point where the appliance would never be crewed on a wholetime basis.

The Authority's intention is (as it has been for a number of years of cuts) to avoid compulsory redundancy for staff and as a result the savings will be made through natural wastage as people retire.

It is very important to point out that the proposal to close Allerton (or to make any other changes to emergency response) is in no way desirable and won't improve services to people in Liverpool. However, it is necessary for the Authority to make the savings detailed at the beginning of this response.

I hope this satisfies your enquiry.

What (if any) other options have been looked in to? What about closing Aintree and moving the appliance to either Croxteth, Netherton or Kirkby? It appears that North Liverpool has much more fire cover than South Liverpool.

Why is the appliance being moved to Old Swan? I know it has easy access down Queens Drive but it is further away from neighbouring grounds Speke and Toxteth, increasing response times for a second appliance.

Of the 280 incidents Allerton crews attended in 2014 there is no incident type breakdown, we are still in 2014 till which date were there 280 incidents? Does this figure include callouts to neighbouring stations as an additional pump? As I have heard from a number of people in the service that Allerton is "closed more than it's open" would it be fair to say the number of turnouts would be higher?

Has retained or day crewing been looked at?

Response:

Thank you for your questions about the proposal to close Allerton Fire Station. I hope the response below will provide you with the information you need, but please do not hesitate to ask if you need further information.

On 2nd October the Fire and Rescue Authority approved a proposal to close Allerton Fire Station subject to the outcomes of twelve weeks public consultation. The full report and its appendices can be found on the link below. The report is item 11. Also on that agenda were reports recommending the closure of Huyton and Whiston fire stations and the building of a new station to replace them in Prescott and a proposal to close West Kirby and Upton Fire stations, with a new build in Greasby. The Knowsley recommendation has already been out to public consultation and the Authority is currently consulting on the Wirral proposal. Knowledge of these other reports might help set the Allerton proposal in a Merseyside wide context and explain the challenges faced by the Authority.

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possible to identify a merger in Liverpool that would not involve closing at least one new station to build another new station. As a result closure is the only option open to the Authority. Merseyside has a greater density of fire stations than any other Fire and Rescue Service in the country and this density is most evident in Liverpool which has 10 stations, (whether measured against area or population size). As a result any single emergency incident occurring in Liverpool can be attended within our 10 minute response standard by appliances from several stations

In response to your specific questions;

You will see from Appendix B in the report that full analysis of the options for Liverpool has been undertaken and the closure of Allerton has been identified as having the least impact on performance. It would also realise a larger saving in building running costs. Allerton is not a key station (one of ten stations from which we can reach all of Merseyside in 10 minutes) therefore the fire appliance is on occasion unavailable for full shifts due to insufficient staffing caused by high numbers of personnel on other duties (in work but not fit enough to ride fire appliances). This situation will become more acute over time to the point where the appliance would never be crewed on a wholetime basis. Regarding the number of incidents in Allerton, I can confirm that the figure is for the year 2013/14 and it is all incidents occurring in the Allerton station area, regardless of which appliance attended. As a result, the availability of the Allerton appliance will have had no impact on this figure.

Retained and day crewing have both been considered. Both options would lead to a significant increase in response times to the Allerton area (retained at all times and day crewing during the night time retained period) to the point where the Allerton appliance would not be selected by the mobilising system for responses to its own area because several other appliances would be able to respond more quickly.

The Authority carried out a series of public engagement forums in January 2014, including one in Liverpool. The attendees were asked to consider which were the “least worst” options for the Authority to adopt to meet the budget savings required. The outcome of that engagement was that community retained and day crewing were least the preferred options, as people would rather have us maintain as much of a whole time service as possible, hence the move towards proposing mergers and closures. The current proposal is to crew the appliance that would be moved from Allerton to Old Swan on a wholetime retained basis. The appliance from Allerton will be used as a strategic reserve on a 30 minute recall and not for immediate response. Firefighters would be called in to staff the appliance when appliance levels across Merseyside fell to a pre-determined level. The reason Old Swan has been chosen is because it is a central location with large numbers of firefighters living within its 30 minute catchment area.

Regards,

Sir, I wish to make known the feelings of my Father and I over the proposed closure of Allerton Fire Station. My father lives on xxx and I live on xxx. The increased time it may take for a response in the event of a fire concerns us both. We would wish to say that we share the concern of many that the station be closed, and hope a solution can be found to keep it open.

Thank you

Yours faithfully,

Response:

Thank you for taking the time to send us your views on the proposal to close Allerton fire station. I don't know if you are aware, but there will be a public meeting to discuss this on Tuesday 9th December at 7pm at the Bluecoat School (Clock Tower Entrance), Church Road, Allerton, L15 9EE.

At the meeting the Chief Fire Officer will present details on the reasons why the closure is being proposed and the other options that have been considered to enable the Authority to achieve the financial savings it is required to make. We are currently preparing a second public consultation document on this matter which will be on our

website (www.merseyfire.gov.uk) on Tuesday 2nd December, or I can email you a copy if you'd prefer. Please let me know.

The Fire and Rescue Authority will take all views into account when making a decision following the consultation period.

Regards

Hi, just thought I would let you know about Allerton fire station in Mossley Hill. This station is being shut and sold off. It is not being merged with another station or being replaced with a new station...it is just being shut down. This is due to happen early 2015. The nearest stations to this are a good distance away, Old Swan, Speke and City Centre. My point is if these stations are busy and you have a house fire in Mossley Hill and local area then God help you.

RESPONSE

Thank you for your letter dated 22nd December 2014 regarding the concerns expressed by your constituent over the proposed closure of Allerton fire station. Please accept my delay in responding to your letter; the Service Headquarters post room did not reopen until 2nd January.

I understand completely the concerns expressed by xxx over the proposed closure of Allerton fire station. As I have stated previously I will in no way attempt to justify the proposed closure of the station however I will attempt to offer xxx some reassurance over the impact on emergency response cover.

As you are aware, the latest round of cuts imposed on the Fire and Rescue Authority for 2015/16 was confirmed in December. The scale of the cut to the Authority budget is worse than expected and is the highest of any Fire and Rescue Authority in the Country. The impact of the cuts to date is such that the Authority can no longer afford to employ sufficient numbers of wholetime Firefighters to crew all of the existing 26 stations. The cuts for 2015/16 exacerbate the situation further. The simple fact is that the Authority now has to close stations across Merseyside and in Liverpool the station that could be closed with the least operational impact is Allerton.

I have enclosed a copy of the Appendix to report CFO/126/14 which was considered by the Authority at its most recent meeting on 16th December. The Appendix provides a concise summary of the rationale underpinning the proposal to close Allerton ahead of other stations in Liverpool and builds on the documentation considered by the Authority at the meeting on 2nd October 2014 when the decision to undertake a 12 week period of public consultation over the proposed closure was made.

I will be presenting at a public consultation event over the proposed closure of Allerton at 1900hrs 15th January at Bluecoat School, Church Road, Allerton L15 9EG should xxx wish to attend as I will be able to cover the substantive issues in detail and hopefully address any outstanding matters of concern.

I would be more than happy to meet with - to explain these issues in more detail if he is not able to attend the consultation meeting as I appreciate the process by which Allerton has been selected for closure is somewhat technical in parts and may be difficult to understand. I have made the same offer to other residents of the Allerton station area who have also expressed concerns.

I hope this response is of some assistance to you and I thank you for your continued support in lobbying against further cuts to the Authority budget.

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Proposed Allerton Station Closure Results from Feedback Surveys

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STRATEGY & PERFORMANCE

Date work received: 21/01/2015
Date work completed: 28/01/2015

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Document Control

Amendment History

Version / Issue No.	Date	Author	Remarks / Reason for Change
1.0	28/01/2015	J Fielding	
1.1	29/01/2015	J Fielding	As per comments from D Appleton
1.2	30/01/2015	J Fielding	As per comments from K Mansfield

Sign-Off List

Name	Position
Deb Appleton	Director of Strategy & Performance
Wendy Kenyon	Equality & Diversity Manager
Paul Terry	Corporate Information & Systems Manager
Karl Mansfield	Communications Manager
Jackie Sutton	IRMP Officer
Peter Rushton	

Distribution List

Name	Position	I / R

Related Documents

Reference No.	Title	Author	Version & Date
1.0	Allerton Consultation Document	MFRA	V2 Dec 14
2.0	Knowsley Consultation concerning Station Mergers – results from Feedback Surveys	J Fielding	V1.1 Aug 14
3.0	Wirral Consultation concerning Station Mergers – results from Feedback Surveys	J Fielding	V1.1 Jan 15

Ownership

Has it been agreed with the client that this is a publicly owned document?

Yes/No

If Yes please state URL:

If No please state reason why:

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1. Agreement

For the purpose of this report the following agreement was made between the client and the Strategy & Performance Function.

This work was requested by Deb Appleton; Director of Strategy & Performance and received on 21/01/2015.

The Manager¹ has approved this report/ piece of work can be undertaken by the Strategy & Performance Function.

If the scope of the work changes, authorisation must be again obtained and would be noted within the version control document sheet.

It was agreed that this report would be produced in draft format by 28/01/2015, and would be sent electronically to the Director of Strategy & Performance and Client for comment.

The Manager / Client agreed that their comments would be received back by 28/01/2015.

The final report, which will always be in PDF format, would be produced by February 2015, subject to receiving comments.

¹ Deb Appleton

2. Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide high level analysis of feedback following community consultation regarding the potential closure of the Allerton station. In summary the report presents the following high level findings:

- In total there were 65 responses to the survey
- The majority of respondents (61.5%, 40 from 65) felt that the proposal to close Allerton station was unreasonable, 36.9% (24 from 65) felt proposals were reasonable.
- When feedback from solely members of the public (rather than MF&RS staff or partners) is taken into account the proportions change to 58.2% (32 from 55) of respondents stating the proposed closure was unreasonable and 40% (22 from 55) feeling the proposal was reasonable.
- Based on the postcode submitted by only 45 respondents, the majority of respondents (20) lived within the L18 postcode area which is where the station is sited. Following this with 7 responses each were the L25 and L19 postcodes. The L17 postcode area which makes up a large part of the western fringe of the Allerton station area received zero responses.
- Concerning **age** and **gender**, 61 valid responses were analysed with 37 (60.7%) male respondents and 24 female (39.3%). There was a wide distribution of ages to have responded to the survey with the 40-49 being the most common group with 16 responses, followed by the 50-59 and 60-69 groups. There were zero responses from the below 19 group.
- Of the 60 valid responses to the question concerning **disability**, 7 of the 60 (11.7%) declared they were disabled.
- Concerning ethnicity, 95.2% (60 from 63) of respondents were from a White background, with 4.8% (3 from 63) preferring not to say.
- It is worth noting that over 51,384 people live in the Allerton station area, so the response rate to the questionnaire is a little over 0.1% of the overall population.

3. Introduction

Background²

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) are responsible for providing fire and rescue services for Merseyside's 1.4 million people at 26 fire stations across the five districts. This currently includes delivering fire and rescue services in Liverpool from ten stations; Kirkdale, Liverpool City, Kensington, Allerton, Speke & Garston, Toxteth, Old Swan, Belle Vale, Aintree and Croxteth.

Over the last four years MFRA has had to make savings of £20 million as a result of Government cuts. MFRA is required to make a further £6.3 million savings in 2015/16. It is possible that future savings required as a result of ongoing Government cuts might reach £9.1 million in 2016/17 and up to £20 million in total by 2020. We now need to make more changes to meet this new

² Taken from the MF&RS website:

http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/asp/opsResponse/pdf/Allerton_consultation_Document2_02122014.pdf

financial challenge.

MFRA has already had to make significant reductions in its support services and back office staff and the number of firefighters it employs has reduced from 1,400 to 764 with fire appliances reducing from 42 to 28. What has not changed in more than 20 years is the number of community fire stations (26) and this cannot continue in the future.

To save £6.3 million, the Authority has assumed it will be able to deliver £2.9 million from support services such as Finance, Human Resources and Estates management as well as technical areas such as debt financing. The remaining £3.4 million will have to come from our emergency response and this will require at least four station mergers or outright closures.

As part of this consideration a twelve week public consultation on the proposed closure of Allerton fire station took place between 1st November 2014 to 26th January 2015; with an online survey also being available on the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service website (www.merseyfire.gov.uk) as well as being available in paper format at consultation events³. This report analyses feedback from completed surveys to provide an understanding of any issues identified by members of the public as well as a demographical analysis of who responded as a means of diversity monitoring.

The survey closed with a total of 65 responses.

4. Methodology

For the purpose of analysing the public's feedback and opinions on the proposed closure of the Allerton station; the following method was applied:

- An electronic survey was created using Snap 10 Survey Software which can be viewed in Appendix A.
- The online survey was live: between the 1st November 2014 to 26th January 2015.
- Microsoft Excel 2010 was used to interpret the results.
- MapInfo 10.5 was used to provide an understanding of where respondents reside – based on postcodes submitted when the survey was completed.
- Concerning comments, minor changes to spelling and grammar have been used for the sake of legibility. Otherwise comments are verbatim.
- Only valid (complete) responses are analysed within this report.
- Population data is based on Census 2011 data, broken down to Lower Layer Super Output Area geography. Data available from Office for National Statistics affiliate: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

³ <http://surveys.merseyfire.gov.uk/surveys/allerton/allerton.htm>

5. Results

5.1 Responding to the Survey

Question 1: Do you think the proposed closure of Allerton Fire Station is reasonable, given the financial challenges faced by the Authority?

Table 1: Response to whether the proposed closure is reasonable or not

Response	Count	Proportion
Yes	24	36.9%
No	40	61.5%
Don't Know	1	1.5%
Total	65	

Table 1 identifies that the majority of respondents (61.5% or 40 from 65) felt that given the financial challenges to the authority the proposed closure was not reasonable. Of the 65 respondents to the questionnaire, 36.9% (24) felt it was reasonable.

Table 2: Response to whether the proposed closure is reasonable or not by status

Response	Public	MF&RS Staff	Partner Organisation	No Response	Total
Yes	22 (40%)	2 (28.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	24 (36.9%)
No	32 (58.2%)	5 (71.4%)	1 (100%)	2 (100%)	40 (61.5%)
Don't Know	1 (1.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.5%)
Total	55 (100%)	7 (100%)	1 (100%)	2 (100%)	65 (100%)

Table 2 breaks down the results of table 1 according to whether a respondent was a member of the public, MF&RS staff or Partner Organisation. Taking responses from the Public into account, the majority of respondents 58.2% (32 from 55 respondents) do not feel that the proposed closure is reasonable, which is less than that of the Total figure of 61.5% (40 from 65 respondents). The table also identifies that members of the public on the whole find the closure more reasonable with 40% (22 from 55 respondents), this is greater than the Total figure of 36.9% (24 from 65 respondents).

Question 2: If you answered "No", please use the box below to explain why you do not think the proposal is reasonable:

The following comments have been submitted by respondents who stated "No" in the previous question. The comments have been grouped by organisation i.e.: members of the public, MFRA staff, and external partners. In total there were 37 responses.

Table 3: Comments submitted by respondents

Comments from Members of the Public
It's simple really closure of fire stations will increase attendance times and cost lives. We need to stand up to this government.
It is not reasonable as there is an overlap of stations in city centre, Toxteth, Kensington and Old Swan. The area left uncovered by shutting Allerton station is enormous especially considering that Belle Vale is not whole time staffed. The area has already suffered the loss of a station when Banks Road was shut now another station could be going. Manage the situation rather than the politics!!!!!!
There will be no cover for Mossley Hill too. Time to attend a fire is important, speed essential. Certain aspects should not be affected by finance - hospitals, schools, fire stations. Maybe reducing Authority pats would help.

I have answered NO because the information on the newsletter or website does not give any information on other options. I also object to the appliance being moved to Old Swan as it further depletes cover to Allerton's neighbouring stations for a 2nd appliance.
I cannot believe that a response time from Old Swan would only increase by 49 seconds.
The nearest station would take extra time to attend an emergency that could result in the loss of life.
L18 needs a fire station, it has had a fire station for a very long time and the council only want to shut it because the police station is no longer open to the public and eventually the police will be moved so the whole site can be sold, they are not thinking of the residents who pay a premium to live in a nice area and they will be penalised by not having emergency services on their doorstep. Talking about the costs of repairs to the building what about the costs that have occurred by building accommodation for the fireman who are no longer on the shift pattern the properties have been modernised for, isn't that a waste of tax payers money! We already have a shortage of fireman so surely this will mean more pressures on the men who put their lives at risk on every shift they work, by reaching targets yet having to travel further. This council is a joke!
The Fire station is in an area of a lot of Restaurants, busy roads and by and large an ageing population, we have no Police Station that has been taken from us, so we do need the reassurance of our Fire Station.
I live in the area and feel secure with the proximity of the fire station
There is a big student population in Allerton area; also the building is very popular with tourists which bring a lot of money to this city. The increased time a fire appliance would get to a fire is dangerous for the public and the firefighters trying to fight the fire .disaster waiting to happen.
Although I am incredibly sympathetic with the financial constraints forced on the fire service by this shambolic government I am also dead against the proposed closure of Allerton fire station. I understand that Liverpool is fairly well covered with fire stations, however, in real terms, closing Allerton would at least double the response time for an emergency in my area. The station is also of huge historical and cultural interest.
Cuts have already been made in the south of Liverpool
Takes longer to respond if I need service in an emergency. Will my taxes be reduced as a result of having poorer fire cover? Utterly disgraceful! Cut back management before the front line staff who are actually needed
Prepared to risk people's lives to save some money.
I understand that cuts need to be made, but to entirely close this station is the wrong decision.' Maybe reduce staff or make it a part time station. The area the open stations need to cover will be increased leading to longer wait times in an emergency
It will increase the response time to any incident in Mossley Hill and will endanger lives.
Will put people's lives at risk
Because it serves the local community and who are old.
I think the closure of any fire station is an absolute disgrace. This is life today, always moving or closing premises nothing stays the same. You call it progress, I don't but then again what do I know. I am well retired now. This is a very dangerous and hazardous job as 9/11 showed. No other profession is like this, maybe the Police and RNL! Cutbacks and redundancies are the name of the game, people don't enter into it!
Opposed to any closure
Because it is a matter of people's lives. In the next 5 years, at least 1 person will die if it shuts
Increasing population Large student population Increasing pressure on adjacent fire stations Loss of local knowledge Loss of community activities Loss of being part of the community
This will directly affect response times to areas within the South Liverpool area
Has the proximity of accidents been considered (not just fires) e.g. at Rose Lane, Allerton Road/Queens Drive, Aigburth Road
Cannot put a price on human life. This station has served the community for many years and cannot be considered surplus because of financial constraints. A life lost because of a delay in a response from a station further away is one life to many.
I think other avenues should be explored before closing this station. It is essential for many residents & businesses in the area & crucial in the community. Can other stations (maybe where council taxes aren't as high) be looked at to be closed? Don't think it's fair to be closing in an affluent area where working people pay their taxes.
Not reasonable as will take longer for fire engines to attend fires in Allerton Road area.
It is only fire station left for the area since closure of Garston Fire Station
It will take longer to attend fires in the local area if close station at Allerton.
If Allerton Road Station closed it will put local resident's lives at risk as coverage diluted and take longer to attend fires. Even if a few minutes longer it may/will cost lives.
Cut backs to essential services can never be deemed reasonable, particularly when it involves saving lives.
Comments from Partner Organisations
No matter what the public say, the authority will still close stations to save a bit of cash, I will however give my opinion on it. I know that the authority is going through an exceptionally tough financial time, however you have already removed the 2nd pumps from most stations, you haven't recruited new firefighters to replace the ones retiring so there is more money saved, you won't however do anything to the wages of top senior officers, you have already stopped attending the vast majority of AFA'S so again there is money saved on a daily basis. You bought new appliances that have barely been used, by this I am referring to the MAN and the Mercedes Vario didn't last very long either and the CPP was another flop, so all this Un needed spending is now going to cost the closure of a station and put more pressure on surrounding stations because they have extra ground to cover. You have also just built a bunch of new stations across the county when it would have been cheaper to refurbish them, what you fail to mention in the newsletter is although it would cost over £340,000 to bring it up to modern day standards, how much are you going to spend on building new stations on the Wirral and in St Helens for your ridiculous merger plans, I'm pretty sure a new fire station costs more than £340,000.

Comments From MF&RS Staff
money could be saved elsewhere
Due to the logistical location of Station 14. If the appliance at Station 14 was in attendance at an incident and Allerton was closed although the attendance times would in theory be met due to the increase in the time it would still require an appliance from either Toxteth or Belle Vale to attend and both stations are some distance away. This would put excessive pressure on the drivers and appliance O.I.C's to meet the times of attendance. Also given that Allerton is the closest station to provide back up to Speke who have a lot of industry in their station area including chemical plants and comah sites it would benefit the community to have Allerton remain open.
I feel the knock on effects of attendance times will greatly impact on the service provided to the public, this not only relates to the first attendance but two and three pump incidents. Fire fighter safety will be compromised due to the delays in the arrival of the 2nd and 3rd pumps. Historical significance of the station.
longer attendance times firefighter safety compromised
Closing a fire station which is a community asset is not a good idea, we are heavily over managed and savings can be made by reducing the number of non productive, grossly over paid middle and senior managers, who do nothing to serve the local community of Allerton, unlike the station and station personnel who do.
Unattached Comments
I disagree with the cuts to our services because of elderly / vulnerable and children and would bring up times
We do not want any stations closed but feel that your hands are tied with the government cuts forcing the closures on you

Question 3: If you would like to give us any more information:

The comments have been grouped by organisation i.e.: Members of the public, MF&RS staff, and external partners. In total there were 17 additional comments made by respondents.

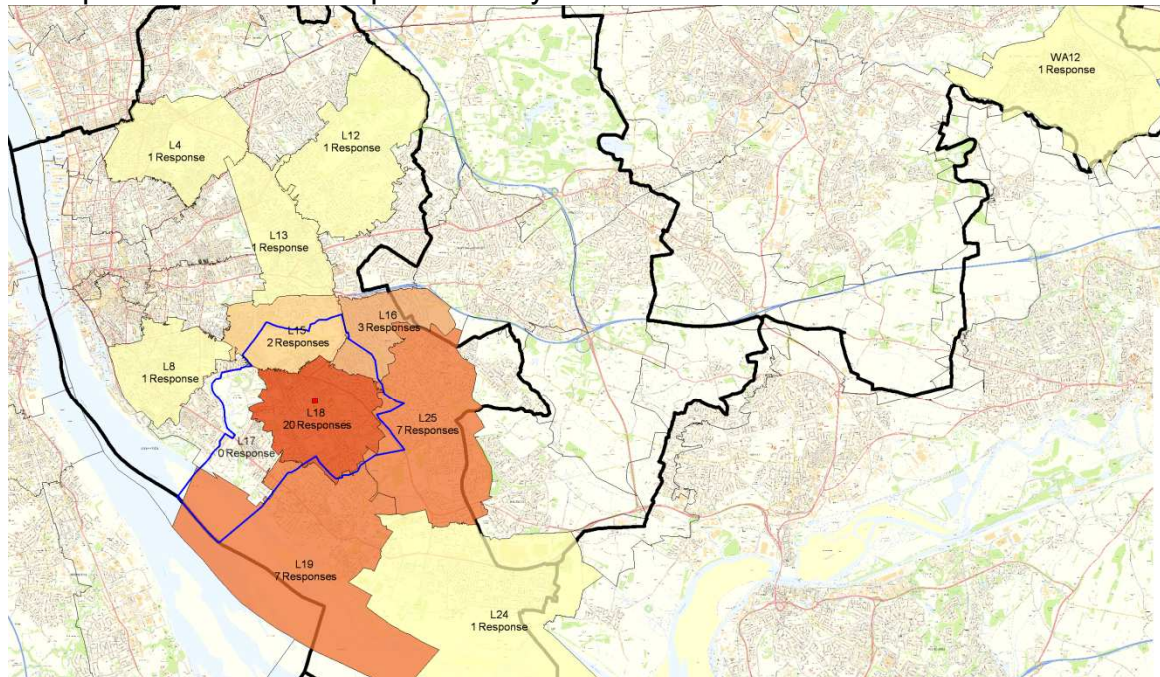
Table 4: Comments submitted by respondents

Comments from Members of the Public
AS per above: No Closures, No Mergers, No Redundancies! I know it's the name of the game, but this is just my opinion
Based on the evidence and queries I have found this to be the best option
Due to this government ruining our fire service then changes have to be made. Liverpool have a lot of fire stations where are very close to each other. Although I Don't agree that any stations should close there is obviously no other option. Allerton is a quiet station and is probably the best option as Old Swan and Speke are close by. At least keeping the pump and moving it to Old Swan will kind of soften the blow.
Fire service do a good job and we know stations have to close
Given the financial situation, the decision appears reasonable. However, I would continue to oppose the closure of Allerton
Given the numbers used in the consultation document, it would appear to be the logical, if somewhat unsavoury, choice to make.
Happy with the info given. This is a "worst case scenario" simply caused by reduced funding
I believe the authority should be looking further down the line and be making larger savings now to spend the money differently, e.g. more station closures / change of status of appliances to spend on alternative services
I have concerns about high risk religious sites e.g. Jewish school and synagogue in the Allerton area in current climate.
It's disappointing that Allerton station may be closed, but I guess the council is left with little choice
Moving the pump to Old Swan, would Speke/Garston station not be a better option?
The session was very well conducted with plenty of time for everyone to express their views
The stations listed are mainly wartime stations, With modern appliances today it makes sense to centralise stations.
What (if any) other options have been looked in to? What about closing Aintree and moving the appliance to either Croxteth or Netherton? It appears that North Liverpool has much more fire cover than South Liverpool. Why is the appliance being moved to Old Swan? I know it has easy access down Queens Drive but it is further away from neighbouring grounds Speke and Toxteth, increasing response times for a second appliance. Of the 280 incidents Allerton crews attended in 2014 there is no incident type breakdown, we are still in 2014 till which date were there 280 incidents? Does this figure include callouts to neighbouring stations as an additional pump? As I have heard from a number of people in the service that Allerton is "closed more than it's open" would it be fair to say the number of turnouts would be higher? Has retained or day crewing been looked at? I shall also be sending these points to consultation2@merseyfire.gov.uk
While I have said yes to the above question. I am concerned at the safety levels especially during 'rush hour' time due to the lack of a station at Allerton. I would obviously prefer that there were no closures at all. If any other ways of saving money, this would be far more favourable than a closure
Whilst the building is old it is also beautiful and should be retained as a fire station. Is one of the motives for closing Allerton Station that value of the property.
Comments from MF&RS Staff
a merger between Speke and Allerton would be a better solution as Speke will now be isolated and in the wrong location

5.2 Monitoring Information

Locality of Respondents

Map 1: Locations of respondents by Postcode area



Author: J Fielding
Date: 27/01/2015
Produced using MapInfo
Strategy & Performance

Thematic Map Identifying Density of Respondents by Postcode

Map Reference:

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Map 1 identifies where respondents to the consultation survey live. The map identifies that, of the 45 valid responses, the majority live in the L18 postcode area (20 responses), which is the immediate area in and around the station. Following this are the L25 and L19 areas with 7 responses each, however though these areas neighbour L18 only small parts of these areas overlap into the Allerton station area. Of interest there were zero responses from the L17 postcode area which accounts for the western part of the Allerton station area.

Age and Gender

Table 5: Breakdown of Age and Gender (based on valid data only)

Age Group	Female	Male	Total
19 or younger	0	0	0
20-29	2	7	9
30-39	2	3	5
40-49	6	10	16
50-59	3	9	12
60-69	7	5	12
70-79	3	2	5
Greater than 80	1	1	2
Total	24	37	61

Table 5 compares age against gender based on valid responses received. The table identifies that respondents were primarily male with 37 from 61 respondents (60.7%). The table identifies that the single most populous age

group is the 40-49 group accounting for 16 responses; this is then followed by the 50-59 and 60-69 age groups with 12 respondents each. Of note, there are no respondents belonging to the 19 or younger age range.

Table 6: Proportion of Respondents by age when compared to local population⁴

Age Range	Responses		Population	
	Total	%	Total Population	% total population
Below 19	0	0.0%	11,460	22.3%
20-29	9	14.8%	10,524	20.5%
30-39	5	8.2%	5,941	11.6%
40-49	16	26.2%	6,598	12.8%
50-59	12	19.7%	6,188	12.0%
60-69	12	19.7%	4,928	9.6%
70-79	5	8.2%	3,317	6.5%
Greater than 80	2	3.3%	2,428	4.7%
Total	61		51,384	

Table 6 compares ages of the respondents along with the population that makes up the Allerton Station ground. The table identifies that the population of the Allerton Station area is predominantly young; this is inferred as there are large student populations throughout the area. When comparing the overall response data to the population data, there is skewing of the figures with disproportionately high responses within the 40-49, 50-59 and 60-69 age groups, though this could be due to the aforementioned student population. By contrast the Below 19 and 20-29 age groups are under-represented.

Disability

Table 7: Comparison of age of respondents and whether they reported themselves as disabled

Age Range	Yes	Prefer not to Say	No	Total
Below 19	0	0	0	0
20-29	0	0	10	10
30-39	0	0	4	4
40-49	2	0	14	16
50-59	0	2	10	12
60-69	3	2	7	12
70-79	1	0	3	4
Greater than 80	1	0	1	2
Total	7	4	49	60

Table 7 identifies that based on valid data, 7 respondents stated that they were disabled. The table suggests that there are more people with disabilities as age increases, with the exception of 2 respondents within the 40-49 age groups. When analysed by postcode area, 4 respondents resided within the L18 postcode area, 1 resided in the neighbouring L25 postcode with the final 2 respondents failing to respond to the postcode question on the survey.

⁴ Populations are based Census 2011 data with populations broken down to Lower Super Output Area geography. Should an SOA reside or is greater than 50% within the Allerton Station area then it is counted.

Ethnic Background

Table 8: Ethnicity of respondents

Ethnicity	Count	%
White: English	54	85.7%
White: Scottish	3	4.8%
White: Northern Irish	1	1.6%
White: Gypsy or Traveller	1	1.6%
White: Other White Background	1	1.6%
Prefer not to Say	3	4.8%
Total	63	

Table 8 identifies that the majority of people who responded to the survey were from a white background with 95.2% or 60 from 63 valid responses, 3 respondents prefer not to say their ethnicity.

6. Appendices

Appendix A: Copy of the Survey Published on the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service website

Allerton Station Closure Proposal Public Consultation Questions

Our consultation newsletter outlines Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority's proposal to close Allerton Fire Station. The newsletter explains why we are proposing this change and how we would do it.

We are planning a public meeting and other events during the twelve-week consultation beginning on 1st November 2014 in order to fully understand the views of the public, stakeholders and other interested parties.

There is an opportunity for you to comment on the proposed changes online.

The Fire and Rescue Authority will consider all the comments it receives before it makes any final decisions.

Please note this survey should take no longer than 5 minutes to complete.

1. Do you think the proposed closure of Allerton Fire Station is reasonable, given the financial challenges faced by the Authority?

- Yes*
 No
 Don't Know

2. If you answered "No", please use the box below to explain why you do not think the proposal is reasonable:

3. If you would like to give us any more information, please use the box below:

Monitoring Information

Please note that information collected within this section is for monitoring purposes - no personal identifiable information will be collected.

Are you a member of: Please tick the appropriate box

- Public*
 Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Staff
 Partner Organisation

What is the first part of your postcode: (for example L18)

Your Gender:

- Male
- Female

Your Age

- 19 or younger
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70-79
- Greater than 80

Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Please tick the appropriate box

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to Say

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Please tick the appropriate box

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White: English | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background: Other Mixed / Multiple Background |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White: Welsh | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British: Indian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White: Scottish | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British: Pakistani |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White: Northern Irish | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White: Irish | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British: Chinese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White: Gypsy or Traveller | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British: Other Asian Background |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White: Other White Background | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British: Caribbean |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background: White & Black Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British: African |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed / Multiple ethnic Background: White & Black African | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British: Other Black Background |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed / Multiple Ethnic background: White & Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to Say |

Other ethnic group (please state)

Thank you for your comments, please click submit to continue



Draft Proposal to Close Allerton Fire Station

**Report of Consultation by
Forums and a Focus Group
with Members of the Public
January 2015**

Opinion Research Services
Spin-out company of Swansea University



As with all our studies, findings from this research are subject to Opinion Research Services' Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract.

Any press release or publication of the findings of this research requires the advance approval of ORS. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misrepresentation.

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Acknowledgements

Opinion Research Services (ORS) is pleased to have worked with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) on the public consultation meetings reported here. The participants in the two forums and the focus group engaged with the issues under consideration and discussed their ideas readily, so we trust the report will contribute to service planning by MFRA at a time of serious financial constraints.

We thank MFRA for commissioning the project as part of its on-going programme of public and stakeholder engagement and consultation about its risk management planning. We particularly thank the senior officers and staff who attended the sessions to listen to the public's views and answer questions. Such meetings benefit considerably from the readiness to answer participants' questions fully and frankly, as in this case.

We are grateful to all the members of the public who took part in the meetings and shared their views readily with us. They were patient in listening to background information before entering positively into the spirit of open discussions about challenging topics, with some controversial aspects in some cases.

At all stages of the project, ORS's status as an independent organisation consulting the public as objectively as possible was recognised and respected. We are grateful for the trust, and we hope this report will contribute usefully to thinking about MFRA's development in difficult times. We hope also that ORS has been instrumental in continuing to strengthen MFRA's public engagement.

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Introduction

The Commission

1. ORS was commissioned by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) to convene and facilitate a Liverpool-based forum, an all-Merseyside forum and also a focus group in the Allerton station area, to consider the draft proposal to close the Allerton fire station. ORS's role was to recruit and facilitate the meetings and to report their opinions of MFRA's draft proposals to close Allerton. To conduct the meetings based on the fullest possible information for participants, ORS worked with MFRA to prepare informative stimulus material for the meetings before facilitating the discussions and preparing this independent report of findings.

Consultation Framework

2. The context and status of the meetings is important. MFRA has had an extensive 'engagement' with residents for a number of years and, in this context, ORS has facilitated both district-based and all-Merseyside forums regularly. Within this on-going framework, MFRA has conducted both 'listening and engagement' and 'formal consultation' meetings on a regular cycle.
3. The consultation meetings reported here followed an earlier all-Merseyside 'listening and engagement' process that considered hypothetically a wide range of policies and options for the MFRA in the context of its reduced budget due to public expenditure reductions. Having taken account of those earlier meetings, and all the other available evidence, the MFRA has formulated a range of draft proposals, including station mergers in the Wirral, Knowsley and St Helens, and the closure of Allerton station in Liverpool.

Deliberative Research: Focus Groups and Forums

4. The consultation meetings reported here used a 'deliberative' approach to encourage members of the public to reflect in depth about the fire and rescue service, while both receiving and questioning background information and discussing the proposals in detail. The meetings lasted for at least two-and-a-half hours and in total there were 47 diverse participants. The dates of the meetings and attendance levels by members of the public are shown on the next page.

MEETING	TIME AND DATE (2014)	TYPE OF MEETING AND NUMBER OF ATTENDEES
Liverpool-wide Forum	18.00 – 20.50 Thursday 4 th December 2014	Forum 21
Allerton Focus Group	18:00 – 20.45 Monday 1 st December 2014	Focus Group 4
Merseyside-wide Forum	18.00 – 20.45 Tuesday 13 th January 2015	Forum 22

5. The attendance target for the focus group meeting was 8 people, and for the forums it was 15 – so it is somewhat disappointing that the focus group attendance fell below the target since attendance expectations are normally exceeded – as happened in this case for both of the forums.
6. As usual, the participants were recruited by random-digit telephone dialling from the ORS Social Research Call Centre. Having been initially contacted by phone, they were written to – to confirm the arrangements; and those who agreed to come then received telephone or written reminders shortly before each meeting. Such recruitment by telephone is normally the most effective way of ensuring that all the participants are independently recruited.
7. In recruitment, care was taken to ensure that no potential participants were disqualified or disadvantaged by disabilities or any other factors, and the venues at which the forums met were readily accessible. People's special needs were all taken into account in the recruitment and at the venues. The random telephone recruitment process was monitored to ensure social diversity in terms of a wide range of criteria – including, for example: local authority area of residence; gender; age; ethnicity; social grade; and disability/long-term limiting illness (LLTI).
8. Despite the lower than normal attendance at the focus group, overall there was a diverse range of participants and, as standard good practice, they were recompensed for their time and efforts in travelling and taking part. The profile of the participants is shown on the next page.

	Gender	Age	Social grade	Ethnicity	Limiting long-term illness
Liverpool Forum	Male: 12 Female: 9	16-34: 3 35-54: 6 55+: 12	AB: 4 C1: 7 C2: 3 DE: 7	Non-White: British: 1	Yes: 7 No: 0
Allerton focus group	Male: 3 Female: 1	16-34: 1 35-54: 1 55+: 2	AB: 0 C1: 3 C2: 0 DE: 1	Non-White: British: 0	Yes: 1 No: 0
All-Merseyside Forum	Male: 14 Female: 8	16-34: 5 35-54: 10 55+: 7	AB: 7 C1: 6 C2: 4 DE: 5	Non-White British: 2	Yes: 2 No: 20

9. Although, like all other forms of qualitative consultation, deliberative forums cannot be certified as statistically representative samples of public opinion, the meetings reported here gave diverse people the opportunity to comment in detail on MFRA's draft proposal for Allerton. Because the participants were diverse, the outcomes of the meeting (as reported below) are broadly indicative of how informed opinion would incline on the basis of similar discussions.

Background Information and Discussion Agenda

The Context

10. ORS worked in collaboration with MFRA to agree a suitable agenda and informative stimulus material for the four meetings. The first part of each meeting began, for the sake of context, with a short review of the background issues, including the:

Importance of prevention and risk-management policies – particularly via home fire safety checks

Trend showing a reduction in risk when measured in terms of the number of critical and other incidents per year

Sources of funding of MFRA – from the government and from council tax

Impact of public spending reductions on MFRA – including the previous reduction of fire engines from 42 to 28, and the corresponding reduction of 180 fire fighter and 90 support staff posts

MFRA's current financial constraints in the context of public spending reductions.

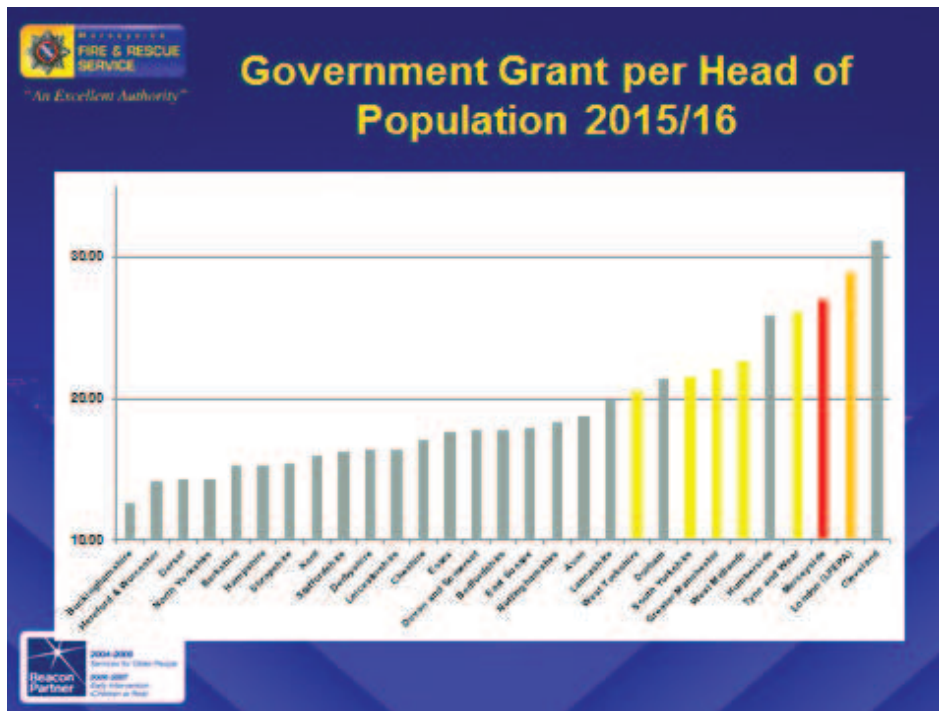
11. The meetings were also informed of the wide range of options considered by MFRA in order to reduce its expenditure, including the introduction of:
 - More low-level-activity-and-risk (LLAR) fire stations
 - Day-crewed fire stations
 - Community retained (RDS) fire stations
 - Merging some fire stations
 - Closing fire stations.
12. It is worth noting that the (several months) earlier wide-ranging 'listening and engagement' meetings had demonstrated that, when faced with a broad choice between *either* keeping all stations and changing to cheaper duty systems *or* reducing stations while protecting current wholetime duty systems, the participants clearly favoured the latter option. That is, they made at least an implicit choice in favour of reducing stations rather than changing the way Merseyside is crewed. These 'conclusions' of the earlier meetings were not repeated to participants in the meetings reported here, but it is interesting to note them as general background.

Financial Constraints

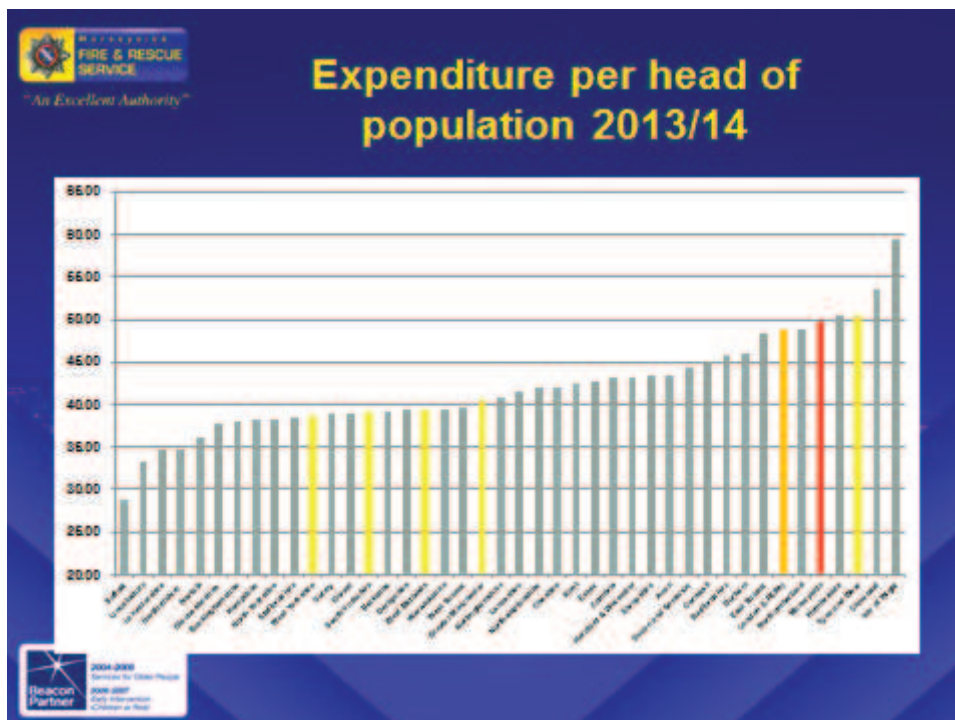
13. Following the review of the range of options considered, the meetings briefly reviewed the implications of funding reductions that MFRA faces, including the:
 - Projected budget deficit of £6.3 million by the end of 2015/16, based on projections of current expenditure levels and known financial information
 - Projected deficit of £9.1 million by the end of 2017/18, based on projections of current expenditure levels and plausible financial assumptions.
14. The financial challenges were explained neutrally as constraints requiring reductions in spending to be made progressively; but, in order to encourage free discussion, the financial position was not used as a repeated justification of the draft proposals. Participants were invited to assess the proposals on their general merits, albeit within a generally constrained position.

Taking Stock

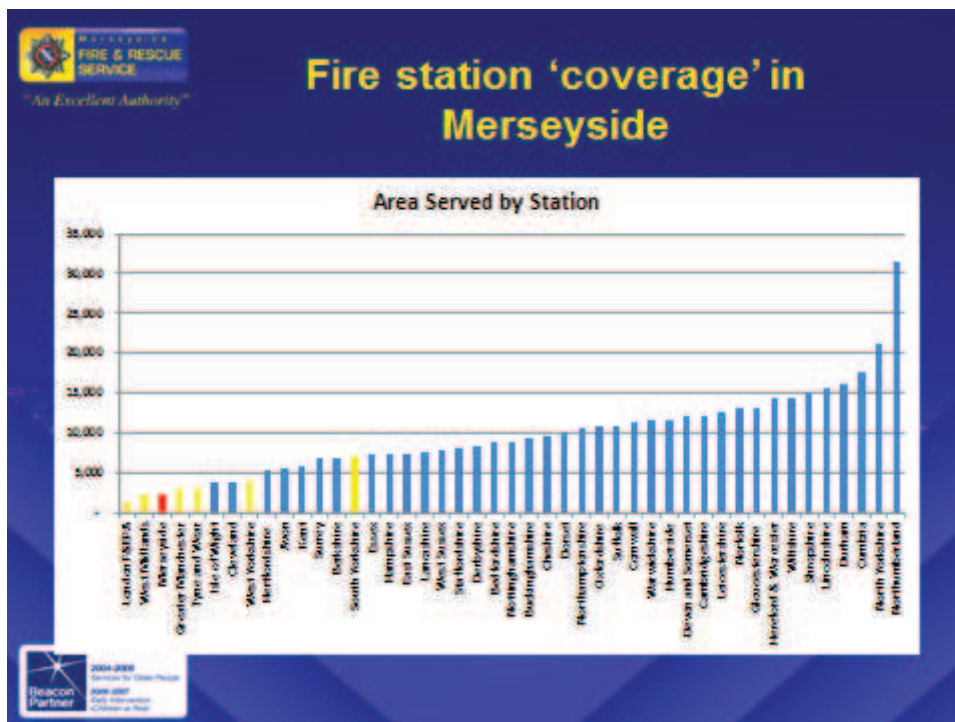
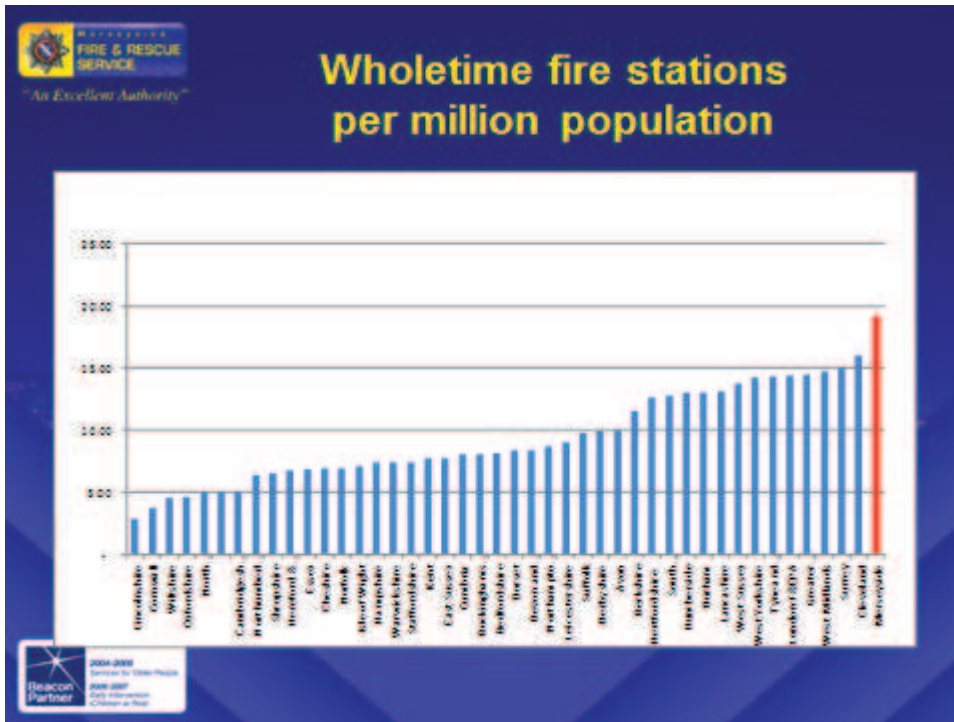
15. In fact, in order to present a balanced picture, the ORS introduction to each meeting tried to 'take stock' of MFRA in terms of its much reduced risk levels (reduced by 53% over the last nine years) when measured in terms of the number of critical and other incidents, strategic roles and allocation of resources. Participants were shown comparative data on the (still relatively high) levels of government funding and the emergency cover resources that MFRA (and the other metropolitan fire and rescue services) continue to enjoy relative to other combined fire authorities. For example, the following graphics were explained, with Merseyside highlighted in red and the other big metropolitan authorities in yellow. The chart overleaf shows that, relative to most other fire authorities, Merseyside still receives a high proportion of its total funding from the government and raises a relatively small proportion through council tax.



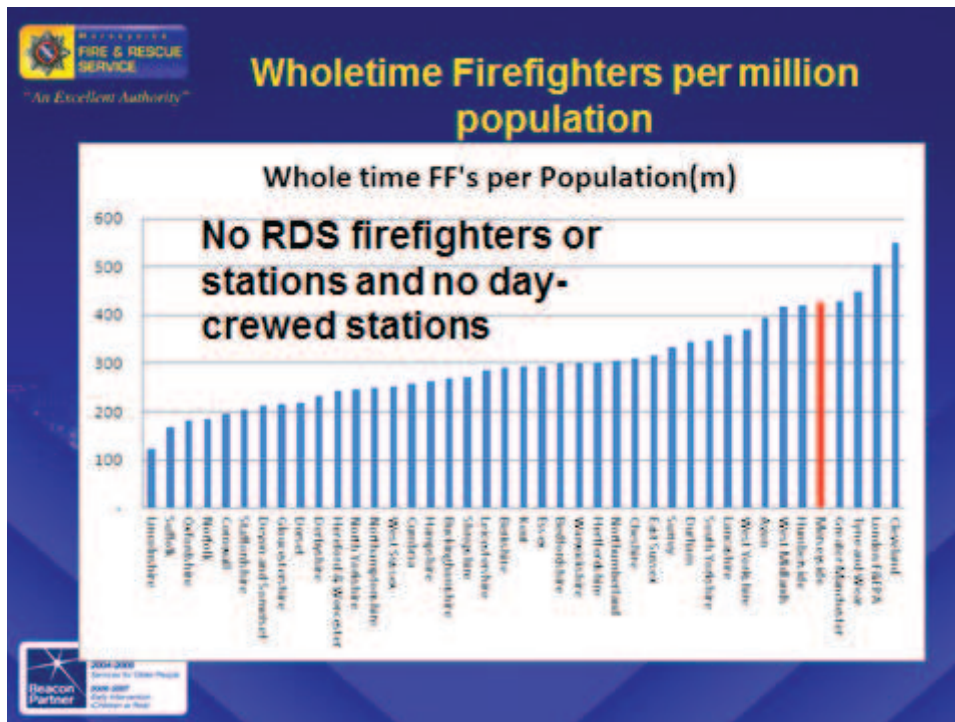
16. Therefore, even in recent years, MFRA has been able to maintain a relatively high level of expenditure per head of population – as the next chart shows.



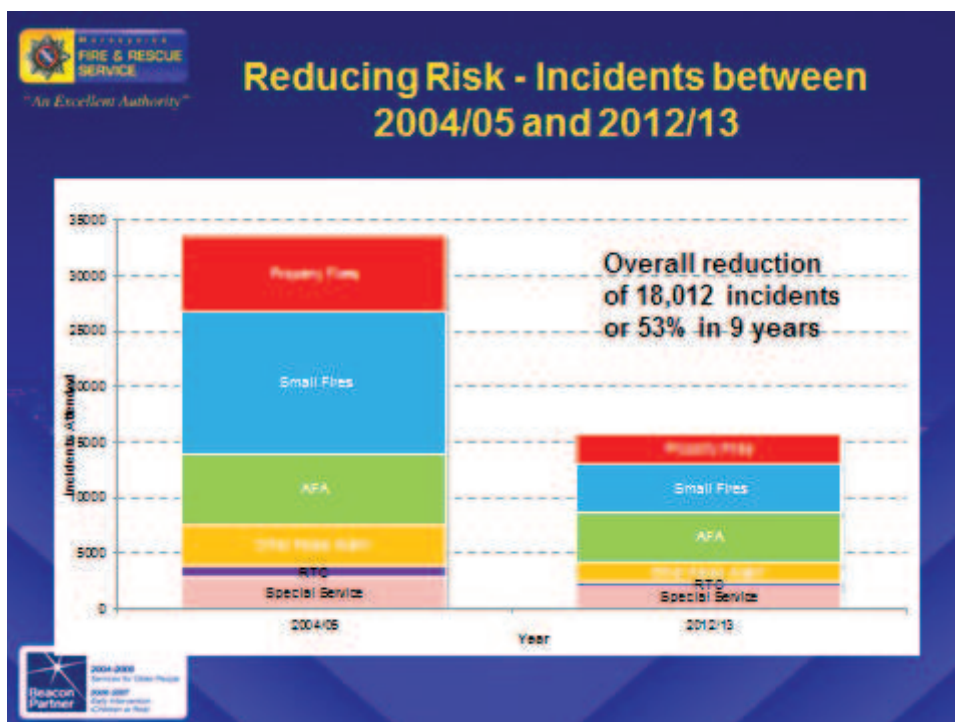
17. Due to its funding, and due to historical assessments of risk deriving from intensive bombing in WW2, Merseyside has had a large number of closely located fire stations (especially in Liverpool and the Wirral) in order to meet the statutory response time standards that prevailed from the 1950s to 2004 – as the two charts overleaf illustrate.



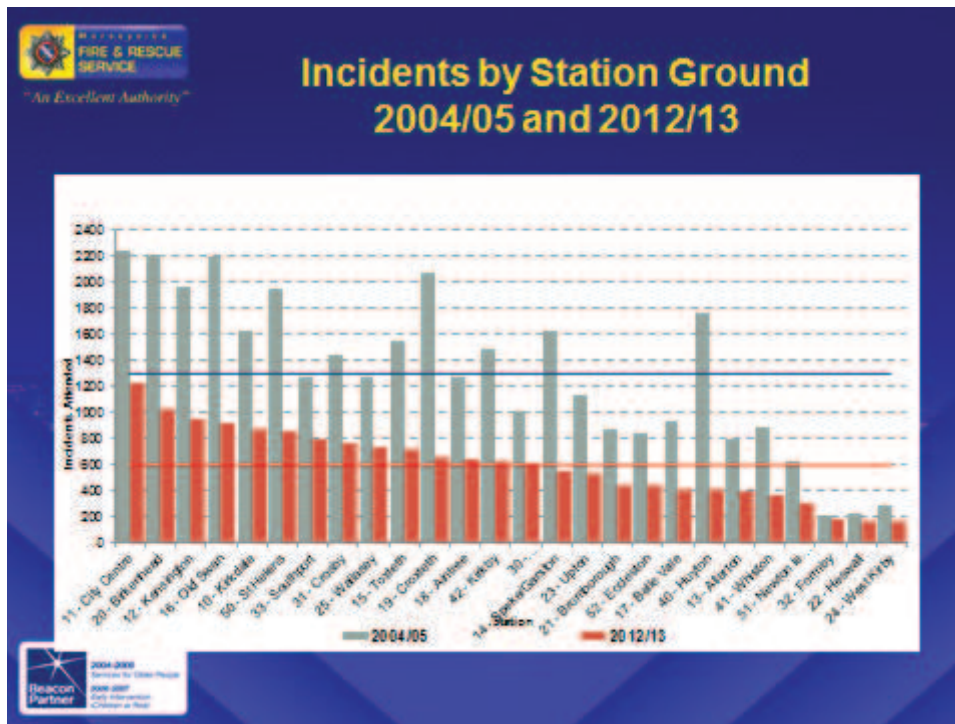
- 18. Indeed, on the basis of its population of about 1.4 million people, MFRA has more wholetime fire stations than any other area of the country, including London – and so, as the chart above shows, each of its 26 current stations covers a relatively small area.
- 19. Given its many fire stations and engines, MFRA has managed to maintain a relatively large number of wholetime firefighters compared with most other combined fire authorities – as the next chart shows.



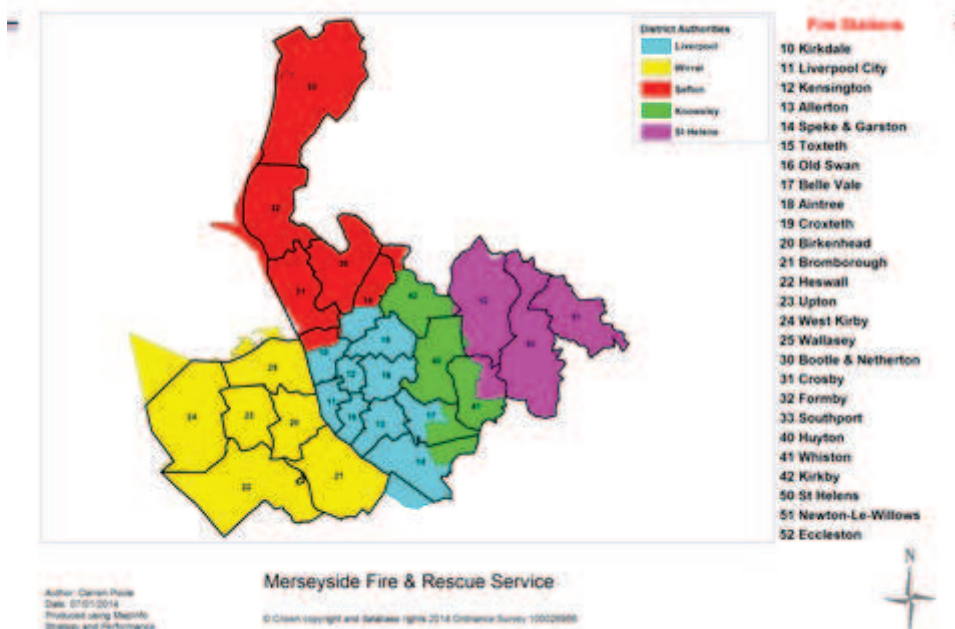
20. Partly as a result of MFRA’s very active preventative and educational work, all categories of incidents have reduced very significantly in Merseyside over the last nine years, as the chart below shows.



21. Not surprisingly, then, all of MFRA’s fire stations deal with many fewer incidents each year than they used recently to do – as shown overleaf.



22. In the context of all the above data, the meetings were shown the current distribution of MFRA’s fire stations with the following map.



Draft Proposals to Close Allerton Fire Station

23. The final and longest part of each of the meetings was devoted to detailed discussion of the draft proposals, which were summarised as follows:

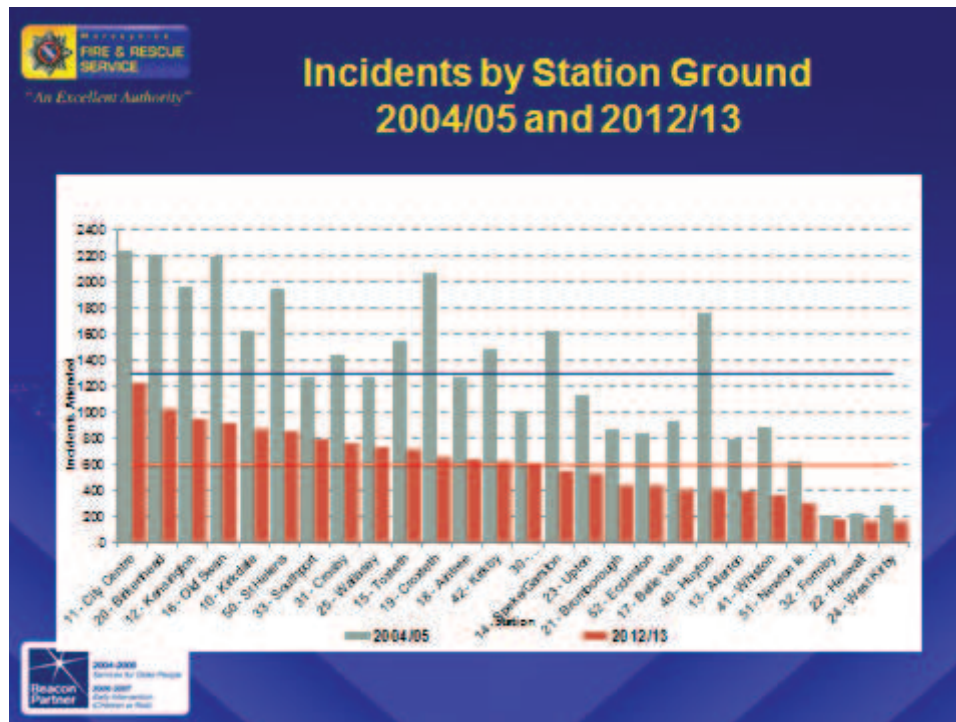
Closing the one-pump stations at Allerton

Moving the fire engine to the Old Swan station – but also

Designating the former Allerton fire engine as a reserve or resilience vehicle which would not normally be crewed – but with its back-up crew subject to recall within 30 minutes, in the event of exceptional incidents or spate conditions

Crewing the reserve second pump with wholetime firefighters who would have supplementary retained contracts to provide the support cover duties when required.

24. In the third meeting, the all-Merseyside forum, the case for Allerton's closure was examined specifically in relation to the *methodology* and *evidence base* that MFRA had used in reaching its conclusion that Allerton might be closed (pending the outcome of public consultation).
25. In all the meetings, there were *two distinct issues* for consultation: (a) closing the one-pump Allerton fire station *and also* (b) reducing the total number of wholetime fire engines by one – by re-designating Allerton's former engine as a reserve or resilience back-up vehicle for periods of exceptional demand. In each meeting great care was taken to ensure that participants understood how the second (reserve) fire engine would be crewed and used as only a back-up reserve vehicle in the context of the closure of the two stations and their replacement by a new one.
26. The meetings also considered very carefully the relevant evidence about reducing risk levels (see above) and response times. For example, they reviewed how the reduction in risk measured by the number of incidents has resulted in far fewer incidents for all fire stations, as shown in the chart on the next page.

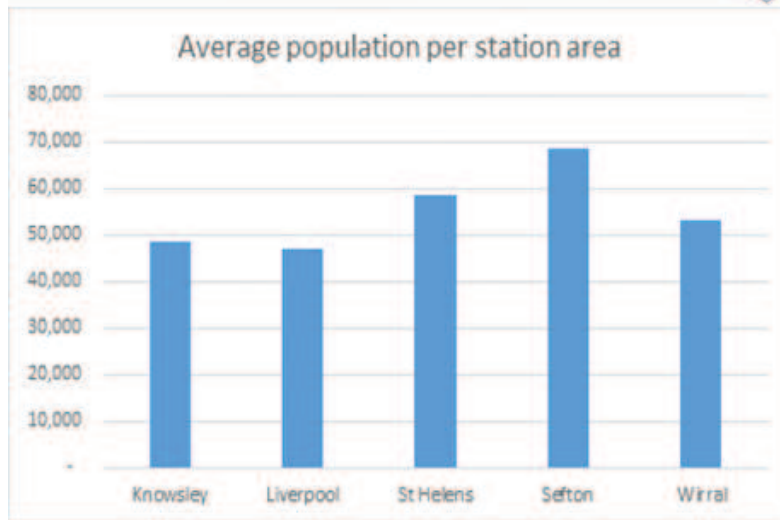


27. In addition, the meetings considered MFRA's response time target (to attend critical incidents within 10 minutes on at least 90% of occasions) and they also compared the national average response time for domestic fires (7 minutes, 24 seconds) with MFRA's average time for critical incidents (5 minutes, 23 seconds).
28. In this context, the meetings were informed explicitly about the impact on response times of closing Allerton station. Currently, the average response time in Allerton for critical incidents is 5 minutes, 9 seconds; but, with the local station closed, the average response time for the Allerton station area would be increased to 5 minutes, 56 seconds.

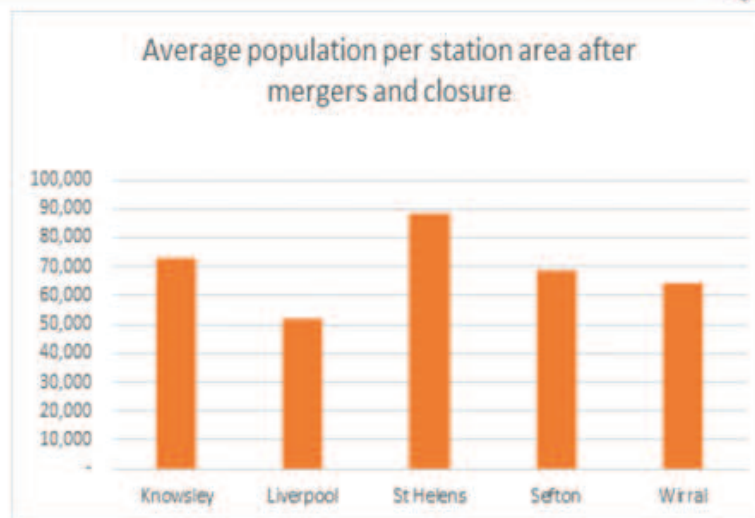
Why Allerton?

29. In order for the meetings to better understand the range of possible options which had been, and might be considered, slides were used to explain (a) why station reductions were more appropriate in Liverpool than elsewhere and (b) why Allerton was (marginally) the most appropriate station when compared with other Liverpool stations with relatively few emergency incidents.
30. The following two slides show that currently Liverpool has the lowest population per fire station and that the city will continue in the same relative position following the implementation of three station mergers the closure of Allerton.

Why Liverpool?



Why Liverpool?



31. It was made clear that, within Liverpool, there are two other stations which might be considered for closure (instead of or alongside) Allerton – so the meetings were provided with the following data to give the comparative picture. The first table shows the number of incidents in recent years for Allerton, Aintree and Kensington; the second shows the number of appliance mobilisations from each station; and the third shows the trend over nine years. Allerton has the lowest number of incidents, the lowest number of mobilisations and the biggest reduction since 2004/05.

Station	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Grand Total
13 - Allerton	513	396	280	1,189
18 - Aintree	875	641	569	2,085
12 - Kensington	1,137	946	929	3,012

Appliance Mobilisations	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Grand Total
13 - Allerton	611	724	717	2,052
18 - Aintree	909	982	1,021	2,912
12 - Kensington	2,103	1,040	956	4,099

Difference from 2004/05 to 2013/14

Station	2004/05	2013/14	Difference	% Difference
13 - Allerton	791	280	-511	-65%
18 - Aintree	1,267	569	-698	-55%
12 - Kensington	1,962	929	-1,033	-53%

32. In this context, the meetings were asked to consider if there were any other options – including closing Aintree and/or Kensington instead – they would like to suggest.
33. Finally, it was made clear to the participants that, in addition to the Allerton draft proposals, plans for some station closures are being brought forward in Knowsley and the Wirral, and are likely to feature in St Helens, too. It was also clearly said that MFRA would not bring forward such proposals if it was not facing an urgent need to reduce expenditure in the context of reduced central government grant funding and restrictions on council tax increases – and the proposal was described by senior MFRA officers as the ‘*least worst option*’ in the current situation. Nonetheless, the facilitator encouraged participants to consider the proposals *in principle* – on their merits in terms of suitability, sustainability, resilience and acceptability for Liverpool and Merseyside – rather than just to accept them without scrutiny as inevitable. In other words, financial issues were not the primary focus of the discussion: the proposals were examined carefully and at length. Participants were given extensive time for questions and discussion prior to being invited to make up their minds on each discussion topic.

Equality and diversity issues

34. In the Liverpool forum and focus group, while considering the draft proposals, participants were encouraged to consider whether the proposals have any adverse implications for any vulnerable people and in particular groups with 'protected characteristics': in other words, this question was not just a 'footnote' to the main discussion but an intrinsic part of the scrutiny of the draft proposals.
35. In the final, all-Merseyside forum the equality and diversity discussion turned on whether MFRA should set formal targets for minority group recruitment as well as using positive action methods to encourage applications from under-represented groups.

The Report

36. This report concisely reviews the sentiments and judgements of participants about MFRA's proposals for Allerton and its fire engine. Verbatim quotations are used, in indented italics, not because we agree or disagree with them – but for their vividness in capturing recurrent points of views. ORS does not endorse the opinions in question, but seeks only to portray them accurately and clearly. While quotations are used, the report is obviously not a verbatim transcript of the sessions, but an interpretative summary of the issues raised by participants in free-ranging discussions.

Consultation Findings

Executive summary

37. The key overall findings regarding the draft proposals (a) to close the fire station and (b) to reduce the number of fully-crewed wholetime engines by moving the Allerton fire engine to Old Swan while also making it a reserve or resilience vehicle for recall (subject to a 30-minute delay) in exceptional conditions.

In the Liverpool forum

In each case by a ratio of two-to-one, the participants accepted the proposals, namely that:

It is reasonable and acceptable to close a fire station in principle

Allerton is the most appropriate station to close

It is reasonable and acceptable to make Allerton's fire engine a reserve or resilience vehicle while moving it to Old Swan

No specific equality and diversity issues were raised.

In the Allerton focus group

The participants all accepted that it is reasonable and acceptable to close a fire station and that Allerton is the most appropriate. They were not quite unanimous about the fire engine, for there was one 'don't know'.

In the all-Merseyside forum

The participants unanimously accepted that:

It is reasonable and acceptable to close a fire station in principle

Allerton is the most appropriate station to close

It is reasonable and acceptable to make Allerton's fire engine a reserve or resilience vehicle while moving it to Old Swan

MFRA's evidence base for its conclusions was appropriate and properly used

The methodology used for considering the selection of possible stations for closure was appropriate and should continue to be used.

Overall assessment

While the Allerton focus group was small, it is significant that the members were almost totally unanimous about all the proposals, after being given every opportunity to understand and question the information on which the draft plans were based.

While a third of the 21 Liverpool forum members were opposed, two-thirds accepted all the proposals readily after discussing the evidence.

The all-Merseyside forum accepted the proposals for Allerton unanimously and endorsed the evidence-base and methodology used in selecting that particular station.

Reasoning about the Proposals

Introduction

38. People's reasons for their views are obviously important – particularly because consultation is not just a 'numbers game' in which majority support or opposition counts for everything: the key issue is not numbers but the cogency of the arguments for or against the various options. Therefore, this section concisely reviews the various opinions, reasons, considerations and attitudes of the participants.
39. The preceding executive summary shows that the meetings accepted the draft proposals. Of course, the participants did not accept the proposals 'blindly' or just 'on trust'. Indeed, most would not have reached the conclusions summarised above without being able to see and consider the evidence provided by MFRA – including all the comparative data on how MFRA fares in funding and resources alongside other fire authorities; how risk and incident levels have been reducing (not only across Merseyside, but also in Liverpool and across other parts of the country); and how Liverpool's emergency cover resources compare favourably with other parts of Merseyside.

Reducing fire stations

40. Naturally, while having a wide-ranging discussion and review of the above issues, the meetings focused on reducing fire stations and changing the crewing of some fire engines. As we have shown in the executive summary above, there was overwhelming support for the draft proposals for Allerton – with unanimous endorsements in the all-Merseyside forum and the small Allerton focus group.
41. However, participants had some concerns and raised many questions – for example:

How do you choose which engines to dispense with?

Why are you not merging stations in Liverpool [instead of closing them]?

The proposal to close Allerton and use Old Swan might be appropriate in quiet times but what about the rush hour?

How do you measure the response times? Is there any time of the day when the response times are calculated? It must be slower in the rush hours with slower travel times?

North Liverpool has a lot of old houses that are fire traps – it's dangerous to reduce fire engines

If Allerton closed, what would be the impact on the service for the public?

If your staff are cut, will that have an impact on the work you can do in the community?

The savings seem to be continuously increasing from 2015-16 to 2016-17 – so how will you make the bigger savings for the latter and following years?

Will you still be able to maintain your prevention work if you have these reductions in fire stations and engines?

What will happen to Allerton station if it's closed?

Would the station ever open again, if the financial position improved considerably?

I'm worried that you are reducing the stations by four – but you will leave a hole in the Allerton area – so it will be difficult to cover?

42. All the above issues, and more, were reviewed in answers to people's questions, and the discussions prompted expressions of positive support, but without uncritical optimism – for example:

A new fire station has just been built in Belle Vale – and it is more important than Allerton is – Allerton needs updating and Belle Vale is only three miles away. Was there always an intention to close Allerton?

If you close Allerton, the overall difference in average response times [to the station area] is less than a minute – so does that impact on the level of casualties and deaths?

43. Some even thought that a more radical longer-term plan for Liverpool and other fire stations should be developed, rather than making reactive decisions based on urgent financial considerations. For example, one emphatic statement said:

This consultation seems too narrow in scope! You have to save a lot of money in the next few years, so there will be even more closures to face – so why don't you have a bigger strategic plan anticipating those cuts more boldly and rationally? Ideally, there should be more radical planning for bigger savings than you immediately need in order to use the short-term surpluses generated for investment in more and better prevention work! It's important to use the money wisely on prevention work – so the budget is not saved but spent differently.

44. The argument for a more radical approach was generally rejected, but people could clearly understand the line of thought. The main opposing point of view was:

It's dangerous to do more than you need prematurely!

45. Of course, even in accepting that the proposals are reasonable in the circumstances, there were regrets about the general financial position that MFRA finds itself in. Some typical comments were:

There'll be a big reduction from 26 to 22 fire stations – and the response times will be lengthened, and less prevention work, too – but you just can't keep reducing staff without changing the service

Is this government gets in again, then the number of firefighters will be reduced much more – it's a disgrace!

You are talking about a 100 job losses in an area with unemployment

You are between a rock and a hard place! How will you cope with risk?

I sympathise with the FRS because your hands are tied behind your back by the cuts! You are like forced into this.

46. There were some suggestions of possible savings to be made – three typical ones being:

You could keep the Allerton building and rent them out to raise income

Have you looked at other options – like new contracts for new staff – so they get less benefits than current staff?

Could you do more to discourage false alarms? They can be a big nuisance

47. Overall, though, there was no enthusiasm for increasing the number of LLAR stations or introducing community retained firefighters.

Allerton fire engine

48. The quotations reviewed above do not highlight the downgrading of the Allerton fire engine if the station closes, but the issue was presented to the meeting and after a full discussion all three meetings accepted the proposed outcome as reasonable in the circumstances. That is, they were able to accept its designation as a reserve vehicle to be crewed only in exceptional circumstances by on-call wholetime firefighters (with a 30-minute recall time). There were fewer explicit comments on the detail of this proposal, but the facilitator confirmed that all the groups understood the implications of the change before asking their opinions, which (as the executive summary shows) were in most cases favourable. People appreciated that closing the station was a one-off saving, while changing the crewing of its engine would generate annual savings.

Equalities Issues

49. Finally, in the Liverpool meetings, the discussion of equality issues was brief; but the main points made were about serving the many elderly people and schools, and also about protecting vulnerable groups from terrorist attacks – for example:

There are Jewish groups in Allerton and they are vulnerable to terrorism at the moment.

50. In the all-Merseyside forum, the equalities discussion focused on recruitment – reaching the conclusion that MFRA should not adopt formal recruitment targets for minority groups but should use positive action to encourage diverse applicants. By a ratio of two-to-one, the participants opposed formal recruitment targets, but welcomed positive encouragement of minority group applications.

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Allerton Consultation

Public meetings and stakeholders Meeting

Promotion

Two evening public meetings and a breakfast stakeholders meeting were held as part of the Allerton Fire Station consultation process.

The meetings were all held at Blue Coat School, the stakeholder breakfast on the 8th of December, the first public meeting on the 10th December and the second on the 15th January.

These meetings were widely promoted in the local media, on the internet, social media, our own staff meetings and newsletter distribution to public buildings, businesses and local supermarkets.

The Liverpool Echo ran articles announcing the consultation, the public meetings and reaction from the public to the proposed closure of the station. Radio Merseyside and Radio City interviewed the Chief Fire Officer and mentioned the public meetings.

MFRS Facebook page and the MFRS website carried information from the day the consultation was launched and there was regular promotion of the process on twitter and social media generally.

An initial newsletter was widely distributed to the media and local people. Following the response from the first public meeting a second document was produced and distributed responding to some of the issues the public had raised.

Meetings were held with all Allerton station staff providing the same information as the public meetings.

Signers were engaged for the meetings and a hearing loop was also available to ensure any attendees with hearing impairment could participate.

Feedback

The format of the public meetings and stakeholder meetings was a formal presentation by the Chief Fire Officer explaining the reasons for the changes being proposed and its impact on MFRS operational activities.

This was followed by an invitation for people to ask questions of the MFRS senior management who attended.

Four people attended the stakeholders breakfast, 20 people attended the first public meeting and eight people attended the second public meeting.

8th December Stakeholders meeting questions and answers

Question: What does population density play in it? (question asked during presentation when map showing all the stations was on the screen).

Answer: The Chief explained the population levels in the Liverpool areas and compared to Wirral and what the stations cover and referred to an earlier slide that showed the population covered by stations.

Question: As years go by there are more cars on the road and more congestion – do (response) times alter?

Answer: The Chief explained the numbers mentioned in the presentation on response times was based on actual response time data and was around 99% accurate.

Comment: From a business perspective, to me it makes sense. I don't see how you can justify keeping it (Allerton) open. People get quite passionate about things like this in their area but I think business-wise you have got to do it.

Comment: It's a 'no brainer'. To me it makes perfect sense.

Comment: It (the presentation) is visual – that’s what people like. I can’t see how you could justify keeping it open looking at that (the presentation). An increase of 45 seconds (response time) by shutting it – it’s nothing really.

Question: I understand where you are coming from. Has there been any health risk impact assessment?

Answer: The Chief explained that he was not “arguing” to close stations and had given evidence to a Select Committee on the impact of cuts in funding in regards to response and the community.

Question: Has there been any health impact assessment?

Answer: The Chief explained that in terms of risk assessment he was looking at “speed and weight of attack” and that was the “primary measure”. He explained the response time of just under 6 minutes was still exceptionally good. He explained what people were not seeing was the reduction in prevention work and this was focused on operational response.

Group Manager Ben Ryder spoke about the data sharing work and using data to target prevention activities for those in the community who are more vulnerable to fire, such as the over 65 age group.

The Chief also explained that if Allerton were to close, its area would be split between the remaining stations.

Comment: We have got to start getting realistic. Given the way the funding is and we are now at the stage where we can't avoid that. Another perspective is Merseyside has probably been spoilt as we have got ten stations. It's about managing people's expectations, what people are used to. I live in Huyton and that station is going to move – I think the way it has been presented (the draft proposal to close Allerton) I do think, when you look at it, there does not seem to be an option.

Answer: The Chief explained how fire deaths had decreased and incident numbers had decreased, but that was not by chance – it was through prevention and response work.

Question: What have the councillors said (who cover the Allerton area)?

Answer: The Chief explained politicians, including the MPs, had received a briefing. The Chief said even if Labour were to come to power in the next General Election there was "no reversing this" as the money had gone. He also said local councillors were aware of this as well.

Question: Are they (the politicians) pretty much "on board"?

Answer: The Chief explained that he could not comment on what politicians may or may not say and he would not get involved in politics but Mayor Anderson had been "fully briefed" on the financial situation.

Question: When will this happen?

Answer: The Chief explained the consultation is running until January then a report would go to the Fire Authority and they set their budget in February for the new financial year starting in April.

Question: What if a key station appliance was sent into Allerton's station?

Answer: The Chief explained that the nearest appliance is mobilised to "stand in" and be at the key station if the key station appliance is sent somewhere.

Question: When is it closing then?

Answer: The Chief explained again that a report would go to the Fire Authority budget setting meeting was in February.

Question: Is there something about severity of incidents (in the presentation)?

Answer: The Chief explained that "life risk" incidents were referred to in the presentation and that covered the severity side of incidents.

Public Meeting Questions and Answers

Questions and Answers from the 10th December Allerton Public Meeting

Question: You mentioned a 2% increase in council tax. What is the percentage the fire service gets from council tax? Has that increased or decreased over time (of the cuts to funding)?

Answer: The Chief explained the "precept" for fire was separate on council tax bills and gave an example of what a 2% rise for a Band D property would be. He said the precept had been increased since the spending review but that increase just sets off "a little bit" the extent of the cut in funding.

Question: You have identified that the quantity is fixed to 2%. What I'm suggesting is that perhaps that percentage can be increased.

Answer: The Chief explained that there was a cap under the "excessiveness principles" and that the precept could only be increased by 2%.

Question: You cannot increase it by more than 2% in council tax?

Answer: The Chief explained that the fire, police and council could not increase their precept without going to a referendum but the fire and rescue service would have to hold five referendums, for the five areas of Merseyside, and this was unlikely to succeed as an increase of 36% would be needed in the precept to offset current cuts. He also said that if they did go to referendum no lobbying could be done to encourage people to vote for the increase in the run-up to it.

Comment: I find it very difficult. I'm talking about the Government now – that they can reduce services like this. It's a service, a provision to provide a service to the public. You can't justify it. The man explained that he had worked in Devon but Liverpool had high rise blocks here and there was deprivation.

Answer: The Chief explained that he had argued about the levels of deprivation in Merseyside and protecting those people as part of the lobbying against the cuts and the deprivation was higher than any other place in the country.

Comment: It's because we have not got Conservative MPs in Liverpool.

Question: You say Allerton closes then you have got this building. You have said you cannot maintain that station. What would happen to that land? Once it closes would the land have to be sold off?

Answer: The Chief said if the closure did go ahead then the land would be sold as it was part of making the process of station mergers and building new stations in better positions “cost neutral”.

Question: Is the capital value (of the land where Allerton is) being used (as a reason to close the station)?

Answer: The Chief said that the land sales of any of the stations they were looking to close would not really raise that much money – not a “great deal” of money.

Comment – You have got legacy issues with stations.

Answer: The Chief explained the Fire Authority had a £48million debt and it took £8m to service that debt a year and this was due to “legacy issues”. He explained the PFI funding of new stations in Merseyside had been the most cost effective but debts had arisen from such elements as avoiding compulsory redundancy in the past.

Question: Is it more cost effective to do it (close stations and sell off the land) “wholesale” rather than “piece-meal”?

Answer: The Chief explained that funding was becoming available for capital projects at different times and bids were made to help building projects but explained that he did not want to close stations.

Comment – Mark Rowe, FBU rep in the audience who attended the public consultation, said the FBU were campaigning to prevent the closure of Allerton and will be taking “the fight” to the MPs. He said the cuts will “cost lives”. He also said: “We have been devastated by these cuts” and said fire appliances had dropped from 42 to 28 in Merseyside

and explained a leafleting campaign had been started and asked people to get in touch with the FBU.

Question: You were talking about response times and safety issues. At any given time when a fire engine is going out there are only “four” firefighters but “your Standard Operating Procedures” says there should be five. She said: “That’s a safety issue”

Answer: The Chief explained that four firefighters on a fire engine could provide a “safe system of work” for committing a breathing apparatus team of two to a house fire, but the Service “aspires” to five being on board each fire appliance but that would mean less fire engines available if they all had five on board.

Question: You have got to have a minimum to ride a fire engine?

Answer: The Chief answered that that is riding four – four firefighters on the fire appliance.

Question: One member of the public said that there are “a lot of ranks” higher than watch Manager – “would it not make sense” to have more firefighters?

Answer: The Chief explained that Merseyside had the least number of senior officers in the country.

Comment – A member of the audience said: “you are paid more than most”

Answer: The Chief explained he was paid less than the previous Chief of Merseyside and less than the London Commissioner.

Comment – A member of the audience said there were “a lot” of Watch Managers and Crew Managers at (the fire and rescue service headquarters).

Answer: The Chief explained that there were two Watch Managers in Contingency Planning as the fire and rescue service had a “legal duty” to control major hazards in their own area and said that Watch Managers did go onto stations and fire appliances when the service could do that and that was done as a matter “of routine”.

Comment – A member of the audience claimed “the only thing that has not been reduced is senior managers wages”.

Answer: The Chief explained that he had taken a £40,000 pay cut when he became Chief and deleted the Assistant Chief role and had doubled his workload.

Question: Where will the staff be based in the future if Allerton closes?

Answer: The Chief explained that the staff from Allerton would go to other stations in Merseyside.

Question: How many staff are there?

Answer: The Chief said there were 24 people at Allerton.

Question: A member of the audience asked about the number of fire appliances at stations in Liverpool.

Answer: The Chief explained the fire appliance at Allerton would be re-located to Old Swan and would be crewed by firefighters on a retained contract.

Question: How many fire engines are there at Allerton?

Answer: The Chief said there was just one at Allerton.

Question: A member of the audience mentioned a response time difference of "50 seconds" and said: "In terms of lives, how big a difference is that?"

Answer: The Chief said it was 50 seconds than he would want but the response time would be better than in other areas. He also explained that there was no outcome which will "improve the situation".

Question: Over the last ten years has the response times already reduced?

Answer: The Chief explained response times had increased.

Question: What's the difference between life and death here?

Answer: The Chief explained that he was trying to achieve the quickest response time and that doing this proposal delivers a quicker response time than making the pump "retained". He explained that doing what was proposed would have the least impact.

Question: Since the station closures in London, has any response times reduced?

Answer: The Chief said response times had increased.

Question: They have increased in London? Any evidence to support that they (firefighters) have not been there in time?

Answer: The Chief explained that if you compared the coverage of the Allerton area to other locations such as Ellesmere Port in Cheshire then there was a good coverage for the Allerton area. He also explained that

Merseyside's response times were quicker than most places in the country.

Question: With all the extra (money from tax) have we not paid for this?

Answer: The Chief explained that a campaign was run in the Echo in 2012 against the looming cuts and a petition was set up but it only attracted around 2,500 signatures from the public out of a population of 1.4 million.

Comment: People feel their opinions are not going to matter. They feel it's already a 'done deal'. Within the community it is a bit of a 'fait accompli'. The person also spoke about getting people to sign petitions against the closure.

Comment – A firefighter at the meeting said he and colleagues had been to Tesco in Allerton and collected 480 names on a petition against the closure he also claimed that they asked people if they knew about the public meeting on December 9 and claimed "no-one knew it was on".

Answer: The Chief urged people to get involved in local democracy and make their voices heard but said there was a "reality check" that the money that was being reduced had "already been taken" and he did not believe any political party, whoever wins a General Election, would change that.

Comment – We have got to fight the cuts.

Answer: The Chief explained that the Shadow Fire Minister had mentioned a cut figure of 8.5% and he said people had a democratic voice but explained that at the end of this consultation process the Fire Authority will have to make a decision.

Comment – A firefighter at the meeting in the audience said the current Chief was left a Service in a “broken” position by the previous senior officers and claimed current senior officers had not challenged the decisions made in the past.

Question: Is this it in terms of the consultation (meeting-wise)?

Answer: The Chief explained that there was another public meeting on January 15.

Question: Are you consulting all across Liverpool and in Aintree?

Answer: The Chief explained that the Liverpool consultation was just taking place in Liverpool but there were consultations in Wirral and there had been one in Knowsley for the station mergers.

Peter Rushton, Chair of the public meeting said the consultations were taking place wherever fire cover was being changed.

Question: What if the firefighters at Allerton want to stay?

Comment – A firefighter at the meeting in the audience said – “we want to stay here” and explained he had been serving the community in Allerton for 24 years.

Comment – Mark Rowe, FBU rep in the audience who attended the public consultation, said there was evidence to suggest fire station closures in London had had an impact in regards to responding to incidents and for people. He said that the FBU did not want people at home responding to beepers to get to the station but have firefighters at the station ready to respond to a call. He also spoke about the importance of response times and said if people held their breath for 3 minutes they would then see why response times mattered.

Question: Can I ask, the petition we have all signed – where is that going (question directed towards the FBU who have been collecting signatures against the closure of Allerton)?

Comment – Mark Rowe, FBU rep in the audience who attended the public consultation, said the signatures would be photocopied, he would arrange a meeting of cross-party MPs and each of the MPs would be given a “bundle” of the signatures rather than taking it to 10 Downing Street.

Question: Is the petition still going?

A firefighter explained the petition against the closure of Allerton was still going and they had around 5,000 signatures so far.

Answer: The Chief explained the consultation was running until the 26th of January and the Fire Authority will consider the outcome of the consultation and the Authority’s budget setting meeting was on 26th February.

Question: Are there more meetings and focus groups to be held on this (consultation)?

Answer: The Chief explained the Allerton station area covered parts of three different constituencies for MPs in Liverpool and that focus groups were being held for stakeholders.

Comment - A firefighter at the meeting in the audience said a Facebook page had been set up "Save Allerton Fire Station" that people could have a look at.

Answer: The Chief explained the Fire Authority has to set a legal budget in February 2015 and it could not spend money it does not have.

Question: How does it work for schools or focus meetings?

Answer: The Chief said that groups could register themselves as part of the consultation process and were then given updates and could attend stakeholder meetings.

Question: How soon would you see the station closing (Allerton) after the meeting in February?

Answer: The Chief said that it would likely be April if the Fire Authority were to decide to go ahead with the closure.

Questions and answers from 15th January Allerton Public meeting

Question: When the Chief was talking about going down to London, lobbying against cuts to funding. At this point in the presentation by the Chief, one woman asked: "How does that tie into your workload?"

Answer: The Chief explained the “utilisation rates” in UK fire and rescue services are low and possibly lower in areas that may have had a better funding settlement – e.g. less cuts. He explained the ambulance service’s utilisation rates were between 80% and 90% but explained that there were higher levels of deprivation in Merseyside. He said he wanted to keep 28 appliances and have wholetime retained firefighters to operate some of these. He said he had selected Allerton because “the operational activity levels are the lowest”, although he said there were still “life risk” call-outs.

Question: Some people might say what I’m going to say is trivial. From the heritage point of view, Allerton Fire Station is probably the most famous fire station. I do tourist guiding... everyone goes to Penny Lane. What will happen to the fire station?

Answer: The Chief explained that the Fire Authority would sell it if it was closed.

Comment: I think that is part of the reason that’s behind this proposal/idea to close Allerton Fire Station

Answer: The Chief said he was not disputing the heritage value of the site but he did not think the financial value of the site would be as large as some people may think.

Comment – The Beatles Tour goes past there five times a day.

Answer: The Chief explained that there was “no conspiracy here” and it was about what was least operational impact. He said the heritage “value”/value of the site in terms of selling did not feature in his “thinking” and the decision was how busy the station was.

Question: Have they not brought up the age of retirement (for firefighters)?

Answer: The Chief explained about pension changes that had come in in 1992, where the retirement age was 55, and changes in 2006, where the age was brought up to 60.

Comment: (We're) not going to have a good fire service if (they/firefighters) are working longer.

Question: Would they do other duties?

Answer: The Chief explained that the age increases did not help the situation and the Fire Authority had had to pay more money for some changes.

Comment – I don't see there's any (option) other than station closures or mergers.

Comment – The morale (of firefighters) is already very low.

A: The Chief explained that what he was trying to do was to protect full-time firefighters but the Government's view was the "future is retained". He said the reality was that "we have got to do something" and the "something we are proposing is the least worst option".

Q: What's the resilience like if there is a 10 pump fire in town?

A: The Chief explained that when there was 42 fire appliances, if there was a 10 pump fire then "you would not notice" but he said with 28 appliances the 10-minute response time comes in and that now a 5 pump or 6 pump incident "really starts to have an impact". The Chief also explained that the full-time retained option is about providing an extra

appliance (Allerton's current appliance) at Old Swan for when major incidents occur.

Comment: That's the "time bomb we'll face" (less appliances and chance of large fires and not having enough fire appliances).

Answer: The Chief explained that he is the national lead for National Resilience and had been campaigning against reducing the number of Search and Rescue Teams as the Government had wanted to reduce the number of teams by 4. He said he had managed to reduce that reduction to two less teams.

Question: What do you get funded for? Floods and road traffic accidents?

Answer: The Chief explained the changes in the Fire and Rescue Services Act making, widening the incidents fire and rescue services need to respond to. He also explained funding was provided for the Urban Search and Rescue Team and CBRNE response. He also explained that the funding mechanism was changed in 13/14.

Question: The Fire Fit Hub in Toxteth is in dire straits. What impact would it have on Toxteth Fire Station (if the Hub were to close)?

Answer: The Chief said the Toxteth Fire Fit Hub was run by a community interest company and if that were to fail then part of the site would close but the fire station would remain there. There would just be an empty building next to the fire station.

Comment: They (The Toxteth Fire Fit Hub) had "begging posters" for people to use the site.

Question: If stations are to be combined (station mergers) will they be PFI again?

Answer : The Chief said the merger station builds would not be PFI and explained that there was no longer a capital grant from DCLG for buildings and that fire and rescue services had to bid for money to do new buildings/build new stations. He explained that MF&RS had £4.5 million from bids they had put in and that would go towards the cost of building new stations. He also explained that he had inherited a debt of £45 million and it took £8 million a year to service that debt and the authority was to “pay off this mortgage”.

Question: Is it (Allerton Fire Station) a listed or graded building?

Allerton: The Chief said it was not a listed building.

Question: I used to work in Allerton police station. Apart from the Police and Crime Commissioner, is anyone else there (using the police site near Allerton Fire Station)?

Answer: The Chief said as far as he knew it was the PCC and her staff using that site at the moment.

Answer: The Chief said that if the fire station closure were to be approved then the fire and rescue service would work with the local council in regards to the disposal of the site.

Question: The fire officers who are there (at Allerton Fire Station) would be moved to other stations?

Answer: The Chief said those at Allerton would be posted to other stations.

Question: How has it been advertised (the public meetings and consultation on the closure)?

Answer: The Chief said social media had been used along with newsletters and it had been mentioned on the radio and in the local papers.

Comment: It was on Radio Merseyside yesterday by the way.

Question: Is there any (stations) that will be safe?

Answer: The Chief said that eventually there may be seven stations left (in Liverpool).

Question: **Do** you look after the docks and look after the River Mersey?

Answer: The Chief said there was no statutory duty to respond to the River Mersey but responsibility to respond to incidents at the docks was part of the fire and rescue service's role.

Question: The inland docks?

Answer: The Chief answered yes. He also explained the inshore rescue service had been inherited by MF&RS which is crewed by LLAR.

Comment – looking at the comparison of money – why have we got more?

Comment – In 1984 it (funding allocation) was put down in crayon. People were not happy so they came back 10 years later.

Answer: The Chief explained briefly about the context and history that has given rise to the current situation in regards to more fire appliances in Merseyside.

Comment: One in the audience said she would not sign a petition against the closure of Allerton now she had heard the explanation and options.

Comment: Another person said that what would happen to the Allerton Fire Station building was a “planning” issue.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
Equality Impact Assessment Form

Title of policy/report/project:	Station Mergers , Closures and other Operational Response Options
Department:	Strategy and Performance
Date:	EIA Stage 1 - 19.11.13 EIA Stage 2 – 31.1.14 EIA Stage 3 – 20.8.14 – <u>Knowsley Consultation</u> EIA Stage 3A – From 3.10.14 to 5.12.15 <u>Wirral Consultation</u> EIA Stage 3B – From 1.11.14 to 25.1.15 <u>Liverpool Consultation (Allerton)</u> EIA Stage 3C – From 2.3.15 – <u>Saughall Massie Road Wirral Consultation or closure of West Kirby</u> Any other options will be considered when/if proposed.
<p><u>Scope of EIA</u></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>Stage 1 – Desk Top Assessment by 3/12/13 :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</p>	

Engagement and Consultation Exercises in the new year (by 19/11/13)

Stage 2 – Consultation External and Internal: to gain feedback from those communities and MF&RS 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)

Stage 3 – More detailed assessment on the local areas affected by options: for Authority members to take into account at their meeting when they review the EIA in full. (from April 2014)

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). The location was withdrawn by Wirral BC and the FRA considered a further two options for consultation on 29th January 2015:
 - Consultation on a possible site at Saughall Massie
 - Close West Kirby stationThe first option was chosen
- 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 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&RS 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&RS 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**

3.3 Profile of MF&RS 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>

3.4 **Appendix B** sets out the impact of a potential merger of West Kirby and Upton at

a site in Saughall Massie. All areas would be attended well within the 10 minute response time from a new station or other Wirral stations. It has been made clear throughout that there is no option that will improve attendance. The proposals are the least worst option.

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 Prescott 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 Prescott 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".

Allerton

Age Structure: The Allerton Station Ground has a mix of age groups across different wards, 45-59 age group is the most populous age range. Greenbank has a large population of 20-24 year olds inferring a high population of students. Woolton has particularly high level of population above the age of 65 with 26% of ward population, however the majority of this ward is covered by the Belle Vale station area.

Socio Economic: Majority of area is affluent with small pockets of deprivation (based on IMD 2010) The majority of wards are below the Liverpool average for

unemployment and long term health and disabilities.

Racial Profile: Predominantly “White” (at least 90% white). Greenbank however has a more diverse population including above counts of BME populations, BME groups equate to 17% of overall population compared to 5.5% Merseyside population as a whole.

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

3.4 Proposals for mergers at a site in Saughall Massie or Closure of West Kirby- the impact on the achievement of 10 Minute Standard Response times (Appendix B)

The document highlights the impact of adopting either of the proposals on the achievement of the standard 10 minute standard response time. The results show that there are no areas outside the 10 minute response time for the proposals to merge stations at Saughall Massie. In relation to the maps for proposals to close West Kirby, there is a very small area of the West Wirral outside the 10 minute response area with a few dwellings in that area where attendance is 4 seconds outside of the 10 minute response time. It is recommended that HFSC campaigns take place to ensure those living in that area receive prevention advice and support.

4: Research

Summarise the findings of any research you have considered regarding this policy/report/project. This could include quantitative data and qualitative information; anything you have obtained from other sources e.g. CFOA/CLG guidance, other FRSs, etc.

What research have you considered?

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&RS 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

<p>Review of MF&RS 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 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 and the building of new stations.</p> <p>Results show no specific Equality and Diversity implications for any of the areas affected as the Ten Minute response times will be still valid for the station areas affected by the merger/closure proposals</p> <p>There appears to be no detrimental impact on any of the partnership arrangements for the Knowsley fire stations currently being affected by station merger proposals , the development of a new station with advanced community facilities will strengthen the opportunities for Knowsley communities to access the station for better community engagement activities</p>
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5. Consultation

Summarise the opinions of any consultation. Who was consulted and how? (This should include reference to people and organisations identified in section 2 above)
Outline any plans to inform consultees of the results of the consultation

What Consultation have you undertaken?

No Consultation took place at Stage 1 of this EIA, however consultation will be carried out in two stages to scrutinise the OPTIONS and consider others for all mergers/closures. As such consultation comprises 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.

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 :

- The development of a new MF&RS Diversity Consultation Forum; a public voice for diverse groups across each district
- 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)

- Consultation with Community Groups currently using the Stations identified as potentially being closed and merged – Impact on equality
- Making the EIA accessible via the Staff Portal and MF&RS Webpage to enable staff , stakeholders and the public to make comments and provide feedback easily

What did it say?

Stage 3 B – Allerton Closure

A 12 week consultation process took place from 1st November 2014 to 26th January 2015 which followed a similar pattern to the previous consultation for Knowsley and Wirral (see Stage 3 and 3A below). This Included :

- Online questionnaire for staff and public to provide views
- One externally facilitated deliberative focus group
- One Public Forum
- Two Open public meetings
- One stakeholder breakfast meeting
- Several staff consultation meetings
- Several further local Council and local stakeholder consultation meetings and events (including a farmers market and a residents association meeting)

As in the Knowsley and Wirral consultation process, there was an opportunity to invite participants to a deliberative focus group and the forum from a broad spectrum of backgrounds and equality groups. The aim is to be as fully representative as possible.

Equality monitoring data shows a breakdown in attendees at these meetings as follows :

40% Female and 60% Male attendees- this shows a slightly lower than average attendance for females when compared to Liverpool as a whole

16% Under 34's , 28% 35-54 and 56% over 55+ - this reflected the broad range of age groups across the area and matches the higher proportion of over 65's for the Allerton area (26%)

32% of attendees had a limiting long term illness /disability – this is above the average population for Liverpool being 23.6%

4% of Attendees at the event were from Non White backgrounds which is slightly lower than the ethnicity breakdown of the Liverpool (10% BME for Allerton)

The figures above broadly reflect the average profile of residents across Liverpool and this allows us to feel comfortable that the views of different groups of people have been considered when using the consultation for decision making purposes.

While considering the draft proposals, participants in all the meetings were encouraged to consider whether proposals have any adverse implications for any vulnerable people and in particular groups with “protected characteristics”: in other words, this question was not just a ‘footnote’ to the main discussion but an intrinsic part of the scrutiny of the proposals. There were no specific Equality Impacts identified, in relation to any particular 9 protected groups covered by the Equality Act, from the forums. However forum members specifically asked for prevention and community work to continue with the elderly and schools and vulnerable groups, including faith and religious groups at times of heightened security and terrorist

attacks.

No specific equality concerns were raised at the Public and Breakfast meetings. Feedback from the staff meetings did not establish any equality impacts and further consultation with staff in terms of where staff will be posted will take place to address any further issues arising.

The questionnaires received (65) were treated as an information gathering exercise, in the same way as the views expressed at the public meetings, the questionnaires have been analysed in terms of Equality Monitoring and shows:

- 60% were Male and 40% Female respondents, this is slightly lower than the average female population across Liverpool.
- There were a wide range of ages responding to the survey, the largest group of respondents - 26%, were from the 40-49 age group, this was higher than the average population of local residents for that age group at 12.8%. 50% of the respondents were over the age of 50, this population reflects 33% of the local population.
- 11% identified themselves as disabled ,which is lower than the average for Liverpool at 23.6%
- 95% identified their ethnicity as white, 5% preferred not to say and there no residents from a BME background completing the survey.

61.5% of the surveys completed were not in favour of the station being closed. There were one comment made in relation to Equality and Diversity impacts in the free text comments made, this was around concerns about high risk religious sites e.g. Jewish School and synagogue in the Allerton area in the current climate. (see section 9.6)

Stage 3 A – Wirral Consultation

A 12 week consultation process took place from 2nd October 2014 to 5th January 2015 which followed a similar pattern to the events that took place for the previous consultation at Knowsley (See stage 3 Knowsley below). This included:

- Online questionnaire for staff and public to provide their views
- Three externally facilitated deliberative focus groups (one in each station area)
- One Public Forum
- Four Open public meetings
- One stakeholder breakfast meeting
- Several staff consultation meetings
- Several further local Council and stakeholder consultation meetings

As in the Knowsley consultation process, there was an opportunity to invite participants to three deliberative focus groups and the forum from a broad spectrum of backgrounds and equality groups. The aim is to be as fully representative as possible.

Equality Monitoring data shows a breakdown in attendees at these meetings as follows :

44% Female and 56% Male attendees- this closely reflects the gender breakdown for the Wirral as a whole

16% Under 34's , 35.5% 35-54 and 51.5% over 55+ - this reflected the broad range of age groups across the area

16% of attendees had a limiting long term illness /disability – this is slightly lower than the average for Wirral being 22.6%

10% of Attendees at the event were from Non White backgrounds which closely reflects the ethnicity breakdown of the Wirral

The figures above reflect the average profile of residents across Wirral and this allows us to feel comfortable that the views of different groups of people have been considered when using the consultation for decision making purposes.

While considering the draft proposals, participants in all the meetings were encouraged to consider whether proposals have any adverse implications for any vulnerable people and in particular groups with “protected characteristics”: in other words, this question was not just a ‘footnote’ to the main discussion but an intrinsic part of the scrutiny of the proposals

Four comments of concern around equality groups were raised from the 32 people who attended the focus groups and forum :

- Frankby Road (Greasby) is not a suitable site for a fire station in the village; children, elderly and disabled use the road near the site
- The elderly, nursing and residential homes have to be taken into consideration and that does not seem to be a primary focus and yet we have a lot of elderly people in our area
- We have a lot of elderly
- West Kirby has elderly people and there are some flats with social disadvantage
- The aged and disabled people will have some impact from these changes

Two comments were raised in support of the changes :

- The Council and FRS are aware of the needs of the elderly and the vulnerable
- The FRS links up with other agencies – it has to be a multi- agency approach

The questionnaires received (984) were treated as an information gathering exercise, in the same way as the views expressed at the public meetings, the questionnaires have been analysed in terms of Equality Monitoring and shows:

- 46.3% were Male and 53.7% Female respondents which closely reflects the gender breakdowns for Wirral as a whole
- There were a wide range of ages responding to the survey, the largest group of respondents - 50%, were from the 50 to 69 age group - this was slightly higher than the local ward age population profiles for that age group (41.6%) but may be due to a higher proportion of older residents using the Greasby community centre attending the consultation events.
- 7.2% identified themselves as disabled ,which is lower than the average for Wirral at 22.6%
- 91.1% identified their ethnicity as white, 7.3% preferred not to say and 1.3 % (15) were from a BME background. This is similar to the average Ethnicity

breakdowns for those areas.

The majority of surveys completed were not in favour of the station being placed in Greasby village. There were no obvious comments made in relation to Equality and Diversity in the free text comments made.

This EIA has been consulted on with the Community Forum Group at a meeting on the 10th December 2014, where members were presented with the EIA and asked for any notable feedback in relation to the approach we take to the EIA and any outcomes of the proposals for particular Protected groups (specifically Elderly and Disabled). The group were happy with the EIA and its findings and no further suggestions made.

Stage 3 – Knowsley Consultation May to July 2014

A 12 week Consultation process on Fire Station merger proposals took place in Knowsley district between the 6th May and 28th July 2014. The consultation included :

- Online survey for staff and public to provide their views
- Three externally facilitated deliberative focus groups (one in each station area)
- One Public Forum
- Three Open public meetings
- One stakeholder breakfast meeting
- Several staff consultation meetings

All consultation events provided the opportunity for staff and public to provide feedback and views on the merger proposals and the impact they may have, positive or negative, in relation to different equality groups and the impact on any of their service needs/outcomes as a result of the proposals. None of the focus groups or forums raised any specific concerns relating to vulnerable people or equality groups, but some observed that it is important to ensure the elderly get appropriate prevention work in the form of Home Fire safety checks and other precautions in those areas where the mergers may have a bigger impact.

The consultation events were well publicised in many different forums from local council promotion, health and wellbeing boards, posters at local supermarkets, Local radio stations and a variety of Websites,

The only opportunity for MFRA to ensure a representative group of people were consulted with was in relation to the invited participants at the deliberative forums. Efforts are always made to recruit a representative sample of Merseyside residents for each meeting, but as not everyone who is recruited actually attends the meeting this can have an effect.

The breakdown of consultees were as follows:

60% (29) of the 48 attendees were male and 40% (19) were female, 31% (15) were aged 16 -35 and 33.5 % (16) were aged 35 to 55 and 35.5% (17) were aged over 55. These figures are similar to the age profile of Merseyside population.

The majority of attendees were white , however 16% were of Non-white British origin,

this compares favourably when compared to the Merseyside population figures of 7%

All events were fully inclusive with British Sign Language Interpreters at each open public meeting (they were not required at any of the deliberative forums), the use of a hearing loop was available for all meetings and information was also available in large print. The venues were sourced taking careful consideration of access from car parking for disabled and mobility impaired to easy access to public transport close by and access in and out of the rooms and seating.

The results from the on line survey have been summarised in a report;

Knowsley Consultation concerning Station Mergers – results from Feedback Surveys. This can be accessed on our Website. The results showed :

- No specific issues raised in relation to any negative or positive impacts of the proposals on any particular protected groups.
- No specific detrimental impact in relation to Equality and Diversity issues for staff raised at this stage of the proposals (staff consultation will continue)
- Of the 93 respondents to the Survey, a vast majority were from the areas affected by the proposals, the split was almost 50/50 male to female, and 11.8 % declared a disability and 2.4% were from non- white British origin.
- The survey was entirely voluntary for anyone to access and complete and there was very little opportunity to encourage responses from minority groups in any reasonable way.

Stage 2 - Engagement and Consultation January 2014

Stage two of the EIA involved engaging members of the public on the current EIA findings in relation to the Mergers and Closures options ,specifically the 5 options provided to the Public Engagement Forums held in January 2014. The possible options discussed at the for further financial savings :

1. Additional “Low Level Activity and Risk Stations (LLAR)
2. Introduction of “Day Crewing” at some whole time stations
3. Introduction of “Community Retained “ (RDS) stations
4. Merger of pairs of older stations and their replacement by modern community fire stations
5. Closure of some stations without replacement

Five forums were held across each of MFRS District :

- Wirral - Saturday 11th January 2014 – 10.00am -1.30pm
- St Helens - Monday 13th January 2014 – 18.00pm -20.45pm
- Liverpool – Tuesday 14th January 2014 – 18.00pm- 20.45pm
- Knowsley – Wednesday 15th January 2014 - 18.00pm – 20.45pm
- Sefton – Thursday 16th January 2014 – 18.00pm – 20.45pm

Part of the engagement presentation included canvassing views from the forum on the impact of each of the 5 options in relation to protected equality groups. The forums

were broadly representative of the current demographic profiles for each district when compared to the demographic reports for each district, with the exception of Ethnicity for Wirral, St Helens and Sefton.

Table 1 – Equality Monitoring breakdown for each District engagement forums

	WIRRAL	ST Helens	LIVERPOOL	KNOWSLEY	SEFTON
Gender	Male: 12	Male: 10	Male: 13	Male: 10	Male: 13
	Female: 11	Female: 11	Female: 12	Female: 6	Female: 9
Age	18-34: 5	18-34: 3	18-34: 7	18-34: 3	18-34: 4
	35-54: 7	35-54: 9	35-54: 10	35-54: 7	35-54: 8
	55+: 11	55+: 9	55+: 8	55+: 6	55+: 10
Social Grade	AB: 6	AB: 4	AB: 6	AB: 2	AB: 6
	C1: 8	C1: 7	C1: 9	C1: 3	C1: 5
	C2: 4	C2: 3	C2: 4	C2: 6	C2: 3
	DE: 5	DE: 7	DE: 6	DE: 5	DE: 8
BME	0	0	2	1	0
Disability	6	6	6	3	0

Members of the Forum were given a summary of the outcomes from the EIA stage one, and asked if there were any specific concerns about those outcomes and indeed any of the 5 options. No concerns about the options were raised in any of the Forums, the general view was that the favoured option chosen by the members; mergers and closures, would provide a positive opportunity for members of the Disabled community and those elderly residents with limited mobility to access new station for community events and activities more easily than some of the current stations. The building of new stations would benefit many minority community groups who may have limited access to community spaces.

Stage 3 of the EIA will now involve consulting with the Public Proposals which will include consultation with specific organisations who support specific Protected Groups through various consultation methods.

Stage 1 – no public consultation conducted at this stage 1

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 - See Section 9.6 for further actions)

(d) Religion or Belief

As a) above but in relation to Religion and Belief and minority faith groups –See Section 9.6 for further actions

(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.

29.1.15 -EIA stage 3B (update following consultation on Allerton Closure)

The recent consultation on Allerton Station closure has not highlighted any significant Equality and Diversity issues in relation to the different equality groups with the exception of concerns around supporting different faiths and religious groups in times of heightened security and terrorist threats. Actions at 9.6 have been recommended to support those concerns.

13.1.15- EIA stage 3 a Wirral Consultation

The recent Wirral Consultation and this EIA did not highlight any particular negative impacts in relation to different equality groups. It should be noted that the Frankby road, Greasby site was withdrawn by Wirral Borough Council part way through the consultation period as a result of the opposition from residents and local politicians. Proposals are being considered in relation to further options that the Fire and Rescue Authority will consider: to consult on merging at a site in Saughall Massie or to close West Kirby.

17.9.14- EIA stage 3a and 3 b – Wirral and Liverpool (Allerton)

No consultation has taken place at this stage of the EIA for Wirral and Allerton proposals. A review of current demographics shows no significant equality issues in relation to negative impacts on proposed station mergers and closures for both Wirral and Liverpool (Allerton) for any protected group at higher risk of Fire and Rescue as the response times to attend any call will be within the standards set. Consultation at the next stage will review the impact in more detail with different groups of public and will focus also on any equality issues.

EIA Stage 3 – Decisions (Knowsley)

On reviewing the data, research and consultation at stage 3 of this EIA there are no significant disproportionate impacts on any of the protected groups. As response times will be maintained within the 10 minute response standard, no particular group will receive a significantly changed service to Fire and Rescue and there will be no major impact on current partnership arrangements at stations, as these can be transferred to the new station at Prescott with newer and more accessible facilities.

EIA Stage 2 – Decisions

The outcomes of the Engagement forums across the 5 Districts has identified no particular negative impacts that need to be considered in any of the 5 Options. The Merger and Closure option appears to be the most positive for a number of minority equality groups in terms of accessibility to community spaces.

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

8. Equality Improvement Plan

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

9. Equality & Diversity Sign Off

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

Signed off

Wendy Kenyon

Date:

19.11.13- EIA Stage 1
 31.1.14 – EIA stage 2
 20.8.14 – EIA stage 3
 19.9.14 – EIA stage 3a and 3b
 15.1.15 EIA stage 3 a updated and introduction of 3c
 25.1.15 – Stage 3b updated

Action Planned	Responsibility of	Completed by
<p>Actions Identified during EIA stage 1</p> <p>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)</p> <p>9.2 Analysis of Community Profiles for station areas affected to understand the types of communities affected by the Mergers and Closures Options and subsequent Proposals (completed)</p> <p>9.3 Equality analysis of those staff affected</p>	<p>Diversity and Consultation Manager (DCM) with Support from IRMP Officer</p> <p>Business Intelligence Manager and DCM</p> <p>DCM with support</p>	<p>Jan-April14</p> <p>Completed</p>

by the Options and subsequent Proposals to see if any particular protected group are affected disproportionately.	from POD	Completed
Actions Identified during EIA stage 2 9.4 Consider ways to engage further with members of different Ethnic communities (in those station areas which are most affected) when proposals are identified for consultation in the future (Completed)	WK	Completed
Actions Identified during EIA Stage 3 9.5 Target HFSC for those Vulnerable older people most affected by the future station merger and closures (Knowsley and Wirral – See Appendix B) 9.6 Make contact with religious institutions and places of worship which may be at higher risk of attack by fire during current climate to discuss fire safety and hate crime reporting	District Managers Ben Ryder to coordinate	Completed for Knowsley

Appendix A – ONS Demographic Equality Data by Station Ward

Please note that Station Areas are not based on the shape of wards, as such for the purposes of this section a ward has been identified to belong to a specific location if more than 50% of that ward rests within the station area.

District	Station Affected	2011 ward	Population	Mean Age	District Mean
Knowsley	Huyton	Longview	8,726	36	39
Knowsley	Huyton	Page Moss	7,076	38	39
Knowsley	Huyton	Prescot West	6,535	44	39
Knowsley	Huyton	Roby	7,254	44	39
Knowsley	Huyton	St Bartholomews	6,565	41	39
Knowsley	Huyton	St Gabriels	6,565	39	39
Knowsley	Huyton	St Michaels	6,920	39	39
Knowsley	Huyton	Stockbridge	6,018	40	39
Knowsley	Huyton	Swanside	6,519	42	39
Knowsley	Whiston	Prescot East	7,604	38	39
Knowsley	Whiston	Whiston North	6,908	41	39
Knowsley	Whiston	Whiston South	7,355	39	39
St Helens	Whiston	Rainhill	10,853	46	41
St Helens	St Helens	Billinge & Seneley Green	11,080	44	41
St Helens	St Helens	Blackbrook	10,639	41	41
St Helens	St Helens	Bold	9,759	38	41
St Helens	St Helens	Moss Bank	10,682	42	41
St Helens	St Helens	Parr	12,199	37	41
St Helens	St Helens	Sutton	12,003	41	41
St Helens	St Helens	Thatto Heath	12,280	38	41
St Helens	St Helens	Town Centre	10,978	39	41
St Helens	Eccleston	Rainford	7,779	47	41
St Helens	Eccleston	Eccleston	11,525	45	41
St Helens	Eccleston	West Park	11,392	40	41
St Helens	Eccleston	Windle	10,690	41	41
Wirral	Upton	Bidston & St James	15,216	36	41
Wirral	Upton	Cloughton	14,705	42	41
Wirral	Upton	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	13,991	45	41
Wirral	Upton	Moreton West & Saughall Massie	13,988	42	41
Wirral	Upton	Pensby & Thingwall	13,007	46	41
Wirral	Upton	Upton	16,130	42	41
Wirral	West Kirby	West Kirby & Thurstaston	12,733	45	41
Wirral	West Kirby	Hoylake & Meols	13,348	44	41
Liverpool	Allerton	Church	13,974	41	38
Liverpool	Allerton	Greenbank	16,132	32	38
Liverpool	Allerton	Mossley Hill	13,816	40	38
Liverpool	Allerton	Wavertree	14,772	39	38

Ethnicity Table:

District	Station Affected	2011 Ward	Population	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	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British: %	Other ethnic group: Total	Other ethnic group: %
Knowsley	Huyton	Longview	8,726	8,414	96.4%	140	1.6%	112	1.3%	54	0.6%	6	0.1%
Knowsley	Huyton	Page Moss	7,076	6,947	98.2%	75	1.1%	36	0.5%	12	0.2%	6	0.1%
Knowsley	Huyton	Prescot West	6,535	6,388	97.8%	58	0.9%	61	0.9%	17	0.3%	11	0.2%
Knowsley	Huyton	Roby	7,254	7,148	98.5%	50	0.7%	30	0.4%	16	0.2%	10	0.1%
Knowsley	Huyton	St Bartholomews	7,143	6,972	97.6%	101	1.4%	32	0.4%	19	0.3%	19	0.3%
Knowsley	Huyton	St Gabriels	6,565	6,434	98.0%	49	0.7%	49	0.7%	25	0.4%	8	0.1%
Knowsley	Huyton	St Michaels	6,920	6,768	97.8%	82	1.2%	55	0.8%	7	0.1%	8	0.1%
Knowsley	Huyton	Stockbridge	6,018	5,843	97.1%	90	1.5%	33	0.5%	36	0.6%	16	0.3%
Knowsley	Huyton	Swanside	6,519	6,347	97.4%	94	1.4%	52	0.8%	16	0.2%	10	0.2%
Knowsley	Whiston	Prescot East	7,604	7,300	96.0%	109	1.4%	160	2.1%	25	0.3%	10	0.1%
St Helens	Whiston	Rainhill	10,853	10,498	96.7%	83	0.8%	240	2.2%	7	0.1%	25	0.2%
Knowsley	Whiston	Whiston North	6,908	6,604	95.6%	60	0.9%	203	2.9%	24	0.3%	17	0.2%
Knowsley	Whiston	Whiston South	7,355	7,144	97.1%	113	1.5%	73	1.0%	20	0.3%	5	0.1%
Knowsley Average					97.2%		1.3%		1.0%		0.3%		0.1%

District	Station Affected	2011 Ward	Population	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	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British: %	Other ethnic group: Total	Other ethnic group: %
St Helens	St Helens	Billinge & Seneley Green	11,080	10,948	98.8%	67	0.6%	46	0.4%	9	0.1%	10	0.1%
St Helens	St Helens	Blackbrook	10,639	10,474	98.4%	49	0.5%	90	0.8%	4	0.0%	22	0.2%
St Helens	St Helens	Bold	9,759	9,618	98.6%	65	0.7%	50	0.5%	18	0.2%	8	0.1%
St Helens	St Helens	Moss Bank	10,682	10,568	98.9%	46	0.4%	50	0.5%	5	0.0%	13	0.1%
St Helens	St Helens	Parr	12,199	11,972	98.1%	97	0.8%	97	0.8%	22	0.2%	11	0.1%
St Helens	St Helens	Sutton	12,003	11,837	98.6%	87	0.7%	63	0.5%	11	0.1%	5	0.0%
St Helens	St Helens	Thatto Heath	12,280	11,829	96.3%	120	1.0%	270	2.2%	31	0.3%	30	0.2%
St Helens	St Helens	Town Centre	10,978	10,684	97.3%	69	0.6%	191	1.7%	18	0.2%	16	0.1%
St Helens	Eccleston	Eccleston	11,525	11,302	98.1%	76	0.7%	121	1.0%	15	0.1%	11	0.1%
St Helens	Eccleston	Rainford	7,779	7,682	98.8%	34	0.4%	43	0.6%	8	0.1%	12	0.2%
St Helens	Eccleston	West Park	11,392	11,183	98.2%	79	0.7%	88	0.8%	25	0.2%	17	0.1%
St Helens	Eccleston	Windle	10,690	10,564	98.8%	50	0.5%	58	0.5%	8	0.1%	10	0.1%
St Helens Average					98.0%		0.7%		1.0%		0.1%		0.1%

District	Station Affected	2011 Ward	Population	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	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British: %	Other ethnic group: Total	Other ethnic group: %
Wirral	Upton	Bidston & St James	15,216	14,659	96.3%	238	1.6%	270	1.8%	37	0.2%	12	0.1%
Wirral	Upton	Claughton	14,705	14,147	96.2%	163	1.1%	344	2.3%	21	0.1%	30	0.2%
Wirral	Upton	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	13,991	13,685	97.8%	112	0.8%	146	1.0%	21	0.2%	27	0.2%
Wirral	Upton	Moreton West & Saughall Massie	13,988	13,722	98.1%	87	0.6%	134	1.0%	25	0.2%	20	0.1%
Wirral	Upton	Pensby & Thingwall	13,007	12,744	98.0%	109	0.8%	132	1.0%	13	0.1%	9	0.1%
Wirral	Upton	Upton	16,130	15,587	96.6%	123	0.8%	352	2.2%	36	0.2%	32	0.2%
Wirral	W Kirby	Hoylake & Meols	13,348	13,019	97.5%	139	1.0%	139	1.0%	19	0.1%	32	0.2%
Wirral	W Kirby	West Kirby & Thurstaston	12,733	12,326	96.8%	170	1.3%	168	1.3%	16	0.1%	53	0.4%
Wirral Average					97.0%		1.0%		1.6%		0.2%		0.2%

District	Station Affected	2011 Ward	Population	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	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British: %	Other ethnic group: Total	Other ethnic group: %
Liverpool	Allerton	Church	13,974	12,858	92.0%	367	2.6%	472	3.4%	160	1.1%	117	0.8%
Liverpool	Allerton	Greenbank	16,132	13,400	83.1%	736	4.6%	949	5.9%	630	3.9%	417	2.6%
Liverpool	Allerton	Mossley Hill	13,816	12,889	93.3%	293	2.1%	399	2.9%	130	0.9%	105	0.8%
Liverpool	Allerton	Wavertree	14,772	13,288	90.0%	526	3.6%	552	3.7%	245	1.7%	161	1.1%
Liverpool Average					88.9%		2.5%		4.2%		2.6%		1.8%

Disability Tables

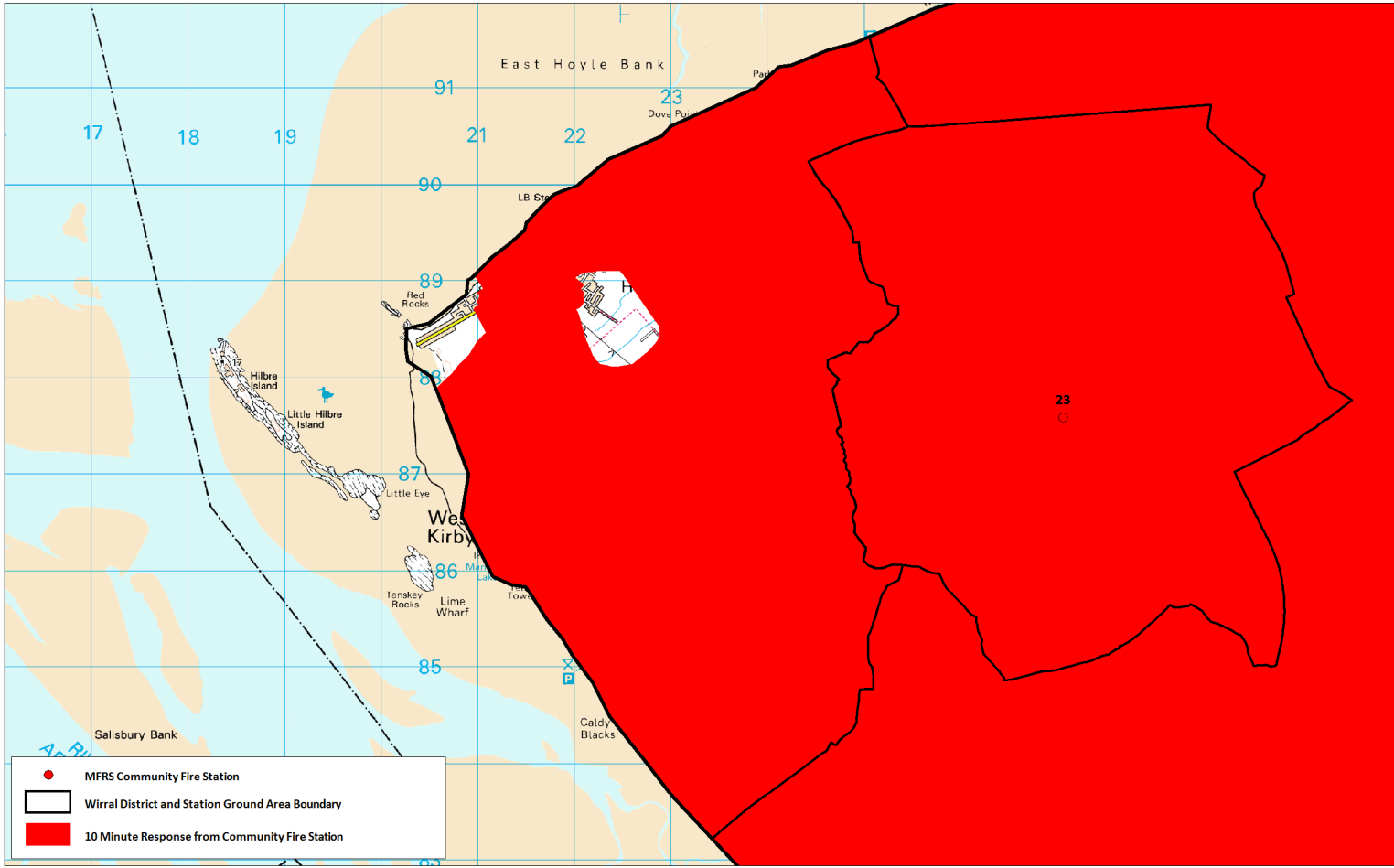
District	Station Affected	2011 Ward	Population	Day-to-Day Activities Limited a Lot	Day-to-Day Activities Limited a Lot %	Day-to-Day Activities Limited a Little	Day-to-Day Activities Limited a Little %	Day-to-Day Activities Not Limited	Day-to-Day Activities Not Limited %
Knowsley	Huyton	Longview	8726	1367	15.7%	904	10.4%	6455	74.0%
Knowsley	Huyton	Page Moss	7076	1239	17.5%	802	11.3%	5035	71.2%
Knowsley	Huyton	Prescot West	6535	1007	15.4%	828	12.7%	4700	71.9%
Knowsley	Huyton	Roby	7254	829	11.4%	722	10.0%	5703	78.6%
Knowsley	Huyton	St Bartholomews	6565	893	13.6%	666	10.1%	5006	76.3%
Knowsley	Huyton	St Gabriels	6920	1042	15.1%	692	10.0%	5186	74.9%
Knowsley	Huyton	St Michaels	7114	642	9.0%	528	7.4%	5944	83.6%
Knowsley	Huyton	Stockbridge	6018	1206	20.0%	730	12.1%	4082	67.8%
Knowsley	Huyton	Swanside	6519	722	11.1%	675	10.4%	5122	78.6%
Knowsley	Whiston	Prescot East	7604	1025	13.5%	817	10.7%	5762	75.8%
Knowsley	Whiston	Whiston North	6908	890	12.9%	701	10.1%	5317	77.0%
Knowsley	Whiston	Whiston South	7355	893	12.1%	739	10.0%	5723	77.8%
St Helens	Whiston	Rainhill	10853	1312	12.1%	1212	11.2%	8329	76.7%
Knowsley Average					14.2%		10.3%		75.5%

District	Station Affected	2011 Ward	Population	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 %
St Helens	St Helens	Billinge & Seneley Green	11080	1192	10.8%	1243	11.2%	8645	78.0%
St Helens	St Helens	Blackbrook	10639	1298	12.2%	1146	10.8%	8195	77.0%
St Helens	St Helens	Bold	9759	1176	12.1%	976	10.0%	7607	77.9%
St Helens	St Helens	Moss Bank	10682	1433	13.4%	1235	11.6%	8014	75.0%
St Helens	St Helens	Parr	12199	1864	15.3%	1319	10.8%	9016	73.9%
St Helens	St Helens	Sutton	12003	1569	13.1%	1253	10.4%	9181	76.5%
St Helens	St Helens	Thatto Heath	12280	1658	13.5%	1250	10.2%	9372	76.3%
St Helens	St Helens	Town Centre	10978	1656	15.1%	1252	11.4%	8070	73.5%
St Helens	Eccleston	Eccleston	11525	1201	10.4%	1233	10.7%	9091	78.9%
St Helens	Eccleston	Rainford	7779	850	10.9%	907	11.7%	6022	77.4%
St Helens	Eccleston	West Park	11392	1362	12.0%	1209	10.6%	8821	77.4%
St Helens	Eccleston	Windle	10690	1140	10.7%	1082	10.1%	8468	79.2%
St Helens Average					12.4%		10.6%		77.0%

District	Station Affected	2011 Ward	Population	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 %
Wirral	Upton	Bidston & St James	15216	2441	16.0%	1748	11.5%	11027	72.5%
Wirral	Upton	Claughton	14705	1940	13.2%	1556	10.6%	11209	76.2%
Wirral	Upton	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	13991	1233	8.8%	1536	11.0%	11222	80.2%
Wirral	Upton	Moreton West & Saughall Massie	13988	1782	12.7%	1413	10.1%	10793	77.2%
Wirral	Upton	Pensby & Thingwall	13007	1528	11.7%	1539	11.8%	9940	76.4%
Wirral	Upton	Upton	16130	2408	14.9%	1778	11.0%	11944	74.0%
Wirral	W Kirby	Hoylake & Meols	13348	1296	9.7%	1337	10.0%	10715	80.3%
Wirral	W Kirby	West Kirby & Thurstaston	12733	1187	9.3%	1361	10.7%	10185	80.0%
Wirral Average					11.9%		10.7%		77.4%

District	Station Affected	2011 Ward	Population	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 %
Liverpool	Allerton	Church	13974	1120	8.0%	1241	8.9%	11613	83.1%
Liverpool	Allerton	Greenbank	16132	1277	7.9%	1047	6.5%	13808	85.6%
Liverpool	Allerton	Mossley Hill	13816	1301	9.4%	1136	8.2%	11379	82.4%
Liverpool	Allerton	Wavertree	14772	1588	10.8%	1336	9.0%	11848	80.2%
Liverpool Average					12.8%		9.7%		77.6%

Appendix B 10 minute response coverage time from Upton Station and surrounding stations (excluding West Kirby and Wallasey)



10 Minute Response Coverage Time from Community Fire Stations 20, 21, 22 and 23

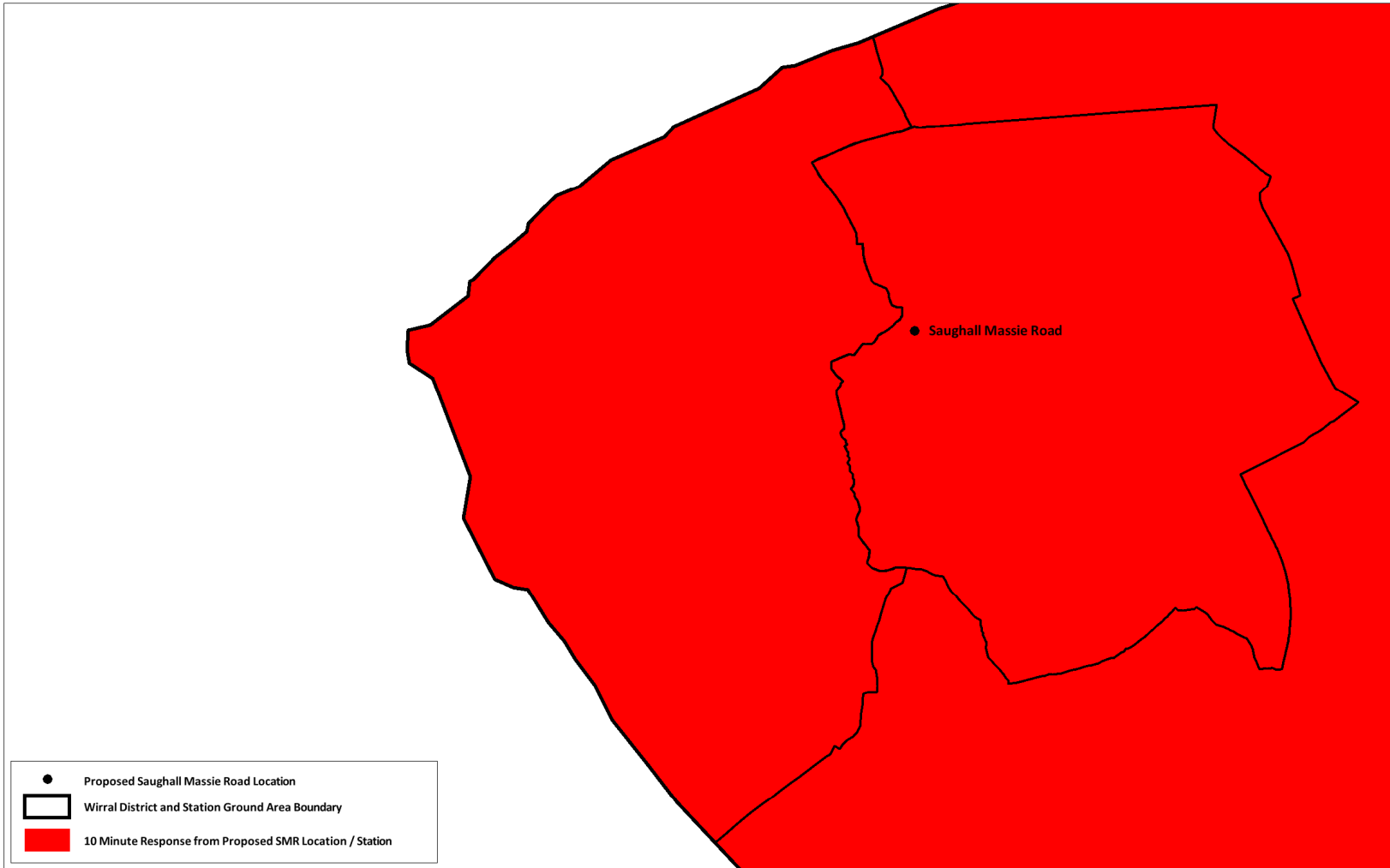
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Author: Gary Crosbie
 Produced Using: MapInfo Professional v11.0
 Date: 15.01.2015
 Strategy and Performance

Map Reference:
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Appendix B Continued – 10 minute response time from proposed Saughall Massie Road location and surrounding stations (Excluding Upton West Kirby and Wallesey)



10 Minute Response Coverage Time from Proposed Saughall Massie Road Location and Community Fire Stations 20, 21 and 22

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Author: Gary Crosbie
Produced Using: MapInfo Professional v11.0
Date: 16.01.2015
Strategy and Performance

Map Reference:
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MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY BUDGET MEETING		
DATE:	26TH FEBRUARY 2015	REPORT NO:	CFO/010/15
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER	REPORT AUTHOR:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT GROUP		
TITLE OF REPORT:	OPERATIONAL RESPONSE SAVINGS OPTIONS 2015/16 – LIVERPOOL DISTRICT		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A	ALLERTON 2ND PUBLIC CONSULTATION DOCUMENT
	APPENDIX B	EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Purpose of Report

1. To advise Members of the operational response savings options for Liverpool following the consultation process (which commenced on 1st November 2014 and concluded on 26th January 2015) over the proposal to close Allerton fire station and relocate the Allerton appliance to Old Swan to be crewed on a wholetime retained basis on a 30 minute recall.

Recommendation

2. That Members:
 - a) consider the outcomes of the public consultation process and the professional view of the Chief Fire Officer over the option to deliver least impact on overall operational response and
 - b) as a result approve the proposal to close Allerton fire station and relocate the Allerton appliance to Old Swan to be crewed on a wholetime retained basis on a 30 minute recall.

Introduction and Background

3. At the Authority meeting 2nd October 2014 Members approved a 12 week public consultation over the proposal to close Allerton fire station and relocate the Allerton appliance to Old Swan to be crewed on a wholetime retained basis on a 30 minute recall (report CFO/102/14 refers). Appendix B to report CFO/102/14 explained the logic underpinning the selection of Allerton as the station in Liverpool for closure.
4. The consultation process commenced on 1st November 2014 and concluded on 26th January 2015. The outcomes of the consultation process have been reported to Members within CFO/008/15. In summary there were no substantive issues raised during the consultation process that called in to question the reasonableness of the

proposal. However, Members are asked to fully consider the outcomes of the consultation process whilst considering the recommendations of this report.

5. In 2015/16 the Authority must make savings of £6.3m in addition to the £20m savings required as a result of cuts in the Authority budget over the period 2011/12 – 2014/15.
6. To date the Authority has increased its council tax by the maximum amount it can (2%) without undertaking a referendum. A referendum is estimated to cost £1m. It is assumed for the purpose of this report that the Authority will increase council tax by the maximum permissible amount for 2015/16.
7. The Authority has also identified all of the available non-operational savings options and adopted them in full. These total £2.9m. However this still leaves £3.4m of the £6.3m which must be delivered from operational response. This equates to a reduction of around 90 whole-time equivalent (WTE) Firefighter posts. These posts will be lost through natural turnover as firefighters retire.
8. As has previously been explained to Members any further reductions in Firefighter numbers directly impacts on the number of appliances that can be crewed on a whole-time basis which in turn directly impacts on the number of fire stations the Authority can realistically maintain.
9. Officers have previously undertaken extensive pan Merseyside public consultation over the options available to the Authority to make the structural and/or crewing system changes that inevitably result from the reduction in firefighter numbers. These options are;
 - Station mergers
 - Outright station closures
 - Increasing the number of “Low Level of Activity and Risk” (LLAR) stations
 - Introducing the Grey Book Day Crewing shift system
 - Crewing stations during the day time only
 - Crewing stations with community retained Firefighters
10. The merger of stations was recognised by the public as the best option to pursue given the circumstances; with the least resulting impact on operational response. The closure of stations was preferred over changes to the way fire stations and fire appliances are crewed as the majority of participants in the consultation process understood that it is firefighters and fire appliances that respond to incidents to save lives not fire stations. As there are no pairs of older fire stations in Liverpool that are adjacent to each other a merger of stations, whilst initially thought to be a feasible option, was found to not be realistic after a more detailed analysis. It is for this reason that the proposal to close Allerton outright was made to the Authority by the Chief Fire Officer.
11. The professional view of the Chief Fire Officer on the viability all of the options listed is contained within the public consultation document that was distributed at the Allerton consultation events and published on the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service website (attached to this report at Appendix A). This document also reiterates the logic underpinning the selection of Allerton as the station identified for closure within the Liverpool district. A summary of the alternative options considered is provided below.

Alternative options to station mergers or outright closure and the operational rationale as to why these have been considered and discounted by the Chief Fire Officer at this time

Context

12. Paragraph 3.2 of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority Scheme of Delegation places the following responsibilities on the Chief Fire Officer;

To control all matters of the day to day administration of the Fire & Rescue Service which shall include taking and implementing decisions that are:-

- (a) Concerned with maintaining the operational effectiveness of the Service,*
- (b) Matters incidental to the discharge of the Authority's functions which fall within a policy decision taken by the Authority.*

13. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England directs that 'The Fire and Rescue Authority must hold their Chief Fire Officer to account for the delivery of the fire and rescue service'.
14. The Chief Fire Officer is therefore responsible for all operational matters and is held to account by the Authority for decisions taken in this regard.
15. The Authority currently has 26 fire stations and 28 fire appliances. Of the 26 fire stations, 24 have 1 fire appliance and 2 of the 26, Kirkdale and Southport, have 2 fire appliances. Kirkdale is the Operational Resource Centre for the Authority housing all of the non-Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) special appliances (which are located at Croxteth with the USAR team and attract a separate crewing grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government). The second appliance at Kirkdale operates as a support appliance to the special appliances. Southport has 2 fire appliances because of its geographic location and the travel distances involved for additional appliances responding from elsewhere on Merseyside.
16. The number of wholetime Firefighters employed directly equates to the numbers of fire appliances that can be staffed and therefore the numbers of fire stations the Authority can operate.
17. The removal of around 90 Firefighter posts will result in the loss of 4 wholetime fire appliances. It is the view of the Chief Fire Officer that the Authority should maintain 2 appliances at Kirkdale and Southport. In maintaining 2 appliances at Kirkdale and Southport the Authority can only staff enough appliances to maintain 22 fire stations on a wholetime basis. The Authority could as an alternative maintain 26 stations through altering the crewing arrangements on specific stations or across the Service.
18. The operational logic for station mergers is to close two adjacent 1 appliance wholetime stations and build a new 1 appliance wholetime, 1 appliance wholetime retained station at a location in between to deliver the best response times achievable in the circumstances from the 1 remaining wholetime appliance. (Such an option is possible in Knowsley, Wirral and St Helens due to the age and proximity of the stations hence the merger proposals which have been or will be the subject of public consultation). The second appliance is maintained in this option through the use of "wholetime retained" crewing.
19. "Wholetime retained" crewing means wholetime Firefighters having a second retained contract whereby they provide cover on their days off to respond in to the station to crew the second appliance within 30 minutes of an alert. It is the view of the Chief Fire Officer that the 30 minute delay in responding criteria would attract volunteers from

sufficient numbers of existing staff to make the system viable. The retained (second) appliance would only be called in during periods of high operational demand and should not be considered as an appliance that would be used for an immediate response to incidents on the station area. Its function is as part of a strategic reserve, not as a first line response until such time as the crew had been called in which would take up to 30 minutes. The reason this option is proposed is that it uses wholetime Firefighters rather than solely community retained Firefighters.

20. There are no viable merger options in Liverpool due to the age and proximity of the stations across the city. An outright closure and the relocation of the wholetime appliance to be crewed wholetime retained at a neighbouring station has been proposed in these circumstances as it delivers the least impact on response times of all of the achievable options.

Low Level of Activity and Risk

21. The Low Level of Activity and Risk (LLAR) duty system is currently in operation at 4 of the Authority's 26 stations. The system consists of a 12 hour wholetime day shift followed immediately by a 12 hour retained night shift (spent off the station) where the crew must respond to an incident within 1.9 minutes of an alert thus maintaining a comparable alert to mobile time as achieved by other wholetime staff during their night time rest period.
22. Changing the crewing at a station from wholetime to LLAR would deliver a saving of 8 wholetime equivalent (WTE) posts. In order to deliver the same savings as for a station merger or outright closure 3 wholetime stations would need to convert to LLAR. Whilst this option would maintain an immediate emergency response (assuming it was possible to secure accommodation for the night time retained period separate from the station but within a 1.9 minute alert to mobile time) it is less resilient than wholetime crewing as the same staff cover the 12 hour wholetime period and the 12 hour retained period. For example, if a crew attends incidents during the night time period they will then require a period of stand down time to recover during the day shift, meaning they are not available to provide operational response.
23. As the number of appliances reduces the ability for Fire Control to not mobilise LLAR appliances during the retained period is also reduced meaning they will attend more incidents and potentially no longer meet the LLAR threshold.
24. To make the £3.4m savings required from operational response the Authority would need to convert a further 12 wholetime appliances to LLAR. This would result in 16 of the Authorities 28 appliances being crewed in this way.
25. In order to comply with Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended) the Authority would be required to provide separate accommodation for the retained duty period within a 1.9 minute response isochrone from the stations in question.
26. The cost of building accommodation at existing LLAR stations has been around £300k. Converting 12 appliances to LLAR would therefore require a capital spend of around £3.6m for accommodation. Of the 10 key stations only one, Formby, is currently crewed LLAR which is as a result of its geographic location, the very low numbers of incidents on the station ground and number of appliance mobilisations. In any other circumstances a key station would not be crewed on the LLAR duty system. Of the stations not designated as 'key' a number have appliance mobilisation numbers which exceed the LLAR threshold of 825 incidents to the station area agreed in 2006

(Kirkdale, Kensington, City Centre, St Helens and Birkenhead). A number also do not have sufficient space within the curtilage of the station to build separate accommodation necessary to make the 1.9 minute alert to mobile time during the retained period (Toxteth and Aintree).

27. There is a very low likelihood anticipated that the Authority could attract and indeed retain sufficient volunteers from existing staff to crew an additional 12 LLAR appliances. Whilst the Authority could recruit Firefighters directly on to the LLAR system this would result in crews on LLAR stations with a disproportionately high number of inexperienced Firefighters until such time as they were able to demonstrate competence in role. It would also invariably result in existing wholetime firefighters who did not wish to volunteer for the LLAR duty system being placed at risk of compulsory redundancy.
28. It is for these reasons that LLAR has been discounted by the Chief Fire Officer as an option to maintain operational effectiveness at this time.

Day Crewing

29. The Authority does not currently operate the Day Crewing duty system at any station on Merseyside. This system consists of a wholetime day shift (typically 10 hours duration) immediately followed by a 14 hour retained night shift where a response is made by a Firefighter from home within 5 minutes of an alert.
30. Changing the crewing at a station from wholetime to Day Crewing would deliver a saving of 10.8 wholetime equivalent (WTE) posts (assuming a 10% retaining fee). In order to deliver the same savings as for a station merger or outright closure, 2 wholetime stations would need to convert to Day Crewing.
31. To make the £3.4m savings required from operational response the Authority would need to convert 8 wholetime appliances to Day Crewing in addition to the existing 4 LLAR appliances. This would result in 12 of the Authority's 28 appliances either on Day Crewing or LLAR crewing. Day Crewing is less resilient than wholetime crewing for similar reasons as for LLAR as the same staff cover the 10 hour wholetime period and the 14 hour retained period. As the number of appliances reduces the ability for Fire Control to not mobilise LLAR or Day Crewing appliances during the retained period is also reduced.
32. This option would introduce a 5 minute delay in responding from 8 appliances for 14 hours each day. 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 be able to attend an incident in at least the same time as the Day Crewing appliance if not quicker during the retained period.
33. There is a very low likelihood indeed that the Authority could attract and indeed retain sufficient volunteers from existing staff to crew 8 Day Crewing appliances. Whilst the Authority could recruit Firefighters directly on to the Day Crewing system this would result in crews on Day Crewing stations with a disproportionately high number of inexperienced Firefighters until such time as they were able to demonstrate competence in role. It would also invariably result in existing wholetime firefighters who did not wish to volunteer for the Day Crewing duty system being placed at risk of compulsory redundancy.

34. It is for these reasons that Day Crewing has been discounted by the Chief Fire Officer as an option to maintain operational effectiveness. If as expected the Authority faces further cuts beyond 2015/16 this option may have to be reconsidered as a means of maintaining capacity during the day time period.

Day only crewing

35. The Authority does not currently operate day only crewing at any station on Merseyside. This system involves Firefighters crewing the station for a 12 hour wholtime day shift only in order to maintain capacity to undertake training and community safety activities.
36. Changing the crewing at a station from wholtime to day only crewing would deliver a saving of 12 wholtime equivalent (WTE) posts. In order to deliver the same savings as for a station merger or outright closure 2 wholtime stations would need to convert to day only crewing.
37. To make the £3.4m savings required from operational response the Authority would need to convert 8 wholtime appliances to day only crewing in addition to the existing 4 LLAR appliances. This would result in 12 of the Authorities 28 appliances either on day only crewing or LLAR crewing.
38. Whilst an immediate response to incidents would be achieved during the 12 hour day shift there would be no response at all during the 12 hour night time period from day only crewed stations.
39. There is a very low likelihood indeed that the Authority could attract and indeed retain sufficient volunteers from existing staff to crew 8 days only appliances. Whilst the Authority could recruit Firefighters directly on to day only crewing this would result in crews on day only stations with a disproportionately high number of inexperienced Firefighters until such time as they were able to demonstrate competence in role. It would also invariably result in existing wholtime firefighters who did not wish to volunteer for day only crewing being placed at risk of compulsory redundancy.
40. It is for these reasons that day only crewing has been discounted by the Chief Fire Officer as an option to maintain operational effectiveness at this time. If as expected the Authority faces further cuts beyond 2015/16 this option may have to be reconsidered as a means of maintaining capacity during the day time period.

Retained

41. The Authority does not currently operate retained only crewing at any station on Merseyside. This system involves members of the community who live or work within 5 minutes of a fire station volunteering to be available for up to 120 hours per week for a retaining fee equivalent to 10% of a wholtime Firefighter's salary.
42. Changing the crewing at a station from wholtime to retained would deliver a saving of 22 wholtime equivalent (WTE) posts. In order to deliver the same savings as for a station merger or outright closure 1 wholtime station would need to convert to retained crewing.
43. To make the £3.4m savings required from operational response the Authority would need to convert 4 wholtime appliances to retained in addition to the existing 4 LLAR

appliances. This would result in 8 of the Authorities 28 appliances either on retained or LLAR crewing.

44. 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 (wholtime retained) or for the Authority to recruit members of the public who live or work within 5 minutes of the station.
45. There is a very low likelihood indeed anticipated that the Authority could attract and indeed retain sufficient volunteers from existing staff to crew 4 wholtime retained appliances on a 5 minute recall. That being so, the Authority would need to recruit almost a full crew of retained Firefighters. It is the view of the Chief Fire Officer that a retained Firefighter does not have sufficient contact time within the Grey Book (Firefighters nationally agreed conditions of service) retained contract to acquire and maintain the skills of an existing Merseyside wholtime Firefighter (the Merseyside Trainee Firefighter course is 23 weeks duration and the wholtime work routine allocates in excess of 20 hours per week to on station training. A retained firefighter has approximately 2/3 hours per week contact time at station for training, development and maintenance duties). 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 wholtime 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.
46. With 3 hours contact time each week retained Firefighters would only be able to undertake very limited amounts of community safety work.
47. Assuming the 5 minute delay in responding in to the station and given the geography of Merseyside, it is likely that the nearest wholtime appliances would attend an incident in at least the same time as the retained crew if not quicker.
48. It is for these reasons that retained crewing has been discounted by the Chief Fire Officer as an option to maintain operational effectiveness at this time.
49. Whilst fully recognising the gravity and significance of the outright closure of Allerton fire station the Chief Fire Officer remains of the view that the outright closure of Allerton and the relocation of the Allerton fire appliance to Old Swan to be crewed wholtime retained on a 30 minute recall will result in the least impactive outcome on overall operational response and is therefore recommended to Members for their approval.

Equality and Diversity Implications

50. The Equality Impact Assessment has been updated to take account of the consultation process and is attached at Appendix B. In summary:

“The recent consultation on Allerton Station closure has not highlighted any significant Equality and Diversity issues in relation to the different equality groups with the exception of concerns around supporting different faiths and religious groups in times of heightened security and terrorist threats. Actions have been recommended to support those concerns.”

Staff Implications

51. In the event that Members approve the recommendation to close Allerton the Firefighters currently posted to the station will be transferred to the nearest surrounding stations subject to a 21 day notice period.
52. A collective agreement is in place with the representative bodies to ensure the availability of 4 wholetime retained appliances, one of which would be relocated from Allerton fire station to Old Swan fire station. This appliance will be crewed by personnel working 24 hour shifts across two locations (to be determined) and providing 24 hours retained cover in every 8 day reference period for a retaining fee of 5%.

Legal Implications

53. If the recommendation of the report is approved this will mean that savings required for the Authority to deliver a balanced budget will be made however if this report is not approved the Authority will still need to make savings in order to set a balanced and therefore legal budget as required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended).

Financial Implications & Value for Money

54. The change in crewing from wholetime to wholetime retained on four appliances is necessary to deliver the savings target of £3.4m from Operational Response required for the financial plan and 2015/16 budget.
55. The specific saving from converting a whole time appliance to wholetime retained is approximately £0.8m (22 WTE posts).
56. The expected savings in direct running costs like energy, rates and water bills through the outright closure of Allerton are £44,500. In addition day to day repairs and the overall maintenance bill for the station will be avoided.
57. In order to avoid compulsory redundancy the Authority is using natural retirement rates for Firefighters to deliver savings. Whilst these retirements will happen ahead of the new merged stations being delivered they will not happen fast enough to deliver the budget savings for 2015/16 therefore the Authority has committed to use reserves to meet the deficit.
58. Members will recall that the Authority has been successful in obtaining £4.5m of transformation and efficiency funding towards a programme of station mergers and integration with blue light partners. In the light of the outcomes of the public consultation officers have been exploring options with North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) and Merseyside Police to deliver the strategic outcome of blue light integration within South Liverpool. At this point in time it is considered most likely that effective joint working can be delivered with NWAS from Toxteth fire station and that investing resources in colocation will deliver significant operational efficiencies and meet the expected outcomes of the transformation and efficiency fund.
59. Officers will work up detailed proposals for Members to consider on how to achieve this outcome. This may require endorsement by CLG of the eventual proposal.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

60. The closure of Allerton and the relocation of the Allerton appliance to Old Swan to be crewed on a wholetime retained basis has been identified as having the least overall impact on operational response achievable in the circumstances.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

61. The Chief Fire Officer will continue to manage appliance availability in such a way so as to minimise the impact on response times.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/102/14 Operational Response Savings Options 2015/16 – Liverpool District

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

Liverpool Fire Cover Consultation

Consultation Document 2

December 2014

Introduction

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) is consulting on a draft proposal to close Allerton fire station and relocate its fire appliance to Old Swan fire station. The consultation began on the 1st of November and will close on the 26th of January 2015. A newsletter was published on the 1st of November and this second document provides additional information to help people respond to the consultation.

Why the Fire and Rescue Service has to change

MFRA is responsible for providing fire and rescue services for Merseyside's 1.4 million people at 26 fire stations across the five districts. This currently includes delivering fire and rescue services in Liverpool from ten stations; Kirkdale, Liverpool City, Kensington, Allerton, Speke & Garston, Toxteth, Old Swan, Belle Vale, Aintree and Croxteth.

Over the last four years MFRA has had to make savings of £20 million as a result of Government spending reductions and now the Authority is required to make a further £6.3 million of savings in 2015/16. It is also possible that future savings will be required – whichever party is in power: possibly up to £9.1 million in 2016/17 and up to £20 million in total by 2020.

MFRA has already had to make significant reductions in its support services and back office staff. The number of firefighters MFRA employs has reduced from 1,400 to 764, with fire appliances reducing from 42 to 28 across the county. All but two stations have only one appliance. What has not changed in more than 20 years is the number of community fire stations (26) and the Authority will not be able to afford to maintain all of them in the future.

To save £6.3 million in 2015/16 the Authority aims to deliver £2.9 million from support services (such as Finance, Human Resources and Estates management) and technical areas such as debt financing. The remaining £3.4 million would then come from our emergency response and this will require the equivalent of at least four station mergers or outright closures.

The Authority is making these changes reluctantly, but the situation is such that the existing number of fire stations cannot be maintained in the future.

The options considered

Before making proposals to change fire cover in Merseyside the Authority considered a number of other options and consulted with the public about them.

The options were:

- Some outright station closures.
- Increasing the number of “Low Level of Activity and Risk” (LLAR) stations.

- Some station mergers.
- Crewing some stations only during the day.
- Using community retained firefighters to crew some stations.

The merger of stations was recognised by the public as the best option given the circumstances; with least impact on operational response. The closure of stations was preferred over changes to the way fire stations and fire engines are crewed (because they understood that it is firefighters and fire engines that save lives, not the fire stations).

Following this consultation, three possible mergers were identified as offering opportunities to replace old buildings with new facilities in locations which offer the best incident response coverage possible in the circumstances. The draft proposals were to:

1. Close the stations at Huyton and Whiston while building a new station at Prescott;
2. Close the stations at Upton and West Kirby while providing a new station at a central location (initially the Frankby Road site);
3. Close the stations at Eccleston and St Helens while providing a new station in the proximity of St Helens Town Centre.

Each of these merged stations would have two fire engines. In each case, one fire engine would be crewed 24/7 (as now) while the other would be a “reserve”, or “back-up” vehicle to be crewed by “wholetime retained” firefighters on a 30-minute recall basis for periods of exceptionally high demand.

A fourth merger in Liverpool has also been considered but, given the age and proximity of stations, it is proposed that outright closure of a station would be the most sensible option.

The Fire and Rescue Authority believes that each of these changes may be made safely and will provide significant savings. The information on the next page gives more detail about why the Authority has approved the draft proposal for Allerton.

The information below is a detailed explanation of the alternative options to station mergers or outright closure and the operational rationale as to why these have been considered and discounted by the Chief Fire Officer at this time.

Context

1. Paragraph 3.2 of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority scheme of delegation places the following responsibilities on the Chief Fire Officer:

To control all matters of the day to day administration of the Fire & Rescue Service which shall include taking and implementing decisions that are:-

*(a) Concerned with maintaining the operational effectiveness of the Service,
(b) Matters incidental to the discharge of the Authority's functions which fall within a policy decision taken by the Authority.*

2. *The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England directs that "The Fire and rescue authority must hold their Chief Fire Officer to account for the delivery of the fire and rescue service".*
3. *The Chief Fire Officer is therefore responsible for all operational matters and is held to account by the Authority for decisions taken in this regard.*
4. *In 2015/16 the Authority must make savings of £6.3 million in addition to the £20 million savings required as a result to cuts in the Authority budget over the period 2011/12 – 2014/15.*
5. *The Authority has increased its council tax by the maximum amount it can (2%) without undertaking a referendum. A referendum is estimated to cost £1m.*
6. *The Authority has also identified all the non-operational savings available to it and adopted them in full. These total £2.9m. However, this still means that of the £6.3m savings, £3.4m must be delivered from operational response. This equates to a reduction of around 90 wholetime equivalent (WTE) Firefighter posts. These posts will be lost through natural turnover as firefighters retire.*
7. *The Authority currently has 26 fire stations and 28 fire appliances. Of the 26 fire stations, 24 have one fire appliance and two, Kirkdale and Southport, have two fire appliances. Kirkdale is the Operational Resource Centre for the Authority housing all of the non-Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) special appliances (which are located at Croxteth with the USAR team). The second appliance at Kirkdale operates as a support appliance to the special appliances. Southport has two fire appliances because of its geographic location and the travel distances involved for additional appliances responding from elsewhere on Merseyside.*

8. *Of our 26 stations, 10 are designated as Key Stations. From these stations we can provide a 10-minute response to all areas of Merseyside on 90% of occasions (our response standard).*
9. *The number of wholetime Firefighters employed directly equates to the numbers of fire appliances that can be staffed for an immediate response by fully trained Firefighters and therefore the numbers of fire stations the Authority can operate.*
10. *The removal of 90 Firefighter posts will result in the loss of 4 wholetime fire appliances. It is the view of the Chief Fire Officer that the Authority should maintain two appliances at Kirkdale and Southport, because of the location of Southport and the fact that Kirkdale is the Operational Resource Centre for Merseyside. In maintaining two appliances at Kirkdale and Southport the Authority can only staff enough appliances to maintain 22 fire stations on a wholetime basis. The Authority could, as an alternative, maintain 26 stations through altering the crewing arrangements on specific stations or across the Service. The reasons why these options have been discounted by the Chief Fire Officer in favour of station mergers or outright closures are detailed in paragraphs below.*
11. *The operational logic for station mergers is to close two adjacent stations (which each currently house one appliance on a wholetime basis) and build a new station (that would house one wholetime appliance and one appliance staffed on a wholetime retained basis). Building the new station at a location in between the two existing stations would deliver the best response times achievable in the circumstances from the one remaining wholetime appliance. Such an option is possible in Knowsley, Wirral and St Helens due to the age and proximity of the stations.*
12. *In each of the merged stations, the second appliance would be crewed on a “wholetime retained” basis. “Wholetime retained” crewing in this instance means wholetime Firefighters having a second retained contract whereby they provide cover on their days off to respond and crew the second appliance within 30 minutes of an alert - because a 30-minute response time delay would attract volunteers from sufficient numbers of existing staff to make the system viable.*
13. *The retained (second) appliance would only be called in during periods of high operational demand and they would not be used for immediate response to incidents in the station area. Its function is as part of a strategic reserve, not as a first-line response until such time as the crew had been called in, which would take up to 30 minutes. The advantage of this option is that it uses wholetime firefighters rather than community retained firefighters (see paragraphs 33 – 39 below).*
14. *There are no viable merger options in Liverpool due to the age and proximity of the stations across the city. An outright closure and the relocation of the wholetime appliance to be crewed on a wholetime retained basis at a*

neighbouring station has been proposed in these circumstances as it delivers the least impact on response times of all of the achievable options.

Low Level of Activity and Risk

- 15. The Low Level of Activity and Risk (LLAR) duty system is currently in operation at four of the Authority's 26 stations. The system consists of a 12-hour wholetime day shift followed immediately by a 12-hour retained night shift (spent off the station) where the crew must respond to an incident within 1 minute 54 seconds of an alert thus maintaining a comparable alert to mobile time as achieved by other wholetime staff during their night-time rest period.*
- 16. Changing the crewing at a station from wholetime to LLAR would deliver a saving of 8 wholetime equivalent (WTE) posts. In order to deliver the same savings as for a station merger, 3 wholetime stations would need to convert to LLAR. Whilst this option would maintain an immediate emergency response (assuming it was possible to secure accommodation for the night-time retained period separate from the station but within a 1 minute 54 seconds alert to mobile time) it is less resilient than wholetime crewing as the same staff cover the 12-hour wholetime period and the 12-hour retained period. For example, if a crew attends incidents during the night-time period they will then require a period of stand down time to recover during the day shift, meaning they are either not available to provide operational response or unable to undertake prevention work or normal scheduled duties. As the number of appliances reduces the ability for Fire Control to not mobilise LLAR appliances during the retained period is also reduced meaning they will attend more incidents and potentially no longer meet the Low Level of Activity and Risk threshold.*
- 17. To make the £3.4m savings required from operational response, the Authority would need to convert 12 wholetime appliances to LLAR in addition to the existing 4 LLAR appliances. This would result in 16 of the Authority's 28 appliances being crewed in this way.*
- 18. In order to comply with working time regulations the Authority would be required to provide separate accommodation for the retained duty period that is within a 1 minute 54 second response from the stations in question. The cost of building accommodation at existing LLAR stations has been around £300k. Converting 12 appliances to LLAR would therefore require a capital spend of around £3.6m for accommodation. Of the 10 key stations only one, Formby, is currently crewed LLAR which is as a result of its geographic location and the very low numbers of incidents on the station ground and number of appliance mobilisations. In any other circumstances a key station would not be crewed on the LLAR duty system. Of the stations not designated as "key" a number have appliance mobilisation numbers which exceed the LLAR threshold of 825 incidents to the station area agreed in 2006 (Kirkdale, Kensington, City Centre and Birkenhead). A number also do not have sufficient space within the curtilage of the station to build separate accommodation necessary to make the 1 minute 54 seconds alert to mobile time during the retained period (Toxteth and Aintree).*

19. *There is a very low likelihood indeed that the Authority could attract and indeed retain sufficient volunteers from existing staff to crew an additional 12 LLAR appliances. Whilst the Authority could recruit Firefighters directly on to the LLAR system this would result in crews on LLAR stations with a disproportionately high number of inexperienced Firefighters until such time as they were able to demonstrate competence in role. It would also invariably result in existing wholetime firefighters who did not wish to volunteer for the LLAR duty system being placed at risk of compulsory redundancy.*
20. *It is for these reasons that LLAR has not been proposed by the Chief Fire Officer as an option to maintain operational effectiveness at this time.*

Day Crewing

21. *The Authority does not currently operate the Day Crewing duty system at any station on Merseyside. This system consists of a wholetime day shift (typically 10 hours duration) immediately followed by a 14-hour retained night shift where a response is made by a Firefighter from home within 5 minutes of an alert.*
22. *Changing the crewing at a station from wholetime to Day Crewing would deliver a saving of 10.8 wholetime equivalent (WTE) posts (assuming a 10% retaining fee). In order to deliver the same savings as a station merger would, 2 wholetime stations would need to convert to Day Crewing.*
23. *To make the £3.4m savings required from operational response the Authority would need to convert 8 wholetime appliances to Day Crewing in addition to the existing 4 LLAR appliances. This would result in 12 of the Authority's 28 appliances either on Day Crewing or LLAR crewing. Day Crewing is less resilient than wholetime crewing for similar reasons as for LLAR as the same staff cover the 10 hour wholetime period and the 14-hour retained period. As the number of appliances reduces the ability for Fire Control to not mobilise LLAR or Day Crewing appliances during the retained period is also reduced.*
24. *This option would introduce a 5-minute delay in responding from 8 appliances for 14 hours each day. 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 be able to attend an incident in at least the same time as the Day Crewing appliance if not quicker during the retained period.*
25. *There is a very low likelihood indeed that the Authority could attract and indeed retain sufficient volunteers from existing staff to crew 8 Day Crewing appliances. Whilst the Authority could recruit Firefighters directly on to the Day Crewing system this would result in crews on Day Crewing stations with a disproportionately high number of inexperienced Firefighters until such time as they were able to demonstrate competence in role. It would also invariably result in existing wholetime firefighters who did not wish to volunteer for the Day Crewing duty system being placed at risk of compulsory redundancy.*

26. It is for these reasons that Day Crewing has not been proposed by the Chief Fire Officer as an option to maintain operational effectiveness. If, as expected, the Authority faces further cuts beyond 2015/16 this option may have to be reconsidered as a means of maintaining capacity during the daytime period.

Day only crewing

27. The Authority does not currently operate day only crewing at any station on Merseyside. This system involves Firefighters crewing the station for a 12-hour wholetime day shift only in order to maintain capacity to undertake training and community safety activities.

28. Changing the crewing at a station from wholetime to day only crewing would deliver a saving of 12 wholetime equivalent (WTE) posts. In order to deliver the same savings as the station merger option, 2 wholetime stations would need to convert to day only crewing.

29. To make the £3.4m savings required from operational response the Authority would need to convert 8 wholetime appliances today only crewing in addition to the existing 4 LLAR appliances. This would result in 12 of the Authority's 28 appliances either on day only crewing or LLAR crewing.

30. Whilst an immediate response to incidents would be achieved during the 12-hour day shift there would be no response at all during the 12-hour night-time period from day only crewed stations.

31. There is a very low likelihood indeed that the Authority could attract and indeed retain sufficient volunteers from existing staff to crew 8 days only appliances. Whilst the Authority could recruit Firefighters directly on to day only crewing this would result in crews on day only stations with a disproportionately high number of inexperienced Firefighters until such time as they were able to demonstrate competence in role. It would also invariably result in existing wholetime firefighters who did not wish to volunteer for day only crewing being placed at risk of compulsory redundancy.

32. It is for these reasons that day only crewing has not been proposed by the Chief Fire Officer as an option to maintain operational effectiveness at this time. If, as expected, the Authority faces further cuts beyond 2015/16 this option may have to be reconsidered as a means of maintaining capacity during the day time period. It should be noted that these appliances would in all likelihood be used as a pan-Merseyside resource to, for example, stand in at key stations to facilitate the key appliance crew attending the Training and Development Academy for crew-based training. It would make more financial sense therefore to relocate the day crewed only appliance permanently to a key station thus allowing the Authority to make permanent savings on premises overheads (on average around £100k per year) through closing the non key station.

Retained

33. *The Authority does not currently operate retained only crewing at any station on Merseyside. This system involves members of the community who live or work within 5 minutes of a fire station volunteering to be available for up to 120 hours per week for a retaining fee equivalent to 10% of a wholetime Firefighter's salary.*
34. *Changing the crewing at a station from wholetime to retained would deliver a saving of 22 wholetime equivalent (WTE) posts. In order to deliver the same savings as for a station merger 1 wholetime station would need to convert to retained crewing.*
35. *To make the £3.4m savings required from operational response the Authority would need to convert 4 wholetime appliances to retained in addition to the existing 4 LLAR appliances. This would result in 8 of the Authority's 28 appliances either on retained or LLAR crewing.*
36. *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.*
37. *There is a very low likelihood indeed that the Authority could attract and indeed retain sufficient volunteers from existing staff to crew 4 wholetime retained appliances on a 5-minute recall. That being so, the Authority would need to recruit almost a full crew of retained Firefighters. It is the view of the Chief Fire Officer that a retained Firefighter does not have sufficient contact (training) time within the Grey Book (Firefighters' nationally agreed conditions of service) retained contract to acquire and maintain the skills of an existing Merseyside wholetime Firefighter. Also, the Merseyside Trainee Firefighter course is currently 40 weeks long and the wholetime work routine allocates in excess of 20 hours per week to on station training. A retained firefighter has approximately 2/3 hours per week contact time at station for training, development and maintenance duties). 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.*
38. *With 3 hours contact time each week retained Firefighters would not be able to undertake any amount of community safety work.*
39. *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*

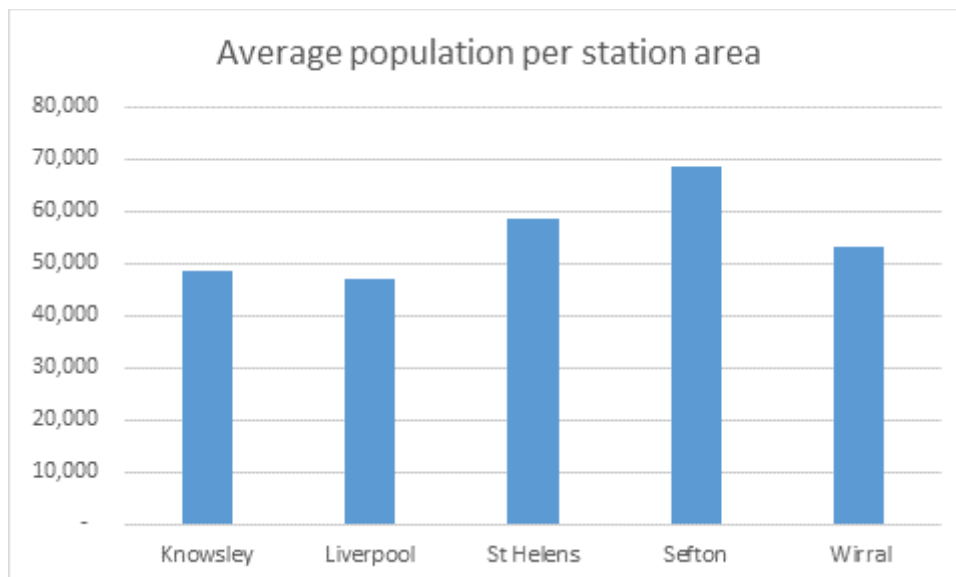
would attend an incident in at least the same time as the retained crew if not quicker.

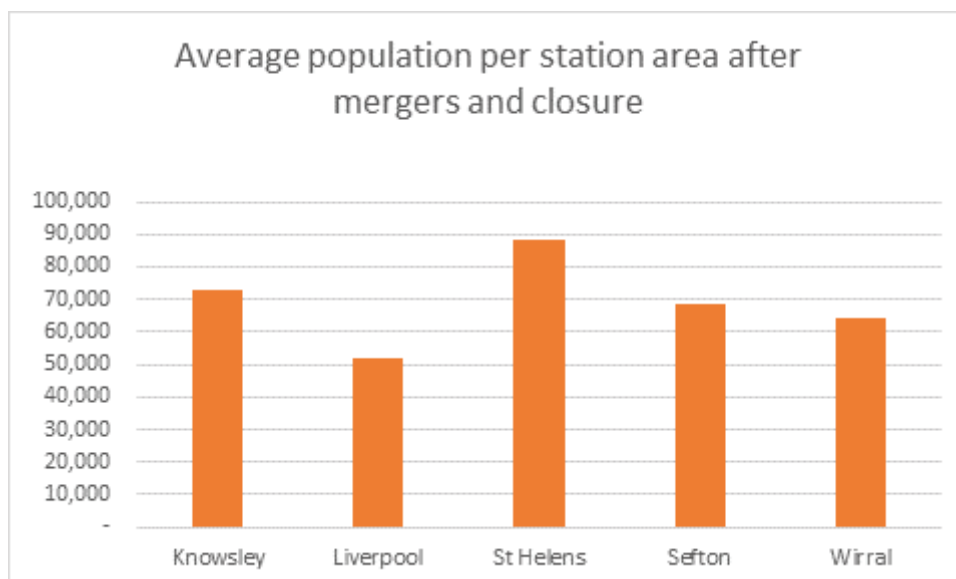
It is for these reasons that retained crewing has not been proposed by the Chief Fire Officer as an option to maintain operational effectiveness at this time.

Why Allerton is the Authority's proposed option for closure.

The draft proposal is to close Allerton Fire Station and relocate the Allerton fire appliance to Old Swan Fire Station, where it would be crewed on what is known as a wholetime retained basis. More detail on this system has been provided earlier in this document, but in summary, this would involve our existing wholetime firefighters providing cover on two of their days off, providing a 30-minute response to stations. This fire appliance would only be used during periods of very high demand and will not offer an immediate emergency response.

Merseyside has a greater density of fire stations than any other fire and rescue service and this density is most evident in Liverpool which has 10 stations in a relatively small geographic area. Liverpool stations also provide services to fewer people per station than in any other Merseyside district, as is shown in the graph below:





Our analysis of Liverpool stations shows that because Liverpool has so many stations and those are located so close to each other, the closure of any station makes little or no difference to overall emergency response performance.

Of the ten stations, however the closure of Kensington, Aintree or Allerton would have the least impact on operational response. There is no discernible difference between these three stations in terms of overall performance.

Because the effect on performance is minimal whichever of the three stations is closed, we then considered the number of calls in each station area. Kensington has a greater number of incidents occurring in the station area and the fire appliance is used more than the appliances at Aintree and Allerton.

Aintree has a greater number of incidents occurring in the station area and the fire appliance is used more than the appliance at Allerton.

The tables below illustrate this:

Incident Numbers by Station Ground

Station	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Grand Total
13 - Allerton	513	396	280	1189
18 - Aintree	875	641	569	2085
12 - Kensington	1137	946	929	3012

Appliance Mobilisations

Appliance	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Grand Total
13 - Allerton	611	724	717	2052
18 - Aintree	909	982	1021	2912
12 - Kensington	2103	1040	956	4099

Difference Between 2004/05 and 2013/14

Station	2004/05	2013/14	Difference	% Difference
13 - Allerton	791	280	-511	-64.60%
18 - Aintree	1267	569	-698	-55.09%
12 - Kensington	1962	929	-1033	-52.65%

The analysis also demonstrates that neighbouring stations are so closely located together that they already provide good cover for Allerton and would continue to do so if Allerton was closed.

In Liverpool, the merger of stations would be less beneficial as there are no pairs of older stations which could be closed and a new one built to replace them.

Allerton is also one of the older fire stations and would require significant expenditure to bring it up to modern standards.

The potential impact on response times to life risk incidents

Over the last decade, incidents across Merseyside have reduced by 55% (18,428 incidents). Allerton has seen a fall of 64.6% (from 791 incidents in 2004/5 to 280 incidents in 2013/14 – the highest reduction across all three stations).

If Allerton station is closed, our most up-to-date analysis shows that the average response to life risk incidents (such as house fires and road traffic collisions) in the station area would increase from the current 5 minutes 9 seconds to a predicted 5 minutes 56 seconds*. The national average for house fires is 7 minutes 24 seconds.

But when an incident does occur, particularly where there is a risk to life, the Authority wants to continue to provide the fastest response possible.

Allerton station area is well covered by Old Swan, Speke Garston, Belle Vale and Toxteth.

How you can share your views during the consultation period

The Authority is interested in how reasonable the public and other stakeholders consider our plans for Allerton are given the major cuts we continue to face. We are continuing with our extensive consultation programme in Allerton before any final decisions are made.

This will involve public meetings at 7pm on the 9th of December and 7pm on the 15th of January, both to be held at Bluecoat School, Church Road, Allerton, L15 9EE.

There will also be a focus group, a meeting of our Liverpool consultation forum and a stakeholders meeting. In addition, representatives from the Fire and Rescue Service attended an Allerton Farmers Market on Saturday the 15th of November to provide information.

Our online survey remains available on www.merseyfire.gov.uk on the page: <http://surveys.merseyfire.gov.uk/surveys/allerton/allerton.htm> and you can also email consultation2@merseyfire.gov.uk or write to us at Allerton Consultation, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, Bridle Road, Bootle, L30 4YD.

***The attendance times have been revised from those previously published to include data up to 31st October 2014. The results are a marginal improvement on those previously published.**

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Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
Equality Impact Assessment Form

Title of policy/report/project:	Station Mergers , Closures and other Operational Response Options
Department:	Strategy and Performance
Date:	<p>EIA Stage 1 - 19.11.13</p> <p>EIA Stage 2 – 31.1.14</p> <p>EIA Stage 3 – 20.8.14 – <u>Knowsley Consultation</u></p> <p>EIA Stage 3A – From 3.10.14 to 5.12.15 <u>Wirral Consultation</u></p> <p>EIA Stage 3B – From 1.11.14 to 25.1.15 <u>Liverpool Consultation (Allerton)</u></p> <p>EIA Stage 3C – From 2.3.15 – <u>Saughall Massie Road Wirral Consultation or closure of West Kirby</u> Any other options will be considered when/if proposed.</p>
<p><u>Scope of EIA</u></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>Stage 1 – Desk Top Assessment by 3/12/13 :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</p>	

Engagement and Consultation Exercises in the new year (by 19/11/13)

Stage 2 – Consultation External and Internal: to gain feedback from those communities and MF&RS 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)

Stage 3 – More detailed assessment on the local areas affected by options: for Authority members to take into account at their meeting when they review the EIA in full. (from April 2014)

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). The location was withdrawn by Wirral BC and the FRA considered a further two options for consultation on 29th January 2015:
 - Consultation on a possible site at Saughall Massie
 - Close West Kirby stationThe first option was chosen
- 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 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&RS 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&RS 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**

3.3 Profile of MF&RS 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>

3.4 **Appendix B** sets out the impact of a potential merger of West Kirby and Upton at

a site in Saughall Massie. All areas would be attended well within the 10 minute response time from a new station or other Wirral stations. It has been made clear throughout that there is no option that will improve attendance. The proposals are the least worst option.

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 Prescott 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 Prescott 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".

Allerton

Age Structure: The Allerton Station Ground has a mix of age groups across different wards, 45-59 age group is the most populous age range. Greenbank has a large population of 20-24 year olds inferring a high population of students. Woolton has particularly high level of population above the age of 65 with 26% of ward population, however the majority of this ward is covered by the Belle Vale station area.

Socio Economic: Majority of area is affluent with small pockets of deprivation (based on IMD 2010) The majority of wards are below the Liverpool average for

unemployment and long term health and disabilities.

Racial Profile: Predominantly “White” (at least 90% white). Greenbank however has a more diverse population including above counts of BME populations, BME groups equate to 17% of overall population compared to 5.5% Merseyside population as a whole.

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

3.4 Proposals for mergers at a site in Saughall Massie or Closure of West Kirby- the impact on the achievement of 10 Minute Standard Response times (Appendix B)

The document highlights the impact of adopting either of the proposals on the achievement of the standard 10 minute standard response time. The results show that there are no areas outside the 10 minute response time for the proposals to merge stations at Saughall Massie. In relation to the maps for proposals to close West Kirby, there is a very small area of the West Wirral outside the 10 minute response area with a few dwellings in that area where attendance is 4 seconds outside of the 10 minute response time. It is recommended that HFSC campaigns take place to ensure those living in that area receive prevention advice and support.

4: Research

Summarise the findings of any research you have considered regarding this policy/report/project. This could include quantitative data and qualitative information; anything you have obtained from other sources e.g. CFOA/CLG guidance, other FRSs, etc.

What research have you considered?

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&RS 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

<p>Review of MF&RS 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 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 and the building of new stations.</p> <p>Results show no specific Equality and Diversity implications for any of the areas affected as the Ten Minute response times will be still valid for the station areas affected by the merger/closure proposals</p> <p>There appears to be no detrimental impact on any of the partnership arrangements for the Knowsley fire stations currently being affected by station merger proposals , the development of a new station with advanced community facilities will strengthen the opportunities for Knowsley communities to access the station for better community engagement activities</p>
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5. Consultation

Summarise the opinions of any consultation. Who was consulted and how? (This should include reference to people and organisations identified in section 2 above)
Outline any plans to inform consultees of the results of the consultation

What Consultation have you undertaken?

No Consultation took place at Stage 1 of this EIA, however consultation will be carried out in two stages to scrutinise the OPTIONS and consider others for all mergers/closures. As such consultation comprises 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.

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 :

- The development of a new MF&RS Diversity Consultation Forum; a public voice for diverse groups across each district
- 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)

- Consultation with Community Groups currently using the Stations identified as potentially being closed and merged – Impact on equality
- Making the EIA accessible via the Staff Portal and MF&RS Webpage to enable staff , stakeholders and the public to make comments and provide feedback easily

What did it say?

Stage 3 B – Allerton Closure

A 12 week consultation process took place from 1st November 2014 to 26th January 2015 which followed a similar pattern to the previous consultation for Knowsley and Wirral (see Stage 3 and 3A below). This Included :

- Online questionnaire for staff and public to provide views
- One externally facilitated deliberative focus group
- One Public Forum
- Two Open public meetings
- One stakeholder breakfast meeting
- Several staff consultation meetings
- Several further local Council and local stakeholder consultation meetings and events (including a farmers market and a residents association meeting)

As in the Knowsley and Wirral consultation process, there was an opportunity to invite participants to a deliberative focus group and the forum from a broad spectrum of backgrounds and equality groups. The aim is to be as fully representative as possible.

Equality monitoring data shows a breakdown in attendees at these meetings as follows :

40% Female and 60% Male attendees- this shows a slightly lower than average attendance for females when compared to Liverpool as a whole

16% Under 34's , 28% 35-54 and 56% over 55+ - this reflected the broad range of age groups across the area and matches the higher proportion of over 65's for the Allerton area (26%)

32% of attendees had a limiting long term illness /disability – this is above the average population for Liverpool being 23.6%

4% of Attendees at the event were from Non White backgrounds which is slightly lower than the ethnicity breakdown of the Liverpool (10% BME for Allerton)

The figures above broadly reflect the average profile of residents across Liverpool and this allows us to feel comfortable that the views of different groups of people have been considered when using the consultation for decision making purposes.

While considering the draft proposals, participants in all the meetings were encouraged to consider whether proposals have any adverse implications for any vulnerable people and in particular groups with “protected characteristics”: in other words, this question was not just a ‘footnote’ to the main discussion but an intrinsic part of the scrutiny of the proposals. There were no specific Equality Impacts identified, in relation to any particular 9 protected groups covered by the Equality Act, from the forums. However forum members specifically asked for prevention and community work to continue with the elderly and schools and vulnerable groups, including faith and religious groups at times of heightened security and terrorist

attacks.

No specific equality concerns were raised at the Public and Breakfast meetings. Feedback from the staff meetings did not establish any equality impacts and further consultation with staff in terms of where staff will be posted will take place to address any further issues arising.

The questionnaires received (65) were treated as an information gathering exercise, in the same way as the views expressed at the public meetings, the questionnaires have been analysed in terms of Equality Monitoring and shows:

- 60% were Male and 40% Female respondents, this is slightly lower than the average female population across Liverpool.
- There were a wide range of ages responding to the survey, the largest group of respondents - 26%, were from the 40-49 age group, this was higher than the average population of local residents for that age group at 12.8%. 50% of the respondents were over the age of 50, this population reflects 33% of the local population.
- 11% identified themselves as disabled ,which is lower than the average for Liverpool at 23.6%
- 95% identified their ethnicity as white, 5% preferred not to say and there no residents from a BME background completing the survey.

61.5% of the surveys completed were not in favour of the station being closed. There were one comment made in relation to Equality and Diversity impacts in the free text comments made, this was around concerns about high risk religious sites e.g. Jewish School and synagogue in the Allerton area in the current climate. (see section 9.6)

Stage 3 A – Wirral Consultation

A 12 week consultation process took place from 2nd October 2014 to 5th January 2015 which followed a similar pattern to the events that took place for the previous consultation at Knowsley (See stage 3 Knowsley below). This included:

- Online questionnaire for staff and public to provide their views
- Three externally facilitated deliberative focus groups (one in each station area)
- One Public Forum
- Four Open public meetings
- One stakeholder breakfast meeting
- Several staff consultation meetings
- Several further local Council and stakeholder consultation meetings

As in the Knowsley consultation process, there was an opportunity to invite participants to three deliberative focus groups and the forum from a broad spectrum of backgrounds and equality groups. The aim is to be as fully representative as possible.

Equality Monitoring data shows a breakdown in attendees at these meetings as follows :

44% Female and 56% Male attendees- this closely reflects the gender breakdown for the Wirral as a whole

16% Under 34's , 35.5% 35-54 and 51.5% over 55+ - this reflected the broad range of age groups across the area

16% of attendees had a limiting long term illness /disability – this is slightly lower than the average for Wirral being 22.6%

10% of Attendees at the event were from Non White backgrounds which closely reflects the ethnicity breakdown of the Wirral

The figures above reflect the average profile of residents across Wirral and this allows us to feel comfortable that the views of different groups of people have been considered when using the consultation for decision making purposes.

While considering the draft proposals, participants in all the meetings were encouraged to consider whether proposals have any adverse implications for any vulnerable people and in particular groups with “protected characteristics”: in other words, this question was not just a ‘footnote’ to the main discussion but an intrinsic part of the scrutiny of the proposals

Four comments of concern around equality groups were raised from the 32 people who attended the focus groups and forum :

- Frankby Road (Greasby) is not a suitable site for a fire station in the village; children, elderly and disabled use the road near the site
- The elderly, nursing and residential homes have to be taken into consideration and that does not seem to be a primary focus and yet we have a lot of elderly people in our area
- We have a lot of elderly
- West Kirby has elderly people and there are some flats with social disadvantage
- The aged and disabled people will have some impact from these changes

Two comments were raised in support of the changes :

- The Council and FRS are aware of the needs of the elderly and the vulnerable
- The FRS links up with other agencies – it has to be a multi- agency approach

The questionnaires received (984) were treated as an information gathering exercise, in the same way as the views expressed at the public meetings, the questionnaires have been analysed in terms of Equality Monitoring and shows:

- 46.3% were Male and 53.7% Female respondents which closely reflects the gender breakdowns for Wirral as a whole
- There were a wide range of ages responding to the survey, the largest group of respondents - 50%, were from the 50 to 69 age group - this was slightly higher than the local ward age population profiles for that age group (41.6%) but may be due to a higher proportion of older residents using the Greasby community centre attending the consultation events.
- 7.2% identified themselves as disabled ,which is lower than the average for Wirral at 22.6%
- 91.1% identified their ethnicity as white, 7.3% preferred not to say and 1.3 % (15) were from a BME background. This is similar to the average Ethnicity

breakdowns for those areas.

The majority of surveys completed were not in favour of the station being placed in Greasby village. There were no obvious comments made in relation to Equality and Diversity in the free text comments made.

This EIA has been consulted on with the Community Forum Group at a meeting on the 10th December 2014, where members were presented with the EIA and asked for any notable feedback in relation to the approach we take to the EIA and any outcomes of the proposals for particular Protected groups (specifically Elderly and Disabled). The group were happy with the EIA and its findings and no further suggestions made.

Stage 3 – Knowsley Consultation May to July 2014

A 12 week Consultation process on Fire Station merger proposals took place in Knowsley district between the 6th May and 28th July 2014. The consultation included :

- Online survey for staff and public to provide their views
- Three externally facilitated deliberative focus groups (one in each station area)
- One Public Forum
- Three Open public meetings
- One stakeholder breakfast meeting
- Several staff consultation meetings

All consultation events provided the opportunity for staff and public to provide feedback and views on the merger proposals and the impact they may have, positive or negative, in relation to different equality groups and the impact on any of their service needs/outcomes as a result of the proposals. None of the focus groups or forums raised any specific concerns relating to vulnerable people or equality groups, but some observed that it is important to ensure the elderly get appropriate prevention work in the form of Home Fire safety checks and other precautions in those areas where the mergers may have a bigger impact.

The consultation events were well publicised in many different forums from local council promotion, health and wellbeing boards, posters at local supermarkets, Local radio stations and a variety of Websites,

The only opportunity for MFRA to ensure a representative group of people were consulted with was in relation to the invited participants at the deliberative forums. Efforts are always made to recruit a representative sample of Merseyside residents for each meeting, but as not everyone who is recruited actually attends the meeting this can have an effect.

The breakdown of consultees were as follows:

60% (29) of the 48 attendees were male and 40% (19) were female, 31% (15) were aged 16 -35 and 33.5 % (16) were aged 35 to 55 and 35.5% (17) were aged over 55. These figures are similar to the age profile of Merseyside population.

The majority of attendees were white , however 16% were of Non-white British origin,

this compares favourably when compared to the Merseyside population figures of 7%

All events were fully inclusive with British Sign Language Interpreters at each open public meeting (they were not required at any of the deliberative forums), the use of a hearing loop was available for all meetings and information was also available in large print. The venues were sourced taking careful consideration of access from car parking for disabled and mobility impaired to easy access to public transport close by and access in and out of the rooms and seating.

The results from the on line survey have been summarised in a report;

Knowsley Consultation concerning Station Mergers – results from Feedback Surveys. This can be accessed on our Website. The results showed :

- No specific issues raised in relation to any negative or positive impacts of the proposals on any particular protected groups.
- No specific detrimental impact in relation to Equality and Diversity issues for staff raised at this stage of the proposals (staff consultation will continue)
- Of the 93 respondents to the Survey, a vast majority were from the areas affected by the proposals, the split was almost 50/50 male to female, and 11.8 % declared a disability and 2.4% were from non- white British origin.
- The survey was entirely voluntary for anyone to access and complete and there was very little opportunity to encourage responses from minority groups in any reasonable way.

Stage 2 - Engagement and Consultation January 2014

Stage two of the EIA involved engaging members of the public on the current EIA findings in relation to the Mergers and Closures options ,specifically the 5 options provided to the Public Engagement Forums held in January 2014. The possible options discussed at the for further financial savings :

1. Additional “Low Level Activity and Risk Stations (LLAR)
2. Introduction of “Day Crewing” at some whole time stations
3. Introduction of “Community Retained “ (RDS) stations
4. Merger of pairs of older stations and their replacement by modern community fire stations
5. Closure of some stations without replacement

Five forums were held across each of MFRS District :

- Wirral - Saturday 11th January 2014 – 10.00am -1.30pm
- St Helens - Monday 13th January 2014 – 18.00pm -20.45pm
- Liverpool – Tuesday 14th January 2014 – 18.00pm- 20.45pm
- Knowsley – Wednesday 15th January 2014 - 18.00pm – 20.45pm
- Sefton – Thursday 16th January 2014 – 18.00pm – 20.45pm

Part of the engagement presentation included canvassing views from the forum on the impact of each of the 5 options in relation to protected equality groups. The forums

were broadly representative of the current demographic profiles for each district when compared to the demographic reports for each district, with the exception of Ethnicity for Wirral, St Helens and Sefton.

Table 1 – Equality Monitoring breakdown for each District engagement forums

	WIRRAL	ST Helens	LIVERPOOL	KNOWSLEY	SEFTON
Gender	Male: 12	Male: 10	Male: 13	Male: 10	Male: 13
	Female: 11	Female: 11	Female: 12	Female: 6	Female: 9
Age	18-34: 5	18-34: 3	18-34: 7	18-34: 3	18-34: 4
	35-54: 7	35-54: 9	35-54: 10	35-54: 7	35-54: 8
	55+: 11	55+: 9	55+: 8	55+: 6	55+: 10
Social Grade	AB: 6	AB: 4	AB: 6	AB: 2	AB: 6
	C1: 8	C1: 7	C1: 9	C1: 3	C1: 5
	C2: 4	C2: 3	C2: 4	C2: 6	C2: 3
	DE: 5	DE: 7	DE: 6	DE: 5	DE: 8
BME	0	0	2	1	0
Disability	6	6	6	3	0

Members of the Forum were given a summary of the outcomes from the EIA stage one, and asked if there were any specific concerns about those outcomes and indeed any of the 5 options. No concerns about the options were raised in any of the Forums, the general view was that the favoured option chosen by the members; mergers and closures, would provide a positive opportunity for members of the Disabled community and those elderly residents with limited mobility to access new station for community events and activities more easily than some of the current stations. The building of new stations would benefit many minority community groups who may have limited access to community spaces.

Stage 3 of the EIA will now involve consulting with the Public Proposals which will include consultation with specific organisations who support specific Protected Groups through various consultation methods.

Stage 1 – no public consultation conducted at this stage 1

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 - See Section 9.6 for further actions)

(d) Religion or Belief

As a) above but in relation to Religion and Belief and minority faith groups –See Section 9.6 for further actions

(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.

29.1.15 -EIA stage 3B (update following consultation on Allerton Closure)

The recent consultation on Allerton Station closure has not highlighted any significant Equality and Diversity issues in relation to the different equality groups with the exception of concerns around supporting different faiths and religious groups in times of heightened security and terrorist threats. Actions at 9.6 have been recommended to support those concerns.

13.1.15- EIA stage 3 a Wirral Consultation

The recent Wirral Consultation and this EIA did not highlight any particular negative impacts in relation to different equality groups. It should be noted that the Frankby road, Greasby site was withdrawn by Wirral Borough Council part way through the consultation period as a result of the opposition from residents and local politicians. Proposals are being considered in relation to further options that the Fire and Rescue Authority will consider: to consult on merging at a site in Saughall Massie or to close West Kirby.

17.9.14- EIA stage 3a and 3 b – Wirral and Liverpool (Allerton)

No consultation has taken place at this stage of the EIA for Wirral and Allerton proposals. A review of current demographics shows no significant equality issues in relation to negative impacts on proposed station mergers and closures for both Wirral and Liverpool (Allerton) for any protected group at higher risk of Fire and Rescue as the response times to attend any call will be within the standards set. Consultation at the next stage will review the impact in more detail with different groups of public and will focus also on any equality issues.

EIA Stage 3 – Decisions (Knowsley)

On reviewing the data, research and consultation at stage 3 of this EIA there are no significant disproportionate impacts on any of the protected groups. As response times will be maintained within the 10 minute response standard, no particular group will receive a significantly changed service to Fire and Rescue and there will be no major impact on current partnership arrangements at stations, as these can be transferred to the new station at Prescott with newer and more accessible facilities.

EIA Stage 2 – Decisions

The outcomes of the Engagement forums across the 5 Districts has identified no particular negative impacts that need to be considered in any of the 5 Options. The Merger and Closure option appears to be the most positive for a number of minority equality groups in terms of accessibility to community spaces.

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

8. Equality Improvement Plan

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

9. Equality & Diversity Sign Off

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

Signed off

Wendy Kenyon

Date:

19.11.13- EIA Stage 1
 31.1.14 – EIA stage 2
 20.8.14 – EIA stage 3
 19.9.14 – EIA stage 3a and 3b
 15.1.15 EIA stage 3 a updated and introduction of 3c
 25.1.15 – Stage 3b updated

Action Planned	Responsibility of	Completed by
<p>Actions Identified during EIA stage 1</p> <p>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)</p> <p>9.2 Analysis of Community Profiles for station areas affected to understand the types of communities affected by the Mergers and Closures Options and subsequent Proposals (completed)</p> <p>9.3 Equality analysis of those staff affected</p>	<p>Diversity and Consultation Manager (DCM) with Support from IRMP Officer</p> <p>Business Intelligence Manager and DCM</p> <p>DCM with support</p>	<p>Jan-April14</p> <p>Completed</p>

by the Options and subsequent Proposals to see if any particular protected group are affected disproportionately.	from POD	Completed
Actions Identified during EIA stage 2 9.4 Consider ways to engage further with members of different Ethnic communities (in those station areas which are most affected) when proposals are identified for consultation in the future (Completed)	WK	Completed
Actions Identified during EIA Stage 3 9.5 Target HFSC for those Vulnerable older people most affected by the future station merger and closures (Knowsley and Wirral – See Appendix B) 9.6 Make contact with religious institutions and places of worship which may be at higher risk of attack by fire during current climate to discuss fire safety and hate crime reporting	District Managers Ben Ryder to coordinate	Completed for Knowsley

Appendix A – ONS Demographic Equality Data by Station Ward

Please note that Station Areas are not based on the shape of wards, as such for the purposes of this section a ward has been identified to belong to a specific location if more than 50% of that ward rests within the station area.

District	Station Affected	2011 ward	Population	Mean Age	District Mean
Knowsley	Huyton	Longview	8,726	36	39
Knowsley	Huyton	Page Moss	7,076	38	39
Knowsley	Huyton	Prescot West	6,535	44	39
Knowsley	Huyton	Roby	7,254	44	39
Knowsley	Huyton	St Bartholomews	6,565	41	39
Knowsley	Huyton	St Gabriels	6,565	39	39
Knowsley	Huyton	St Michaels	6,920	39	39
Knowsley	Huyton	Stockbridge	6,018	40	39
Knowsley	Huyton	Swanside	6,519	42	39
Knowsley	Whiston	Prescot East	7,604	38	39
Knowsley	Whiston	Whiston North	6,908	41	39
Knowsley	Whiston	Whiston South	7,355	39	39
St Helens	Whiston	Rainhill	10,853	46	41
St Helens	St Helens	Billinge & Seneley Green	11,080	44	41
St Helens	St Helens	Blackbrook	10,639	41	41
St Helens	St Helens	Bold	9,759	38	41
St Helens	St Helens	Moss Bank	10,682	42	41
St Helens	St Helens	Parr	12,199	37	41
St Helens	St Helens	Sutton	12,003	41	41
St Helens	St Helens	Thatto Heath	12,280	38	41
St Helens	St Helens	Town Centre	10,978	39	41
St Helens	Eccleston	Rainford	7,779	47	41
St Helens	Eccleston	Eccleston	11,525	45	41
St Helens	Eccleston	West Park	11,392	40	41
St Helens	Eccleston	Windle	10,690	41	41
Wirral	Upton	Bidston & St James	15,216	36	41
Wirral	Upton	Cloughton	14,705	42	41
Wirral	Upton	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	13,991	45	41
Wirral	Upton	Moreton West & Saughall Massie	13,988	42	41
Wirral	Upton	Pensby & Thingwall	13,007	46	41
Wirral	Upton	Upton	16,130	42	41
Wirral	West Kirby	West Kirby & Thurstaston	12,733	45	41
Wirral	West Kirby	Hoylake & Meols	13,348	44	41
Liverpool	Allerton	Church	13,974	41	38
Liverpool	Allerton	Greenbank	16,132	32	38
Liverpool	Allerton	Mossley Hill	13,816	40	38
Liverpool	Allerton	Wavertree	14,772	39	38

Ethnicity Table:

District	Station Affected	2011 Ward	Population	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	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British: %	Other ethnic group: Total	Other ethnic group: %
Knowsley	Huyton	Longview	8,726	8,414	96.4%	140	1.6%	112	1.3%	54	0.6%	6	0.1%
Knowsley	Huyton	Page Moss	7,076	6,947	98.2%	75	1.1%	36	0.5%	12	0.2%	6	0.1%
Knowsley	Huyton	Prescot West	6,535	6,388	97.8%	58	0.9%	61	0.9%	17	0.3%	11	0.2%
Knowsley	Huyton	Roby	7,254	7,148	98.5%	50	0.7%	30	0.4%	16	0.2%	10	0.1%
Knowsley	Huyton	St Bartholomews	7,143	6,972	97.6%	101	1.4%	32	0.4%	19	0.3%	19	0.3%
Knowsley	Huyton	St Gabriels	6,565	6,434	98.0%	49	0.7%	49	0.7%	25	0.4%	8	0.1%
Knowsley	Huyton	St Michaels	6,920	6,768	97.8%	82	1.2%	55	0.8%	7	0.1%	8	0.1%
Knowsley	Huyton	Stockbridge	6,018	5,843	97.1%	90	1.5%	33	0.5%	36	0.6%	16	0.3%
Knowsley	Huyton	Swanside	6,519	6,347	97.4%	94	1.4%	52	0.8%	16	0.2%	10	0.2%
Knowsley	Whiston	Prescot East	7,604	7,300	96.0%	109	1.4%	160	2.1%	25	0.3%	10	0.1%
St Helens	Whiston	Rainhill	10,853	10,498	96.7%	83	0.8%	240	2.2%	7	0.1%	25	0.2%
Knowsley	Whiston	Whiston North	6,908	6,604	95.6%	60	0.9%	203	2.9%	24	0.3%	17	0.2%
Knowsley	Whiston	Whiston South	7,355	7,144	97.1%	113	1.5%	73	1.0%	20	0.3%	5	0.1%
Knowsley Average					97.2%		1.3%		1.0%		0.3%		0.1%

District	Station Affected	2011 Ward	Population	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	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British: %	Other ethnic group: Total	Other ethnic group: %
St Helens	St Helens	Billinge & Seneley Green	11,080	10,948	98.8%	67	0.6%	46	0.4%	9	0.1%	10	0.1%
St Helens	St Helens	Blackbrook	10,639	10,474	98.4%	49	0.5%	90	0.8%	4	0.0%	22	0.2%
St Helens	St Helens	Bold	9,759	9,618	98.6%	65	0.7%	50	0.5%	18	0.2%	8	0.1%
St Helens	St Helens	Moss Bank	10,682	10,568	98.9%	46	0.4%	50	0.5%	5	0.0%	13	0.1%
St Helens	St Helens	Parr	12,199	11,972	98.1%	97	0.8%	97	0.8%	22	0.2%	11	0.1%
St Helens	St Helens	Sutton	12,003	11,837	98.6%	87	0.7%	63	0.5%	11	0.1%	5	0.0%
St Helens	St Helens	Thatto Heath	12,280	11,829	96.3%	120	1.0%	270	2.2%	31	0.3%	30	0.2%
St Helens	St Helens	Town Centre	10,978	10,684	97.3%	69	0.6%	191	1.7%	18	0.2%	16	0.1%
St Helens	Eccleston	Eccleston	11,525	11,302	98.1%	76	0.7%	121	1.0%	15	0.1%	11	0.1%
St Helens	Eccleston	Rainford	7,779	7,682	98.8%	34	0.4%	43	0.6%	8	0.1%	12	0.2%
St Helens	Eccleston	West Park	11,392	11,183	98.2%	79	0.7%	88	0.8%	25	0.2%	17	0.1%
St Helens	Eccleston	Windle	10,690	10,564	98.8%	50	0.5%	58	0.5%	8	0.1%	10	0.1%
St Helens Average					98.0%		0.7%		1.0%		0.1%		0.1%

District	Station Affected	2011 Ward	Population	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	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British: %	Other ethnic group: Total	Other ethnic group: %
Wirral	Upton	Bidston & St James	15,216	14,659	96.3%	238	1.6%	270	1.8%	37	0.2%	12	0.1%
Wirral	Upton	Claughton	14,705	14,147	96.2%	163	1.1%	344	2.3%	21	0.1%	30	0.2%
Wirral	Upton	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	13,991	13,685	97.8%	112	0.8%	146	1.0%	21	0.2%	27	0.2%
Wirral	Upton	Moreton West & Saughall Massie	13,988	13,722	98.1%	87	0.6%	134	1.0%	25	0.2%	20	0.1%
Wirral	Upton	Pensby & Thingwall	13,007	12,744	98.0%	109	0.8%	132	1.0%	13	0.1%	9	0.1%
Wirral	Upton	Upton	16,130	15,587	96.6%	123	0.8%	352	2.2%	36	0.2%	32	0.2%
Wirral	W Kirby	Hoylake & Meols	13,348	13,019	97.5%	139	1.0%	139	1.0%	19	0.1%	32	0.2%
Wirral	W Kirby	West Kirby & Thurstaston	12,733	12,326	96.8%	170	1.3%	168	1.3%	16	0.1%	53	0.4%
Wirral Average					97.0%		1.0%		1.6%		0.2%		0.2%

District	Station Affected	2011 Ward	Population	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	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British: %	Other ethnic group: Total	Other ethnic group: %
Liverpool	Allerton	Church	13,974	12,858	92.0%	367	2.6%	472	3.4%	160	1.1%	117	0.8%
Liverpool	Allerton	Greenbank	16,132	13,400	83.1%	736	4.6%	949	5.9%	630	3.9%	417	2.6%
Liverpool	Allerton	Mossley Hill	13,816	12,889	93.3%	293	2.1%	399	2.9%	130	0.9%	105	0.8%
Liverpool	Allerton	Wavertree	14,772	13,288	90.0%	526	3.6%	552	3.7%	245	1.7%	161	1.1%
Liverpool Average					88.9%		2.5%		4.2%		2.6%		1.8%

Disability Tables

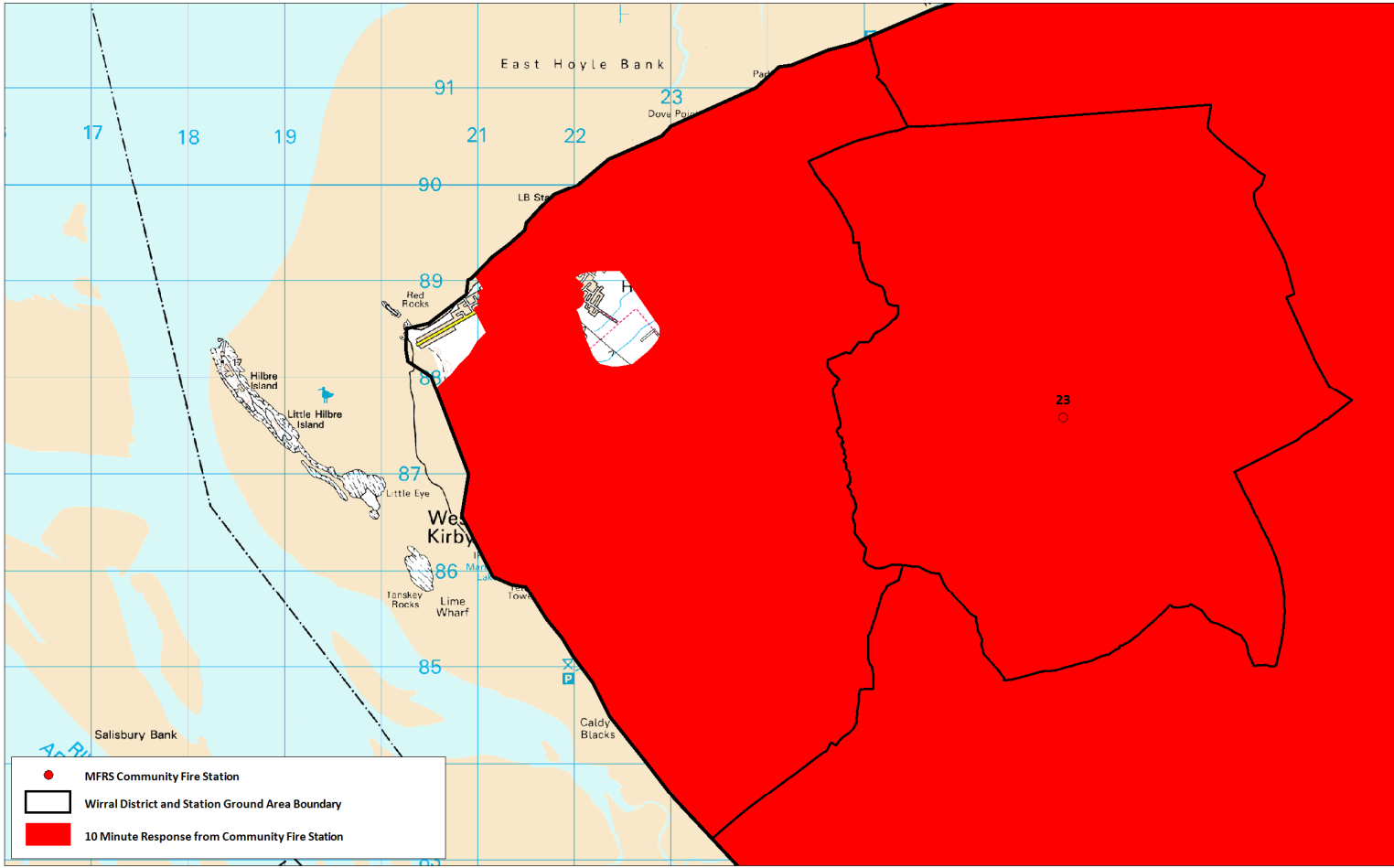
District	Station Affected	2011 Ward	Population	Day-to-Day Activities Limited a Lot	Day-to-Day Activities Limited a Lot %	Day-to-Day Activities Limited a Little	Day-to-Day Activities Limited a Little %	Day-to-Day Activities Not Limited	Day-to-Day Activities Not Limited %
Knowsley	Huyton	Longview	8726	1367	15.7%	904	10.4%	6455	74.0%
Knowsley	Huyton	Page Moss	7076	1239	17.5%	802	11.3%	5035	71.2%
Knowsley	Huyton	Prescot West	6535	1007	15.4%	828	12.7%	4700	71.9%
Knowsley	Huyton	Roby	7254	829	11.4%	722	10.0%	5703	78.6%
Knowsley	Huyton	St Bartholomews	6565	893	13.6%	666	10.1%	5006	76.3%
Knowsley	Huyton	St Gabriels	6920	1042	15.1%	692	10.0%	5186	74.9%
Knowsley	Huyton	St Michaels	7114	642	9.0%	528	7.4%	5944	83.6%
Knowsley	Huyton	Stockbridge	6018	1206	20.0%	730	12.1%	4082	67.8%
Knowsley	Huyton	Swanside	6519	722	11.1%	675	10.4%	5122	78.6%
Knowsley	Whiston	Prescot East	7604	1025	13.5%	817	10.7%	5762	75.8%
Knowsley	Whiston	Whiston North	6908	890	12.9%	701	10.1%	5317	77.0%
Knowsley	Whiston	Whiston South	7355	893	12.1%	739	10.0%	5723	77.8%
St Helens	Whiston	Rainhill	10853	1312	12.1%	1212	11.2%	8329	76.7%
Knowsley Average					14.2%		10.3%		75.5%

District	Station Affected	2011 Ward	Population	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 %
St Helens	St Helens	Billinge & Seneley Green	11080	1192	10.8%	1243	11.2%	8645	78.0%
St Helens	St Helens	Blackbrook	10639	1298	12.2%	1146	10.8%	8195	77.0%
St Helens	St Helens	Bold	9759	1176	12.1%	976	10.0%	7607	77.9%
St Helens	St Helens	Moss Bank	10682	1433	13.4%	1235	11.6%	8014	75.0%
St Helens	St Helens	Parr	12199	1864	15.3%	1319	10.8%	9016	73.9%
St Helens	St Helens	Sutton	12003	1569	13.1%	1253	10.4%	9181	76.5%
St Helens	St Helens	Thatto Heath	12280	1658	13.5%	1250	10.2%	9372	76.3%
St Helens	St Helens	Town Centre	10978	1656	15.1%	1252	11.4%	8070	73.5%
St Helens	Eccleston	Eccleston	11525	1201	10.4%	1233	10.7%	9091	78.9%
St Helens	Eccleston	Rainford	7779	850	10.9%	907	11.7%	6022	77.4%
St Helens	Eccleston	West Park	11392	1362	12.0%	1209	10.6%	8821	77.4%
St Helens	Eccleston	Windle	10690	1140	10.7%	1082	10.1%	8468	79.2%
St Helens Average					12.4%		10.6%		77.0%

District	Station Affected	2011 Ward	Population	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 %
Wirral	Upton	Bidston & St James	15216	2441	16.0%	1748	11.5%	11027	72.5%
Wirral	Upton	Claughton	14705	1940	13.2%	1556	10.6%	11209	76.2%
Wirral	Upton	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	13991	1233	8.8%	1536	11.0%	11222	80.2%
Wirral	Upton	Moreton West & Saughall Massie	13988	1782	12.7%	1413	10.1%	10793	77.2%
Wirral	Upton	Pensby & Thingwall	13007	1528	11.7%	1539	11.8%	9940	76.4%
Wirral	Upton	Upton	16130	2408	14.9%	1778	11.0%	11944	74.0%
Wirral	W Kirby	Hoylake & Meols	13348	1296	9.7%	1337	10.0%	10715	80.3%
Wirral	W Kirby	West Kirby & Thurstaston	12733	1187	9.3%	1361	10.7%	10185	80.0%
Wirral Average					11.9%		10.7%		77.4%

District	Station Affected	2011 Ward	Population	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 %
Liverpool	Allerton	Church	13974	1120	8.0%	1241	8.9%	11613	83.1%
Liverpool	Allerton	Greenbank	16132	1277	7.9%	1047	6.5%	13808	85.6%
Liverpool	Allerton	Mossley Hill	13816	1301	9.4%	1136	8.2%	11379	82.4%
Liverpool	Allerton	Wavertree	14772	1588	10.8%	1336	9.0%	11848	80.2%
Liverpool Average					12.8%		9.7%		77.6%

Appendix B 10 minute response coverage time from Upton Station and surrounding stations (excluding West Kirby and Wallasey)



10 Minute Response Coverage Time from Community Fire Stations 20, 21, 22 and 23

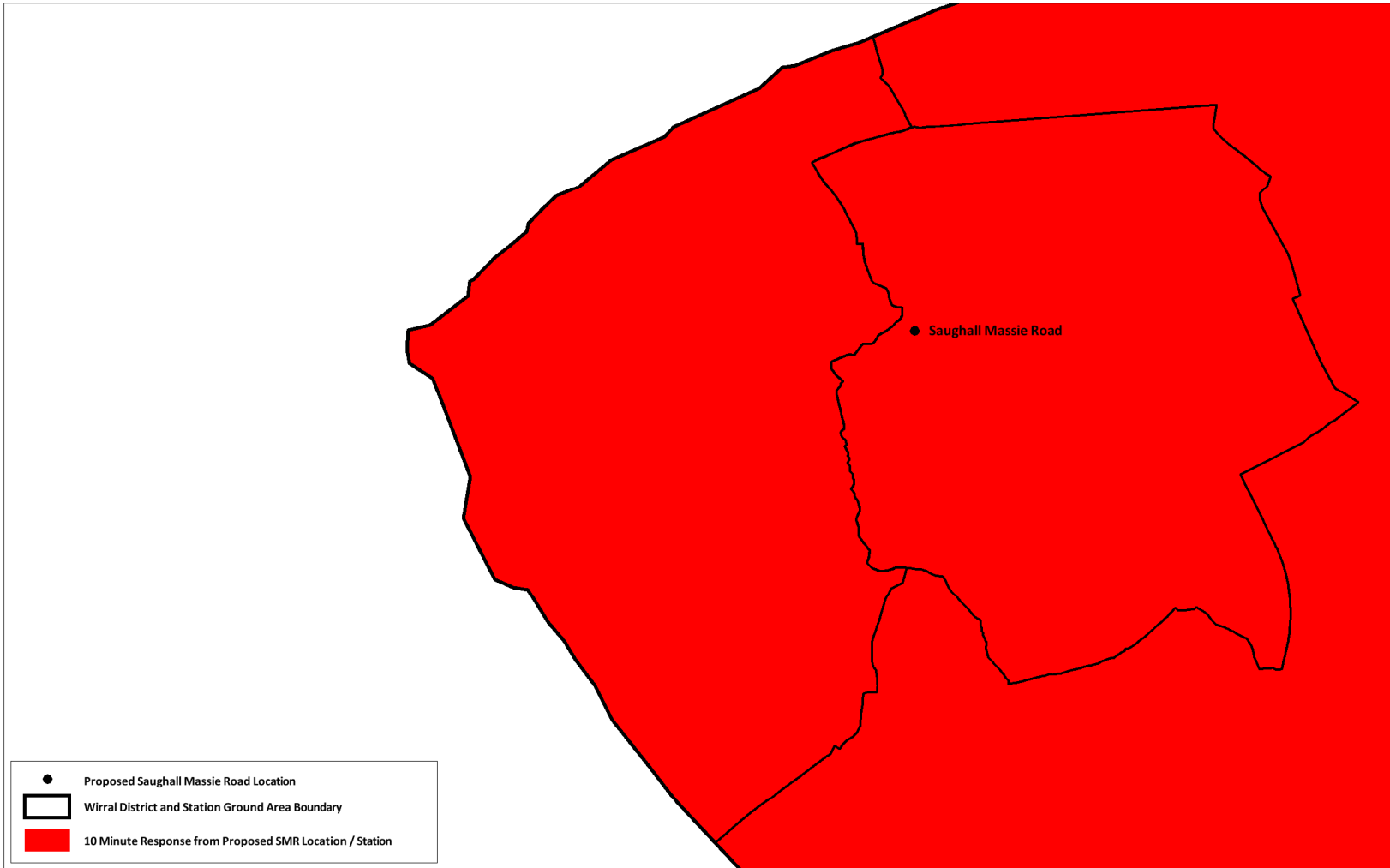
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Author: Gary Crosbie
 Produced Using: MapInfo Professional v11.0
 Date: 15.01.2015
 Strategy and Performance

Map Reference:
 KIM:\Work Requests\Data and Systems\Wirral Merger\
 Greasby/Maps/
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Appendix B Continued – 10 minute response time from proposed Saughall Massie Road location and surrounding stations (Excluding Upton West Kirby and Wallesey)



10 Minute Response Coverage Time from Proposed Saughall Massie Road Location and Community Fire Stations 20, 21 and 22

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Author: Gary Crosbie
Produced Using: MapInfo Professional v11.0
Date: 16.01.2015
Strategy and Performance

Map Reference:
KIM:\Work Requests\Data and Systems\Wirral Merger\
Greasby\Maps\
20_21_22_SM_10 Minutes_23_24_SGA_Zoom.png



MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY BUDGET MEETING		
DATE:	26TH FEBRUARY 2015	REPORT NO:	CFO/013/15
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER	REPORT AUTHOR:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT GROUP		
TITLE OF REPORT:	INTERIM MEASURES TO BE TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO ENSURE APPLIANCE AVAILABILITY		

APPENDICES:	
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Purpose of Report

1. To advise Members of the interim measures taken by the Chief Fire Officer under delegated authority to ensure appliance availability prior to the structural changes required as a result of ongoing cuts to the Authority budget are implemented.

Recommendation

2. That Members note the measures being taken by the Chief Fire Officer under delegated authority to ensure appliance availability prior to the structural changes required as a result of ongoing cuts to the Authority budget are implemented.

Introduction and Background

3. At the Authority budget meeting on 28th February 2014 the Authority unanimously approved the budget for the 2014/15 and 2015/16 period. The assumptions the Authority have made in its budget are that in order to meet the £6.3m savings target as a result of Government cuts to the grant the Authority will save £2.9m from support service and technical areas. The remaining £3.4m is assumed to be delivered from operational response for 2015/16 through the reduction of around 100 Firefighter posts from the staffing model. This will result in a reduction in wholetime (immediately available) fire appliances from 28 to 24.
4. The Authority has already approved the merger of Huyton and Whiston fire stations at a new 2 appliance station at Prescott. One appliance will be crewed wholetime and one appliance will be crewed wholetime retained. Typically the whole process of fire station merger including consultation, design planning, procurement and build can take two years or more. A construction contractor has been procured to help speed up the process but it still remains lengthy. Work on Prescott is proceeding but the new station will not be built and operational until mid-2015/16 at the earliest.
5. On the agenda today the Authority is considering the outcomes of the public consultation process concerning the proposal to close Allerton fire station and relocate

the Allerton fire appliance to Old Swan fire station to be crewed on a wholetime retained basis.

6. A consultation process over the proposal to merge Upton and West Kirby fire stations at a new 2 appliance station at Saughall Massie Road commences on 1st March. Under this proposal one appliance would be crewed wholetime and one appliance would be crewed wholetime retained. A similar proposal will be made for St Helens subject to securing an appropriate site. If these mergers were to be approved following the consultation then the planning application and construction would take in excess of 12 months to complete.
7. The current staffing model effective up until 31st March 2015 assumes 764 operational personnel to crew 28 wholetime appliances (including 4 crewed on the Low Level of Activity and Risk duty system). At the time of writing (6th February) the Authority employs 737 Grey Book operational staff. The budget as of 1st April supports a staffing model of 674 Grey Book operational staff to crew 24 wholetime appliances (including 3 crewed on the Low Level of Activity and Risk duty system) and 4 wholetime retained appliances.
8. The Authority has committed to avoiding Firefighter compulsory redundancies through the use of reserves until such time as the figure of 674 Firefighters is reached via natural retirement rates. This takes no account of the further cuts to the Authority budget that may result out of the spending review to be undertaken following the General Election in May.
9. Of the 737 Grey Book employees employed by the Authority 37 are on Other Duties, 13 are long term sick and 15 are on secondment or a career break (total of 65). In addition on any given shift an average of 6 operational Grey Book employees are absent through short term sickness. These figures are well in excess of the 3% assumption for all absences other than contractual and public holiday leave contained within the staffing model.
10. The Authority has committed £1m of reserves to support the recruitment of a limited number of wholetime Firefighters for succession planning purposes. A 23 week trainee course of 16 wholetime Firefighters commences in early April. These trainee Firefighters will not be available for operational duties until November 2015. This number may be supplemented by a limited number of transfers in to the Service.
11. The ban on undertaking voluntary additional hours as an element of action short of strike resulting from the ongoing Fire Brigades Union (FBU) pension's dispute remains in place.
12. The cumulative impact of all of these issues on appliance availability has previously been highlighted to Members at the Community Safety and Protection Committee on 27th March 2014 within report CFO/038/14. In simple terms as more Firefighters retire and are not replaced in order to meet the savings target for 2015/16, other duties and long term sickness figures remain high and the structural changes in terms of the conversion of wholetime appliances to wholetime retained are not made it is no longer possible to continue to crew 28 wholetime appliances. As stated in paragraph 4 above the new Prescott fire station will not be operational until mid-2016 at the earliest. Assuming the merger proposals for West Wirral and St Helens are approved the new fire stations will not be operational until late 2016/early 2017.
13. On any given shift between 1 and 6 appliances are unavailable due to insufficient staffing as a result of the reasons previously highlighted. Over the last 3 months an

average of 25 appliances have been available out of 28 on each shift. These appliances have been staffed with 5 riders on 70% of occasions.

14. The Chief Fire Officer has reached a collective agreement with the representative bodies on a proposal to introduce 24 hour shifts on 8 stations in conjunction with the wholetime retained crewing of 4 appliances.
15. It is the intention of the Chief Fire Officer to implement as an interim measure, pending Authority decisions on permanent structural changes, wholetime retained crewing on 4 appliances as of 1st April 2015.
16. This will improve the situation in terms of overall appliance availability in that instead of appliances being unavailable other than via recall to duty which is voluntary, they will be available to be crewed by wholetime staff undertaking retained contracts on a 30 minute recall. It should be noted however that it will still not be possible to maintain 24 wholetime appliances in addition to the 4 wholetime retained appliances without the reintroduction of voluntary additional hours. This is recognised by the representative bodies and dialogue is on-going around measures to maintain appliance availability including the reintroduction of voluntary additional hours.

Equality and Diversity Implications

17. There are no equality and diversity implications contained within this report.

Staff Implications

18. The collective agreement reached with the representative bodies is predicated on a combination of the Grey Book wholetime and retained duty systems whereby personnel will work 2 x 24 hour wholetime shifts across two locations (to be determined) and provide 24 hours retained cover in every 8 day reference period for a retaining fee of 5% in addition to their core salary.

Legal Implications

19. The interim measures to be implemented by the Chief Fire Officer will ensure the highest levels of appliance availability achievable in the circumstances thus ensuring the Authority continues to meet its statutory duties under the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

20. The change in crewing from wholetime to wholetime retained on four appliances is necessary to deliver the savings target of £3.4m from Operational Response required for the financial plan and 2015/16 budget.
21. The saving from converting a whole time appliance to wholetime retained is approximately £0.8m (22 WTE posts).
22. In order to avoid compulsory redundancy the Authority is using natural retirement rates for Firefighters to deliver savings. Whilst these retirements will happen ahead of the new merged stations being delivered they will not happen fast enough to deliver the budget savings for 2015/16 therefore the Authority has committed to using reserves to balance the budget in the meantime

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

23. The interim measures to be implemented by the Chief Fire Officer will result in the least overall impact on operational response achievable in the circumstances.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

24. The Chief Fire Officer will continue to manage appliance availability in such a way so as to minimise the impact on response times.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

**CFO/038/14 BUDGET RESOLUTION TRANSITIONAL RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS –
ORDER OF APPLIANCE UNAVAILABILITY**

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	BUDGET AUTHORITY		
DATE:	26 FEBRUARY 2015	REPORT NO:	CFO/005/15
PRESENTING OFFICER	KIERAN TIMMINS		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	KIERAN TIMMINS	REPORT AUTHOR:	IAN CUMMINS
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	SMG		
TITLE OF REPORT:	FINANCIAL REVIEW 2014/15 - APRIL TO DECEMBER		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A1: REVENUE BUDGET MOVEMENTS SUMMARY APPENDIX A2: BUDGET MOVEMENTS ON RESERVES APPENDIX A3: FIRE SERVICE REVENUE BUDGET MOVEMENTS SUMMARY APPENDIX A4: CORPORATE SERVICE REVENUE BUDGET MOVEMENTS SUMMARY APPENDIX B: CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2014/15 APPENDIX C: APPROVED AUTHORITY CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2014/15 – 2018/19 APPENDIX D: DEBTOR WRITE-OFFS
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Purpose of Report

1. To review the financial position, revenue and capital, for the Authority for 2014/15. The Authority receives regular comprehensive financial reviews during the year which provide a full health check on the Authority's finances. This report covers the period April to December 2014.

Recommendation

2. That Members;
 - a Note the potential £0.4m favourable revenue position identified within this report
 - b Approve the utilisation of the £0.4m favourable revenue position to increase the capital investment reserve in light of the future station merger programme and Service investment needs, and
 - c Instruct the Deputy Chief Executive to continue to work with budget managers to maximise savings in 2014/15.

Executive Summary

Revenue:

The Authority has a detailed medium-term financial plan. The key elements of this are :-

- To control Council Tax
- Continue with its modernisation programme and deliver the Authority's mission of achieving Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters
- To deliver the required savings through efficiencies of which most are employee related whilst minimising the impact of the cuts.

The Authority is on target to deliver the approved 2014/15 budget savings and is progressing well with the required structural changes in its workforce to maintain the required savings on a permanent basis. The Authority has a strategy of maximising savings and delivering its savings plan as early as possible in order to increase reserves as a hedge against the future financial challenges. Overall this report has identified that in cash terms the Authority is £0.4m ahead of its saving plan target. Members are asked to approve utilising this saving to fund an increase in the capital investment reserve in order to provide funding towards the future station merger initiative. The Deputy Chief Executive is continuing to work with budget holders to maximise savings in 2014/15.

The total budget requirement remains at the original budget level of £64.356m, (appendix A1 – A4 outlines in detail all the revenue budget and reserve movements).

Capital:

The capital programme planned spend has reduced by £0.580m, of which £0.490m relates to the reduction in smoke alarm spend arising from the Authority policy of offering free smoke alarms to those households most at risk or those properties not yet visited. The revised Capital Programme is outlined in Appendix B and C.

Reserves & Balances:

The general balance remains unchanged at £2.000m. All movements in earmarked reserves are outlined in Appendix A2.

Treasury Management:

Short-term interest rates have remained at 0.50% as expected. No new long term borrowing has been arranged and the Authority has continued its policy of reducing investments and only taking short term borrowing to cover cash flow requirements.

Financial Processes:

Performance in Financial processes remains strong.

Introduction and Background

3. The purpose of this report is to enable the Authority to monitor its income and expenditure levels against its budget on a regular basis throughout the year to ensure effective financial management.
4. This report is the review of the Authority's position up to the end of the December of the financial year 2014/15 (April – December 2014).
5. In order to ensure that the financial reviews provide a regular and effective financial health check on all aspects of the Authority's finances the following structure has been adopted.

Financial Review Structure

<u>Section</u>	<u>Content</u>
A	Current Financial Year Review (Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and movement on Reserves)
B	Treasury Management Review
C	Internal Audit
D	Financial Process Monitoring/Performance Indicators

(A) Current Financial Year – 2014/15

6. The purpose of the financial review report is to provide Members with an assurance that the approved budget remains robust and that the current forecast of expenditure can be contained within the available resources. If actual expenditure or income for the year is inconsistent with the current budget then the report will, if necessary, identify the appropriate corrective action.

Revenue Position:

7. Budget Movements: The attached Appendix A1 – A4 to this report summarises the movements in the revenue budget. The net budget requirement remains at £64.356m which is consistent with the original budget.
8. There have been a number of budget adjustments with no net impact because they are either self-balancing virements within Department budgets or budget increases financed by reserves in line with previously agreed Authority decisions. The net use of reserves for the period was £0.033m, of which £0.021m was the allocation from the reserves to fund severance payments during the year.
9. Update on Budget Savings Implementation: The Authority has approved savings in total of £25.577m as part of the medium term financial plans. These

will take until 2016/17 to deliver in full because operational savings are being achieved by natural retirement rates. Of this total £20.410m was expected to have been implemented by the end of 2014/15. This has mostly been achieved with only £0.303m yet to be formally implemented. Plans are well advanced to deliver these savings and in cash terms the total value of savings will be delivered in the year.

10. The outstanding £0.303m savings options are;

Phase 1 & 2 (2011/12 & 2013/14 Budget Saving Options);

- Estates Savings target £0.075m; the original target was £0.250m and £0.100m has been delivered by reconfiguring the cleaning service and £0.075m as a result of a reduction in management costs. Outsourcing of the facilities management (FM) will deliver the remainder of this saving. The FM outsourcing has been deferred for a number of reasons but it is expected to be concluded during 2014/15.
- Review of ICT Expenditure £0.150m; The Authority set a target saving on ICT expenditure of £0.200m in 2013/14 rising to £0.350m in future years. The £0.150m reflects the required increased saving target as £0.200m of permanent savings were implemented in 2013/14. Officers are currently in negotiations with our external ICT contractors (most ICT is outsourced) on proposals to achieve the additional £0.150m.
- Restructure of the Training and Development Academy (TDA) £0.030m; of the original £0.062m saving target £0.030m remains to be formally actioned. Officers are finalising a restructure that will deliver the remaining saving by the end of the year.
- Search and Rescue Team (SRT) contracts review £0.048m; revised staff contracts will deliver reduced operating costs for the SRT while maintaining the current service standards.

Table A below summarises the progress in implementing the approved saving options at the time of writing this report:

Progress in Implementing Approved Saving Options					
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
A) Phase 1 & 2 (2011/12 & 2013/14 Budgets) Approved Savings:					
Options formally implemented into budget	-18,957	-18,899	-18,974	-18,974	-18,974
Approved Saving Options yet to be formally implemented:					
Phase 1					
Outsource Estates function	-75	-75	-75	-75	-75
Phase 2					
Review of ICT spend (<i>part 2 increase in saving £200k to £350k</i>)	-150	-150	-150	-150	-150
TDA Restructure	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30
SRT amended contracts	-48	-48	-48	-48	-48
Value of Saving Options yet to be formally implemented	-303	-303	-303	-303	-303
Total	-19,260	-19,202	-19,277	-19,277	-19,277
B) 2014/15 Budget Approved Savings:					
Options formally implemented into budget	-1,150	-1,878	-2,120	-2,000	-2,000
Approved Saving Options yet to be formally implemented:					
Non Employee Budget review	0	0	0	0	0
10% saving on Non Uniform Establishment	0	-450	-900	-900	-900
Operational Response	0	-350	-3,000	-3,400	-3,400
Value of Saving Options yet to be formally implemented	0	-800	-3,900	-4,300	-4,300
Total	-1,150	-2,678	-6,020	-6,300	-6,300
Total Value of Approved Savings Options (A + B)	-20,410	-21,880	-25,297	-25,577	-25,577
Total of Approved Savings yet to be formally implemented	-303	-1,103	-4,203	-4,603	-4,603

Actual staff numbers are continually monitored to ensure the Service continues to deliver in “cash” terms the required saving target.

11. Actual Expenditure in comparison to Revenue Budget: The Authority is expecting further grant cuts in 2015/16 and in future years and therefore as part of its strategy it has directed Officers to maximise savings in the year to contribute towards the building up reserves. Such reserves can then be used as part of an implementation and risk management strategy to deliver savings.

Employee Costs;

Employee costs make-up approximately 80% of the Authority's revenue budget and is the most risk critical area of the financial plan. As a result these costs are monitored extremely closely.

Firefighter retirements have continued in line with the forecast profile adopted for the financial strategy. As a consequence of the current national firefighter dispute the take-up of additional voluntary hours has reduced significantly. After taking account of other small savings on the uniform employee budget the expected overall saving on firefighter employee costs is £0.100m.

Contingency for 2014/15 Pay & Price Increases;

Members will recall that the budget made a 1% provision for pay bill increases in 2014/15. The outstanding 2014/15 pay award settlement for MFRA staff has now been agreed. Green book staff have been awarded a 2.2% increase with effect from January 2015 and covers the period from April 2014 up to 31st March 2016. The two year deal equates to 0.8% in 2014/15 rising to 2.2% in future years. The cost of this award can be contained within the overall pay inflation provision. Officers are continuing to control the allocation of the non-employee inflation. In the first instance any inflationary pressure is expected to be absorbed, at least in the first instance, from within the relevant budget line. As a consequence the estimated saving on the contingency for price inflation provision in 2014/15 is £0.225m.

Other Non-Employee Revenue Costs;

The Deputy Chief Executive is continuing to work with budget holders to maximise savings in 2014/15. Additional one-off savings have been identified as outlined below;

- Supplies and services – the Authority set a non-employee saving target of £0.150m in 2014/15 rising to £0.275m in future years. Officers have managed to deliver the full saving target this year. In addition small one-off savings on a variety of other supplies and services budgets has resulted in a forecast additional saving of £0.035m.
- Agency Services – some minor service issues have resulted in a saving on the budgeted unitary charge payments at the PFI stations, saving £0.030m.
- Central Support Services – a small one-off saving is anticipated on the finance application contract of £0.010k due to a slight delay in moving to a new scanning application.

The Deputy Chief Executive is continuing to work with budget holders to maximise savings in 2014/15 and will continue to monitor actual staff numbers during the year to ensure the Service continues to deliver in “cash” terms the required saving target.

Summary of Revenue Forecast Position: The Authority has made good progress in implementing the approved budget saving options and required organisational structure changes.

A small number of budget options remain to be fully completed in budgetary terms, however due to Firefighter retirements and other service savings the Service continues to deliver in “cash” terms the required saving target.

Overall the latest forecast has identified a revenue saving of £0.400m. The Deputy Chief Executive is continuing to work with budget holders to maximise savings in 2014/15. Table B below summarise the revenue year-end forecast position based on spend to the end of December 2014:

Table B: Anticipated Year-End Revenue Position

	FIRE SERVICE BUDGET	CORP MGT BUDGET	TOTAL BUDGET	ACTUAL as at 31.12.14	FORE-CAST	VARI-ANCE
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure						
Employee Costs	51,193	391	51,584	35,920	51,484	-100
Premises Costs	3,066	0	3,066	2,022	3,066	0
Transport Costs	1,589	0	1,589	1,150	1,589	0
Supplies and Services	4,018	68	4,086	2,169	4,051	-35
Agency Services	4,947	0	4,947	3,915	4,917	-30
Central Support Services	382	94	476	304	466	-10
Capital Financing	7,741	0	7,741	0	7,741	0
Income	-6,608	0	-6,608	-4,244	-6,608	0
Net Expenditure	66,328	553	66,881	41,236	66,706	-175
Contingency Pay&Prices	549		549	0	324	-225
Cost of Services	66,877	553	67,430	41,236	67,030	-400
Interest on Balances	-97		-97	-59	-97	0
Movement on Reserves	-2,977		-2,977	0	-2,977	0
Total Operating Cost	63,803	553	64,356	41,177	63,956	-400

Capital Programme Position:

12. The last financial review report (CFO/113/14) approved a 5 year capital programme worth £37.111m. This has now been updated for scheme additions and changes during quarter 3 of (£0.580m) which are summarised in the table below:

Movement in the 5 Year Capital Programme						
	Total Cost	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure						
2015/16 re-phasing	0.0	-2,891.6	2,991.6	-200.0	50.0	50.0
Amendments to Approved Schemes;						
Realignment / Amendment to Veh Cap Prog.	-108.7	71.4	-137.3	-17.8	16.0	-41.0
Reduction in Smoke Alarm Spend	-490.0	-490.0				
ICT Hardware increase	14.8	14.8				
Ops Equip - Methods of Entry	4.0	4.0				
	-579.9	-3,291.4	2,854.3	-217.8	66.0	9.0
Funding						
Borrowing:						
Re-phasing of approved schemes into future yrs	0.0	-2,891.6	2,991.6	-200.0	50.0	50.0
Realignment / Amendment to Veh Cap Prog.	-108.7	71.4	-137.3	-17.8	16.0	-41.0
Reduction in Smoke Alarm Spend	-250.0	-250.0				
Capital Reserve (ICT Hardware)	8.5	8.5				
Capital spend funded from the Revenue Budget						
Smoke Alarm installation	-240.0	-240.0				
ICT Hardware	6.3	6.3				
Ops Equip -Methods of Entry	4.0	4.0				
	-579.9	-3,291.4	2,854.3	-217.8	66.0	9.0

13. The reduction in the capital programme of £0.580m has resulted in a reduction in required borrowing of £0.359m. The reduction in the capital programme can be explained by;
- Officers have reviewed major schemes planned expenditure and have revised the phasing of some schemes in light of this review. As a consequence £2.892m planned 2014/15 spend has been re-phased into future years. In addition some small realignment of operational equipment spend in future years has also been actioned following a review of equipment needs.
 - A review of the vehicle ancillary fleet has been carried out and the number of cars and vans in the programme has now been reduced by 25 and replaced by 13 '4x4' vehicles that are more suitable to meeting operational needs. In addition the vehicle programme has been amended in light of the latest vehicle purchase costs. The net impact is an overall reduction of £0.109m in the programme.
 - The current fire safety capital programme is based on the delivery of approximately 100,000 HFSCs and the installation of 70,000 free smoke alarms a year. In recent years the spend on smoke alarms and installation has reduced as a consequence of the Authority policy of offering free smoke alarms to only those households most at risk and those not previously visited. Smoke alarm spend and installation is expected to be £0.250m and £0.240m lower than budget.
 - The remaining amendments reflect small increases in the ICT and Operational Equipment budgets that are being funded by revenue or reserve budgets.
14. The revised detailed capital programme is attached as Appendix B (2014/15 Capital Programme) and Appendix C (2014/15–2018/19 Capital Programme) to this report.

Use of Reserves:

15. The analysis in Appendix A2 outlines the £0.033m movement on reserves during the third quarter of 2014/15. The drawdown from reserves is required to fund approved projects and some severance costs incurred in the year. The general revenue reserve has remained unchanged at £2.000m.
16. It is recommended that the £0.400m revenue saving identified in this report is allocated to increase the capital investment reserve. The capital investment reserve will provide a funding stream to support the proposed future station merger programme and to support the Authority strategy of aiming to minimise borrowing costs.

(C) Treasury Management

17. The Authority continues to "buy in" Treasury Management from Liverpool City Council. The following paragraphs reflect Treasury Management activities in the period April to December 2014/15.
18. **Prospects For Interest Rates;**

Growth prospects remain strong for the rest of 2014/15 and unemployment is expected to fall. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) was forecast to hold bank rate at 0.5% throughout 2014 but with the possibility of an increase in early 2015 should the recovery prove stronger than expected. However, the sharp fall in UK inflation and further weakening in the Eurozone indicates that any move will be delayed until later in 2015. Base rate is expected to remain at 0.5% for the rest of the financial year 2014/15.

It was expected that there would be upward pressure on longer term rates due to a high volume of debt issuance and improved prospects of a return to economic growth. However, this has been offset by a continued demand for safe haven instruments whilst there is political unrest in various places around the world. Long term PwLB rates fell by 0.4% during the first half of the year. Since then, benign prospects for inflation and base rate changes have resulted in a further fall by 0.5% to the end of December 2014.

The strategy indicated that the overall structure of interest rates whereby short term rates are lower than long term rates was expected to remain throughout 2014/15. In this scenario, the strategy would be to reduce investments and borrow for short periods and possibly at variable rates when required.

19. Capital Borrowings and the Portfolio Strategy;

The borrowing requirement comprises the expected movements in the Capital Financing Requirement and reserves plus any maturing debt which will need to be re-financed. The Authority does not envisage that any new long term borrowing will be required in 2014/15. Current market conditions continue to be unfavourable for any debt rescheduling.

20. Annual Investment Strategy;

The investment strategy for 2014/15 set out the priorities as the security of capital and liquidity of investments. Investments are made in accordance with DCLG Guidance and CIPFA Code of Practice. Investments are made in sterling with an institution on the counterparty list.

The credit ratings and individual limits for each institution within the categories of investments to be used by the Authority in 2014/15 are as follows:

UK Government (including gilts and the DMADF)	Unlimited
UK Local Authorities (each)	Unlimited
Part Nationalised UK banks	£4m
Money Market Funds (AAA rated)	£3m
UK Banks and Building Societies (A- or higher rated)	£2m
Foreign banks registered in the UK (A or higher rated)	£2m

Extreme caution has been taken in placing investments to ensure security of funds rather than rate of return. The use of deposit accounts with high rated or nationalised banks and AAA rated money market funds has enabled reasonable returns in a low interest rate environment. In the period 1st April to 31st December 2014 the average rate of return achieved on average principal available was 0.66%. This compares with an average seven day deposit (7 day libid) rate of 0.35%.

The Authority had investments of £15.4m as at 31st December 2014:

ANALYSIS OF INVESTMENTS END OF DECEMBER 2014				
Institution	Credit Rating	MM Fund*	Bank / Other	Building Society
		£	£	£
Ignis Liquidity Fund	AAA	2,400,000		
Handelsbanken Inst Access	A		2,000,000	
Close Brothers	A		2,000,000	
HBOS 9 Month FTD	A		2,000,000	
Clydesdale Bank	A		2,000,000	
Coventry B Soc	A			2,000,000
Progressive B Soc	Unrated			1,000,000
West Brom B Soc	Unrated			1,000,000
Principality B Soc	Unrated			1,000,000
Totals		2,400,000	8,000,000	5,000,000
Total Current Investments				15,400,000

**MM Fund - Money Market Funds -these are funds that spread the risk associated with investments over a wide range of credit worthy institutions.*

21. **External Debt Prudential Indicators;**

The external debt indicators of prudence for 2014/15 required by the Prudential Code were set in the strategy as follows:

Authorised limit for external debt:	£80 million
Operational boundary for external debt:	£44 million

Against these limits, the maximum amount of debt reached at any time in the period 1st April to 31st December was £43.6 million.

22. **Treasury Management Prudential Indicators;**

The treasury management indicators of prudence for 2014/15 required by the Prudential Code were set in the strategy as follows:

a) Interest Rate Exposures

Upper limit on fixed interest rate exposures:	100%
Upper limit on variable interest rate exposures:	50%

The maximum that was reached in the period 1st April to 31 December 2014 was as follows:

Upper limit on fixed interest rate exposures: 100%
 Upper limit on variable interest rate exposures: 0%

b) Maturity Structure of Borrowing

Upper and lower limits for the maturity structure of borrowing were set and the maximum and minimum that was reached for each limit in the period 1st April to 31st December 2014 was as follows : -

Maturity Period	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Maximum	Minimum
Under 12 months	80%	0%	3%	2%
12 months and within 24 months	50%	0%	5%	2%
24 months and within 5 years	50%	0%	8%	4%
5 years and within 10 years	50%	0%	9%	8%
10 years and above	85%	0%	80%	77%

c) Total principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days

The limit for investments of longer than 364 days was set at £2 million for 2014/15. No such investments have been placed during 2014/15.

(D) Internal Audit

23. The Authority continues to “buy in” Internal Audit services from Liverpool City Council. Most audit work is carried out in the latter part of the year to fit in with work demands and provide relevant data for the year-end audit. Since the last financial review report two project based audits have been completed; a review of the new integrated Payroll/HR process; and, a review of the SHQ JCC agreement between the Authority and Merseyside Police. Some minor recommendations were made, and have been accepted and implemented, in terms of the Payroll/HR processes. Copies of all audit reports will be shared with members at the next Audit Sub-Committee along with any other completed audit reports for member’s consideration.

(E) Monitoring of Financial Processes

24. To ensure the internal financial processes of the Authority are operating effectively, a suite of performance indicators have been developed that now feed into the financial review. At present these indicators include:
- Payment of invoices,
 - Raising Invoices, and
 - Debtors

Prompt payment of invoices

25. In July 2009 the Authority joined the Prompt Payment Code (PPC). The PPC gives notice to suppliers of the Authority’s commitment to pay promptly. In the current economic climate the Government is keen for all businesses and local authorities to pay suppliers promptly. Information about the prompt payment of undisputed invoices, paid within 30 days of receipt invoices are reported monthly (LPI128)

26. The performance for this financial year is as follows:

	<u>1stqtr</u>	<u>2ndqtr</u>	<u>3rdqtr</u>	<u>4thqtr</u>
Invoices paid within 30 days of receipt	100%	100%	100%	
Number of Invoices processed	2,323	2,421	2,694	

27. The target for prompt payment in 2014/15 is 100%. The third quarter's results confirm the Authority continues to respond quickly and efficiently to requests for payment from suppliers.

Processing Sales Invoices

28. A key performance indicator in relation to the processing of income generation is the time it takes to generate a sales invoice. The current target is 100% within 2 working days from the request to raise an invoice. The performance for this financial year is as follows:

	<u>1stqtr</u>	<u>2ndqtr</u>	<u>3rdqtr</u>	<u>4thqtr</u>
Sales Invoice production	100%	100%	100%	
Number of Sales Invoices raised	250	211	321	

Debt Recovery

29. A key performance indicator in assessing the service's effectiveness in collecting income due is to review the change in the age and value of debt over a period of time. A comparison of the number and value of aged debts over for the third quarter can be summarised as follows:

Number of debts 60 days+

	<u>2012/13</u>	2013/14	2014/15
October	43	38	39
November	40	23	40
December	36	26	56

Value of debts 60 days+

	<u>2012/13</u>	2013/14	2014/15
	£'000	£'000	£'000
October	58	61	111
November	69	18	42
December	50	25	101

30. The Authority raises approximately 1,100 sales invoices per year and this can equate to income of between £2m - £3.5m. The profile of accounts raised

varies month by month and from year to year. It therefore can lead to significant variations when comparing the same month over a period of time. Considerable effort is made to actively engage with customers as part of the drive to improve the aged debt profile of the Authority.

31. Debtor accounts under £5,000 may be written off by Deputy Chief Executive. Four accounts have been approved for write-off under delegated powers totalling £115.56 (excl. VAT) following advice from the litigation service. Details of these accounts can be found in Appendix D.

Equality and Diversity Implications

32. There are no equality and diversity implications contained within this report.

Staff Implications

33. There are no staff implications contained within this report.

Legal Implications

34. None directly related to this report.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

35. See Executive Summary.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

36. None directly related to this report.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

37. The achievement of actual expenditure within the approved financial plan and delivery of the expected service outcomes is essential if the Service is to achieve the Authority's Mission.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- CFO/011/14** "MFRA Budget and Financial Plan 2014/2015-2018/2019" Authority 27th February 2014.
- CFO/097/14** "Financial Review 2014/15- April to June" Policy and Resources Committee 2nd September 2014.
- CFO/113/14** "Financial Review 2014/15- April to September" Policy and Resources Committee 27th November 2014.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- JCC** Joint Control Centre
SHQ Service Headquarters

FM	Facilities Management
ICT	Information and communications technology
SRT	Search and Rescue Team
MPC	Monetary Policy Committee
CPI	Consumer Price Index
PWLB	Public Works Loans Board
PPC MFRA	Prompt payment code

APPENDIX A1**2014/15 REVENUE BUDGET MOVEMENT SUMMARY**

Actual 2013/14	SERVICE REQUIREMENTS	Base Budget 2014/15	Qtr 1 Budget 2014/15	Qtr 2 Budget 2014/15	Reserve Draw- down	Vire- ments	Qtr 3 Budget 2014/15
£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
66,051	Fire Service	66,938	67,541	66,592	33	6	66,631
523	Corporate Management	591	589	559	0	-6	553
0	2012 - 13 B/fwd Dynamic Staff Saving	-154	-154	-75	0	0	-75
0	2013 - 14 New Dynamic Staff Saving	-260	-260	-228	0	0	-228
0	2014 - 15 New Dynamic Staff Saving	-150	-150	0	0	0	0
66,574		66,965	67,566	66,848	33	0	66,881
0	Contingency for Pay/Price Changes	843	843	549	0	0	549
66,574	TOTAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE	67,808	68,409	67,397	33	0	67,430
-86	Interest on Balances	-372	-372	-97	0	0	-97
66,488	NET OPERATING EXPENDITURE	67,436	68,037	67,300	33	0	67,333
	<u>Contribution to /(from) reserves</u>						
	<u>Spate / Other Emergency Related Reserves</u>						
-250	Insurance Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	Catastrophe Reserve	0	-500	-500	0	0	-500
	<u>Specific Projects</u>						
1,250	Smoothing Reserve	-2,396	-5,055	-5,055	0	0	-5,055
-181	Severance Reserve	0	0	-15	-21	0	-36
309	Ill Health Penalty Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
100	SMG Reserve	0	-100	-100	0	0	-100
-1,559	Capital Investment Reserve	-539	5,131	6,119	-10	0	6,109
241	PFI Annuity Reserve	-19	-26	-26	0	0	-26
0	Equality / DDA Investment Reserve	0	-225	-225	0	0	-225
0	Firefighter Safety Investment Reserve	-200	-200	-200	0	0	-200
0	Facing the Future Challenge Reserve	0	-800	-800	0	0	-800
-100	Community Sponsorship Reserve	0	0	-7	-2	0	-9
135	Equipment Reserve	0	0	-80	0	0	-80
-47	FSD Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
-33	Healthy Living / Olympic Legacy	0	0	-45	0	0	-45
-4	Water Rescue Reserve	0	-4	-4	0	0	-4
0	Inflation Reserve	0	-1,000	-1,000	0	0	-1,000
	<u>Ringfenced Reserves</u>						
6	F.R.E.E. Reserve	0	0	-3	0	0	-3
199	Princes Trust Reserve	0	-64	-64	0	0	-64
4	Community Youth Team Reserve	0	0	-5	0	0	-5
-3	Beacon Peer Project Reserve	0	0	-12	0	0	-12
1	Innovation Fund Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	Regional Control Reserve	0	-18	-18	0	0	-18
85	Energy Reseve	74	74	-1	0	0	-1
-7	St Helens District Reserve	0	0	-9	0	0	-9
87	New Dimensions Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
233		-3,080	-2,787	-2,050	-33	0	-2,083
0	Appropriation to / From General Fund	0	-894	-894	0	0	-894
66,721	BUDGET REQUIREMENT	64,356	64,356	64,356	0	0	64,356
-39,963	Government Funding / NNDR Top Up	-36,545	-36,545	-36,545	0	0	-36,545
	Local NNDR Forecast	-3,974	-3,974	-3,974			-3,974
-55	Collection Fund Deficit	-407	-407	-407	0	0	-407
-26,703	Precept Income	-23,430	-23,430	-23,430	0	0	-23,430
0		-64,356	-64,356	-64,356	0	0	-64,356

APPENDIX A2

Budgeted Movement on Reserves 2014/15

	Opening Balance	Original Budget Planned Use	Qtr 1 Drawdown & changes	Qtr 2 Drawdown	Qtr 3 Drawdown	Closing Balance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Earmarked Reserves</u>						
<u>Emergency Related Reserves</u>						
Bellwin Reserve	147	0				147
Insurance Reserve	370	0				370
Emergency planning Reserve	75	0				75
Catastrophe Reserve	1,000	0	-500			500
<u>Modernisation Challenge</u>						
Smoothing Reserve	6,750	-2,396	-2,659			1,695
Severance Reserve	721	0		-15	-21	685
Ill Health Penalty Reserve	908	0				908
Recruitment Reserve	1,000	0				1,000
SMG Reserve	100	0	-100			0
Capital Investment Reserve	4,277	-539	5,670	988	-10	10,386
PFI Annuity Reserve	2,251	-19	-7			2,225
Equality / DDA Investment Reserve	510	0	-225			285
Firefighter Safety Investment Reserve	1,000	-200				800
Facing the Future Challenge Reserve	800	0	-800			0
<u>Specific Projects</u>						
Community Sponsorship Reserve	13	0		-7	-2	4
Equipment Reserve	191	0		-80		111
Contestable Research Fund Reseve	25	0				25
FSD Reserve	6	0				6
Healthy Living / Olympic Legacy	80	0		-45		35
Water Rescue Reserve	5	0	-4			1
Inflation Reserve	1,500	0	-1,000			500
<u>Ringfenced Reserves</u>						
F.R.E.E. Reserve	44	0		-3		41
Princes Trust Reserve	343	0	-64			279
Community Youth Team Reserve	58	0		-5		53
Beacon Peer Project Reserve	62	0		-12		50
Innovation Fund Reserve	170	0				170
Regional Control Reserve	18	0	-18			0
Energy Reseve	85	74		-75		84
St Helens District Reserve	15	0		-9		6
New Dimensions Reserve	793	0				793
Total Earmarked Reserves	23,317	-3,080	293	737	-33	21,234
						0
General revenue Reserve	2,894	-894	0	0		2,000
						0
Total Reserves	26,211	-3,974	293	737	-33	23,234

APPENDIX A3

2014/15 FIRE SERVICE REVENUE BUDGET MOVEMENT SUMMARY

Actual 2013/14 £'000	SERVICE REQUIREMENTS	Base Budget 2014/15 £'000	Qtr 1 Budget 2014/15 £'000	Qtr 2 Budget 2014/15 £'000	Reserve Draw- down £'000	Vire- ments £'000	Qtr 3 Budget 2014/15 £'000
	EMPLOYEES						
	Uniformed						
34,077	Firefighters	34,104	34,171	34,008	0	51	34,059
1,263	Control	1,259	1,259	1,296			1,296
2,253	Additional Hours	1,285	1,303	1,313		49	1,362
37,593	TOTAL UNIFORMED	36,648	36,733	36,617	0	100	36,717
	APT&C and Manual						
8,163	APT&C	8,378	8,756	8,676		8	8,684
259	Handymen/Cleaning	288	288	288			288
93	Catering	106	106	106			106
540	Transport Maintenance	568	568	568			568
59	Other Manual	95	95	95			95
186	Casuals	0	19	19		-10	9
9,300	TOTAL APT&C/MANUAL	9,435	9,832	9,752	0	-2	9,750
	Other Employee Expenses						
0	Rent & Lodging	1	1	0			0
149	Allowances	68	91	110			110
5	Removal Expenses	5	5	5			5
376	Training Expenses	585	616	567		-31	536
0	Interview Expenses	0	0	0			0
217	Other Expenses	36	32	43	22		65
15	Staff Advertising	22	22	15		-1	14
37	Development Expenses	97	97	77			77
946	Employee Insurance	128	128	146		3	149
832	MPF Pen Fixed Rate	2,818	2,818	2,538	0		2,538
168	Enhanced pensions	46	46	52			52
8	SSP & SMP Reimbursements	-16	-16	-16			-16
109	Catering Expenditure	113	113	121			121
-358	HFRA Capitalisation Payroll	0	0	-730		240	-490
2,504	TOTAL OTHER EMPLOYEE EXPEND	3,903	3,953	2,928	22	211	3,161
	Pensions						
1,700	Injury Pension	1,694	1,694	1,694			1,694
351	Ill Health Ret charges	174	174	174			174
2,051	TOTAL PENSIONS	1,868	1,868	1,868	0	0	1,868
51,448	TOTAL EMPLOYEES	51,854	52,386	51,165	22	309	51,496
	PREMISES						
352	Building Maintenance Repairs	368	339	318		-1	317
203	Site Maintenance Costs	172	183	193		7	200
732	Energy	759	759	758		9	767
108	Rent	76	76	80			80
1,061	Rates	1,195	1,195	1,167			1,167
232	Water	264	264	251		-8	243
58	Fixtures	66	60	58		31	89
152	Contract Cleaning	157	157	154			154
47	Insurance	61	61	52		-3	49
2,945	TOTAL PREMISES	3,118	3,094	3,031	0	35	3,066
	TRANSPORT						
400	Direct Transport	330	334	348		37	385
26	Tunnel Fees	29	29	29			29
168	Operating Lease	198	199	202		5	207
493	Other Transport Costs	584	585	500		3	503
154	Car Allowances	133	132	110		2	112
365	Insurance	344	344	353			353
1,606	TOTAL TRANSPORT	1,618	1,623	1,542	0	47	1,589

APPENDIX A3

2014/15 FIRE SERVICE REVENUE BUDGET MOVEMENT SUMMARY

Actual 2013/14	SERVICE REQUIREMENTS	Base Budget 2014/15	Qtr 1 Budget 2014/15	Qtr 2 Budget 2014/15	Reserve Draw- down	Vire- ments	Qtr 3 Budget 2014/15
£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	SUPPLIES & SERVICES						
43	S01 Administrative Supplies	42	64	57		3	60
274	S02 Operational Supplies	292	305	363			363
6	S03 Hydrants	20	20	20			20
65	S04 Consumables	74	75	70			70
103	S05 Training Supplies	154	165	147		-6	141
119	S06 Fire Prevention Supplies	138	140	151	2	-16	137
43	S07 Catering Supplies	31	47	50		2	52
316	S09 Uniforms	358	363	340		12	352
113	S10,11 Printing & Stationery	170	164	141		3	144
14	S12 Operating Leases	2	2	3			3
729	S13 Professional Fees/Service	883	889	774	0	-6	768
660	S14,15,1 Communications	664	684	673		35	708
25	S17 Postage	35	35	30		1	31
8	S18,19,2 Command/Control	4	4	11		-3	8
305	S21 Computing	387	390	365		-7	358
251	S22 Medicals	306	310	318		2	320
90	S23 Travel & Subsistence	84	88	104		14	118
74	S24 Grants/Subscriptions	110	113	103		2	105
23	S25 Advertising	15	15	21		-3	18
45	S27 Furniture	44	45	121		2	123
81	S28 Laundry	81	81	81			81
32	S26 Insurances	46	46	34			34
27	S30 Hospitality	16	19	8		-4	4
3,446	TOTAL SUPPLIES & SERVICES	3,956	4,064	3,985	2	31	4,018
	AGENCY SERVICES						
75	Super Fund Admin	73	73	73			73
1,453	ICT Service Provider	1,466	1,466	1,495		43	1,538
203	Third Party Payments (FSN)	197	197	195			195
455	ICT Managed Suppliers	544	544	544		-43	501
2276	PFI Unitary Charges ((Int/Principal/Op C	2633	2,640	2,640			2,640
4,462	TOTAL AGENCY SERVICES	4,913	4,920	4,947	0	0	4,947
	CENTRAL EXPENSES						
317	Finance & Computing	278	279	382			382
317	TOTAL CENTRAL EXPENSES	278	279	382	0	0	382
	CAPITAL FINANCING						
5,197	PWLB Debt Charges	5,895	5,895	5,270	0		5,270
75	MRB Debt Charges	76	76	76			76
23	Finance Lease Debt Charges	0	0	0			0
3,327	Revenue Contribution to Capital	775	1,304	2,616	9	-230	2,395
8,622	TOTAL CAPITAL FINANCING	6,746	7,275	7,962	9	-230	7,741
72,846	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	72,483	73,641	73,014	33	192	73,239
	INCOME						
3,759	Specific Grants	3,585	3,696	3,795		38	3,833
16	Sales	0	0	0			0
1,581	Fees & Charges	832	1,111	1,234		108	1,342
16	Reinforcing moves	5	5	5			5
281	Rents etc	448	448	448			448
754	Recharges Secondments	456	521	521		38	559
218	Contributions	100	200	300		2	302
107	Recharges Internal	114	114	114			114
27	Other Income	5	5	5			5
36	UKRO Income	0	0	0			0
6,795	TOTAL INCOME	5,545	6,100	6,422	0	186	6,608
66,051	NET EXPENDITURE	66,938	67,541	66,592	33	6	66,631

APPENDIX A4

2013/14 CORPORATE SERVICES REVENUE BUDGET MOVEMENT SUMMARY

Actual 2013/14 £'000	SERVICE REQUIREMENTS	Base Budget 2014/15 £'000	Qtr 1 Budget 2014/15 £'000	Qtr 2 Budget 2014/15 £'000	Reserve Draw- down £'000	Vire- ments £'000	Qtr 3 Budget 2014/15 £'000
	EXPENDITURE						
	Finance & Legal costs						
79	1010 Finance Officer	79	79	79			79
93	1015 Legal Officer	84	84	86		-2	84
	1016 Regionalisation Costs	0	0	0			0
	Democratic Rep (1020)						
19	5162-4 - Travel & Subsistence	48	48	44		3	47
4	5165 - Conference fees	15	15	15			15
239	5166 - Members Allowances	230	228	228			228
1	5168 - Telephones	2	2	3		-1	2
0	5169 - Training	1	1	1			1
0	5170 - Hospitality	3	3	3			3
	Central Expenses (1030)						
16	5141 Bank charges	18	18	17			17
38	5142 District Audit Fees	68	68	48			48
34	5144 Subscriptions	43	43	35		-6	29
523	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	591	589	559	0	-6	553

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APPEN**Capital Programme 2014/15**

EXPENDITURE	Approved Budget	Qtr 1 Budget	Qtr 2 Budget	Qtr 3 Re-Phasing of Schemes	QTR 3 Virements	QTR 3 Amend-ments	Qtr 3 Budget
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
<u>BUILDING & LAND PROGRAMME</u>							
Roofs & Canopy Replacements	50,000	65,000	55,000				55,000
Concrete Yard Repairs	20,000	28,000	38,000				38,000
Tower Improvements	0	9,900	9,900				9,900
L.E.V. Sys In App Rooms	0	6,700	6,700				6,700
Capital Refurbishment	57,000	57,000	57,000				57,000
Appliance Room Floors	46,500	51,500	51,500				51,500
Boiler Replacements	0	49,500	49,500				49,500
Community Station Investment	35,500	38,500	38,500				38,500
F.S. Refurbishment Toxteth	0	0	0				0
Conference Facilities H/Q	4,500	4,500	4,500				4,500
5 Year Electrical Test	38,000	150,000	150,000	-100,000			50,000
Corporate Signage	0	3,000	3,000				3,000
Diesel Tanks	150,000	150,000	150,000	-150,000			0
Sanitary Accommodation Refurb	50,000	56,000	56,000				56,000
Office Accommodation	0	16,000	16,000				16,000
L.L.A.R. Accommodation Formby	300,000	313,500	313,500	-300,000			13,500
F.S. Refurbishment Whiston	152,500	152,500	0				0
F.S. Refurbishment Aintree	277,000	280,000	0				0
St Helens Conversion	507,000	511,000	111,000				111,000
Asbestos Surveys	0	15,500	15,500				15,500
City Centre Community Facility	70,000	79,500	79,500	-70,000			9,500
F.S. Refurbishment Bromborough	310,000	322,500	12,500				12,500
F.S. Refurbishment Eccleston	338,000	338,000	0				0
F.S. Refurbishment Crosby	375,000	375,000	0				0
H.V.A.C. Heating, Vent & Air Con	92,000	92,000	92,000	-50,000			42,000
Llar Accomodation Eccleston	237,500	237,500	0				0
D.D.A. Compliance Work	0	307,000	307,000	-250,000			57,000
Lighting Conductors Surge Protectors	50,000	55,000	55,000	-55,000			0
Emergency Lighting	0	26,400	26,400				26,400
F.S. Refurbishment Kirby	326,000	326,000	0				0
MACC Server Room Extension	0	4,000	4,000				4,000
Gym Equipment Replacement	25,000	76,500	76,500				76,500
SHQ JCC	0	3,110,300	3,531,300	0	0	0	3,531,300
F.S. Refurbishment Allerton	341,000	341,000	0				0
Workshop Enhancement	0	350,000	350,000	-250,000	19,500		119,500
Station Refresh	450,000	486,000	186,000	-75,000			111,000
SHQ Tower	75,000	249,000	249,000				249,000
SHQ Museum	75,000	150,000	150,000	-75,000	-19,500		55,500
SHQ 2 Storey Refresh	0	404,000	405,000				405,000
Llar Accomodation Newton Le Willows	0	65,000	65,000				65,000
Energy Conservation Non-Salix	25,000	33,500	33,500				33,500
Energy Conservation Salix	0	0	75,000				75,000
D.S.O. Cleaning Equipment	6,000	8,500	8,500				8,500
Fridge/Freezer Rep Prog	10,500	22,000	22,000				22,000
Furniture Replacement Prog	10,500	22,500	22,500				22,500
Fire House Refurbishment	80,000	80,000	80,000				80,000
Total	4,584,500	9,519,300	6,956,300	-1,375,000	0	0	5,581,300
<u>FIRE SAFETY</u>							
Smoke Alarms (H.F.R.A.)	500,000	500,000	500,000			-250,000	250,000
Installation Costs (H.F.R.A.)	730,000	730,000	730,000			-240,000	490,000
Deaf Alarms (H.F.R.A.)	49,000	49,000	49,000				49,000
Replacement Batteries (H.F.R.A.)	2,000	2,000	2,000				2,000
Risk Management Residential Blocks	200,000	200,000	200,000				200,000
Total	1,481,000	1,481,000	1,481,000	0	0	-490,000	991,000

Capital Programme 2014/15

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	Approved Budget	Qtr 1 Budget	Qtr 2 Budget	Qtr 3 Re-Phasing of Schemes	QTR 3 Virements	QTR 3 Amend-ments	Qtr 3 Budget
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
ICT							
F.M.I.S. Replacement	0	233,000	230,300				230,300
I.C.T. Software	2,000	2,000	2,000				2,000
I.C.T. Hardware	91,000	106,800	106,800			14,800	121,600
I.C.T. Servers	205,000	303,500	303,500		0		303,500
I.C.T. Network	54,000	71,500	71,500				71,500
I.C.T. Operational Equipment	12,000	14,000	14,000				14,000
I.C.T. Security	2,000	6,000	6,000				6,000
System Development Portal	112,000	129,900	129,900				129,900
I.C.T. Projects / Upgrades	5,000	5,000	5,000				5,000
Portable Storage Media	0	27,000	27,000				27,000
Estates Management System	20,000	20,000	20,000	-20,000			0
Analytical Tool CFS Work	90,000	90,000	90,000				90,000
E Recruitment System	0	700	700				700
TRM System	0	200,000	252,700				252,700
Legl Case Management system	0	4,500	4,500				4,500
Wireless Rollout	0	9,000	9,000				9,000
Community Protection System	30,000	30,000	30,000				30,000
JCC ICT scheme	0	928,000	957,000	0	0	0	957,000
C3i C&C Comms and Info system	15,000	25,000	25,000				25,000
PFI Access Door System	18,000	18,000	18,000				18,000
Fleet Management System	0	0	87,500				87,500
Corporate Gazateer	0	9,500	9,500				9,500
Total	656,000	2,233,400	2,399,900	-20,000	0	14,800	2,394,700
OPERATIONAL EQUIP. & HYDRANTS							
Gas Tight Suits Other Ppe	40,000	50,000	50,000				50,000
Hydraulic Rescue Equipment	65,000	93,000	93,000				93,000
Resuscitation Equipment	0	27,500	27,500		-7,500		20,000
Pod Equipment	50,000	119,000	119,000	-50,000			69,000
Thermal Imaging Cameras	10,000	11,500	11,500				11,500
Improvements To Fleet	20,000	36,000	36,000				36,000
Water Rescue Equipment	0	0	0	50,000	-26,000		24,000
BA equipment / Comms	502,000	723,500	723,500				723,500
Rope Replacement	20,000	35,000	35,000				35,000
Light Portable Pumps	20,000	20,000	20,000				20,000
Cctv Equipment/Drone	32,000	32,000	32,000		-24,000		8,000
Marine Rescue Launch	0	5,000	5,000				5,000
Operational Ladders	0	0	0		14,000		14,000
Water Delivery System	0	62,000	62,000		-10,000		52,000
Water Delivery Hoses	0	49,000	49,000	-20,000			29,000
Bulk Foam Attack Equipment	48,000	48,000	48,000	-48,000			0
DEFRA FRNE Water Rescue Grant	0	20,000	20,000				20,000
Methods of Entry	0	0	0		20,000	4,000	24,000
Electrical Equipment	0	0	0		33,500		33,500
Hydrants (New Installations)	18,500	18,500	18,500				18,500
Hydrants (Rep Installations)	18,500	20,100	20,100				20,100
Total	844,000	1,370,100	1,370,100	-68,000	0	4,000	1,306,100
VEHICLES							
Wtl'S Purchased	750,000	750,000	750,000				750,000
Ancilliary Vehicles	677,200	876,200	876,200	-439,600		167,900	604,500
Special Vehicles	1,001,000	1,012,500	1,012,500	-916,000		-96,500	0
Vehicles water Strategy	0	29,000	29,000	-29,000			0
Motorcycle Response	44,000	44,000	44,000	-44,000			0
Workshop Equipment	0	32,000	32,000				32,000
Total	2,472,200	2,743,700	2,743,700	-1,428,600	0	71,400	1,386,500
Grand Total	10,037,700	17,347,500	14,951,000	-2,891,600	0	-399,800	11,659,600

Capital Programme 2014/15

FINANCING	Approved Budget	Qtr 1 Budget	Qtr 2 Budget	Qtr 3 Re-Phasing of Schemes	QTR 3 Virements	QTR 3 Amend-ments	Qtr 3 Budget
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Capital Receipts							
Sale of Toxteth FS	250,000	250,000	250,000	0	0		250,000
Sale of Formby LLAR House	350,000	350,000	350,000	0	0		350,000
Sale of Derby Road	700,000	500,000	500,000	0	0		500,000
R.C.C.O. / Cap Investment Reserve							
Capitalisation of Sals HFRA	730,000	730,000	730,000	0		-240,000	490,000
It Equipment (IT003)	0	2,300	2,300	0		6,300	8,600
Joint Control Room (BLD068)	0	177,300	177,300	0	0		177,300
SHQ Stage C Works (BLD081)	0	0	340,000	0	0		340,000
Two Storey Refresh (BLD074)	0	0	1,000	0	0		1,000
Salix Energy Conservation (CON002)	0	0	75,000	0	0		75,000
JCC IT Works (IT053) Cap Inv Res	0	60,000	60,000	0	0		60,000
FSN Charge for Alarms (FIR002)	50,000	50,000	50,000	0	0		50,000
Fleet Mgmt System (IT057) Cap Inv Res	0	0	78,000	0	0		78,000
Station Refresh (BLD071) Cap Inv Res	400,000	400,000	400,000	0	0		400,000
SHQ Museum (BLD073) Cap Inv Res Year2	75,000	75,000	75,000	0	0		75,000
Fire Risk Mgmt (FIR009) Fire Safety Res	200,000	200,000	200,000	0	0		200,000
Planning Performnce Mgmt (IT040) Cap Inv Res	50,000	50,000	50,000	0	0		50,000
DDA Compliance works (BLD068) Cap Inv Reserve	0	225,000	225,000	0	0		225,000
Training Tower HQ (BLD072) Cap Inv Reserve	0	64,000	64,000	0	0		64,000
Fleet Mgmt System (IT057) Cap Inv Res	0	0	9,500	0	0		9,500
TRM System (IT046)	0	0	50,000	0	0		50,000
JCC IT Works (IT052) Cap Inv Res	0	0	29,000	0	0		29,000
Tablets / Ipads (IT003) Cap Inv Res	0	0	0	0		8,500	8,500
Methods of Entry (OPS053)	0	0	0	0		4,000	4,000
Grant						0	
(Capital Grant) Fire Control Grant	0	700,000	700,000	0	0		700,000
(Capital Grant) DCMS	133,000	133,000	133,000	0	0		133,000
(Capital Grant) Police Grant	0	1,752,000	1,833,000	0	0		1,833,000
Capital Grant CSR07 (1,728,900) (BLD067)	1,243,966	1,243,966	1,243,966	0	0		1,243,966
Total Non Borrowing	4,181,966	6,962,566	7,626,066	0	0	-221,200	7,404,866
Borrowing Requirement							
Unsupported Borrowing	5,855,734	10,384,934	7,324,934	-2,891,600	0	-178,600	4,254,734
Borrowing	5,855,734	10,384,934	7,324,934	-2,891,600	0	-178,600	4,254,734
Total Funding	10,037,700	17,347,500	14,951,000	-2,891,600	0	-399,800	11,659,600

DIX B

Actual to December 2014
£
720
29,158
0
4,984
0
0
0
1,469
-34,528
0
0
2,653
0
4,073
13,345
3,086
0
0
39,785
4,841
0
9,570
0
0
0
0
24,852
0
0
0
0
20,568
1,958,823
0
22,191
43,769
234,050
3,521
430,275
65,000
0
0
1,545
5,990
1,995
0
2,891,735
192,587
0
0
1,200
0
193,787

DIX B

Actual to December 2014
£
110,574
0
60,199
29,276
32,127
6,475
0
923
0
2,872
0
72,930
0
105,090
0
0
0
831,559
21,074
0
4,250
5,100
1,282,448
21,891
20,711
0
0
0
35,532
0
218,710
3,696
0
0
0
0
0
19,242
0
2,079
0
0
6,062
0
327,923
0
104,261
0
0
0
8,685
112,946
4,808,839

Approved Authority Capital Programme for 2014/2015 - 2018/2019

Capital Expenditure	Total Cost £	2014/15 £	2015/16 £	2016/17 £	2017/18 £	2018/19 £
Building/Land	16,151,300	5,581,300	9,366,000	455,500	352,000	396,500
Fire Safety	6,109,000	991,000	1,281,000	1,279,000	1,279,000	1,279,000
ICT	4,679,700	2,394,700	672,000	531,000	556,000	526,000
Operational Equipment & Hydrants	1,917,100	1,306,100	225,000	152,000	117,000	117,000
Vehicles	7,673,600	1,386,500	2,675,100	1,526,000	1,228,000	858,000
Ependiture	36,530,700	11,659,600	14,219,100	3,943,500	3,532,000	3,176,500
2014/15 - 2018/19 Qtr 2 Approved Programme	37,110,600	14,951,000	11,364,800	4,161,300	3,466,000	3,167,500
Q3 Current to Q2 Change	(579,900)	(3,291,400)	2,854,300	(217,800)	66,000	9,000
Q3 Movements Explained by						
Reduction in 2014/15 Smoke Alarms Spend - Installations (Salaries)	(240,000)	(240,000)				
Reduction in 2014/15 Smoke Alarms Spend - Alarms	(250,000)	(250,000)				
ICT Hardware: Laptops/ Tablets	14,800	14,800				
Ops. Equipment (Methods of Entry)	4,000	4,000				
Slippage/Realignment of Building Prog	0	(1,375,000)	1,375,000			
Slippage/Relignment of IT Equipment	0	(20,000)	20,000			
Slippage/Relignment of Operational Equipment	0	(68,000)	168,000	(200,000)	50,000	50,000
Slippage/Realignment of Vehicles	(108,700)	(1,357,200)	1,291,300	(17,800)	16,000	(41,000)
Q3 Movement	(579,900)	(3,291,400)	2,854,300	(217,800)	66,000	9,000
Financing Available	Total £	2014/15 £	2015/16 £	2016/17 £	2017/18 £	2018/19 £
Capital Receipts	1,875,000	1,100,000	275,000	500,000	0	0
RCCO	3,741,600	621,600	780,000	780,000	780,000	780,000
DDA Investment Reserve	225,000	225,000	0	0	0	0
Capital Reserve	2,178,300	1,348,300	830,000	0	0	0
Firefighter Safety Investment Reserve	200,000	200,000	0	0	0	0
Grants	3,846,966	2,076,966	1,770,000	0	0	0
External Contributions	1,833,000	1,833,000	0	0	0	0
Total Non Borrowing	13,899,866	7,404,866	3,655,000	1,280,000	780,000	780,000
Unsupported Borrowing	22,630,834	4,254,734	10,564,100	2,663,500	2,752,000	2,396,500
Total Funding	36,530,700	11,659,600	14,219,100	3,943,500	3,532,000	3,176,500
Q2 Funding Level for 2014/15 - 2018/19 Programme	37,110,600	14,951,000	11,364,800	4,161,300	3,466,000	3,167,500
Q3 to Q2 Change	(579,900)	(3,291,400)	2,854,300	(217,800)	66,000	9,000
Funding Change Explained by:						
RCCO	(229,700)	(229,700)	0	0	0	0
Reserves	8,500	8,500	0	0	0	0
Unsupported Borrowing	(358,700)	(3,070,200)	2,854,300	(217,800)	66,000	9,000
Q3 Movement	(579,900)	(3,291,400)	2,854,300	(217,800)	66,000	9,000

Building / Land - Approved Budget 2014/15 to 2018/19

Type of Capital Expenditure	Total Cost £	2014/15 £	2015/16 £	2016/17 £	2017/18 £	2018/19 £
Major Site Refurbishments						
BLD039 FS Refurbishment Heswall	150,000		150,000			
BLD055 FS Refurbishment Bromborough	12,500	12,500				
BLD077 FS Refurbishment Upton	275,000		275,000			
BLD078 FS Refurbishment West Kirby	400,000		400,000			
BLD042 St Helens Conversion	111,000	111,000				
BLD070 Workshop Enhancement	369,500	119,500	250,000			
BLD072 SHQ Tower	249,000	249,000				
BLD073 SHQ Museum	130,500	55,500	75,000			
BLD071 Station Refresh	186,000	111,000	75,000			
BLD079 Station Refurbishments	3,410,000		3,410,000			
	5,293,500	658,500	4,635,000			
Station Mergers						
BLD080 Prescot FS New Build (CFO/095/14)	3,100,000		3,100,000			
SHQ/JCC Major Refurbishment	3,936,300	3,936,300				
LLAR Accomodation Works						
BLD016 Community Station Investment	144,500	38,500		36,000	25,000	45,000
BLD036 LLAR Accomodation Formby	313,500	13,500	300,000			
BLD045 City Centre Community Facility	79,500	9,500	70,000			
BLD075 LLAR Accomodation Newton-le-Willows	375,000	65,000	310,000			
	912,500	126,500	680,000	36,000	25,000	45,000
General Station Upgrade Works						
BLD001 Roofs & Canopy Replacements	235,000	55,000	50,000	50,000	40,000	40,000
BLD004 Concrete Yard Repairs	118,000	38,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
BLD005 Tower Improvements	47,900	9,900		18,000	10,000	10,000
BLD011 Capital Refurbishment	57,000	57,000				
BLD013 Non Slip Coating to Appliance Room Floors	224,500	51,500	46,500	46,500	40,000	40,000
BLD014 Boiler Replacements	69,500	49,500				20,000
BLD020 Electrical Testing	276,000	50,000	138,000	38,000	30,000	20,000
BLD031 Diesel Tanks	150,000		150,000			
BLD033 Sanitary Accomodation Refurbishment	176,000	56,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
BLD044 Asbestos Surveys	150,500	15,500	50,000	50,000	25,000	10,000
BLD060 DDA Compliance	377,000	57,000	250,000	30,000	20,000	20,000
	1,881,400	439,400	734,500	282,500	215,000	210,000
Other Works						
BLD007 L.E.V. System in Appliance Rooms	6,700	6,700				
BLD018 Conference Facilities SHQ	29,000	4,500	4,500	10,000	5,000	5,000
BLD026 Corporate Signage	23,000	3,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
BLD032 Power Strategy	40,000			20,000	10,000	10,000
BLD034 Office Accomodation	96,000	16,000	25,000	25,000	15,000	15,000
BLD058 HVAC - Heating, Ventilation & Air Con	122,000	42,000	50,000			30,000
BLD061 Lightening Conductors & Surge Protection	55,000		55,000			
BLD062 Emergency Lighting	26,400	26,400				
BLD065 MACC Server Room Extension	4,000	4,000				
BLD067 Gym Equipment Replacement	176,500	76,500	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
CON001 Energy Conservation Non-Salix	133,500	33,500	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
CON002 Energy Conservation Salix	75,000	75,000				
DSO001 DSO Cleaning Equipment	32,500	8,500	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
EQU002 Replacement programme for Fridge Freezers	63,500	22,000	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,000
EQU003 Rfurniture Replacement Programme	64,500	22,500	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,500
	947,600	340,600	216,500	137,000	112,000	141,500
TDA001 Fire house refurbishment	80,000	80,000				
	16,151,300	5,581,300	9,366,000	455,500	352,000	396,500

Original Budget	7,684,500	4,584,500	1,896,000	455,500	352,000	396,500
Current Programme	16,151,300	5,581,300	9,366,000	455,500	352,000	396,500
Changes	8,466,800	996,800	7,470,000			

Q1 Movements/Adjustments: 4,869,800 4,934,800 (65,000)

Q2 Movements/Adjustments: 3,597,000 (2,563,000) 6,160,000

Q3 Movements/Adjustments: (1,375,000) 1,375,000

Slippage to 2015/16

BLD020 Electrical Testing	(100,000)	100,000				
BLD036 LLAR Accomodation Formby	(300,000)	300,000				
BLD045 City Centre Community Facility	(70,000)	70,000				
BLD031 Diesel Tanks	(150,000)	150,000				
BLD058 HVAC - Heating, Ventilation & Air Con	(50,000)	50,000				
BLD060 DDA Compliance	(250,000)	250,000				
BLD061 Lightening Conductors & Surge Protection	(55,000)	55,000				
BLD070 Workshop Enhancement	(250,000)	250,000				
BLD071 Station Refresh	(75,000)	75,000				
BLD073 SHQ Museum	(75,000)	75,000				

Virements

BLD073 to BLD070	(19,500)					
BLD070 from BLD073		19,500				

Q3 Movements/Adjustments: (1,375,000) 1,375,000

Fire Safety - Approved Budget 2014/15 to 2018/19

Type of Capital Expenditure	Total Cost £	2014/15 £	2015/16 £	2016/17 £	2017/18 £	2018/19 £
FIR002 Smoke Alarms (100,000 HFRA target)	2,250,000	250,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
FIR005 Installation costs (HFRA)	3,410,000	490,000	730,000	730,000	730,000	730,000
FIR006 Deaf Alarms (HFRA)	245,000	49,000	49,000	49,000	49,000	49,000
FIR007 Replacement Batteries (12,000)	4,000	2,000	2,000			
FIR009 Fire Risk Management in Residential Blocks (CFO/135/13)	200,000	200,000				
	6,109,000	991,000	1,281,000	1,279,000	1,279,000	1,279,000
Original Budget	6,599,000	1,481,000	1,281,000	1,279,000	1,279,000	1,279,000
Current Programme	6,109,000	991,000	1,281,000	1,279,000	1,279,000	1,279,000
Changes	(490,000)	(490,000)				
Q3 Movements/Adjustments	(490,000)	(490,000)				
<u>Savings</u>						
FIR002 Smoke Alarms (100,000 HFRA target)		(250,000)				
FIR005 Installation costs (HFRA)		(240,000)				
	(490,000)	(490,000)				

ICT including Regional Control - Approved Budget 2014/15 to 2018/19

Type of Capital Expenditure	Total Cost £	2014/15 £	2015/16 £	2016/17 £	2017/18 £	2018/19 £
IT002 ICT Software						
Software Licences	10,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
New Visualistaion Infrastructure	75,000					75,000
3 Year Licences Antivirus & Filtering	155,000				155,000	
Microsoft EA Agreement (Servers & Security)	180,000		60,000	60,000	60,000	
Microsoft SQL Upgrade	50,000		50,000			
	470,000	2,000	112,000	62,000	217,000	77,000
IT003 ICT Hardware						
PC, monitor and laptop replacement (target 20%)	417,100	97,100	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000
PC, monitor and laptop growth	30,000	10,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Tablets (Ipads)	8,500	8,500				
Peripherals replacement (target 20%)	30,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Appliance Toughbook Replacement	110,000		110,000			
LFS Laptops	40,000			40,000		
	635,600	121,600	201,000	131,000	91,000	91,000
IT005 ICT Servers						
Server/storage replacement (target 20%)	548,500	288,500	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000
Server/storage growth	75,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
New SAN Solution	100,000					100,000
	723,500	303,500	80,000	80,000	80,000	180,000
IT018 ICT Network						
Local Area Network replacement (discrete)	20,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
Network Switches/Routers replacement	377,000	26,000	141,000		100,000	110,000
Network Switches/Router growth	25,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Vesty Road Network Link Refresh	31,500	31,500				
IP Telephony	155,000	5,000	50,000	100,000		
Wireless Network	40,000			40,000		
	648,500	71,500	200,000	149,000	109,000	119,000
IT026 ICT Operational Equipment						
Pagers/Alerters	37,000	9,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000
Station End Kit	25,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Incident Ground Management System	50,000			50,000		
	112,000	14,000	12,000	62,000	12,000	12,000
SHQ/JCC Major Refurbishment	957,000	957,000				
Other IT Schemes						
IT027 ICT Security - Remote Access Security FOBS	14,000	6,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
IT028 System Development (Portal)	229,900	129,900	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
IT030 ICT Projects/Upgrades	25,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
IT036 Portable Storage Media Security	27,000	27,000				
IT039 Estates Management System	20,000		20,000			
IT040 Integrated Planning & Performance M.S.	90,000	90,000				
IT043 E-Recruitment System	700	700				
IT046 TRM System	252,700	252,700				
IT047 Computerised Legal Case Management System	4,500	4,500				
IT049 Wireless Rollout	9,000	9,000				
IT050 Community Protection IMS System	30,000	30,000				
IT055 C.3.I. C.&C Communication & Information System	85,000	25,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
IT056 P.F.I. Door Access System	18,000	18,000				
IT057 Fleet Management System	87,500	87,500				
FIN001 FMIS/Eproc/Payroll/HR Replacement	230,300	230,300				
RC003 Corporate Gazetteer	9,500	9,500				
	1,133,100	925,100	67,000	47,000	47,000	47,000
	4,679,700	2,394,700	672,000	531,000	556,000	526,000
Original Budget	2,921,000	656,000	652,000	531,000	556,000	526,000
Current Programme	4,679,700	2,394,700	672,000	531,000	556,000	526,000
Changes	1,758,700	1,738,700	20,000			
Q1 Movements/Adjustments	1,577,400	1,577,400				
Q2 Movements/Adjustments	166,500	166,500				
Q3 Movements/Adjustments	14,800	(5,200)	20,000			
Slippage to 2015/16						
IT039 Estates Management System		(20,000)	20,000			
RCCO						
IT003 ICT Hardware: Laptop - from 0167			800			
IT003 ICT Hardware: Laptop - from 0248			1,900			
IT003 ICT Hardware: Laptops - from 0085 Hub			3,600			
Capital Reserve						
IT003 ICT Hardware: Tablets (Ipads)			8,500			
	1,758,700	1,738,700	20,000			

Operational Equipment - Approved Budget 2014/15 to 2018/19

Type of Capital Expenditure	Total Cost £	2014/15 £	2015/16 £	2016/17 £	2017/18 £	2018/19 £
<u>OPS003 Hydraulic Rescue Equipment</u>						
Hydraulic Rescue Equipment - Replacement Programme	28,000	28,000				
Pneumatic Rescue Equipment - Air Bags	65,000	65,000				
	93,000	93,000				
<u>OPS024 BA Equipment/Communications</u>						
BA Cylinder Replacement	221,500	221,500				
BA Sets (back pack/face mask/tubes/equip) Replacement	219,000	219,000				
BA Telementary Breathing Units	133,000	133,000				
Replacement of hand held communication radios	150,000	150,000				
	723,500	723,500				
<u>Other Operational Equipment</u>						
OPS001 Gas Tight Suits Other PPE	50,000	50,000				
OPS005 Resuscitation Equipment	20,000	20,000				
OPS009 POD Equipment (Demountable Unit Refurb 2013/14 IRMP)	119,000	69,000	50,000			
OPS011 Thermal imaging cameras	11,500	11,500				
OPS022 Improvements to Fleet	136,000	36,000	20,000	20,000	30,000	30,000
OPS023 Water Rescue Equipment	224,000	24,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
OPS026 Rope Replacement	35,000	35,000				
OPS027 Light prtble Pumps	20,000	20,000				
OPS031 CCTV Equipment (IRMP2 CCTV Drone)	8,000	8,000				
OPS033 Marine Rescue Launch	5,000	5,000				
OPS034 Operational Ladders	14,000	14,000				
OPS036 Radiation Detection Equipment	45,000			45,000		
OPS038 Water Delivery System	52,000	52,000				
OPS039 Water Delivery Hoses	49,000	29,000	20,000			
OPS049 Bulk Foam Attack Equipment	48,000		48,000			
OPS052 DEFRA FRNE	20,000	20,000				
OPS053 Methods of Entry	24,000	24,000				
OPS054 Electrical Equipment	33,500	33,500				
	914,000	451,000	188,000	115,000	80,000	80,000
<u>Hydrants</u>						
HYD001 Hydrants (New Installations)	92,500	18,500	18,500	18,500	18,500	18,500
HYD002 Hydrants (Replacements)	94,100	20,100	18,500	18,500	18,500	18,500
	186,600	38,600	37,000	37,000	37,000	37,000
	1,917,100	1,306,100	225,000	152,000	117,000	117,000
Original Budget	1,387,000	844,000	57,000	352,000	67,000	67,000
Current Programme	1,917,100	1,306,100	225,000	152,000	117,000	117,000
Changes	530,100	462,100	168,000	(200,000)	50,000	50,000
<u>Q1 Movements/Adjustments</u>	526,100	526,100				
<u>Q3 Movements/Adjustments</u>	4,000	(64,000)	168,000	(200,000)	50,000	50,000
<u>Slippage to 2015/16</u>						
OPS009 POD Equipment		(50,000)	50,000			
OPS039 Water Delivery Hoses		(20,000)	20,000			
OPS049 Bulk Foam Attack Equipment		(48,000)	48,000			
<u>Budget Realignmet</u>						
OPS031 CCTV Equipment		(24,000)				
OPS053 Methods of Entry		20,000				
OPS023 Water Rescue Equipment		24,000	50,000	(200,000)	50,000	50,000
OPS054 Electrical Equipment		33,500				
OPS038 Water Delivery System		(10,000)				
OPS005 Resuscitation Equipment		(7,500)				
OPS034 Operational Ladders		14,000				
<u>RCCO</u>						
OPS053 Methods of Entry - from 0026 TDA		4,000				
	530,100	462,100	168,000	(200,000)	50,000	50,000

Vehicles - Approved Budget 2014/15 to 2018/19

Type of Capital Expenditure	Price Per Unit	Total		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
		Units	Cost £	Units	£	Units	£	Units	£	Units	£	Units	£
VEH002 Ancillary Vehicles													
Cars													
Car (5 door - Fiesta/Corsa)	9,500	41	389,500	12	114,000	13	123,500	16	152,000				
Officer Response Car 1	22,000	2	44,000					2	44,000				
Officer Response Car 2	26,000	2	52,000							2	52,000		
Officer Response Car 3	20,000	2	40,000									2	40,000
7 Seater Galaxy	23,000	2	46,000									2	46,000
Car - Automatic	25,000	1	25,000							1	25,000		
4x4s													
4x4 1 (Isuzu)	27,000	2	54,000							2	54,000		
4x4 SMAs - NEW Vehicle (CAP1320 10C 1A : 11 @ £23,075)	23,000	10	230,000	8	184,000					2	46,000		
4x4 IITs - NEW Vehicle (CAP1320 10C 1A : 11 @ £23,075)	23,000	3	69,000	3	69,000								
4x4 (Climbing Wall Vehicle)	22,000	1	22,000									1	22,000
Vans													
Small Vans (Fiesta/Corsa)	9,500	5	47,500			5	47,500						
Panel Van Renault Master (CAP1278 A : 1 x £16,940)	18,500	16	296,000	7	129,500	9	166,500						
Panel Van 2 Jumbo Van	25,000	2	50,000							2	50,000		
Ford Connect Van	10,500	8	84,000			6	63,000			2	21,000		
Dog Van Mercedes Vito (CAP1283 C : 1 @ £42,994)	43,000	1	43,000	1	43,000								
Other													
Water Training Vehicle (Mercedes 4x4 Sprinter) (CAP1281 A : 1 @ £41,766)	41,800	1	41,800	1	41,800								
PCVs (Ford Transit 17 Seater) (CAP1277 C : 1 @ £23,157)	23,200	4	92,800	1	23,200	3	69,600						
			1,626,600		604,500		470,100		196,000		248,000		108,000
VEH004 Special Vehicles													
CPLs													
Vehicle 2 (refurbished)	300,000	1	300,000			1	300,000						
Vehicle 3 (refurbished)	300,000	1	300,000			1	300,000						
Vehicle 4 (New)	600,000	1	600,000					1	600,000				
Other													
IMU - Prime Movers	98,000	4	392,000			4	392,000						
BA Support Unit (POD)	75,000	1	75,000			1	75,000						
SFU Vehicle - No Longer Required £170,000 VIRED to VEH002	85,000												
Water Rescue Unit	45,000	1	45,000			1	45,000						
			1,712,000				1,112,000		600,000				
VEH006 Motorcycle Response													
AFA/RTC Bikes	6,000	2	12,000			2	12,000						
Firefighting bikes	16,000	2	32,000			2	32,000						
			44,000				44,000						
Other Vehicles													
VEH001 Fire Appliances £245,000 to £250,000 (CAP1310: 3 @ £241,845)		17	4,190,000	3	750,000	4	980,000	3	730,000	4	980,000	3	750,000
VEH005 Water Strategy			29,000				29,000						
			4,219,000		750,000		1,009,000		730,000		980,000		750,000
WOR001 Workshop Equipment													
Equipment			32,000		32,000								
Replace steam clean lift			40,000				40,000						
			72,000		32,000		40,000						
			7,673,600		1,386,500		2,675,100		1,526,000		1,228,000		858,000
Original Budget			7,510,800		2,472,200		1,383,800		1,543,800		1,212,000		899,000
Current Programme			7,673,600		1,386,500		2,675,100		1,526,000		1,228,000		858,000
Changes			162,800		(1,085,700)		1,291,300		(17,800)		16,000		(41,000)
Q1 Movements/Adjustments			271,500		271,500								
Q3 Movements/Adjustments			(108,700)		(1,357,200)		1,291,300		(17,800)		16,000		(41,000)
			162,800		(1,085,700)		1,291,300		(17,800)		16,000		(41,000)

Vehicles - Approved Budget 2014/15 to 2018/19

Type of Capital Expenditure	Price Per Unit	Total		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
		Units	Cost £	Units	£	Units	£	Units	£	Units	£	Units	£
Budget Realignments													
VEH002 Ancillary Vehicles - Price Adjustment													
Car (5 door - Fiesta/Corsa) - Increase per unit of £1,200	1,200	49	58,800	32	38,400	1	1,200	16	19,200				
4x4 5 Climbing Wall Vehicle - Increase per unit of £1,000	1,000		1,000									1	1,000
Small Vans (Fiesta/Corsa) - Increase per unit of £2,500	2,500	5	12,500	5	12,500								
Panel Van 1 Renault Master - Increase per unit of £300	300	16	4,800	16	4,800								
Ford Connect Van - Increase per unit of £1,000	1,000	8	8,000	4	4,000	2	2,000			2	2,000		
Dog Van Mercedes Vito - Increase per unit of £22,000	22,000	1	22,000	1	22,000								
PCVs Ford Transit 17 Seater - Increase per unit of £5,200	5,200	4	20,800	4	20,800								
Water Training Vehicle (Mercedes 4x 4 Sprinter)	(200)	1	(200)	1	(200)								
			127,700		102,300		3,200		19,200		2,000		1,000
VEH002 Ancillary Vehicles - No longer needed													
Car (5 door - Fiesta/Corsa) - Reduction in Units @ £9,500	9,500	(8)	(76,000)	(8)	(76,000)								
4x4 (Ford Ranger/Toyota Hilux) - No Longer Needed	16,000	(5)	(80,000)	(3)	(48,000)					(2)	(32,000)		
Panel Van - No Longer Needed	18,500	(6)	(111,000)	(1)	(18,500)	(3)	(55,500)	(2)	(37,000)				
Dog Van Mercedes Vito - Reduction in units	21,000	(4)	(84,000)	(2)	(42,000)							(2)	(42,000)
Various - net saving			(2,900)		(2,900)								
VEH004 Special Vehicles No longer needed													
SFU Vehicle - No Longer Needed VIREd to VEH002	85,000	(2)	(170,000)	(1)	(85,000)	(1)	(85,000)						
Slippage from 13/14 towards price increases			(11,500)		(11,500)								
			(535,400)		(283,900)		(140,500)		(37,000)		(32,000)		(42,000)
VEH002 Ancillary Vehicles - New													
4x4 3 SMAs - New Vehicle	23,000	10	230,000	8	184,000					2	46,000		
4x4 4 IITs - New Vehicle	23,000	3	69,000	3	69,000								
			299,000		253,000						46,000		
Budget realignment in Qtr 3		(12)	(108,700)	(43)	71,400	35	(137,300)	(2)	(17,800)		16,000	(2)	(41,000)

Slippage

VEH002 Ancillary Vehicles													
Car (5 door - Fiesta/Corsa)	9,500			(12)	(114,000)	12	114,000						
Small Vans (Fiesta/Corsa)	9,500			(5)	(47,500)	5	47,500						
Panel Van Renault Master	18,500			(9)	(166,500)	9	166,500						
Ford Connect Van	10,500			(4)	(42,000)	4	42,000						
PCVs Ford Transit 17 Seater	23,200			(3)	(69,600)	3	69,600						
VEH004 Special Vehicles													
CPL Vehicle 2 (refurbished)	300,000			(1)	(300,000)	1	300,000						
CPL Vehicle 3 (refurbished)	300,000			(1)	(300,000)	1	300,000						
IMU - Prime Movers	98,000			(2)	(196,000)	2	196,000						
BA Support Unit (POD)	75,000			(1)	(75,000)	1	75,000						
Water Rescue Unit	45,000			(1)	(45,000)	1	45,000						
VEH006 Motorcycle Response													
AFA/RTC Bikes	6,000			(2)	(12,000)	2	12,000						
Firefighting bikes	16,000			(2)	(32,000)	2	32,000						
VEH005 Water Strategy					(29,000)		29,000						
Slippage				(43)	(1,428,600)	43	1,428,600						
Q3 Movements/Adjustments			(108,700)	(1,357,200)	1,291,300	(17,800)	16,000	(41,000)					

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Quarter 3 Write-Offs 2014/15

Invoice Date	Invoice Number	Provision Bad Debt List	Customer Code	Customer Name	Line Description	Write Off Reason	Outstanding Balance	Amount To Be Written Off		
								Nett Value	VAT	Gross Value
08/01/13	I0014933	YES	G00016	PAUL GOODALL	SALARY OVERPAYMENT	LITIGATION ADVICE	29.73	29.73	0.00	29.73
09/08/13	I0015678	NO	BAI010	MISS BAILEY	HFSC	LITIGATION ADVICE	25.00	20.83	4.17	25.00
06/12/13	I0016058	NO	SOU045	SOUND FOOD & DRINK	TRAINING COURSE	LITIGATION ADVICE	6.00	5.00	1.00	6.00
03/06/13	I0015456	NO	TRL001	TONER REUNITED LTD	TONER REMOVAL	LITIGATION ADVICE	72.00	60.00	12.00	72.00
								115.56	17.17	132.73

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MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY BUDGET MEETING		
DATE:	26 FEBRUARY 2015	REPORT NO:	CFO/014/15
PRESENTING OFFICER	DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	KIERAN TIMMINS	REPORT AUTHOR:	IAN CUMMINS
OFFICERS CONSULTED:			
TITLE OF REPORT:	MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PLAN 2015/2016 – 2019/2020		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A(1): DRAFT SUMMARY REVENUE BUDGET ANALYSIS APPENDIX A(2): DRAFT DETAILED REVENUE BUDGET ANALYSIS APPENDIX B: PROPOSED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015/16 – 2019/20 SUMMARY APPENDIX B(1): CURRENT APPROVED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2014/15 – 2018/19 APPENDIX B(2): PROPOSED NEW CAPITAL SCHEMES 2015/16 – 2019/20 APPENDIX C 2014/15 – 2015/16 APPROVED £6.300M SAVING PLAN APPENDIX D 2015/16 – 2019/20 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN
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Purpose of Report

1. To present information to allow Members to set a medium term capital and revenue financial plan that allocates resources in line with the Authority's strategic aims and ensures that the Authority delivers an efficient, value for money service. This will also allow the Authority to determine a budget for 2015/16 and a precept level in line with statutory requirements.

Recommendation

2. That Members consider the report and proposed budget and:-
 - a. Note the 2015/16 service budgets set out in the report.
 - b. Endorse the Deputy Chief Executive's recommendation on maintaining the current level of general fund balance, £2.000m, and maintaining the reserves as outlined in Paragraph 151 to 153 of this report.
 - c. Endorse their current plan to increase the precept by just below 2% for 2015/16, raising the Band D Council Tax from £70.07 to £71.47 and confirm the strategy for future precept rises (the plan assumes 2% in each

year thereafter).

- d. Re-affirm the approved 2014/15 – 2015/16 £6.300m saving plan outlined in Appendix C.
- e. Endorse the assumptions in developing the 2015/16 – 2019/20 Financial Plan outlined in the report and approve the Medium Term Financial Plan in Appendix D and the 2015/16 budget estimate of £62.169m.
- f. Approve the capital strategy and investment strategy as summarised in Appendix B.
- g. Approve the Minimum Revenue Payment (MRP) strategy for 2015/16 as outlined in Paragraph 79 of this report.
- h. Note the prudential indicators relating to the proposed capital programme, paragraph 90 to 92 of this report.
- i. Approve the Treasury Management Strategy outlined in Section F and agree the Treasury Management indicators set out in paragraph 97 of this report for:-
 - External Debt
 - Operational Boundary for Debt
 - Upper limits on fixed interest rate exposure
 - Upper limits on variable rate exposure
 - Limits on the maturity structure of debt
 - Limits on investments for more than 364 days
- j. Note that recommendations above provide an approved framework within which officers undertake the day to day capital and treasury activities.

Introduction and Background

Information

3. The Authority is required to determine its budget and precept level for 2015/16 by 1st March 2015.
4. This report will present all the necessary financial information in a single report. This report considers:-
 - a. Forecast Revenue Estimates
 - b. The Proposed Capital Programme
 - c. Savings and Growth Options
 - d. The Treasury Management Strategy
 - e. The Minimum Revenue Payment Policy for the Authority

5. Considering all the financial issues to be taken into account a single report ensures that the Authority can:-
 - a. Consider the borrowing freedoms available under the prudential code
 - b. Reflect best practice
 - c. Provide value for money
 - d. Focus on the link between capital investment decisions and revenue budgets
 - e. Continue developing their strategic financial plan

6. The following report structure will be adopted:-

Section	Focus	Paragraph
A	Executive Summary	7-29
B	Background Information	30-49
C	Capital Programme	50-74
D	Minimum Revenue Provision Statement	75-84
E	Prudential Indicators	85-94
F	Treasury Management Strategy	95-97
G	Revenue Forecasts 2015/16 – 2019/2020	98-124
H	Options for Tackling the Financial Challenge	125-138
I	Adequacy of Reserves and Balances	139-154
J	Budget Timetable & Resolution	155-158

A) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

7. The Authority must set a balanced budget and a precept level by 1st March 2015.
8. The budget and financial plan should allocate resources in line with the Authority's Mission and Aims:-

Our Mission:

To Achieve; Safer, Stronger Communities - Safe Effective Firefighters

Our Aims:

Excellent Operational Preparedness
Excellent Operational Response
Excellent Prevention and Protection
Excellent People

9. Members will recall that they set a balanced budget and plan for two years (2014/15- 2015/16) when they set the 2014/15 budget last year. The key elements of the current plan are:-
 - A 10% reduction in support staff numbers and overall support costs by £1.5m
 - Other technical savings of £1.4m
 - Unavoidable savings in the front-line response by 4 station mergers or outright closures, and a reduction of around 90 Firefighter posts delivered by natural turnover rates, saving £3.4m
10. The Government has now announced the final settlement funding for 2015/16. The grant cut in 2015/16 is 9.1% (slightly higher than the 8.5% anticipated last year). This is a further £0.210m cash cut. However this is based upon certain assumptions about related costs and is expected to be offset by other savings in relation to the implementation of the Firefighters pension schemes although this cannot be confirmed at this time.
11. A draft 5 year financial plan has been prepared using the latest information and the following key assumptions:
 - Annual increases in council tax of (fractionally below) 2%.
 - A pay bill increase of 1% in 2015/16 and 2% thereafter. The pay bill includes all pay related costs including pension contributions and national insurance.
 - 2% per annum General Price Inflation.
 - That government funding cuts will continue beyond 2015/16 in a profile broadly similar to that which has been applied over the spending review period since all major political parties have committed to tackle the national deficit during the next parliament (although it is accepted the actual level of cuts may vary as there appear to be significant policy approach differences between the political parties).
12. The report assumes the Authority will maintain its approved two year plan (2014/15 – 2015/16) and that it will seek to lobby the Government to minimise the impact of any changes in any future Comprehensive Spending Review, but only deal with any

financial challenge once known. Therefore if the Authority set a precept increase at just below 2% (as assumed in the current plan) then no further savings would be required to set a balanced budget for just 2015/16.

The table below summarises the forecast financial plan:-

<u>2015/16 - 2019/20 MTFP</u>					
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
2014/2015 Approved Financial Plan	61,113	62,889	64,589	66,089	67,589
2015/16 Issues					
Increase in Sec 31 Grant for restricted NNDR increase	-267	-77	-77	-77	-77
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) & Interest Payable on loans			250	500	750
Adjust Planned Drawdown from smoothing Reserve to reflect movement in Council Tax yield	1,323				
2014/15 Financial Plan Expenditure Forecast	62,169	62,812	64,762	66,512	68,262
FUNDING					
Government Funding - Settlement Funding Assessment	-37,004	-34,082	-31,748	-29,898	-28,447
Adjustment for Local Business Rate income forecast from Districts to CLG estimate	95	0	0	0	0
NNDR Collection Fund (surplus)/deficit	235	0	0	0	0
Council Tax -					
Base Precept Income	-23,430	-24,482	-24,972	-25,471	-25,980
Council Tax Base (increase) / decrease	-572	0	0	0	0
Assume 2% rise 2015/16 to 2019/20	-480	-490	-499	-509	-520
Council Tax Collection Fund (surplus)/deficit	-1,013				
Updated Income Forecast	-62,169	-59,054	-57,219	-55,878	-54,947
Forecast Net Position (surplus) / deficit	0	3,758	7,543	10,634	13,315
Potential Future Saving To Be Identified	0	-3,758	-7,543	-10,634	-13,315

13. Section H of this report “Options for Tackling the Financial Challenge” considers what areas of the future budget could deliver the potential funding gap following next year’s Comprehensive Spending review by any new government.

Reserves and Balances

14. In light of the financial risks facing the Authority it has increased reserves in recent years. The latest financial review report CFO/005/15 identifies a 2014/15 forecast revenue underspend which will allow the Authority to increase its capital investment reserve by a further £0.4m. The current estimated reserves as at 31.03.15 are:-

- Ringfenced Reserves (not available for general spend) £1.5m
- Earmarked Reserves (created to fund future projects or as a resource to meet some potential future spend) £19.6m
- General Fund Reserve (required to cover unexpected events) £2.0m
£23.1m

15. Of the £19.6m of earmarked reserves, £14.2m of this has already been committed to fund future capital investment including the construction of new stations, and therefore avoiding additional borrowing. The remaining £5.4m earmarked reserves are:-

	£'m
Severance Reserve	0.6
Recruitment Reserve	1.0
Firefighter Safety	0.8
Inflation Reserve	1.1
Ill Health Cost	0.4
Equality / DDA	0.2
Insurance and Catastrophe	1.1
Other	<u>0.2</u>
	5.4

16. As previously stated this report identifies a number of potential risks in relation to the key assumptions in the medium term financial plan. If any of these assumptions vary then the forecast balanced budget position will be affected. Any resultant material deficit might result in the Authority having difficulty in maintaining its value for money principles and in particular avoiding compulsory redundancies.
17. The Deputy Chief Executive recommends the Authority hold the £5.4m identified above in reserves at the start of the financial plan. More information on reserves is set out in section (I).
18. Members should be mindful that reserves, balances and one-off savings should only be used to finance one-off expenditure. If such monies are used to fund ongoing revenue expenditure without taking action to reduce underlying expenditure, the Authority would find itself facing the same deficit in the next and future years but without reserves available to finance it. This is underlined by the District Auditor's 'Golden Rule' - that "one off" revenue reserves should not be used to support 'ongoing' revenue expenditure.

Council Tax Increase

19. The proposed financial plan assumes a (just below) 2% council tax increase in 2015/16 and each year thereafter.
20. The Authority may choose to use a further precept increase to bridge the gap, however current legislation requires that any increase above a threshold set by the Secretary of State must be subject to a referendum of the electorate of Merseyside. Any vote against such an increase will require a revised budget and incur the expense of re-billing all the districts within Merseyside. For 2015/16 any proposed increase at or in excess of 2% or more will require such a referendum.
21. Alternatively the Authority might take-up the option of the council tax freeze grant in 2015/16. A (just below) 2% increase in the precept would yield £0.480m and a 1% council tax freeze grant is £0.298m, a variance of £0.182m.
22. The ready reckoners below show the impact of potential Council Tax increases.

Council Tax Increase			
	0%	2%	Change
Band D Tax	70.07	71.47	1.40
District Precept	£m	£m	£m
LIVERPOOL	6.6188	6.7510	0.1322
WIRRAL	6.2604	6.3855	0.1251
ST.HELENS	3.3499	3.4168	0.0669
SEFTON	5.4878	5.5975	0.1097
KNOWSLEY	2.2855	2.3311	0.0456
	24.0024	24.4819	0.4795
Council Tax Freeze Grant			0.2980
Additional Income IF precept increased by 2%			0.1815

Capital

23. The proposed 5 year capital programme is detailed in section C. The table below summarises the proposed investments which are mainly in the Authority's property, vehicle and ICT assets which total nearly £27.3m across the life of the programme.

Proposed Authority Capital Programme for 2015/2016 - 2019/2020						
Capital Expenditure	Total Cost £	2015/16 £	2016/17 £	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £
Building/Land - current	10,946,500	9,366,000	455,500	352,000	396,500	376,500
Fire Safety - current	3,877,000	777,000	775,000	775,000	775,000	775,000
ICT - current	3,071,000	737,000	531,000	556,000	816,000	431,000
Operational Equipment & Hydrants - current	1,837,000	225,000	168,000	525,000	484,000	435,000
Vehicles - current	7,536,100	2,675,100	1,526,000	1,228,000	858,000	1,249,000
Ependiture	27,267,600	13,780,100	3,455,500	3,436,000	3,329,500	3,266,500
Financing Available	Total £	2015/16 £	2016/17 £	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2018/19 £
Capital Receipts						
Sale of 2 existing N-le-W LLAR properties		275,000				
Sale of Huyton FS (CFO/095/14)			250,000			
Sale of Whiston FS (CFO/095/14)			250,000			
	775,000	275,000	500,000	0	0	0
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO)						
CFS alarm installation (salaries)		450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000
CFS alarm installation (Income from FSD)		50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	0
	2,450,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	450,000
Capital Reserve						
Prescot FS New Build (CFO/095/14)		830,000				
	830,000	830,000	0	0	0	0
Grants						
Prescot FS New Build (CFO/095/14)		1,770,000				
	1,770,000	1,770,000	0	0	0	0
Total Non Borrowing	5,825,000	3,375,000	1,000,000	500,000	500,000	450,000
Unsupported Borrowing	21,442,600	10,405,100	2,455,500	2,936,000	2,829,500	2,816,500
Total Funding	27,267,600	13,780,100	3,455,500	3,436,000	3,329,500	3,266,500

24. This capital programme has a borrowing requirement of £10.405 million in 2015/16 and £21.443 million across the whole life of the plan. The proposed borrowing is unsupported borrowing or prudential as Members will note that the Government no longer allocates any supported borrowing to FRA's and therefore no longer builds any revenue grant funding support for new borrowing in the formula grant. This means all borrowing is prudential. At present only those fire station mergers approved following public consultation are included in the capital programme, (currently just the Prescot proposal).
25. The Authority needs to be mindful of the revenue costs of borrowing. Current and future debt servicing costs as a consequence of the proposed capital programme have been built into the proposed financial plan. This report provides members with a number of prudential indicators so they can ensure that this commitment is considered affordable, prudent and sustainable in light of these prudential indicators (Section E).

Treasury Management

26. The Prudential Code requires the Authority to set a Treasury Management Strategy that includes a number of indicators and limits. It sets a framework for the Deputy Chief Executive to manage investments and borrowing within.
27. The proposed strategy is set out in Section F and includes limits for the next three years on:-
 - Overall Level of External Debt
 - Operational Boundary for Debt
 - Upper limits on fixed interest rate exposure
 - Upper limits on variable rate exposure
 - Limits on the maturity structure of debt
 - Limits on investments for more than 364 days

Minimum Revenue Payment (MRP) Statement

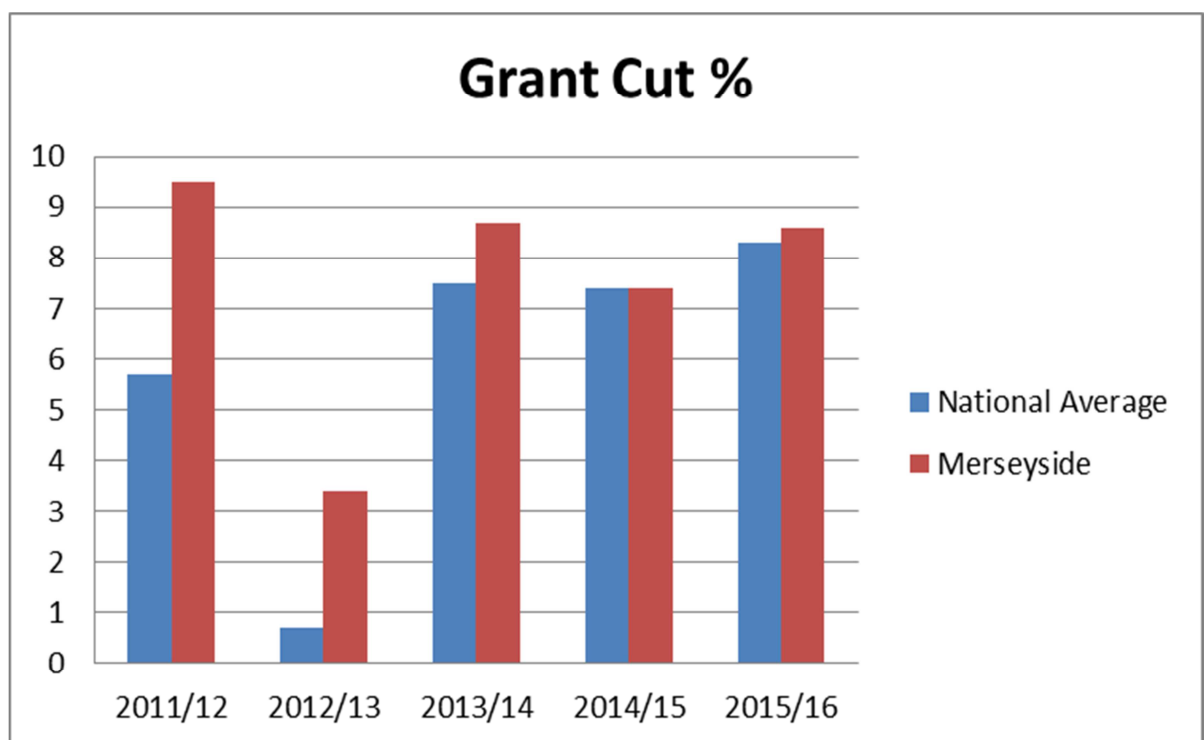
28. MRP is the amount of money set aside in the revenue budget by the Authority each year to reduce its overall level of debt. The Authority is required under the new Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting, England, Amendment) Regulations 2008 to prepare a statement on its policy for MRP in respect of the forthcoming year. Regulations require the Authority to pay debt at a rate which it considers prudent.
29. The Deputy Chief Executive has reviewed the MRP policy in line with the legislation and the report outlines the proposed MRP policy for 2015/16 and future years.

B) BACKGROUND INFORMATION

30. This section provides general financial information on the Authority's finances and financial health.

Corporate Strategy

31. If any organisation wants to be successful its budget setting and medium term financial plan must allocate resources to support its key strategic aims and priorities. This is a vital consideration when organisations face periods of severe resource shortages.
32. For many years now the Authority has maintained a comprehensive five year financial plan and capital programme. In 2010 the new Government announced its austerity plan in an attempt to reduce national debt, a significant element of the plan was to reduce the level of government funding for local government including fire and rescue.
33. The cumulative percentage reduction in grant for Merseyside between 2011/12 and 2015/16 equates to a 33% reduction, compared to a national average grant cut of 26% over the four year period for stand-alone Fire and Rescue Authorities, as shown in the table below:



34. The Authority has already approved plans to deal with the cuts up to 2015/16.
35. The Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) is the key driver in the allocation of the Authority's resources in response to the risks facing Merseyside.

36. The Authority's IRMP states the main strategic themes that the Authority has been progressing and its plans for the future. The 2013/16 IRMP was agreed in June 2013 and elsewhere on this agenda a supplement provides an update for 2015/16.
37. The Authority's Mission and Aims as set out in the IRMP are repeated below. Any financial plan should aim to allocate resources to deliver the mission and aims.

Our Mission;

To Achieve; Safer Stronger Communities - Safe Effective Firefighters

Our Aims;

Excellent Operational Preparedness

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

Excellent Operational Response

To 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, health inequality intervention 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.

Is the Overall Strategy Working?

38. The Authority has achieved great success in its aims to make Merseyside a safer community over the last decade. Members receive detail on this excellent performance in a variety of formats but highlights include:-
- Being the first FRA's in the UK to visit 100,000 households in a single year to carry out Home Fire safety Checks (approximately 700,000 HFSC's in total have been carried out).
 - Fitting approximately 850,000 smoke alarms.
 - Significantly reducing the impact of antisocial behaviour during the bonfire period through effective joint working with partners.
 - Reducing fire deaths from an average of 20 in 1999 to an average of 8 over the last ten years, (a 50% reduction).
 - Reduced the total number of all types of fires and their impacts.

39. The table below summarises performance over the last decade:

Year	Accidental Dwelling Fires	Injuries in Accidental Dwelling Fires	Fatalities in Accidental Dwelling Fires	Anti Social Behaviour Fires
2004-2005	1470	173	11	12258
2005-2006	1456	155	11	11689
2006-2007	1336	126	8	12721
2007-2008	1286	69	9	10449
2008-2009	1302	107	9	7648
2009-2010	1299	117	8	7394
2010-2011	1199	137	5	6893
2011-2012	1196	131	5	6088
2012-2013	1136	128	6	3903
2013-2014	1153	126	8	5141
2014-2015 Q3	768	94	6	3303
Reduction between 2004/05 - 2013/14	-21.56%	-27.17%	-27.27%	-58.06%

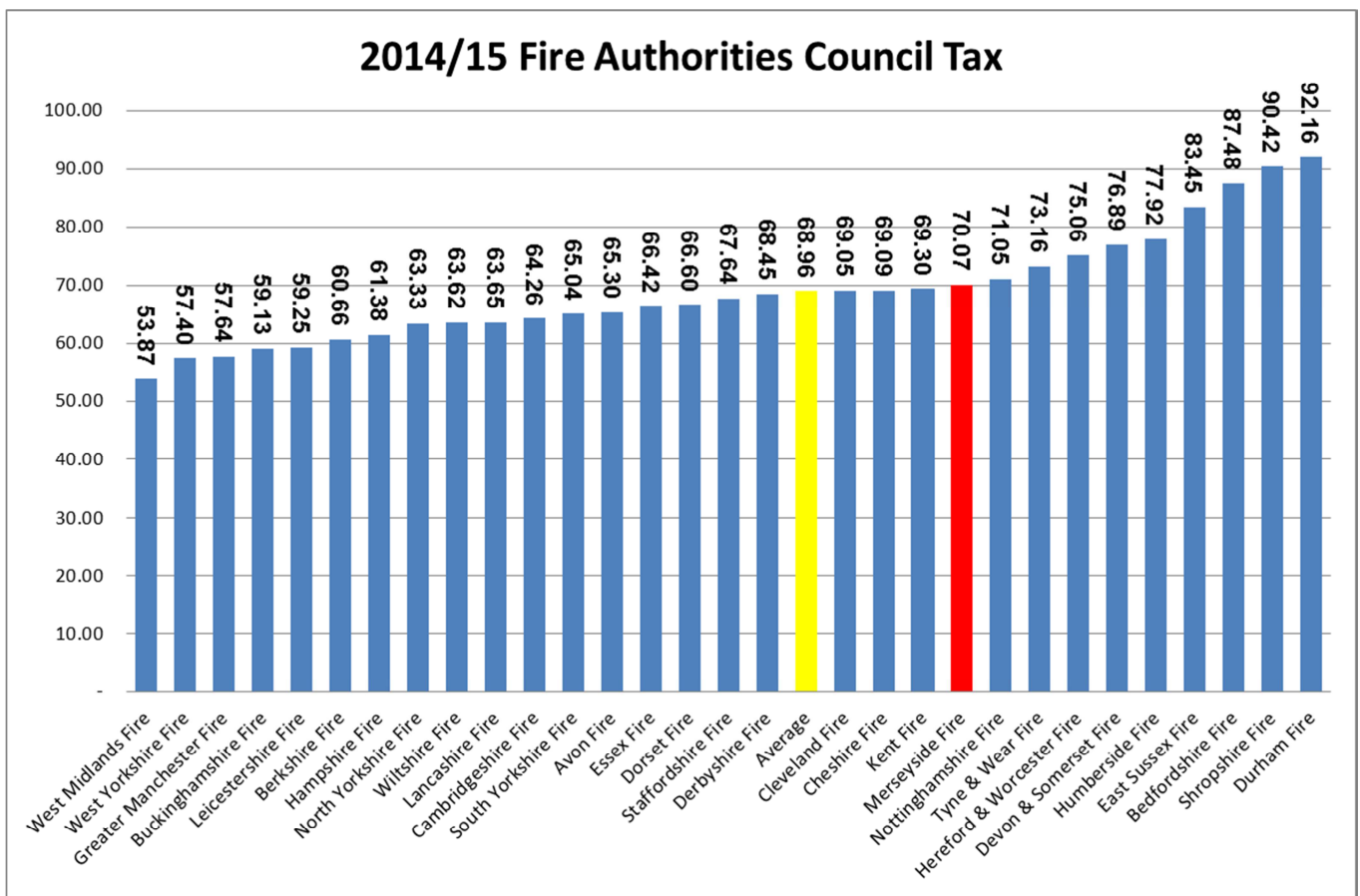
Financial Strategy and where are we now?

40. In recent years the Authority has adopted a financial strategy that:-

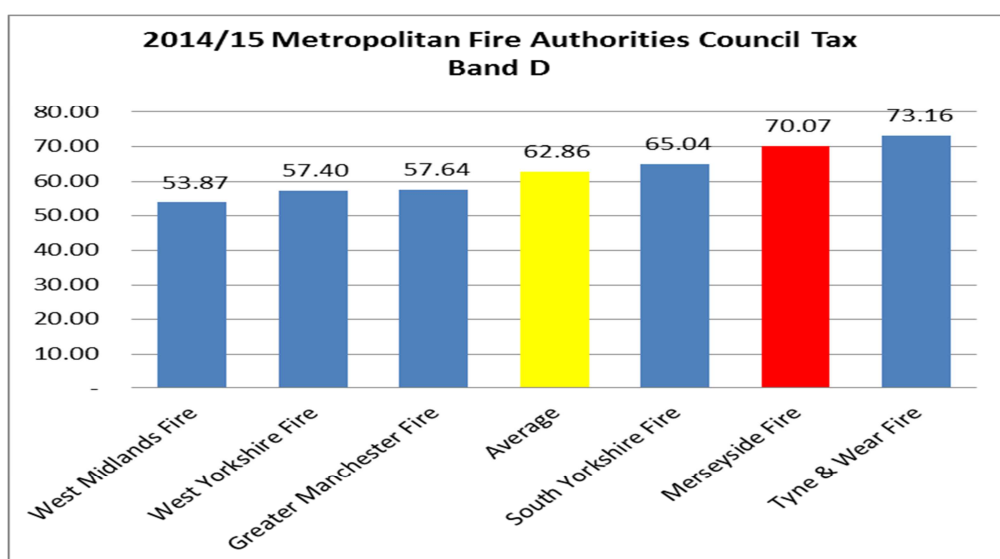
- Sought to control Council Tax increases,
- Planned for pay awards and cost increases in line with HM Treasury inflation forecasts,
- Recruited and trained employees to meet the Authority's high performance standards and budgeted for staff actually in post,
- Sought to generate significant savings through staff reductions whilst avoiding compulsory redundancy,
- Sought to minimise the impact of cuts on frontline services including prevention,
- Made significant investment in IT and computing (including outsourcing),
- Provided further investment in equality and health and safety,
- Attempted to plan prudently over the medium term by considering all significant risks to the assumptions in the financial plan and creating specific reserves if deemed necessary,
- Maintained a general reserve of at least £2m following assessments of risk,
- Because of pressures on revenue budget generally avoided funding capital expenditure from revenue through leasing or RCCO,
- Invested in the capital infrastructure of the Authority in line with the Asset Management Plan, vehicle replacement strategies and corporate objectives.

41. These strategies have over recent history allowed the Authority to reduce costs and maintain relatively low levels of Council Tax increase despite very tight grant settlements.

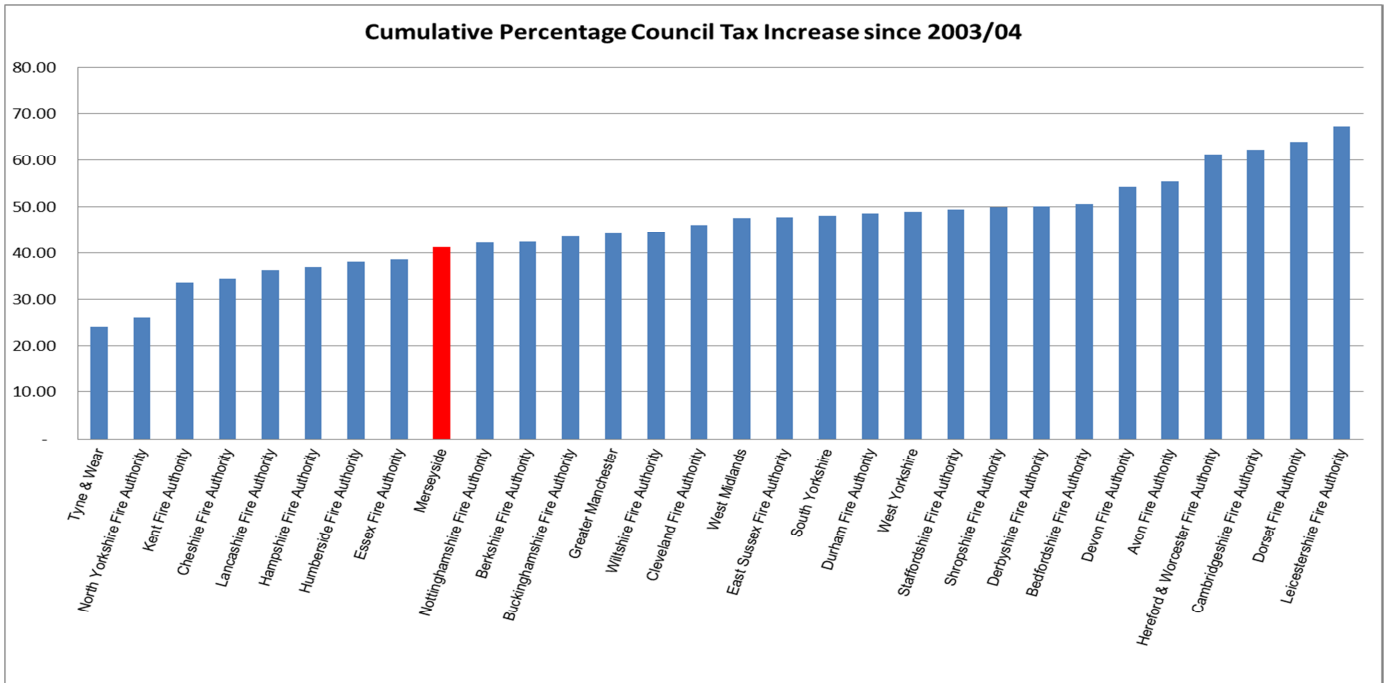
42. The Authority's 2014/15 (Band D) Council Tax is £70.07. This is slightly above the FRS national average (£68.96) as shown in the bar chart below:-



43. In 1996/97 Merseyside's Council Tax was more than 50% above the average of Metropolitan FRA's. Now it is only 11.5% above the average of that group:

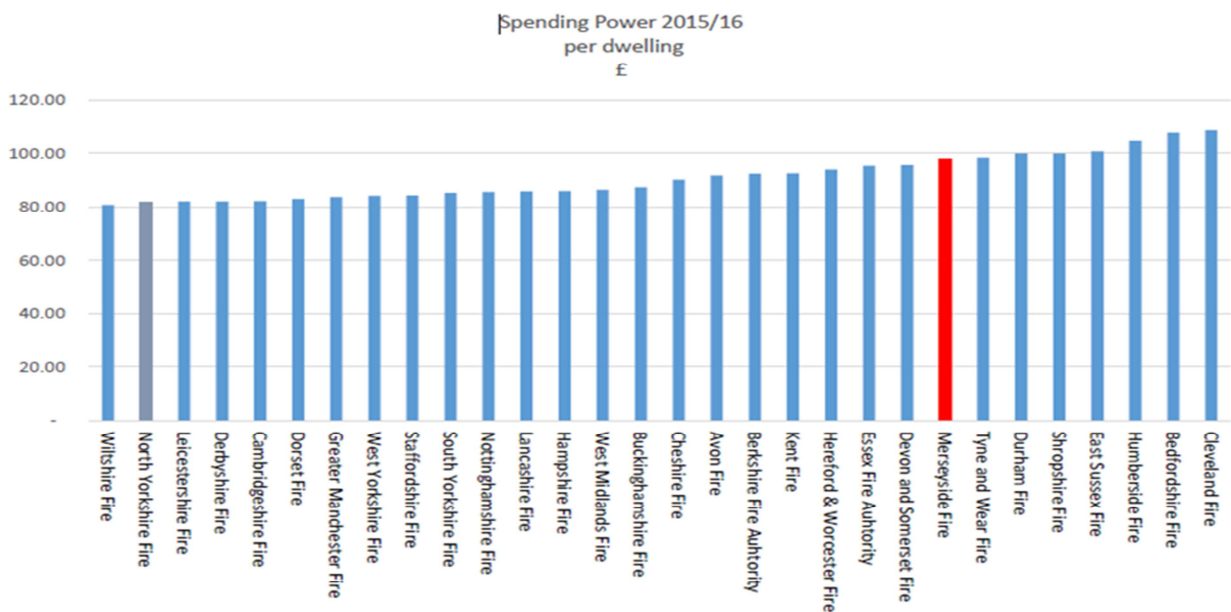


44. Over the past 10 years when compared to the other FRA's Merseyside has had one of the lowest cumulative council tax increases:



45. The Authority’s control of council tax should be considered in light of the fact that across the same time period the council tax base of Merseyside has had one of the lowest increases. The tax base reflects how much income is generated by £1 of “Band D” equivalent council tax. So if the tax base increases, income will increase, even if the council tax charge remains unchanged.

46. However, despite recent improvements it should be noted that we remain, in comparison to our peers, a relatively high spending authority on a spending power per dwelling basis. (*Spending power is a Government measure of estimated overall budget which assumes all FRA’s take the council tax freeze grant.*)



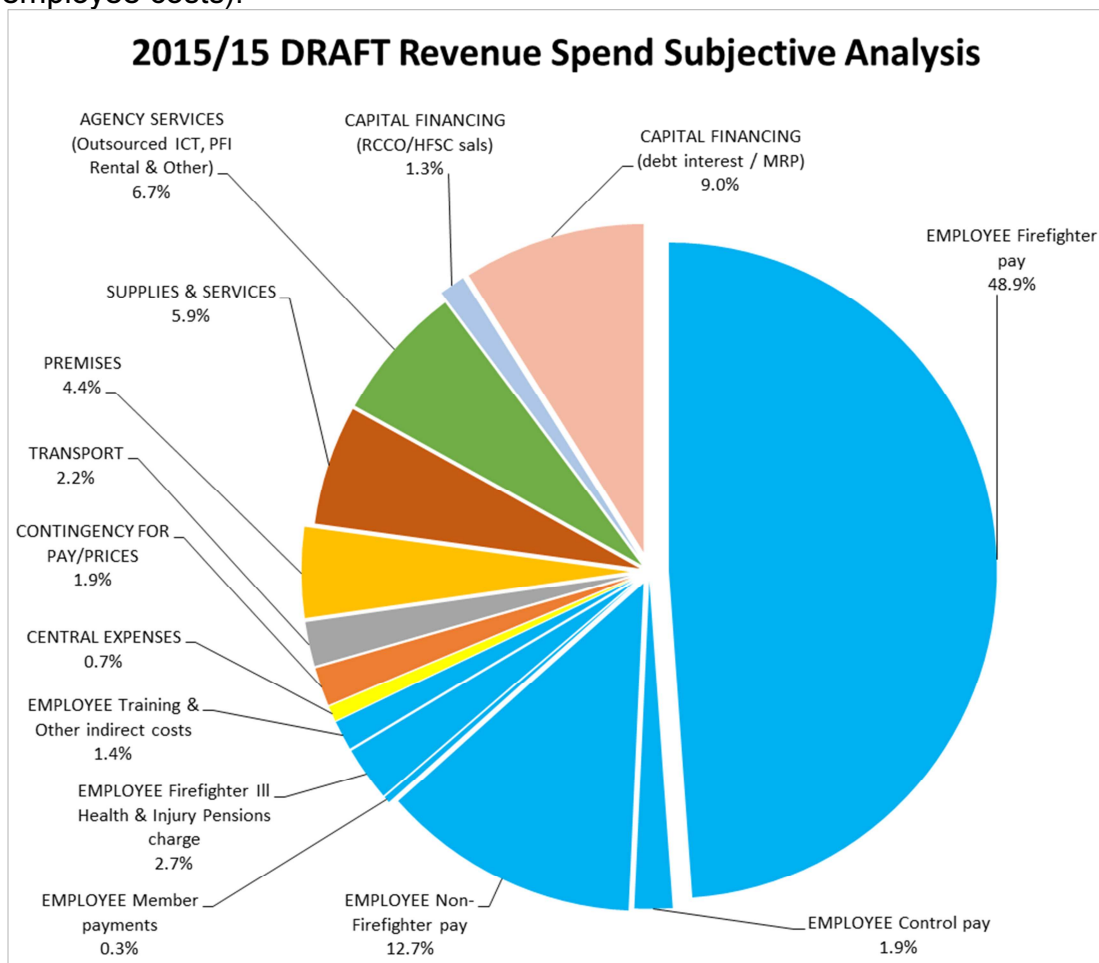
Overall Financial Health

47. The Authority has a proven track record for meeting significant financial challenges in the past. The Authority, as part of a risk based strategy, has built up reserves in recent years to provide a short term buffer whilst the Authority implements the structural changes to deliver the required savings on a permanent basis. The unprecedented reductions in Government funding will require difficult decisions but the Authority has a proven track record in managing its financial affairs well as can be seen in the following indicators:-

- Authority accounts 2013/14 audited without qualification once again.
- Annual Audit Letter highlighted general satisfaction with financial corporate governance and reporting arrangements.
- IRMP recognised as innovative.
- The Authority has maintained a general revenue reserve of at least £2.0m in recent years.
- Cost centre budgeting now well established along with a culture of financial management.
- Maintained a five year financial plan and capital programme and most importantly a consistent medium term strategy.
- Successfully delivered large-scale changes and savings

Current Allocation of Resources

48. Members will be aware that FRS expenditure is predominantly employee related (approximately 70%) as is shown in the pie chart below. (The blue sections relate to employee costs):-

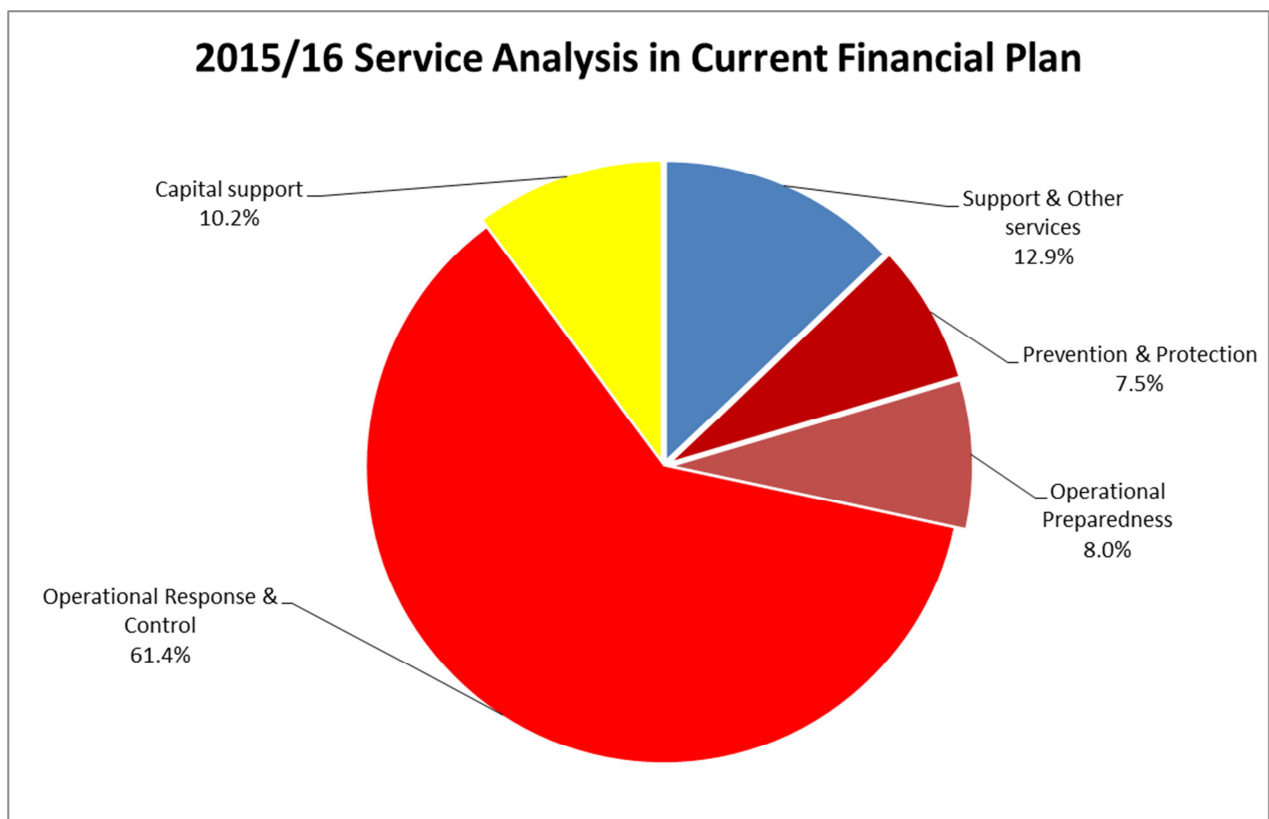


A full subjective analysis of the base budget for 2015/16 is set out in **Appendix A**

A subjective analysis is only part of the overall view on spending and in order to assist Members the same data is shown in a “thematic” view below and is based upon the service’s strategic objectives:

Allocation of Resources in line with Corporate Objectives

49. The Authority has an excellent track record of investing in line with its corporate priorities. It can be seen from the pie chart below that most expenditure 61.4% goes on emergency and specialist response. In addition 8.0% goes on Operational Preparedness and 7.5% on Prevention & Protection, and therefore over 76.9% of expenditure is on the “front line” services. In addition the 10.2% on capital costs relates mostly to previous investment in front line assets, fire stations, vehicles and equipment. The remaining 12.9% is on support services.



Looking in more detail at each area the expenditure includes:-

Operational Response & Control (Total £38m)

- Service delivery and emergency response through its 26 fire stations.
- Specialist capabilities such as the Search and Rescue Team and Search Dogs.
- Invested in staff safety – procured state of the art fire kit, helmets, boots, Breathing Apparatus and appliances.
- Invests £1.5m operating a Training and Development Academy.
- Deliver HFSC programme.
- Investing in new community fire stations.
- Marine Rescue Unit to support the airport and safety on the River Mersey.

Prevention & Protection (Total £5m)

- District Prevention & Protection Teams; £2.5m
- Community Prevention work and youth engagement; £1.6m
- Purchase of £0.5m of smoke alarms per annum
- Fire Service Direct; £0.2m
- Employment of specialist Advocates and continuation of the Princes Trust and other programmes; £0.2m
- Invested in volunteers with the Fire Support Network; £0.2m
- Working with the private sector to deliver speedier restoration of property

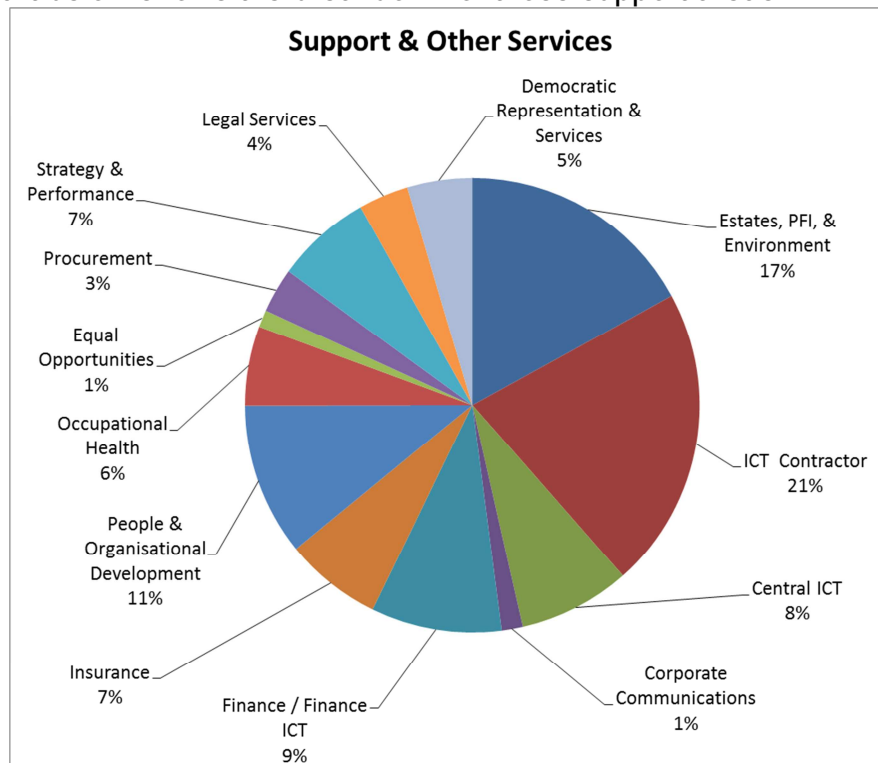
Operational Preparedness (Total £5m)

The investment of £5m delivers a variety of services which helps prepare for a full range of possible incidents in Merseyside and ensure Firefighter safety.

- Operational Planning and Policy
- Contingency Planning
- New Dimensions (National Resilience) to cope with major disasters and terrorist threats
- Operational Equipment Team
- Water Section
- Health and Safety Department
- Transport/Fleet Management – to keep vehicles operating effectively
- Workshops
- Standard Operating Procedure Review Team

Support Services & Other (Total £8m)

The investment in support services of £8m represents 12.9% of the budget. The pie chart below shows the breakdown of those support areas:-



It should be noted that many of the services are key “front line” elements of a modern FRS. For example:-

- Estates – includes the running costs of buildings including 26 Community Fire Stations;
- ICT – includes the cost of the Mobilising Communications Centre;
- Occupational Health – to support staff and manage sickness

In addition some costs are unavoidable for any organisation;

- Insurance- to cover 3 party, vehicle and employer liabilities;
- Legal, Payroll, Accounting; Human Resources; Procurement etc. to support the organisation in paying its staff, suppliers, carrying out activities within the law and preparing statutory returns.

Also the cost of governance in relation to elected members is also contained within support and other costs.

C) CAPITAL PROGRAMME

50. Capital is considered first in this report so that Members can clearly consider the revenue impacts of capital investment and borrowing decisions as part of revenue budget and council tax considerations. ***The following sections (C) to (F) anticipate the Authority agreeing the proposed capital programme and its financing as set out .***

Introduction

51. From 1st April 2004, the Local Government Act 2003 replaced the previous regime of capital controls with the Prudential System for Capital Finance. Local authorities are free to decide for themselves how much they can afford to borrow for capital purposes, subject to various safeguards. The Government has reserve powers to limit an authority's borrowing if the Government believes it to be unaffordable, or in times of public spending restraint.

Prudential Code

52. A key part of the revised capital system is the CIPFA "Prudential Code for Local Authority Capital Finance" which provides a framework of decision-making under which authorities will decide their capital investment and financing plans and set limits for borrowing.
53. Authorities will be required to 'have regard to' the "Prudential Code" when setting their future budgets and Council Tax levels - which in practice means that they would need to have very good reasons not to comply.
54. The over-riding objective of the "Prudential Code" is to ensure that the capital investment plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent, sustainable, and follow good practice.
55. Some of the main features of the "Prudential Code" are as follows:
- The full Authority must consider and set a number of indicators and limits for its capital plans as part of the annual budget setting process. The limits can be revised during the year but only by the full Authority. The mandatory indicators are shown in Section E.
 - The indicators and limits must be monitored during the year and outturn figures reported.
 - The Authority must produce and maintain capital and revenue plans for at least three future years including three year estimates of its future Council Tax taking account of the proposed capital programme and other plans.
 - The Authority must set an authorised limit for its total debt (including borrowing and long term liabilities) which may not be exceeded.
 - Limits relating to treasury management matters must be considered as part of the Annual Treasury Management Strategy Report.
56. Fundamentally, the objective of the Code is that the total of an authority's capital investment remains within sustainable limits, following consideration of the impact on the "bottom line" Council Tax. This is ultimately determined by a judgement about what Members consider is an acceptable level of Council Tax.

Capital Investment Strategy

57. Each financial year the Authority produces a capital programme to manage major capital schemes. Owing to the nature of capital expenditure a large number of schemes span more than one financial year so the programme is a rolling programme covering five future financial years.
58. The starting point for this programme has been an assessment of the capital investment requirements for the Authority for future years based upon needs identified by the various expert professionals in areas like buildings, vehicles, ICT, and operational equipment. Initial bids were requested and through an iterative process Officers have modified the programme in the light of:-
- service requirements, and in particular investments required to support and deliver the IRMP.
 - the need to adopt a prudential approach to capital borrowing under the new regime, being mindful of affordability, prudence and sustainability and in particular the impact on Council Tax levels.
59. This has produced a five-year future capital programme proposal of £27.268m which is set out in the summary table below. This table also identifies funding of the programme and a resultant borrowing requirement of £21.443m. The full programme is set out in **Appendix B** (Appendix B (1) is the updated programme and Appendix B (2) the new additions to previously agreed programmes).

Proposed Authority Capital Programme for 2015/2016 - 2019/2020						
Capital Expenditure	Total Cost £	2015/16 £	2016/17 £	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £
Building/Land - current	10,946,500	9,366,000	455,500	352,000	396,500	376,500
Fire Safety - current	3,877,000	777,000	775,000	775,000	775,000	775,000
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Financing Available	Total £	2015/16 £	2016/17 £	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2018/19 £
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Sale of 2 existing N-le-W LLAR properties		275,000				
Sale of Huyton FS (CFO/095/14)			250,000			
Sale of Whiston FS (CFO/095/14)			250,000			
	775,000	275,000	500,000	0	0	0
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO)						
CFS alarm installation (salaries)		450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000
CFS alarm installation (Income from FSD)		50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	0
	2,450,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	450,000
Capital Reserve						
Prescot FS New Build (CFO/095/14)		830,000				
	830,000	830,000	0	0	0	0
Grants						
Prescot FS New Build (CFO/095/14)		1,770,000				
	1,770,000	1,770,000	0	0	0	0
Total Non Borrowing	5,825,000	3,375,000	1,000,000	500,000	500,000	450,000
Unsupported Borrowing	21,442,600	10,405,100	2,455,500	2,936,000	2,829,500	2,816,500
Total Funding	27,267,600	13,780,100	3,455,500	3,436,000	3,329,500	3,266,500

60. New additions to the capital programme have increased the overall expenditure by £2.397m, (Appendix B(2)), the reasons for this are :-

- (a) The addition of the “extra year” to the programme 2019/20, £3.267m
- (b) A re-assessment of spending on smoke alarm costs. The current fire safety capital programme is based on the delivery of approximately 100,000 HFSCs and the installation of 70,000 free smoke alarms a year. In recent years the spending on smoke alarms and installation has reduced as a consequence of the Authority policy of offering free smoke alarms to only those households most at risk and those not previously visited. Smoke alarm spending and installation costs are expected to be £0.224m and £0.280m a year lower than previously planned respectively. This a total reduction of £2.016m across the whole programme
- (c) New Expenditure Proposals have been included which total across the whole life of the programme £1.146m. The key items are for ICT server and security upgrades (£0.355m) and operational equipment purchases for older equipment (£0.791m)

61. **Appendix B(1)** provides a full analysis of the current 5 year capital programme and additional information can also be found in financial review report (CFO/005/15). Full details of the additional **new starts** can be found in **Appendix B(2)** attached to this report.. The main areas of capital programme expenditure are summarised below

A. Building Investment Strategy (£10.947m)

The estate comprises of 26 fire stations, a Training and Development Academy (TDA), Service Headquarters including Fire and Rescue Control, Marine Rescue Team, and the Engineering Centre. The capital programme reflects the funding required to replace, maintain and enhance the current estate stock, and when possible seeks to attract external funding (PFI) or specific contributions (capital receipts, capital reserves) to reduce the level of borrowing requirement. Estates maintain and revise a 5 year property asset management plan and the proposed capital programme is consistent with the priority areas that are contained within the plan.

Investment is proposed in line with the current Asset Management Plan. Nearly all the planned work is around the refurbishment and essential work at fire stations, £10.1m. At present only those fire station mergers approved following public consultation are included in the capital programme, (currently just the Prescott proposal).

The balance of the programme reflects general maintenance work across all property for items such as energy conservation measures, heating & ventilation, fitness equipment etc.

B. Fire Safety (£3.877m)

Smoke alarms and sprinkler systems are being classed as capital expenditure in line with Government guidance. This follows the awarding of historic capital grants by the (then) ODPM towards the purchase cost of such

items in financial years 2004/05 through to 2007/08. Current policy is to capitalise the installation costs of smoke alarms estimated at £2.250m over the period, however this expenditure is not funded through borrowing but financed in the year by a revenue contribution to capital.

C. ICT – Investing in line with the ICT Strategy (£3.071m)

In line with the increasing use of technology to improve the service there is a significant investment in ICT within the programme. The most significant investments are in line with a planned replacement policy of 5 years for PCs, Servers and Network £1.9m, and software licenses £0.9m.

The other main investment is in the continued development of the portal £0.050m.

D. Operational Equipment & Hydrants (£1.837m)

Provision is also made to ensure that a modern fire and rescue service can be delivered and firefighters kept safe, in particular provision is made for investment in specialist rescue equipment and new breathing apparatus such as :-

- Hydraulic rescue equipment, £0.4m
- BA equipment and communication equipment, £0.1m
- Thermal imaging cameras, £0.2m
- Gas Tight Suits & PPE, £0.2m
- Other specialist equipment, £0.7m
- Installation of new or replacement hydrants in line with our water strategy, £0.2m.

E. Vehicle Replacement Strategy (£7.536m)

The Fleet Manager has identified needs as follows:-

a. Fire Appliances;

The Authority has developed an appliance replacement strategy based on the economic life of an appliance. Each appliance has an estimated service life of 10 years on the front line followed by 2 years as a reserve appliance. The plan provides for 18 new appliances.

b. Specialist Vehicles;

There is a need to make provision for the purchase of specialist vehicles to support the IRMP and to support the wider range of roles for the fire and rescue service including:

- Combined Platform Ladder appliances (2 refurbished and 1 new vehicle)
- IMU - Prime Movers (4)
- Special Vehicles (Water Rescue, BA Support unit)

c. Ancillary Vehicles;

Provision is included for the phased renewal of the ancillary vehicle fleet.

Officers have commenced a review of the specialist vehicle and ancillary fleet and this will not be completed until after the budget. Any amendments

to the proposed capital programme will be brought back to members for approval during 2015/16.

Funding the Programme

62. Capital receipts:- capital receipts are usually the proceeds from the sale of assets. Any such receipts can be applied either to reduce an Authority's outstanding debt or to be reinvested in the capital infrastructure.
63. The Authority has (when available) used capital receipts as a source of funding for new capital investment with little, if any, being used for debt repayment – unless regulations require a proportion of the receipts to be used specifically to repay debt. However, under the new regime the Authority needs to consider if a proportion of any future receipts should be used for debt repayment as part of its overall strategy.
64. The proposed capital programme anticipates capital receipts from a number of site disposals totalling £0.775m.
65. It assumes that this income will be used to reinvest in the capital infrastructure and support the capital programme. Members should note that the anticipated capital receipt values are based on the best estimates at a point in time.
66. Capital Grants:- As part of the 2010 spending review the Government also made the decision that there will be no supported borrowing allocations for the Fire and Rescue Service in the spending review period. Government capital support will be given in the form of a capital grant only. The Government had previously announced that the Authority will receive specific capital grant of £1.770m for a new joint blue light station at Prescot in line with its bid. In addition the Authority was recently successful in its bid for transformation grant funding for a programme of station mergers and blue light collaboration schemes and received £4.47m. At present only the station mergers approved following public consultation are included in the capital programme. The recent £4.47m grant and estimated scheme costs have not been included in the capital programme at this point.
67. Operating Leasing:- Under the previous system of capital controls, investment that was funded by operating leases did not count as either capital expenditure or financing as a credit arrangement. Therefore, in common with most other local authorities, operating leasing has been a source of funding for some limited eligible assets (e.g. vehicles, plant and machinery, and computer equipment) although the Authority generally avoided this because of the impact on the revenue account. However, whilst operating leasing as a source of funding remains outside of the Prudential Capital System, no leasing is assumed in this programme. The Deputy Chief Executive will monitor the suitability of alternative methods of finance.
68. Borrowing:- Under the Prudential capital system Local Authorities are now able to determine their level of borrowing. However, the Government has retained reserve powers to limit an Authority's borrowing if the Government believes an Authority's proposals to be "unaffordable" or in times of national public spending constraint.
69. In the past Government provided support for the Authority's capital spending through supported capital expenditure. The revenue costs associated with

supported borrowing was funded through the revenue formula grant. As part of the CSR2010, the Government made the decision that no new supported borrowing allocations will be made to the Fire and Rescue Service in the Spending Review period. This will impact on revenue support grant allocations. Whilst there have been no new allocations after 2010/11, the level of assumed outstanding historic debt still forms part of the Formula Grant calculation and hence the Authority still receives some grant funding. All borrowing from 2011/12 is therefore effectively now unsupported or prudential borrowing.

70. The proposed capital programme represents an overall expenditure increase of £2.397m reflecting the proposed net “new starts” expenditure. Of this £3.267m relates to the addition of an extra year (2019/20) and there are other adjustments of (£0.870m). Appendix B(2) sets out these changes in more detail.
71. The impact of these net additions to the expenditure programme on the Authority’s borrowing requirement is a net increase of £3.067m:

	£m
Increase in expenditure	2.4
Change in Non Borrowing Funding Sources:	
RCCO (HFSC installation costs)	<u>0.7</u>
Required Increase in Borrowing	3.1

The level of prudential “unsupported” borrowing therefore will increase by £3.067m to £21.443m.

Impacts on Revenue Budget and Financial Plan

72. When the Authority borrows money it has to factor the debt repayment and interest costs into its financial plans. The minimum revenue provision (MRP) methodology calculates how much debt repayment is required each year. Following the new Capital Regulations announced in 2008 the Authority must approve an MRP Statement each year that sets out the policy on MRP. Section D of this report outlines for Members the proposed MRP policy for 2015/16 – 2019/20 and the methodology for calculating the MRP. The additional borrowing and proposed MRP policy require an increase to the 2014/15 base figure for MRP and Interest of:-

	Estimate 2015/16	Estimate 2016/17	Estimate 2017/18	Estimate 2018/19	Estimate 2019/20
	£'m	£'m	£'m	£'m	£'m
Cumulative increase in MRP / Interest	0.256	0.516	0.966	1.216	1.466

73. A significant factor in the large increase in the budget requirement is down to the Government’s decision to factor in no new supported borrowing since 2010/11 and the capital regulations requiring all non-supported borrowing to be repaid over the relevant asset life. This has meant a four or five fold increase in MRP calculations for assets with a short asset life that previously had MRP calculated over a twenty-five year period.
74. Anticipated increase in MRP and Interest has been built into the financial plan for 2015/16 – 2019/20. To give Members an indication of the impact of the proposals,

for each £1m reduction in borrowing it would reduce the associated revenue cost by potentially £0.050m - £0.100m (dependant upon on the relevant asset life), the council tax equivalent reduction would be 0.2% - 0.5% or £0.14 to £0.28.

More information on the impact on the Capital Programme is shown in the section on Prudential Indicators (Section E).

(D) MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION STATEMENT

75. Under the Local Authorities and Accounting Regulations the Authority is required to set aside a sum of money each year to reduce the overall level of debt, this sum is known as the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The 2003 regulations set a minimum annual amount to be charged to revenue based on the Authority's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) which is an amount broadly equivalent to the Authority's outstanding debt. The regulations have been updated in 2008 and now require each Authority to repay debt at a rate it considers **prudent** and to set out in an annual statement the Authority's policy on making MRP in respect of the forthcoming year.
76. The new regulations guidance interprets MRP may be deemed to be prudent if it is either:
- Based over a period that is reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure / asset provides benefits (asset life), or
 - For the element of expenditure met from borrowing supported by Government Grant a period reasonably commensurate with the period in the determination of that grant (this in reality would equate to the current 4% MRP methodology).
77. The regulations guidelines set out four options for calculating MRP, however as the Government are issuing no new supported borrowing only 2 of the 4 options are applicable for new borrowing. (Asset Life Method or Depreciation methods):
1. **Regulatory Method** – This provides for Local Authorities to continue to calculate MRP in line with the minimum existing statutory charge of 4% of outstanding debt related to supported borrowing only. This option is available for all capital expenditure incurred prior to 1 April 2008.
 2. **Capital Financing Requirement Method** – This is very similar to the regulatory method but it does not take account of the adjustment that ensures authorities do not pay more MRP than under the previous capital regulatory regimes. For most Authorities this method may not be appropriate as it would result in a higher level of provision than option 1.
 3. **Asset Life Method** – MRP is determined by reference to the life of the asset and the amount is either based on;
 - equal instalments method. This generates a series of equal annual amounts over the life of each asset that is financed from borrowing; or
 - annuity method. This method links the MRP to the flow of benefits from an asset where the benefit is expected to increase in later years.
 4. **Depreciation Method** - MRP is to be equal to the provision required in accordance with depreciation accounting in respect of the asset on which expenditure has been financed by borrowing. This option is available to both supported and unsupported borrowing in determining the MRP requirement

Finance Leases and PFI

78. The guidance indicates that for finance leases and on balance sheet PFI contracts, the MRP requirement is met by making a charge equal to the element of the finance lease rental that goes to write down the balance sheet liability under proper accounting practices. This is in effect a modified version of the asset life - annuity method, the impact on the revenue account is neutral with MRP for these items matching the principal repayment embedded within the PFI or lease agreement.

2015/16 MRP:

79. The 2015/16 MRP is determined by the actual level of outstanding debt (CFR) as at the end of 2014/15. It is recommended that the Authority adopt a similar strategy for MRP determination as that in 2014/15;
- For all capital expenditure incurred before 1st April 2008 and for all capital expenditure funded via **supported borrowing**; MRP to be calculated using the Regulatory Method.
 - For all capital expenditure incurred after 1st April 2008 financed by **unsupported (prudential) borrowing**; MRP to be calculated using the Asset Life Method – equal instalments method.
 - For credit arrangements such as **on balance sheet leasing arrangements (finance leases)**; the MRP charge is to be equal to the principal element of the annual rental.
 - For **on balance sheet PFI contracts**; the MRP charge will be equal to the principal element of the annual rental.
80. The above options meet the requirement for MRP to be deemed prudent but also allows certainty and predictability over MRP charges. The financial plan outlined in this report reflects the proposed Authority's policy on prudential MRP.
81. By adopting the recommendations above, the MRP charge for 2015/16 would be £3.7m, consisting of £1.7m for prudential borrowing schemes incurred after 1st April 2008 and £2.0m for all other capital schemes (these figures exclude PFI and Finance lease as the MRP charge is a notional figure and contained within the rental budget).
82. Interest on loans taken out to fund capital expenditure is estimated at £2.5m.
83. In addition it is proposed that if any approved MRP/Interest budget becomes available due to; capital schemes being re-phased; additional specific non-borrowing funding becoming available; or a reduction on the approved capital programme/ required borrowing, then the Service may choose to make additional MRP payments if the overall financial position of the Authority in that year remains consistent with the approved financial plan.
84. The Authority in the past has determined it can afford and sustain significant prudential borrowing in order to allow the required level of investment in the infrastructure and assets of the Authority to deliver a modern well equipped fire and rescue service.

(E) PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT

85. Having formulated a draft Capital Programme, the Authority, in making final decisions upon that Capital Programme and Revenue Budget 2015/16, will need to consider a report setting out a range of Prudential Indicators aimed at demonstrating the intended Investment Programme's affordability, prudence and impact upon Treasury Management activity and strategy.
86. It should be noted, however, that in order to provide those Indicators, Capital and Revenue financial plans need to be prepared for each of the next 3 financial years, commencing with 2015/16.
87. The financial plans prepared in respect of the financial years 2016/17 and 2017/18 are not to be mistaken for approved Budgets. They are, at this stage, only a guide for financial planning and as such subject to significant change as a result of decisions made by the Authority. However, such plans are required to be supported by an indication of future Council Tax. At this stage an assumption of Council Tax increases of 2% in 2015/16 and future years.

Prudential Indicators

88. The Authority must demonstrate that its spending plans comply with the Prudential Code by the publication of a number of performance indicators, which are known as the Prudential Indicators. ***Details of the prudential indicators for this Authority are provided below.***
89. The purpose of the indicators is to demonstrate that capital investment remains within sustainable limits and that the Authority has considered the impact of the whole plan on future levels of Council Tax. The indicators that will measure this are:-
- Estimates of the ratio of capital financing charges to the net revenue budget
 - Estimates of the precept that would result from the three-year capital plan.
 - Estimates of the capital financing requirement.
90. The prudential indicators for Merseyside are:-

a) Capital Expenditure

The actual capital expenditure that was incurred in 2013/14 and the estimates of capital expenditure to be incurred for the current and future years that are recommended for approval are:

	Actual 2013/14	Estimate 2014/15	Estimate 2015/16	Estimate 2016/17	Estimate 2017/18	Estimate 2018/19	Estimate 2019/20
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Capital Expenditure	9,375	11,660	13,780	3,456	3,436	3,329	3,267

Members will note that the increased expenditure in 2013/14 and 2015/16 reflects a number of significant investments including;

- the Joint Control Room (£10.4m) of which £5.3m was funded by a contribution from Merseyside Police and £1.1m from CLG Grant;
- A new secondary control room and associated ICT improvements relating to the JCC move (£2.0) of which £0.7m was funded by a CLG Grant;
- The planned new station in Prescot.

This explains why the total expenditure in these years appear to be relatively high. In addition it is important to remember capital costs are shown as the gross figure and are not shown net of any grants or contributions received to contribute towards the cost. More details on the capital programme are given elsewhere in the report (Section C).

(b) Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream

Estimates of the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream (amounts met from government grants and local taxpayers) for the current and future years, and the actual figures for 2013/14 are:

	Actual	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Ratio of Financing costs to Net Revenue Stream	7.94%	8.18%	9.19%	11.04%	12.09%	13.30%	14.01%

This shows that forecast debt financing costs will increase from 7.94% in 2013/14 (based on the actual forecast capital spend in 2014/15) to 14.01% by 2019/20. As stated previously the impact of the Government's decision to issue no new supported borrowing for CSR10 has meant all MRP calculations are now based on asset life. This has resulted in a significant rise in MRP over the medium term, but eventually the ratio will fall as historic debt is repaid and all other debt is paid off over the life of the asset. This is also affected by the fact that whilst the Authority's debt is increasing its overall budget is reducing because of forecast Government funding cuts.

(c) Effect on the Precept

The estimate of the incremental impact of capital investment decisions proposed in this budget report, over and above capital investment decisions that have been previously been taken by the Authority are:

	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Incremental Impact of Capital Investment Decisions	£2.95	-£0.24	-£0.01	£0.06	£1.13

This indicator compares the capital programme set by the Authority in last year's budget process to the proposed revised capital programme submitted this year. It is intended to show the marginal impact of the overall capital programme, and the decisions being made by the Authority, on the Council Tax levels. The re-phasing of expenditure from 2014/15 into 2015/16 approved during the year, £6m, and the reduction in smoke alarm spend in future years explains the movement in the

figures over this period. The new start programme in 2019/20 has resulted in the increase in 2019/20.

Capital Financing Requirement

91. The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) measures the Authority's underlying need to borrow for capital investment purposes.
92. Based on current commitments for 2014/15 and the latest estimates of capital investment decisions in future years, the capital financing requirement at 31st March is as follows:

	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	31.3.14	31.3.15	31.3.16	31.3.17	31.3.18	31.3.19	31.3.20
	£000,s	£000,s	£000,s	£000,s	£000,s	£000,s	£000,s
Capital Financing Requirement (Excluding PFI)	51,587	52,657	59,392	57,455	55,830	53,772	51,569

In accordance with best practice, the Authority does not associate borrowing with particular items or types of expenditure. The Authority has, at any point in time, a number of cash flows both positive and negative, and manages its Treasury position in terms of its borrowings and investments in accordance with its approved Treasury Management Strategy and practices. In day to day cash management, no distinction can be made between revenue cash and capital cash. External borrowing arises as a consequence of all the financial transactions of the Authority and not simply those arising from capital spending. In contrast, the capital financing requirement, CFR, reflects the Authority's underlying need to borrow for a capital investment purposes.

Net Borrowing and the Capital Financing Requirement

93. CIPFA's *Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities* includes the following as a key indicator of prudence:

"In order to ensure that over the medium term net borrowing will only be for a capital purpose, the local authority should ensure that net external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the total capital financing requirement in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current and next two financial years."

94. The Authority had no difficulty in meeting this requirement as the Authority's CFR (excluding PFI) is expected to reach £55.830m by the end of 2017/18 and the expected maximum debt position, (the "operational boundary" – see Treasury Management Strategy) for 2017/18 is £42.000m. The reason for the borrowing figure being lower than the CFR figure reflects the availability of cash in the form of reserves to the Authority and therefore the ability to defer having to take out new loans for the short to medium term.

(F) TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2014/15

INTRODUCTION

95. This report sets out the expected treasury operations for this period, linked to the Authority's Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan, and Capital Programme. It contains four key legislative requirements:-
- (a) The Treasury Management Strategy Statement which sets out how the Authority's treasury service supports capital decisions, day to day treasury management and the limitations on activity through treasury prudential indicators. The key indicator is the Authorised Limit required by S3 of the Local Government Act 2003 and is in accordance with the CIPFA (The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy) Codes of Practice.
 - (b) The reporting of the prudential indicators for external debt and the treasury management prudential indicators as required by the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice.
 - (c) The investment strategy which sets out the Authority's criteria for choosing investment counterparties and limiting exposure to the risk of loss. This strategy is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Guidance on Local Government Investments updated in 2010. It is proposed to maintain the Authority's minimum long term credit rating requirement of Fitch A- or equivalent.
 - (d) The Authority's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy, which sets out how the Authority will pay for capital assets through revenue each year as required by Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations 2008.

PROPOSED STRATEGY

96. The above policies and parameters provide an approved framework within which the Officers undertake the day to day capital and treasury activities. The Authority is recommended to approve each of the key elements contained within this report which are :-
- The Treasury Management Strategy 2015/16.
 - The External Debt and Treasury Management Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2015/16 to 2017/18.
 - The Investment Strategy 2015/16.
 - The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement included in section D which sets out the Authority's policy on MRP.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

97. The suggested strategy for 2015/16 in respect of Treasury Management is based upon treasury officers' views on interest rates supplemented by leading market forecasts. The strategy covers:-
- (a) prospects for interest rates;
 - (b) capital borrowing and debt rescheduling;

- (c) annual investment strategy;
- (d) external debt prudential indicators;
- (e) treasury management prudential indicators;
- (f) performance indicators;
- (g) treasury management advisers.

Each of the above is now considered in more detail below:

(a) PROSPECTS FOR INTEREST RATES:

There are signs that the economic recovery has stabilised and growth forecasts have recently been more subdued. Growth of the economy will still remain strong but not as strong as previously expected. Also encouraging has been the sharp fall in inflation, reaching 1.0% in November 2014, the lowest rate since September 2002. Forward indications for the next year are that inflation is likely to remain around or under 1%. The Monetary Policy Committee will be focusing in 2015/16 on the 2% inflation target and it is unlikely that they will vote to increase base rates before late 2015 or early 2016.

Longer term fixed interest borrowing rates are based on central government borrowing costs i.e. UK gilt yields. Gilt yields have continued to fall despite the high volume of gilt issuance in the UK and of bond issuance in other major western countries. This has been due to rapidly falling inflation and the continued demand for safe haven instruments correlated to geo-political risks. Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) rates have consequently fallen to abnormally low levels. It is difficult to predict how long current levels are sustainable made even harder by the political risks around the UK general election in May 2015. However, the economic fundamentals of continued growth, falling unemployment and eventually rising inflation would indicate upward pressure on long term rates and longer-term Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) rates could rise by around 0.5% in 2015/16.

The overall structure of interest rates is expected to remain the same and short term rates will continue to be lower than long term rates and are likely to remain so throughout 2015/16. In this scenario, the strategy will be to reduce investments and borrow for short periods and possibly at variable rates when required.

(b) CAPITAL BORROWING AND DEBT RESCHEDULING:

The borrowing requirement comprises the expected movements in the Capital Financing Requirement and reserves plus any maturing debt which will need to be re-financed. The Authority does not envisage that any new long term borrowing will be required in 2015/16. Given the likely structure of interest rates described above, it is envisaged that any borrowing to meet short term cash flow shortages will be for very short periods. Against this background, Treasury Officers will monitor the interest rate market and adopt a pragmatic approach to any changing circumstances.

Rescheduling of debt is the early repayment of loans and replacement by loans for different periods and at different interest rates. It can be used to enhance the balance of the long term portfolio, by for example, amending the maturity profile

or changing volatility levels and may on occasion generate cash savings. Debt rescheduling becomes more beneficial when the relationship between short and long term rates moves appreciably.

Current PWLB lending terms have severely constrained the option to generate savings via debt rescheduling. A significant rise in long term interest rates is required before rescheduling of debt is viable. However, interest rate structures will be continually monitored for opportunities to generate savings from debt rescheduling. Any rescheduling that takes place will be reported to Members in monitoring reports.

(c) ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The primary purpose of the Annual Investment Strategy is to set out the policies for managing investments giving priority to the security and liquidity of the Authority's investments. It also contains the policy on the use of credit ratings and credit ratings agencies, procedures for determining and limiting the use of higher risk investments and the use of external advisors.

The Authority's investment priorities are (a) the security of capital and (b) liquidity of its investments. The Authority will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with the proper levels of security and liquidity. All investments will be in sterling. All cash balances will be invested in accordance with the Code of Practice and with regard to the statutory guidance.

A counterparty list of institutions with which the Authority will invest shall be maintained by reference to the criteria set out below for the different categories of institution and their credit rating. Regardless of these criteria, the money market will be closely monitored and any institution will be suspended from the counterparty lending list should any doubts arise concerning its financial standing. Under the guidance, investments fall into two separate categories, either specified or non-specified investments.

Specified Investments: Specified investments offer high security and high liquidity and satisfy the conditions set out below:

- The investment is denominated in sterling and any payments or repayments in respect of the investment are payable in sterling only.
- The investment is not a long-term investment (has a maturity of less than one year).
- The investment does not involve the acquisition of share capital in any corporate body.
- The investment is made with a body or in an investment scheme which has been awarded a high credit rating by a credit rating agency, or with the UK Government or a local authority.

Specified investments will comprise the following institutions: -

- The UK Government (such as the Debt Management Account deposit facility, UK Treasury Bills or a Gilt with less than one year to maturity).
- Supranational bonds of less than one year's duration.

- UK Local Authorities.
- Money Market Funds.
- Enhanced Money Market (Cash) Funds.
- UK Banks.
- Foreign banks registered in the UK.
- Building Societies.

Credit Rating Criteria:- The Authority will invest with UK institutions or non-UK institutions that are domiciled in a country which has a minimum Sovereign long term rating of “AA”. The institution must have a high credit rating assigned by any of the three credit ratings agencies (Fitch, Moodys and Standard & Poors). To be deemed highly rated the institution must satisfy at least the minimum of the following Fitch (or equivalent) criteria:

- Long term credit rating A-

If any of the agencies assigns a rating lower than the Fitch minimum (or equivalent) to an institution then the Authority will not invest with that institution.

In addition, the Authority will use institutions that are part nationalised UK banks.

Regardless of the credit rating assigned to an institution or whether it is covered by a guarantee, if any doubt over its financial standing exists then that institution is removed immediately from the counterparty lending list.

Investment Limits:- The credit ratings and individual limits for each institution within the categories of investments to be used by the Authority in 2015/16 are as follows:

UK Government (including gilts and the DMADF)	Unlimited
UK Local Authorities (each)	Unlimited
Part Nationalised UK banks	£4m
Money Market Funds (AAA rated)	£3m
Enhanced Money Market (Cash) Funds (AAA rated)	£3m
UK Banks and Building Societies (A- or higher rated)	£2m
Foreign banks registered in the UK (A or higher rated)	£2m

No limits on investments with the UK Government and Local Authorities have been set because they are considered to be of the highest credit quality and are essentially risk free. The limits placed on other categories reflect some uncertainty and marginally higher risk profile of the institutions within those categories. The status of Royal Bank of Scotland as a part nationalized bank is unlikely to change for many years but Lloyds Bank is likely to be re-privatised in the near future so will revert to the lower limit of £2m alongside other UK banks. Money Market Funds although AAA rated, invest in a diverse portfolio so are not completely risk free and have been assigned a lower limit. There is a slightly higher risk for A- rated banks as described in para 30 below and so these institutions have the lowest limit.

Ways to increase investment returns have been considered including (a) reducing the minimum credit rating criteria from A- to BBB; (b) increasing the limits with individual institutions and (c) investing for periods longer than one year. Any of these ways would involve taking on additional risk because higher investment returns can only be achieved by taking higher risks. The decision not to do this but to continue with current policies was taken in the light of the Banking Reform Act which enables the government to force investors to take losses if a bank became insolvent. It is now unlikely that the government would fully fund a taxpayer bail out of a failed bank.

The maximum that may be invested with different banks that are part of the same conglomerate shall not exceed the maximum of the highest rated bank within the group. The limits may be exceeded for short periods when there are adverse conditions in the money market with the agreement of the Head of Finance or Treasury Manager.

Non-Specified Investments:- Non-specified investments do not, by definition, meet the requirements of a specified investment. The Department for Communities & Local Government (CLG) guidance requires that greater detail is provided of the intended use of non-specified investments due to greater potential risk. The following types of non-specified investments may be used.

- Deposits with the Authority's own banker shall be unlimited for transactional purposes and to allow for unusual cash flow circumstances.
- Deposits with a maturity of greater than one year (including forward deals in excess of one year from inception to repayment) with any bank or building society that meets the credit rating criteria above.
- Building societies which do not meet the normal credit criteria but are one of the top ten building societies, determined by asset size. Those societies that are within the top ten but do not have an agency determined credit rating shall have an individual limit of £1m. Building Society rankings are checked annually with the Building Societies Association.

Risk Management of Investment Counterparties:- Bank and Money Market Fund ratings are checked daily. The Authority is alerted by e-mail when there is an amendment by any of the agencies to the credit rating of an institution. If an amendment means an institution no longer meets the Authority's minimum requirement, or any doubt over its financial standing exists, then that institution is removed immediately from the counterparty lending list. Conversely, an institution may be added to the list should it achieve the minimum rating.

Credit ratings are only the starting point when considering credit risk. The Code of Practice requires the Authority to supplement credit rating information with additional operational market information which will be applied before making any specific investment decision from the agreed pool of counterparties. Credit Default Swaps and negative rating watches/outlooks are examined and the financial press, internet and financial information systems are monitored for

market information regarding its counterparties. It also receives daily e-mails from various market participants that could identify potential problems. Any information that casts doubt on an institution's creditworthiness is acted on by suspending investment with that institution.

Liquidity of Investments:- Each investment decision is made with regard to cash flow requirements resulting in a range of maturity periods within the investment portfolio. Investments are normally short term having a maturity of less than one year. The Prudential Code does allow longer term investments and under certain money market conditions it may be prudent to invest for up to three years dependent on cash flow forecasts.

Risk Benchmarking:- The CIPFA Codes and the DCLG Investment Guidance recommend the consideration and approval of security and liquidity benchmarks. Yield benchmarks are currently widely used to assess investment performance. Security and liquidity benchmarks are new requirements although the application of these is more subjective in nature. The benchmarks are simple guides to maximum risk and so may be breached from time to time depending on movements in interest rates and counterparty criteria. The purpose of them is for officers to monitor the current and trend position and amend the operational strategy to manage risk as conditions change. Any breach of the benchmarks will be reported, with supporting reasons in the Mid-Year or Annual Report.

Security: - Security is currently evidenced by the application of minimum credit quality criteria to investment counterparties, primarily through the use of credit ratings. A method to benchmark security risk is to assess the historic level of default against the minimum criteria used in the Authority's investment strategy. The Authority's minimum credit rating criteria is "A-". The average expectation of default for a one year investment in a counterparty with an "A-" long term rating is 0.09% of the total investment. The inclusion of unrated Building Societies raises this factor to 0.14% e.g. for a £1m investment the average loss would be £1,400. This is only an average and any specific counterparty loss is likely to be higher but these figures do act as a proxy benchmark for risk across the portfolio. The Authority's maximum security risk benchmark of 0.14% is embodied in the criteria for selecting cash investment counterparties and will be monitored and reported to Members.

Liquidity: - The Authority seeks to maintain liquid short term deposits of at least £1 million available daily.

Yield: - The Authority's benchmark for investment returns is the 7 day LIBID rate.

Reporting Arrangements:- The Investments Strategy forms part of the Treasury Management Strategy which is referred to Policy and Resources or Audit Sub-Committee for monitoring. An interim report is produced during the year and a final annual report by 30th September following the end of a financial year.

(d) EXTERNAL DEBT PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS:

The Prudential Code requires the following external debt indicators of prudence:

- b. Authorised limit for external debt
- c. Operational boundary for external debt

Authorised Limit: The Authorised Limit for Debt represents the maximum level of debt which the Authority may have during the year. The Authority has no powers to exceed this unless a further report with revised prudential indicators is approved by the Authority. The limit therefore makes appropriate allowance for the risks and uncertainties which affect day-to-day debt levels, and the ups and downs of short term cash flow.

The authorised limits reflect the Authority's Capital Financing Requirement, identified in its capital expenditure and financing plans. They are consistent with the treasury management policy statement and practices. The limit will ensure that total gross debt does not exceed the total of the CFR in the preceding, current or following two financial years. The Authority is asked to approve the limits below and to delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive, within the total limit for any individual year, to effect movement between the separately agreed limits for borrowing and other long term liabilities.

Authorised Limit for External Debt		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
		£'000	£'000	£'000
Borrowing		63,000	62,000	60,000
Other Long Term Liabilities		2,000	2,000	2,000
TOTAL		65,000	64,000	62,000

Operational Boundary: The Operational Boundary indicator represents the expected maximum debt position during each year. It takes into account projections of borrowing requirement and repayments in future years. It may be different from the year end position as it reflects cash flows within each year. The Authority is asked to approve the limits and to delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive, within the total limit for any individual year, to effect movement between the separately agreed limits for borrowing and other long term liabilities.

Operational Boundary for External Debt		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
		£'000	£'000	£'000
Borrowing		43,000	42,000	40,000
Other Long Term Liabilities		2,000	2,000	2,000
TOTAL		45,000	44,000	42,000

Actual External Debt: The prudential indicator for actual external debt considers a single point in time and hence is only directly comparable to the

authorised limit and operational boundary at that point in time. Actual external debt is monitored during the year against the limits. It is forecast to be £42.1 million at 31st March 2015.

(e) **TREASURY MANAGEMENT INDICATORS:**

The Treasury Management Code requires the following Treasury Management indicators of prudence:

- Upper limit on fixed interest rate exposures;
- Upper limit on variable interest rate exposures;
- Upper and lower limits for the maturity structure of borrowing;
- Total principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days.

Interest Rate Exposures: It is recommended that the Authority sets upper limits on its fixed and variable interest rate exposures as a percentage of its net outstanding principal sums as follows: -

Upper Limits on Interest Rate Exposures		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
		%	%	%
Fixed		100	100	100
Variable		50	50	50

This means that the Deputy Chief Executive will manage fixed interest rate exposures within the range 50% to 100% and variable interest rate exposures within the range 0% to 50% for 2015/16.

Maturity Structure of Borrowing: It is recommended that the Authority sets upper and lower percentage limits for the maturity structure of its borrowings as follows. Percentage of projected fixed rate borrowing that is maturing in each period:

	Upper Limit	Lower Limit
Under 12 months	50%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	50%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	50%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	50%	0%
10 years and above	90%	0%

Total Principal Sums Invested For Periods Longer Than 364 Days: It is recommended that the limit for investments of longer than 364 days be set at £2 million for each of the years 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18.

(f) **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

The Code of Practice on Treasury Management requires the Authority to set performance indicators to assess the adequacy of the treasury function over the year. These are distinct historic indicators, as opposed to the prudential indicators, which are predominantly forward looking.

The Authority will maintain performance indicators for both borrowing and investment, although it must be stressed that the pursuit of higher performance shall not be at the expense of taking undue risks. The indicators for the treasury function are:

- Borrowing - Average rate of borrowing for the year compared to average available.
- Investments – Internal returns compared to the 7 day LIBID rate.

The results of these indicators will be reported in the Treasury Management Monitoring and Annual Reports.

(g) TREASURY MANAGEMENT ADVISORS

The Treasury Management service is provided to the Authority by Liverpool City Council. The terms of the service are set out in an agreed Service Level Agreement. The Council employs treasury management advisers appointed under a competitive procurement exercise who provide a range of services which include: -

- Technical support on treasury matters, capital finance issues.
- Economic and interest rate analysis.
- Debt services which includes advice on the timing of borrowing.
- Debt rescheduling advice surrounding the existing portfolio.
- Generic investment advice on interest rates, timing and investment instruments.
- Credit ratings/market information service comprising the three main credit rating agencies.

Whilst Liverpool City Council and its advisors provide the treasury function, the responsibility for any decision on treasury matters remains with the Authority.

(G) REVENUE FORECASTS

98. The Authority has in recent years maintained robust medium term financial plans.
99. This plan is fully reviewed on an annual basis and monitored quarterly. This section of the report will develop a financial forecast for the Authority based upon the latest information. It will:-
 - Outline the historical background to the current financial plan
 - Outline any movement since the previously approved financial plan,
 - Outline the underlying assumptions to support forecast,

Background:-

100. Members will recall that in the past few years the Authority's budget forecasts have dealt with significant financial challenges because of government decisions about the funding of Firefighters pensions in 2006 and the poor outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Reviews of 2007 and 2010 (CSR2007 & CSR2010).
101. Following the financial crisis of 2008, the Government set its spending review for 2010 to reflect major reductions in public expenditure. The spending review dealt with funding for 2011/12 to 2015/16. For the first two years of that period, the Authority suffered cuts at double the national average for fire and rescue services.
102. Following a successful lobby, when a new system for fire and rescue service funding was introduced for 2013/14, Merseyside subsequently received cuts at approximately the same level as all other fire and rescue services in percentage terms (albeit the absolute impact is higher because Merseyside is more reliant on grant than most other fire and rescue authorities).
103. Between 2000 and 2015 the number of Firefighters in the Service has reduced from 1400 to 764.
104. The Authority has already developed and approved plans to cope with the spending review cuts over the 2011/12 – 2015/16 period and has approved £25.6m of total saving options. Of this £6.3m related specifically to the current two year plan for 2014/15 and 2015/16. The key elements of that plan were:-
 - A 10% reduction in support staff numbers and overall support costs by £1.5m
 - Other technical and back office savings of £1.4m
 - Unavoidable savings in the front-line response by 4 station mergers or outright closures and a reduction in Firefighter posts of about 90 delivered by national turnover rates, saving £3.4m

105. The section below summarises the good progress in delivering the total approved saving options to date:-

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Options Formally Implemented	-20,107	-20,777	-21,094	-20,974	-20,974
Options awaiting some business re-engineering but being delivered in cash terms	-303	-1,103	-4,203	-4,603	-4,603
	-20,410	-21,880	-25,297	-25,577	-25,577

106. The Service is on track to deliver the approved £6.3m of savings specific to the current two year plan as well .

Progress in Implementing Approved Saving Options					
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
2014/15 Budget Approved Savings:					
Options formally implemented into budget	-1,150	-1,878	-2,120	-2,000	-2,000
Approved Saving Options yet to be formally implemented:					
Non Employee Budget review	0	0	0	0	0
10% saving on Non Uniform Establishment	0	-450	-900	-900	-900
Operational Response	0	-350	-3,000	-3,400	-3,400
Value of Saving Options yet to be formally implemented	0	-800	-3,900	-4,300	-4,300
Total	-1,150	-2,678	-6,020	-6,300	-6,300

The Authority has received recent reports on the progress with the station merger/closure programme and further information is elsewhere on this agenda. Plans are well advanced to deliver the remaining savings. Therefore the Authority's current financial plan has remained on track.

Changes to the currently Approved Plan 2014/15 – 2015/16:-

GRANT

107. The Government funding settlement for 2015/16 has now been confirmed and it is slightly lower than anticipated, £0.210m, mainly as a consequence of a lower CPI factor being applied to uplift business rates as actual inflation was lower than expected. There have also been reductions to reflect the savings that the Authority are expected to realise from new pension contribution rates associated with the implementation of the new firefighters pensions scheme in April 2015. At the time of writing the government has not yet announced what those contribution rates are.

COUNCIL TAX

108. Each district council has now finalised its forecast on the collection fund and council tax base, the position has improved in terms of the overall income yield mainly due to the number of dwelling increasing.

The Districts of Merseyside have set their tax bases 2015/16 and they are shown in the table below:-

District	2014/15	2015/16	Variance	
	Council Tax Taxbase	Council Tax Taxbase	£	%
	£	£	£	%
LIVERPOOL	91,976.50	94,459.50	2,483.00	2.70%
WIRRAL	87,786.20	89,344.90	1,558.70	1.78%
ST.HELENS	46,715.00	47,808.00	1,093.00	2.34%
SEFTON	76,992.00	78,319.00	1,327.00	1.72%
KNOWSLEY	30,916.00	32,617.00	1,701.00	5.50%
	334,385.70	342,548.40	8,162.70	2.44%
2014/15 Band D Tax Level	70.07	70.07		
Total Income £	23,430,405	24,002,366	571,961	2.44%

The total tax base for the Authority has increased by 2.44%. This means that each £1 of Council Tax the level of income will be greater than that generated in 2014/15 by £8,162.70. The result of this is that the income from the current level of Council Tax is anticipated to higher by £571,961 (this is assumed to be a permanent increase).

This means that the additional income forecast from a just below **2% increase in Council Tax** in 2015/16 is now £0.480m. This plan assumes that increase. (This is expected to be the maximum level of increase before holding a referendum).

The Authority has the option to consider freezing the Council Tax. The Government has announced the availability of a 2015/16 Council Tax freeze grant if authorities agree to freeze their Council Tax for 2015/16 at 2014/15 levels. The grant will be equivalent to 1% of the basic amount of council tax set for 2014/15. For the Authority this would be equivalent to a 2015/16 Council Tax freeze grant, £0.298m. Ministers have agreed that the funding for the freeze grant should be built into the spending review baseline in the future. This gives as much certainty as possible at this stage that the extra funding for freezing council tax in 2015/16 will remain available in future years. A 2% increase in the precept would yield £0.480m and the council tax freeze grant is £0.298m, a difference of £0.182m. However, if the freeze grant was taken-up then:-

- Future council tax increases would be on a lower base and therefore the future precept income yield would be permanently lower

- The freeze grant once it has been included in base formula grant is likely to be subject to reduction in future years, (at best fixed), if public spending is cut as expected.
- It would not reduce the Authority's reliance on grant funding (but rather increase it)

Members are asked to keep to the approved financial plan and increase the Council Tax in 2015/16 by 2%. Central Government has clear expectations that local government should, in their opinion, freeze the council tax.

The Districts of Merseyside have reviewed their collection funds and identified the proportion of any surplus or deficit attributable to the Authority. The results are set out in the table below and show a net surplus of £1,012,448. This impact is a one-off.

District	2014/2015 Coll fund deficit/(surplus)
	£
LIVERPOOL	-459,974
WIRRAL	-204,349
ST.HELENS	-44,235
SEFTON	-243,890
KNOWSLEY	-60,000
	-1,012,448

The total increase council tax income and collection fund surplus (one-off) is £1.584m.

BUSINESS RATES

109. The Government has also confirmed the value of the Section 31 grants it will pay to offset the loss of small business's rate income as a consequence of various national policies on rate relief for these companies, totalling £0.267m above that assumed in the original budget forecast.
110. Within the Government settlement funding assessment is an assumption around business rate income and in particular the level of local business rates. The Government funding assumes the Authority will receive 1% of local business rates yield estimated at £4.228m in 2015/16. Each billing authority has prepared an estimate of what they believe they will collect and this estimate is £0.095m lower than that assumed in the settlement grant. In addition rating appeals and other changes such as business closures in the year have resulted in a business rates collection fund deficit of £0.235m. Therefore the overall local share of business rates is £0.330m lower than that in the final settlement funding estimate. Overall the movement has seen a net increase in income of £1.323m.

OVERALL IMPACT

111. The overall impact of all these changes is summarised in the table below:-

	£'m
Reduction in Settlement Fund Assessment	0.210
Increase in Section 31 Grants to reflect national discounts on Business Rates	(0.267)
Adjustment for lower local business rate income forecast	0.095
Business Rate Collection Fund Deficit	0.235
Increase in Council Tax Base	(0.583)
Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus	<u>(1.013)</u>
Overall Change	(1.323)

112. The 2015/16 Budget currently only allows a provision for a 1% paybill increase. The 1% includes pay, pensions and employers NI. This represents a significant risk since staff have had a significant period of low or zero pay increases and there is some possibility of pensions cost increases. In particular at the time of writing whilst a valuation of the anticipated cost of the firefighter pension schemes has been conducted the impact of that valuation on employer pension contribution rates has not yet been announced.

113. It is considered therefore that members might wish to set aside the monies arising from the increase in the taxbase (£0.583m) as a hedge against risks of the paybill increasing by more than 1%.

114. In relation to the other net variation (which is mostly one off) it is proposed that the additional £0.740m is added to the capital investment reserve to try and minimise future borrowing as much as possible.

115. **Therefore if the Authority set a precept increase at just below 2% (as assumed in the current plan) then no further savings would be required to set a balanced budget for just 2015/16.**

Future Years

116. In considering prospects for future years the main areas of concern are:

Government Funding

With an election in May 2015; the continuing high levels of public sector debt; and uncertainty over the economic recovery over the next five years it is not surprising that the Government has not issued any indicative grant settlement figures for 2016/17 or future years. All major political parties have committed to tackle the national deficit during the next parliament but it is accepted that the actual level of cuts may vary as there appears to be significant policy approach differences between the parties. In preparing the 2015/16 – 2019/20 five year revenue plan the Service is facing a high degree of uncertainty over grant settlements post 2015/16. **Therefore Officers have taken the view that Government cuts in grant will continue at similar levels to those over the current spending review period.**

Council Tax

117. The plan assumes future council tax increases will be at the current referendum limit of 2%

Pay Bill

118. The plan assumes that pay constraint will continue and that the overall pay bill (including pension costs) will increase at 2% p.a. The Government is currently finalising the proposed employer pension contribution rates for the firefighter pension schemes. The financial plan assumes that any recommendations will have an overall neutral impact.

Other

119. Using the proposed 2015/16 – 2019/20 capital programme to estimate future borrowing provision has been made to cover debt servicing cost and MRP payments that are consistent with the MRP statement in this report.
120. The plan assumes New Dimension funding, £1.1m, will suffer no additional cuts to those already applied and will be maintained at the revised 2015/16 levels. Also that the Section 31 grant to compensate for the capping of business rate increases will continue at the 2015/16 level of £0.267m.

A potential position for future years 2016/17 – 2019/20

121. Having taken account of the assumption set out above the table below sets out a potential financial forecast up to 2019/20. Based on the assumptions savings of up to £13.3 million might be required:-

2015/16 - 2019/20 MTFP				
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
2014/2015 Approved Financial Plan	62,889	64,589	66,089	67,589
2015/16 Issues				
Increase in Sec 31 Grant for restricted NNDR increase	-77	-77	-77	-77
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) & Interest Payable on loans		250	500	750
Adjust Planned Drawdown from smoothing Reserve to reflect movement in Council Tax yield				
2014/15 Financial Plan Expenditure Forecast	62,812	64,762	66,512	68,262
FUNDING				
Government Funding - Settlement Funding Assessment	-34,082	-31,748	-29,898	-28,447
Adjustment for Local Business Rate income forecast from Districts to CLG estimate	0	0	0	0
NNDR Collection Fund (surplus)/deficit	0	0	0	0
Council Tax -				
Base Precept Income	-24,482	-24,972	-25,471	-25,980
Council Tax Base (increase) / decrease	0	0	0	0
Assume 2% rise 2015/16 to 2019/20	-490	-499	-509	-520
Council Tax Collection Fund (surplus)/deficit				
Updated Income Forecast	-59,054	-57,219	-55,878	-54,947
Forecast Net Position (surplus) / deficit	3,758	7,543	10,634	13,315
Potential Future Saving To Be Identified	-3,758	-7,543	-10,634	-13,315

122. The Authority has already approved a balanced two year plan (2014/15 – 2015/16).
123. There is considerable uncertainty about what will happen to the public finances post the election and how that will impact on local government. However it currently seems likely that there will be continued significant funding reductions.
124. It is difficult to make specific decision to address any financial challenge without more detail and the Authority has adopted an approach whereby
- a. it will only deal with any financial challenge that is known given the uncertainty over future years Government funding settlements.
 - b. will seek to lobby the Government to minimise the impact of any changes in any future Comprehensive Spending Review.
 - c. It will sensibly prepare contingency plans to deliver additional savings which minimise the impact on operational response

It will maintain levels of reserves appropriate to the financial risks which will allow time to implement savings required.

(H) Options for Tackling the Future (2016/17 – 2019/20) Financial Challenge

125. Although the previous section identified that the Authority in effect has set a balance budget for 2015/16 that does not require any further savings to be identified (assuming a 2% precept increase is approved), this section of the report considers what areas of the service any future savings will need to be found from if the saving requirement is £13.3m by 2019/20.

126. This section will:-

- Consider the current VFM Principles underpinning decisions on budget saving decisions
- Analyse what budget areas delivered the 2011/12 – 2015/16 savings
- Consider what areas can contribute to the 2016/17 – 2019/20 potential £13m challenge.

127. Before looking at any areas of potential savings it is important to remember that the Authority has agreed a number of Value For Money Principles that have underpinned its approach to budgets and financial plans in recent years. During 2012/13 the principles were reviewed and updated to better reflect the challenges facing the Authority now and in the future. They are:-

Value for Money Principles (Budget Principles):

Principle 1 – Allocate resources in a way that contributes towards the achievement of MFRA's Mission, Aims and Values

Principle 2 – To continue to seek to avoid compulsory redundancy (if possible given the difficult financial circumstances)

Principle 3 – To choose budget options which minimises negative impact on the front line services or on firefighter safety

Principle 4 – To consider budget approaches which ensure the right balance between local and national funding levels and considers the views of local people on the right level of council tax balanced against aspirations for service levels

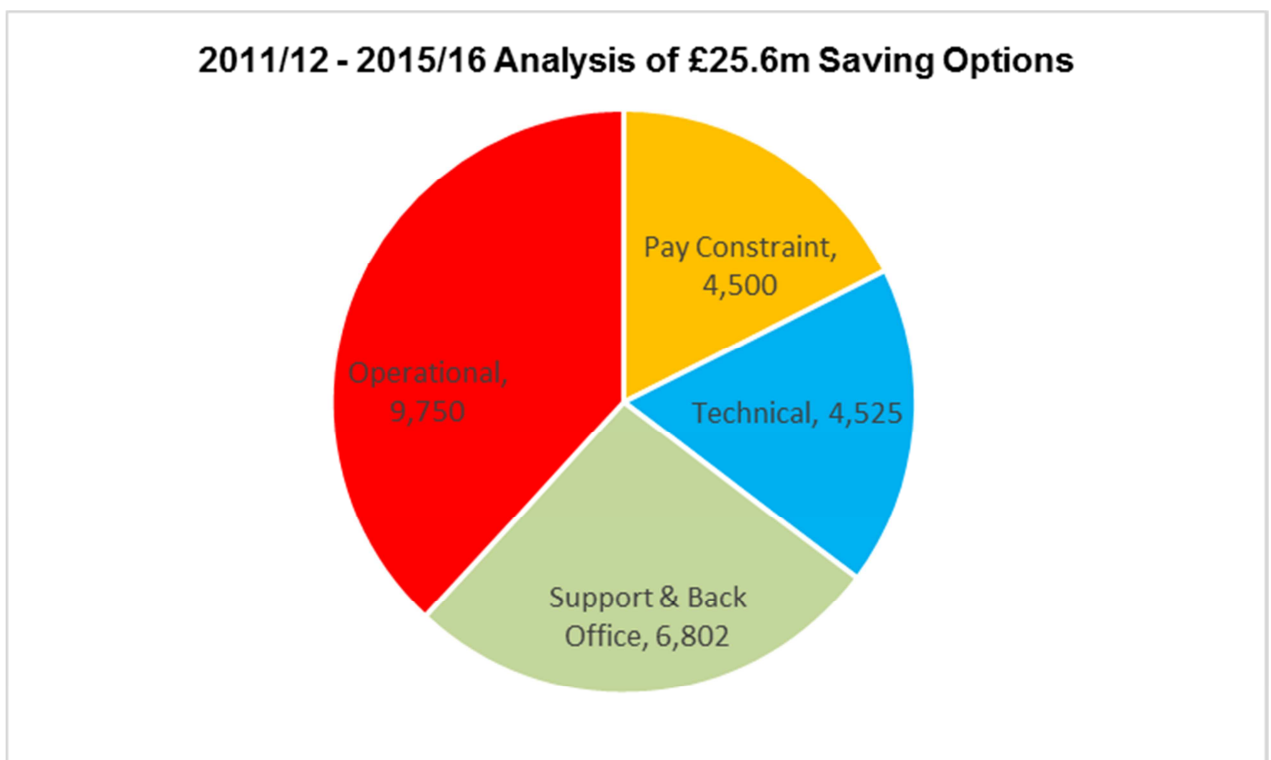
Principle 5 – To allocate resources having considered the impact on our diverse communities and our employees.

128. In applying these principles the Authority has already made large scale budgetary changes and savings. As the Authority faces a further five years of potentially significant financial savings the Authority has very limited room for manoeuvre and these principles may prove difficult to maintain.

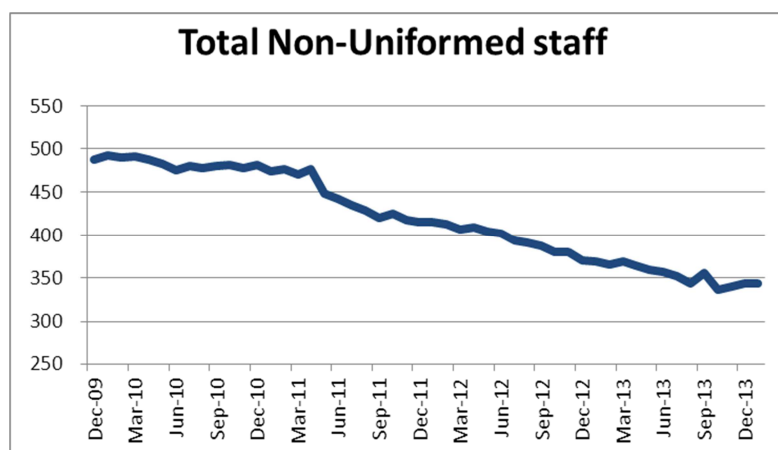
Analysis of Saving Options Already Approved

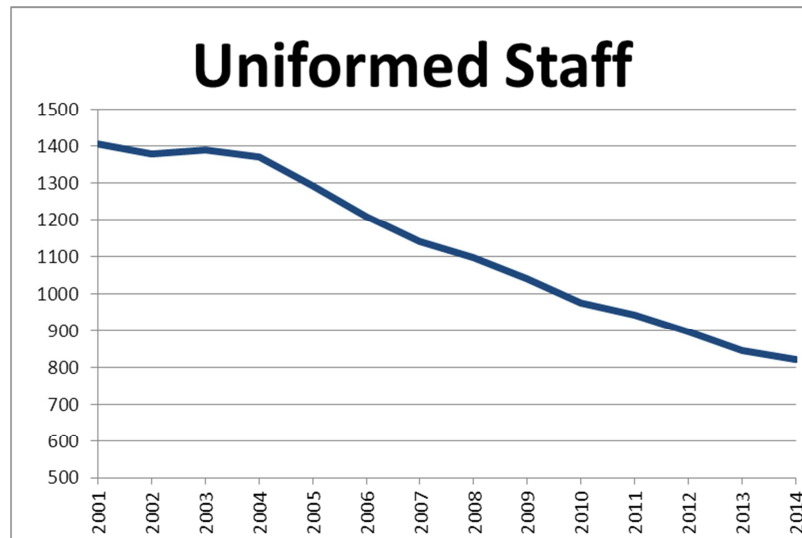
129. The bullet points overleaf and summary pie chart outlines how the £25.577m of saving options approved over the 2011/12 – 2015/16 period have been found:-

- a. The number of appliances has been reduced from 42 to 28
- b. The number of fire stations is planned to reduce from 26 to 22
- c. The number of firefighter post reductions is approximately 200
- d. Operational employee savings of £9.750m
- e. The number of support staff is planned to fall by 90
- f. Support staff and Non-employee saving of £6.802m
- g. Annual staff pay rises have been restricted to a 3% in total over this 5 year period (note 2015/16 firefighter pay award still to be announced). Reduction in Financial Plan of £4.500m
- h. Technical savings of £4.525m (reduction in non-employee inflation £1.625m; revenue costs associated with capital borrowing of £2.400m; and income generation of £0.500m)



130. The graphs below show how staff numbers have been reduced already.





What areas can contribute to future savings?

131. Council Tax:

The Financial Plan assumes a just below 2% council tax increase for 2015/16 and future years which is in line with inflation forecasts. This is expected to be the maximum level of increase before holding a referendum.

The Authority might consider a **higher (above 2%) Council Tax increase**. This would require the Authority to hold a referendum (local vote on its proposals). The advantages of this approach would be:-

- Permanently increased income
- Reduced reliance on grant funding in the mid term
- Potentially avoids cuts in service although the increase would need to be Significant as each additional 1% would generate approximately £0.240m in additional council tax income. As an example a 27% increase (additional 25% above that in the plan) would generate £6.000m towards any future financial challenge.
- The current band d council tax is £70.07, a 27 % increase would increase by £18.92pa to £88.99.
- Future council tax increases would be cumulative on this base

There are a number of practical issues relating to a potential referendum that would make it a risky proposition;

- The Authority has to meet the costs of the referenda – it would need to hold one in each district and get a positive vote in each (Estimate £1m-2m),
- The Authority would have to meet the cost of rebilling if it were not successful (potentially as high as £2m) and would still have to find the required savings to balance the budget,
- There are administrative limitations on the process and campaigning around any referendum which would limit the ability to present a comprehensive argument
- There would be a substantial impact on the taxpayer

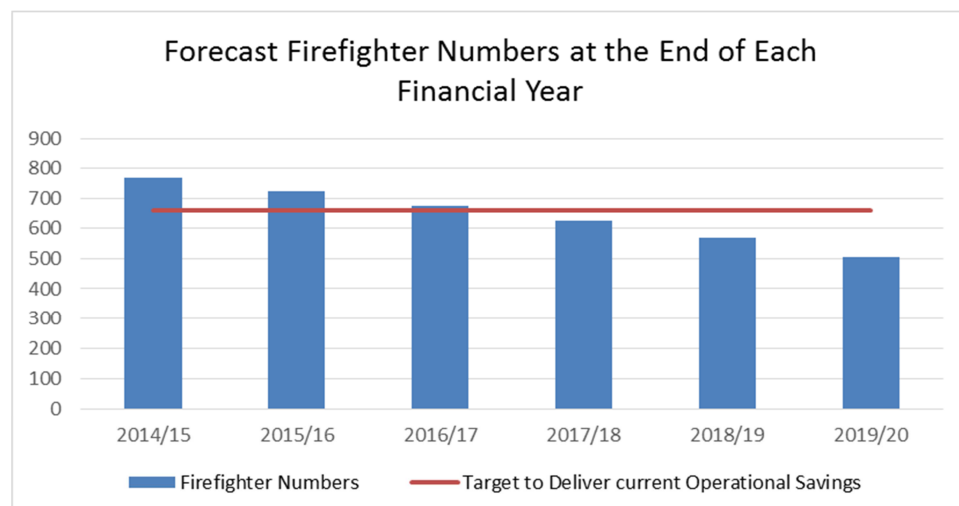
132. Expenditure

Given the level of potential savings that may be required and with nearly 70% of the budget relating to employee costs the reality is that reducing staff numbers would almost certainly be required. The table below outlines the 2015/16 revenue budget over the various types of spend:-

DRAFT 2015/16 Revenue Budget			
	%	£'000	£'000
EMPLOYEE Firefighter pay	49.8%	33,947	
EMPLOYEE Control pay	1.9%	1,299	
EMPLOYEE Non-Firefighter pay	13.0%	8,839	
EMPLOYEE Member payments	0.3%	222	
EMPLOYEE Firefighter Ill Health & Injury Pensions charge	2.7%	1,868	
EMPLOYEE Training & Other indirect costs	1.5%	1,004	
EMPLOYEE	69.2%		47,179
CAPITAL FINANCING (debt interest / MRP)	9.1%		6,226
CAPITAL FINANCING (RCCO/HFSC sales)	1.3%		880
AGENCY SERVICES (Outsourced ICT, PFI Rental & Other)	6.9%		4,673
SUPPLIES & SERVICES	6.0%		4,088
PREMISES	4.5%		3,084
TRANSPORT	2.2%		1,510
CENTRAL EXPENSES	0.8%		518
TOTAL SPEND	100.0%		68,158
INCOME			-6,081
CONTINGENCY FOR PAY/PRICES			1,321
RESERVES			-1,229
NET BUDGET			62,169

133. The Authority would no doubt continue to try and protect the front line as much as possible but again the level of savings is likely to mean further reductions in appliances and a review of fire station numbers and duty system arrangements.

134. The current forecast is that the firefighter establishment will reduce to approximately 670 wholetime equivalents once all the approved saving options have been fully delivered. This is expected to be achieved in 2017. The table below outlines that if no further recruitment took place then by 2019/20 firefighter numbers would be around 500 and this would produce a saving of approximately £6m:-



135. Nearly 10% of the budget is committed to fund revenue costs associated with capital expenditure funded by borrowing. This reflects expenditure already spent so the level of flexibility to drive out further efficiencies is limited. However, the Deputy Chief Executive would continue to consider ways of delivering savings through effective treasury management (using internal cash when available to delay borrowing and other such technical options).
136. It may be possible to drive further savings from non-employee costs however these are often closely linked to the frontline operational service; running costs for fire stations and appliances, uniform and PPE for firefighters.
137. The plan assumes pay awards of 2% from 2016/17, however following a lengthy period of pay constraint pressure is growing for higher pay awards. Each additional 1% would require additional budget of approximately £0.450m.

Conclusion

138. Members have approved a balanced budget for 2015/16 as part of the two year saving plan approved at last year's Budget Authority meeting. Given the level of uncertainty over the future Government funding cuts Members are asked to note the above and direct the CFO to:-
- Develop a lobbying strategy around the next comprehensive spending review to seek to protect as much as possible the fire services budget, and
 - Begin planning for the expected savings outlined in the financial plan.

(I) ADEQUACY OF RESERVES AND BALANCES

139. Responsibilities of Chief Finance Officers

140. Under Part 2 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Chief Finance Officer of an Authority is now required to comment on the following matters:

- the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of determining its Budget Requirement for the forthcoming year;
- the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

141. There is then a requirement for the Authority to have regard to the report of the Chief Finance Officer when making decisions on its Budget Requirement and level of financial reserves.

142. In the Authority the Chief Finance Officer is the Deputy Chief Executive. For the purposes of the Act the “financial reserves” of the Authority would incorporate Earmarked Reserves and Working Balances.

143. To make a final judgement on these issues it will be necessary to consider the proposed budget decisions of the Authority in the light of this budget report.

Robustness of Estimate

144. To fully satisfy the Chief Finance Officer any proposed Budget or amendment should therefore:-

- Be fully based upon the advice of Service Officers (supported by Finance Officers) – or based upon or supported by information the Chief Finance Officer considers reasonable to accept.
- Provide only for Budget proposals that are fully costed to service level and where the implications – both financial and upon service performance – are estimated and identified.
- Provide for all known future developments either through direct service Budget allocations or the establishment of specific reserves for such purposes.
- Provide for an adequate level of Balances and Reserves consistent with the requirements of any Regulation that may be earmarked and/or the Authority’s own risk assessment.
- Provide for the full revenue implications of the Capital Programme.
- Establish clear targets for income collection in respect of key income streams.
- Ensure there are no unidentified savings targets.
- Where appropriate ensure that the consequences of current over and under spending have been taken into account.

Adequacy of proposed Financial Reserves

145. Under the 2003 Local Government Act the Secretary of State may enact Regulations that define certain types of “controlled reserves” and the minimum level

for those Reserves. At the time of preparing this report the Secretary of State has not enacted any such Regulations.

146. However, the 2003 Act still places a requirement upon the Chief Finance Officer to report if the level of reserves is likely to be inadequate. That report should contain comment upon:
- the reasons for that situation
 - the actions, if any, considered appropriate to prevent the situation arising.
147. There is then a requirement for the Authority to respond to the report when making decisions on its future financial reserves.
148. In recent years the Authority has maintained a general revenue reserve of, in excess, of £2m and also maintained a number of earmarked reserves.
149. A pilot Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) performance indicator relating to the level of general fund reserves indicated that;
- an appropriate level was 5% of the forecast Net Operating Expenditure, or
 - that the organisation had a financial risk management process operating which justified a lower level of reserves”.

This is the ‘normal’ rule for multi-service local authorities.

150. For this Authority a 5% forecast Net Operating Expenditure equates to approximately £3million. The Authority’s general revenue reserve is currently £2.000m, however:-
- The Authority’s risk management arrangements have improved. As part of this budget process the Deputy Chief Executive has prepared a financial risk management matrix and also assessed the year on year variation in risk facing the Authority. This takes account of the corporate risk register.
 - The Authority has previously maintained a number of specific earmarked reserves against risk.
 - The Authority is single purpose and does not face as full a range of risks to manage as a multi-purpose authority.
 - The Authority is unlikely to face significant increases in cost because of uncontrollable demand issues (unlike for example Social Services care for the elderly).
 - Members will note that the Authority’s revenue reserves have not generally been consumed during the year by overspendings but have been maintained throughout the year.

Therefore, as the significant risks are known and are being managed or have a specific reserve, the Deputy Chief Executive recommends maintaining the general reserve at its current £2.000m level.

151. Current Reserves:- Based on the latest financial review and known planned future use the Authority's forecast reserves are outlined in the table below:

FORECAST USE OF RESERVES							
	EXPECTED USE						
	Estimate Balance 31.03.15	2015/16		2016/17	2017/18	Future Years	Balance
		Used in 2015/16 Budget	Forecast in year Use				
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Emergency Related Reserves							
Bellwin Reserve	147					-147	0
Insurance Reserve	370					-370	0
Emergency Planning	75					-75	0
Catastrophe Reserve	500					-500	0
Modernisation Challenge							
Smoothing Reserve	1,695	-372	-1,323	646		-646	0
Severance Reserve	600		-600				0
III Health Penalty Reserve	440		-220	-220			0
Recruitment Reserve	1,000		-400	-600			0
Capital Investment Reserve	10,786	-882	176	-4,500		-5,580	0
PFI Annuity Reserve	2,225	-49	-51	-100	-100	-1,925	0
Equality / DDA Investment	285		-285				0
Firefighter Safety Investment	800		-800				0
Specific Projects							
Community Sponsorship	4		-4				0
Equipment Reserve	111		-111				0
Contestable Research Fund	25		-25				0
FSD Reserve	6		-6				0
Healthy Living	35		-35				0
Water Rescue Reserve	1		-1				0
Inflation Reserve	500	0	572	0	0	-1,072	0
Ringfenced Reserves							
F.R.E.E. Reserve	41					-41	0
Princes Trust Reserve	279					-279	0
Community Youth Team	53					-53	0
Beacon Peer Project	50					-50	0
Innovation Fund Reserve	170					-170	0
Regional Control Reserve	0					0	0
Energy Reseve	84	74				-158	0
St Helens District Reserve	6					-6	0
New Dimensions Reserve	793					-793	0
Total Earmarked Reserves	21,081	-1,229	-3,113	-4,774	-100	-11,865	0
General Revenue Reserve	2,000	0	0	0	0	0	2,000
Total Reserves	23,081	-1,229	-3,113	-4,774	-100	-11,865	2,000

152. The latest financial review report CFO/005/15 identifies a 2014/15 forecast revenue underspend which will allow the Authority to increase its capital investment reserve by a further £0.4m. The current estimated reserves as at 31.03.15 are:-

• Ringfenced Reserves (not available for general spend)	£1.5m
• Earmarked Reserves (created to fund future projects or as a resource to meet some potential future spend)	£19.6m
• General Fund Reserve (required to cover unexpected events)	<u>£2.0m</u>
	£23.1m

Approximately £19.6m of earmarked reserves might be seen as available, however, £11.6m of this has already been committed to fund approved current and future capital investment, including the construction of new stations as part of the station merger initiative and controlling the level of borrowing to deliver the approved revenue debt servicing savings. Also £1.1m is required to cover insurance and catastrophe risks; £0.4m of the smoothing reserve is required to balance the 2015/16 budget; and £2.2m is required to smooth out the future PFI unitary charges over the remaining contract years. This leaves £4.3m of earmarked reserve to consider. Although this would appear relatively high it reflects the level of risk associated with the current financial plan and the severity of cuts imposed on the Authority for 2015/16 and beyond. The £5.4m earmarked reserves are:-

£'m	
Severance Reserve	0.6
Recruitment Reserve	1.0
Firefighter Safety	0.8
Inflation Reserve	1.1
Ill Health Cost	0.4
Equality / DDA	0.2
Insurance & Catastrophe	1.1
Other	<u>0.2</u>
	5.4

153. Based upon assumptions that; the Authority will adopt all the savings identified and their attendant risks; that the Authority needs a buffer to give it time to make changes required; and, in order to avoid compulsory redundancy if possible the Deputy Chief Executive recommends the Authority hold the £4.3m identified above in reserves at the start of the financial plan.

Members should bear in mind that reserves and balances should only be used to finance one-off expenditure. If such monies are used to fund ongoing revenue expenditure without taking action to reduce underlying expenditure, the Authority would find itself facing the same deficit in the next and future years but without reserves available to finance it. This is underlined by the District Auditor's 'Golden Rule' - that "one off" revenue reserves should not be used to support 'ongoing' revenue expenditure.

Review of Reserves and Balances

154. Members need to consider their strategy on reserves and balances in the light of the guidance from the Deputy Chief Executive.

(J) BUDGET TIMETABLE & RESOLUTION

155. There is a legal requirement for the Authority to set a balanced budget and decide its level of precept before 1st March 2015. The Authority meeting is now invited to:

- Confirm the financial plan set out in Appendix D, approve the budget requirement of £62.169m for 2015/16 as outlined in Appendix D.
- note that the Authority's council tax base for 2015/16 is 342,548.40, being the aggregate of the tax bases calculated by the Districts.
- approve the following amounts calculated in accordance with Sections 42a to 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-

Calculation of Aggregate Amounts Under Section 42a (2) and (3) of the Local Government Act 1992 (Updated in the Localism Act 2011)					
			Gross Expenditure 2015/16	Gross Income 2015/16	Estimate 2015/16
			£'000	£'000	£'000
(A)	sec 42 (2) (a)	Service Budget	69,593		69,593
(B)	sec 42 (3) (a)	Income		-6,195	-6,195
		Reserves Movement:			
(A)	sec 42 (2) (c)	Contribution to reserves	74		74
(B)	sec 42A (3) (a)	Contribution from reserves		-1,303	-1,303
		Budget Requirement	69,667	-7,498	62,169
(B)	sec 42A (3) (a)	Spending Funding Assessment		-37,004	-37,004
(B)	sec 42A (3) (a)	Local NNDR Estimate Adjustment		95	95
(B)	sec 42A (3) (a)	Collection Fund Deficit / (Suplus)		-778	-778
(C)	In accordance with Sec 42A (4), aggregate of (A) over (B)	Precept Requirement			24,482
		Tax Base			342,548.40
		Basic Tax Amount At Band 'D'			£71.47

156. The valuation bands calculated by the Authority in accordance with Section 47 (1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands:

2014/15	2015/16	Property Band		Increase	
	£			£	%
£46.71	£47.65	For properties in Band	A	0.94	2.01
£54.50	£55.59	For properties in Band	B	1.09	2.00
£62.28	£63.53	For properties in Band	C	1.25	2.01
£70.07	£71.47	For properties in Band	D	1.40	2.00
£85.64	£87.35	For properties in Band	E	1.71	2.00
£101.21	£103.23	For properties in Band	F	2.02	2.00
£116.78	£119.12	For properties in Band	G	2.34	2.00
£140.14	£142.94	For properties in Band	H	2.80	2.00

157. The Authority calculates the precept amounts payable by each constituent district council pursuant to Section 48 of the Act as follows:-

District	2015/16 Council Tax Taxbase
	£
LIVERPOOL	94,459.50
WIRRAL	89,344.90
ST.HELENS	47,808.00
SEFTON	78,319.00
KNOWSLEY	32,617.00
	342,548.40

158. The precept payments are to be made by 10 equal instalments on or before the following dates:-

21st April 2015
 29th May 2015
 6th July 2015
 11th August 2015
 17th September 2015
 23rd October 2015
 30th November 2015
 8th January 2016
 15th February 2016
 17th March 2016

Equality and Diversity Implications

159. Future reports on individual aspects of the savings required to balance the budget will be accompanied by EIAs.
160. The financial plan makes provision for the required investment to ensure the Authority meets and exceeds its Equality and Diversity requirements in addition to work carried out by all staff and teams.

Staff Implications

161. The relevant consultation will take place as and when the plans are drawn up to deliver the required staffing change to deliver the reduction in support staff and firefighters.

Legal Implications

162. The Authority must set a balanced budget and decide its level of precept before 1st March 2015.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

163. See Executive Summary

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

164. The budget and capital investment programme make large-scale investments in staff Health and Safety.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

165. To Achieve; Safer Stronger Communities - Safe Effective Firefighters. The proposed financial plan considers how best to allocate resources and deliver a balanced budget in light of the approved mission of the service and service priorities.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- CFO/011/14** "MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY BUDGET & FINANCIAL PLAN 2014/2015 – 2018/2019" AUTHORITY 27 FEBRUARY 2014.
- CFO/005/15** "FINANCIAL REVIEW REPORT 2014/15 APRIL TO DECEMBER REVIEW" AUTHORITY 26 FEBRUARY 2015

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

MFRS	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
CFR	Capital Financing Requirement – measures the amount of capital spending that has not yet been financed by capital receipts, capital grants or contributions from revenue income. It measures the underlying need to borrow for capital purpose, although this borrowing may not necessarily take place externally (use of available cash etc).
CSR07, 10, 13	Government comprehensive spending review to identify support for the public sector over 2 to 3 year period
MRP	MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION - An amount set aside from revenue towards the repayment of loan debt.
RESERVES	Amounts set aside to meet future contingencies but whose use does not affect the Authority's net expenditure in a given year. Appropriations to and from reserves may not be made directly from the revenue account.
UNSUPPORTED BORROWING	No Revenue Support Grant to cover the costs associated with borrowing and the Authority must earmark revenue funds to cover these costs.

DRAFT SUMMARY 2015/16 REVENUE BUDGET

	£'000
Fire Service	61,903
Corporate Management	546
Contingency for Pay/Price Changes	1,321
TOTAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE	63,770
Interest on Balances	-372
NET OPERATING EXPENDITURE	63,398
<u>Contribution to /(from) reserves</u>	
Cost Smoothing Reserve	-372
Capital Investment Reserve	-882
PFI Annuity Reserve	-49
Energy Reseve	74
Movement on reserves	-1,229
BUDGET REQUIREMENT	62,169
BUDGET FUNDING	
Government Funding / NNDR Top Up	-32,776
Local NNDR Forecast	-4,228
Local District BR adjustment	95
Collection Fund Bus Rates Deficit	235
Precept Income	-24,482
Collection Fund CT surplus	-1,013
	-62,169

DRAFT 2015/16 FIRE SERVICE BUDGET

		£'000
EMPLOYEES		
Uniformed		
Firefighters		32,682
Control		1,299
Additional Hours		1,265
	TOTAL UNIFORMED	35,246
APT&C and Manual		
APT&C		7,733
Handymen/Cleaning		288
Catering		106
Transport Maintenance		568
Other Manual		95
	TOTAL APT&C/MANUAL	8,790
Other Employee Expenses		
Allowances		61
Training Expenses & Other Expenses		584
Staff Advertising		15
Development Expenses		62
Employee Insurance		133
Enhanced pensions		52
SSP & SMP Reimbursements		-16
Catering Expenditure		113
HFRA Capitalisation Payroll		-730
	TOTAL OTHER EMPLOYEE EXPEND	274
Pensions		
Injury Pension		1,694
Ill Health Ret charges		174
	TOTAL PENSIONS	1,868
	TOTAL EMPLOYEES	46,178
PREMISES		
Building Maintenance Repairs		366
Site Maintenance Costs		179
Energy		767
Rent		74
Rates		1,195
Water		232
Fixtures		57
Contract Cleaning		153
Insurance		61
	TOTAL PREMISES	3,084
TRANSPORT		
Direct Transport		328
Tunnel Fees		29
Operating Lease		198
Other Transport Costs		497
Car Allowances		114
Insurance		344
	TOTAL TRANSPORT	1,510
SUPPLIES & SERVICES		
Administrative Supplies		32
Operational Supplies		288
Hydrants		20
Consumables		66
Training Supplies		146
Fire Prevention Supplies		135
Catering Supplies		27
Uniforms		328
Printing & Stationery		136
Operating Leases		2
Professional Fees/Service		1,095
Communications		697
Postage		30
Command/Control		11
Computing		335
Medicals		292
Travel & Subsistence		88
Grants/Subscriptions/Advertising		103
Furniture		34
Laundry		81
Insurances		46
	TOTAL SUPPLIES & SERVICES	3,992

DRAFT 2015/16 FIRE SERVICE BUDGET

		£'000
AGENCY SERVICES		
	Superannuation Fund Admin	73
	ICT Service Provider	1,388
	Third Party Payments (FSN)	195
	ICT Managed Suppliers	354
	PFI Unitary Charges ((Int/Principal/Op Costs)	2,663
	TOTAL AGENCY SERVICES	4,673
CENTRAL EXPENSES		
	Finance & Computing	453
	TOTAL CENTRAL EXPENSES	453
CAPITAL FINANCING		
	PWLB Debt Charges	6,150
	MRB Debt Charges	76
	Revenue Contribution to Capital	1,610
	TOTAL CAPITAL FINANCING	7,836
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	67,726
INCOME		
	Specific Grants	1,602
	PFI Grant	2,097
	Fees & Charges	881
	Rents etc	498
	Recharges Secondments	456
	Contributions	170
	Recharges Internal	114
	Other Income	5
	TOTAL INCOME	5,823
NET EXPENDITURE		61,903

DRAFT 2015/16 CORPORATE SERVICE BUDGET

		£'000
EXPENDITURE		
	Finance & Legal costs	
	Finance Officer	79
	Legal Officer	84
	Travel & Subsistence	46
	Conference fees	15
	Members Allowances	222
	Services	6
	Bank charges	17
	District Audit Fees	48
	Subscriptions	29
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	546

Glossary:

CT	Council Tax
NNDR	National Non-Domestic Rates
PFI	Private Finance Initiative
APT&C	Administrative, Professional Technical & Clerical
SSP/SMP	Statutory Sick Pay / Maternity Pay
HFRA	Home Fire Risk Assessment
PWLB	Public Works Loan Board
MRB	Merseyside Residuary Body

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OPS 003 Hydraulic Rescue Equipment £160,000 per year required in 17/18 and 18/19 to allow this to take place GFO/014/15 Appendix B1-B2

Required to allow routine replacement of existing Hydraulic cutting tools which will be at the end of their working life.

Existing hydraulic equipment will be becoming due for replacement in these years regardless of other considerations. However the service is continuing extended trials of battery powered hydraulic cutting tools. These have produced very positive results and the intention is to replace existing hydraulic tools which are powered by petrol driven power packs with more portable and more powerful battery operated units. These tools will be purchased as existing tools come to the end of their service life.

£160,000 will be required in 17/18 to allow purchase of new Hydraulic equipment

£160,000 will be required in 18/19 to allow purchase further Hydraulic equipment and to replace the majority of rechargeable batteries in use within the service

£80,000 will be required in 19/20 to allow for the final phase of Hydraulic equipment replacement.

OPS005 Resuscitation Equipment –£30,000 required to allow this to take place

Existing Oxygen cylinders carried on all appliances will require replacement as they will be 20 years old and it would be advisable to replace them. This will fit into an existing plan to update all resuscitation equipment carried on appliances in the same year to keep pace with advances in this field. Existing equipment will be over twelve years old by 19/20

OPS005 Defibrillator Batteries–£12,000 required to allow this to take place

Defibrillators are carried on all appliances and one is held on each MFRS site. All of these units will require replacement of their rechargeable batteries at this point.

OPS024 Telemetry Units - £45,000 required to allow this to take place

Replacement of all rechargeable batteries for Telemetry units and BA telemetry boards will be required in 18/19 as they only have a four year lifespan. This is a safety critical item and if the replacement is not carried out then the services Breathing Apparatus will become unusable.

OPS024 Handheld Radios - £15,000 required to allow this to take place

Replacement of Batteries for fire ground radios and restock radios. Fireground radios again require replacement batteries every three to four years to remain fully functional and reliable on the incident ground. A more regular replacement program will keep this vital piece of communications equipment operating effectively at all times.

OPS024 BA Test Rig - £12,000 required to allow this to take place

Existing Test rig is no longer manufactured and parts for it will cease to be available next year. It will be beyond economical repair by 18/19. It is a safety critical piece of equipment required to:

- Conduct tests as part of service investigations on any BA set that malfunctions.
- Acceptance test any BA set that is purchased or repaired.

OPS024 BA Oxygen booster pumps - £12,000 required to allow this to take place

There are five of these within the service required to charge the service's oxygen cylinders. The existing booster pumps will be approaching 20 years old and will require a major overhaul and where necessary complete replacement of some pumps. It is not economically viable to contract out charging of cylinders.

OPS024 BA Emergency supplementary air supply units & air line reducers & bandoliers - £45,000 required to allow this to take place

The Emergency supplementary air supply units carried on all appliances will be at the end of their usable life and therefore require replacement. They are risk critical items of equipment required to assist in rescuing firefighters trapped or in distress in irrespirable atmospheres.

Air Line reducers and bandoliers are required as part of the full decontamination procedure at present to allow decontamination operatives to conduct decontamination procedures and also to allow fire fighters requiring decontamination to be supplied with air for longer periods if required.

OPS049 – Bulk Foam Stock replacement - £70,000 required to allow this to take place

End of guaranteed life of existing bulk foam stock will be reached next year. Annual testing of stock will be required after this point to confirm it is still usable. It is anticipated that the majority of the stock will require replacing by this time.

OPS001 Gas Tight Suits -- £150,000 required to allow this to take place

The existing Treleborg VP1 GTS will be at the end of their guaranteed service life. The suits will be over ten years old and it would be advisable to replace the existing stock.

OPS005 Resuscitation Equipment - £30,000 required to allow this to take place

Resuscitation equipment will be over ten years old and will require replacement and update which will be synchronized with replacement of Oxygen cylinders to ensure that up to date resuscitation equipment is available for use by Operational crews.

OPS011 Thermal imaging Cameras £165,000 **required to allow this to take place 19/20**

This will be required as existing Scott eagle attack cameras will be at the end of their service life and will not be viable to keep. Significant advances are being made in thermal imaging camera technology and it would not be advisable to retain these cameras past their intended life as they provide a vital source of information on the incident ground.

OPS022 – Improvements to fleet required to allow this to take place 19/20

This is to continue a rolling program of work on existing fleet vehicles to retro fit advances and improvements identified by Ops Equipment and Service Workshops to keep appliances in line with the most up to date specification for front line fire appliances.

OPS025 Rope Replacement £35,000 **required to allow this to take place 19/20**

Required for routine replacement of ropes across service for Rope access gear and SRT equipment. This is required to allow the service to meet legal duties on replacement of ropes and to ensure this risk critical item is maintained to the highest standard.

OPS034 Op Ladders. amounts of £13,000 & £16,000 required alternating years to allow this to take place from 16/17 onwards

The service will be purchasing appliances every year for the foreseeable future. This funding will allow these appliances to be provided with new ladders as part of a planned replacement program. This will allow the oldest ladders from the existing stock to be taken out of service as some are now becoming uneconomical to repair due to age.

OPS039 Delivery Hose £10,000 per year in **required to allow this to take place in 18/19 and 19/20**

Anticipated replacement of sections of delivery hose stock due to age. This is a required replacement of stock at the end of its useable life.

OPS054 Electrical Equipment - £30,000 required to allow this to take place in 18/19

Required replacement of all rechargeable batteries on all non hydraulic cutting tools which will be at the end of their useable life. Following extensive trials the service is purchasing battery operated disc cutters and Reciprocating saws which will allow for faster entry to premises (Methods of Entry) and more effective working on the incident ground. These are powered by batteries with a finite lifespan.

2014/15 - 2018/19 SAVING PLAN

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
£6.300m Savings Phasing:					
<u>Back Office and Support Services</u>					
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) & Interest Payable on loans	-750	-850	-900	-900	-900
Non Employee Inflation	-50	-75	-125	-125	-125
Non Employee Budget review	-150	-275	-275	-275	-275
Assume ay restraint in 2015/16. Currently provision for 2% pay/ Assume 1%	0	-400	-500	-500	-500
Employee Vacancy / Incremental saving	-200	-200	-200	-200	-200
10% saving on Non Uniform Establishment	0	-450	-900	-900	-900
One-Off saving from discount on LGPS deficit payment if Authority pay 2014/15 - 2016/17 in April 2014	0	-78	-120	0	0
In the current plan £1.7m is required to balance 2014/15. By delivering some of the £6.3m ahead of schedule the amount of reserve drawdown can be reduced by £1.150m	1,150	0	0	0	0
<u>Operational Response</u>	0	-350	-3,000	-3,400	-3,400
<u>Required Smoothing Reserve</u>		-2,622	-280		
Phase A, Savings Profile:	0	-5,300	-6,300	-6,300	-6,300

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2015/16 - 2019/20 DRAFT MTFP

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
2014/2015 Approved Financial Plan	61,113	62,889	64,589	66,089	67,589
2015/16 Issues					
Increase in Sec 31 Grant for restricted NNDR increase	-77	-77	-77	-77	-77
New Sec 31 Grant to cover 2014/15 other NNDR adjustments (NNDR1 Part 1C In 25-29)increase in Autumn Statement	-190				
Adjust Planned Drawdown from smoothing Reserve?	1,323				
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) & Interest Payable on loans			250	500	750
2015/16 Financial Plan Net Expenditure Forecast	62,169	62,812	64,762	66,512	68,262
FUNDING					
Government Funding					
Baseline Funding					
Council Tax Benefit Grant					
Top Up Grant (Post 15/16 uplift by previous yr change)	-13,765	-14,027	-14,294	-14,566	-14,843
CLG Estimate of Local Business Rate Share (Post 15/16 uplift by previous yr change)	-4,228	-4,310	-4,394	-4,480	-4,568
Allocation Within Baseline Funding Level	-17,993	-18,337	-18,688	-19,046	-19,411
2011/12 Ctax Freeze Grant uplift by previous yr change	-282	-287	-292	-297	-302
Total Baseline Funding Level	-18,275	-18,624	-18,980	-19,343	-19,713
RSG					
2013/14 - 2015/16 RSG Grant	-18,336				
2016/17-2018/19 uplift by previous yr change (-17.5%)		-15,073	-12,391	-10,186	-8,373
2011/12 Ctax Freeze Grant uplift by previous yr change	-393	-385	-377	-369	-361
	-18,729	-15,458	-12,768	-10,555	-8,734
Settlement Funding Assessment	-37,004	-34,082	-31,748	-29,898	-28,447
Adjustment for Business Rate income forecast from Districts	95	0	0	0	0
NNDR Collection Fund (surplus)/deficit	235	0	0	0	0
Council Tax -					
Base Precept Income	-23,430	-24,482	-24,972	-25,471	-25,980
Council Tax Base (increase) / decrease	-572	0	0	0	0
Assume 2% rise 2013/14 to 2015/16	-480				
Assume 2% rise 2016/17 to 2019/20		-490	-499	-509	-520
Precept Income yield, rounding adjustment					
Council Tax Collection Fund (surplus)/deficit	-1,013				
Forecast Council Tax Income	-25,495	-24,972	-25,471	-25,980	-26,500
Updated Income Forecast	-62,169	-59,054	-57,219	-55,878	-54,947
Potential Future Saving Requirement	0	3,758	7,543	10,634	13,315

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 1,3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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