

<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>			
<b>MEETING OF THE:</b>	<b>POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>10 DECEMBER 2020</b>	<b>REPORT NO:</b>	<b>CFO/064/20</b>
<b>PRESENTING OFFICER</b>	<b>CHIEF FIRE OFFICER</b>		
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	<b>DEB APPLETON</b>	<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>DEB APPLETON</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>			
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>IRMP 2021/24 INITIAL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT</b>		

<b>APPENDICES:</b>	<b>APPENDIX A: IRMP PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT REPORT NOVEMBER 2020</b>
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### **Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Members of the outcomes of a public engagement exercise which will inform the development of the 2021/24 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) (Appendix A) and the process to be applied in the development of the plan.

### **Recommendation**

2. That Members note the content of this report.

### **Introduction and Background**

3. Members will be aware that the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2018 requires each Fire and Rescue Authority to produce an IRMP and each plan must:
  - reflect up to date risk analyses including an assessment of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the area of the authority;
  - demonstrate how prevention, protection and response activities will best be used to prevent fires and other incidents and mitigate the impact of identified risks on its communities, through authorities working either individually or collectively, in a way that makes best use of available resources;
  - outline required service delivery outcomes including the allocation of resources for the mitigation of risks;
  - set out its management strategy and risk-based programme for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in accordance with the principles of better regulation set out in the Statutory Code of Compliance for Regulators, and the Enforcement Concordat;
  - cover at least a three-year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as it is necessary to ensure that the authority is able to deliver the requirements set out in this Framework;

- reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies and partners; and
  - be easily accessible and publicly available.
4. In July 2019, the Authority approved a two year IRMP Supplement that extended the previous 2017/20 IRMP. That Supplement is due to end in July 2021 and the process for developing a replacement has begun. Members will recall that potential areas for initial public engagement were discussed at the Members' Strategy Day in September. These ideas were then discussed with members of the public at online forums in October and November fulfilling the National Framework requirement to engage people in the development of the IRMP at a formative stage.
5. As has been the case for a number of years, five forums were held (one for each local authority area) and these were facilitated by Opinion Research Services. The attendees were a mix of people who had previously taken part and those newly recruited through random direct dialling to achieve a demographically mixed group of participants.
6. The attendees were provided with background information about the Authority and Service, introduced to the way in which Risk, Demand and Vulnerability are considered by the Authority when planning services for the future and invited to review the previously agreed Planning Principles (which were themselves the product of earlier engagement and consultation), before being asked to give their opinions on a number of areas under consideration for inclusion in the new IRMP. The participants were invited to ask questions at all stages and to vote on a number of Zoom polls throughout the evening. Participants were informed that if possible and financially viable, MFRS is considering:
- Maintaining 642 firefighters as a minimum, while increasing its retained capabilities;
  - Increasing its diversity through continued 'positive action' recruitment, so its staff reflect the communities it serves;
  - Directing its Prevention activity toward the areas of highest deprivation and the most vulnerable;
  - Increasing the number of Protection officers in light of Grenfell Tower Inquiry and recommendations;
  - Aiming to increase its resilience (by increasing the number of fire engines if possible), for example by introducing innovative duty systems such as Hybrid Stations;
  - Enhancing its specialist and non-specialist capabilities for terrorist incidents and providing additional kit and equipment to firefighters;

- Ensuring its specialist capabilities reflect foreseeable risk and are located/deployed based on that risk;
- Assisting the ambulance service when it is facing a surge in demand, like that experienced through the pandemic (whilst maintaining response to fires/other emergencies); and
- Enhancing firefighter training (in relation to, for example, high rise incidents, terrorist attacks, marine response, Emergency Medical Response, flooding and wildfire etc.) by building a new training facility that is fit for purpose and reflects new/emerging foreseeable risk.

7. The summary of outcomes can be found below, with the full report available at Appendix A.

### **There was support for MFRS factoring risk, demand and vulnerability into the way it uses its resources**

While there was strong support for MFRS factoring risk, demand and vulnerability into the way it uses its resources, concerns were expressed that:

- Resourcing to risk and demand could leave lower risk/demand areas without adequate fire and rescue cover;
- Relying too heavily on patterns of demand could prove dangerous given how changeable they are;
- Vulnerability is not a particularly easy metric to define, quantify or mitigate against; and
- The burden of identifying vulnerability should not fall solely on MFRS, but should be done in partnership with others.

There was, though, a great deal of trust generally that MFRS would: ensure proper levels of cover across all of its area; ensure it is properly monitoring demand patterns and resource accordingly; and work with its partner agencies to improve the safety and wellbeing of those with vulnerabilities.

Participants were asked to give their views on which of the three factors discussed - risk, demand and vulnerability - are most important for MFRS to consider. A majority felt they are all equally important.

### **MFRS's Planning Principles were largely considered appropriate, but there was support for a couple of 'tweaks'**

The general consensus was that MFRS's 'Planning Principles' remain appropriate, but there was support for amending that which reads 'keep fire stations open using different duty systems rather than close stations' (no-one agreed that it is never acceptable to close and/or merge stations and there was strong support for doing so in the event that response times can be improved or maintained).

Participants also agreed to the inclusion of a principle around Protection given the forthcoming necessary increased focus on it as a result of the Grenfell Tower inquiry and recommendations – and for amending that which currently supports proposals for MFRS to respond along with NWS to Cardiac Arrest incidents with ‘the public and Fire Authority would support MFRS assisting the ambulance service when it is facing a surge in demand, like that experienced through the pandemic (whilst maintaining response to fires/other emergencies)’.

### **Prevention, Protection, Response and Firefighter training were all considered important – but Response most so**

When asked to rank MFRS’s four main areas of activity (Prevention, Protection, Response and Firefighter Training) from 1 to 4 (with 1 being most important and 4 least important), Response was rated highest, with Firefighter Training only slightly behind in second place. Prevention was ranked third, with Protection fourth. The fact that all four areas received an average ranking of under three demonstrates, however, that none were considered unimportant.

### **MFRS’s ‘proposals’ were supported**

There was widespread support for all of MFRS’s suggested IRMP ‘proposals’ [initial ideas rather than formal proposals].

8. Following the receipt of this report and the support it provides for the Authority’s approach to the IRMP and the areas that it is considering as it developing its proposal, a draft IRMP is currently being prepared. This will be discussed with Members at the Budget Strategy Day in January 2021, with a final draft IRMP being presented to the Budget Authority meeting in February. This draft will be subject to twelve week’s stakeholder consultation and a final IRMP will be presented to Authority in late June or early July.

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### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

9. An equality impact assessment will be developed alongside the draft IRMP.

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### **Staff Implications**

10. Staff will invited to comment on the IRMP during the twelve week consultation process for the draft plan.

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### **Legal Implications**

11. The Authority is required to publish an IRMP as detailed in paragraph 3 and engagement and consultation is required as part of that process,.

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

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12. The IRMP is clearly linked to the Authority's budget in that the proposals contained within the plan must be affordable. The 2021/22 budget settlement will impact on the content of the IRMP and the latter will be considered alongside the Medium Term Financial Plan at the February Budget Authority meeting.
  13. The Government has stated the 2021/22 funding settlement will only be a one year announcement this means funding beyond 2021/22 remains uncertain. This makes planning beyond 2021/22 more challenging as the level of funding and therefore available resources is unknown. The Government have said the 2021 CSR will provide a multi-year (3 year settlement).

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

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14. The assessment of risk is a key part of the preparation of the IRMP and health and safety and Environmental implications are also considered as part fo the planning process.

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

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15. The IRMP is the key document that sets out how the Authority will deliver services to the community.

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### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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### **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

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