

# Equality Impact Assessment

<b>Title of policy/report/project:</b>	<b>Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2021 -2024 Draft EIA</b>
<b>Department:</b>	<b>Strategy and Performance</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>February 2021</b>
<b>Completed by:</b>	<b>Deb Appleton and Michelle Kirk</b>

## **1: What are the main aims and objectives outlined in the functional plan and are any of them in your opinion Positive / Negative or Neutral in relation to those protected groups outlined in section 6 below**

The key proposals in the IRMP 2021/24 are listed below and are the basis for the completion of this EIA. This EIA sets out to review the proposals to ascertain their impact in relation to our Diverse communities in Merseyside and specifically how the proposals affect the fire and rescue services we deliver to those communities Positively, Negatively or Neutrally. There will be separate EIA's carried out in relation to any of the proposals below that may have the potential to impact staff in terms of equality.

We will continue to review and monitor any potential opportunities for equalities impacts.

Alternative 2021-2024 Supplement Plans

- **Emergency Response**

### **Fire Engines and Firefighters**

We propose to improve our emergency response and resilience by increasing our fire appliances from 29 (plus the Special Rescue Appliance) to 31 (plus the Special Rescue Appliance) through the expansion of the Hybrid Duty system.

We plan to:

- Introduce a Hybrid duty system at Kirkdale fire station
- Combine the stations at Aintree and Croxteth fire stations to create a superstation (Hybrid/Specialist Rescue station)
- Creation of a new £25m state of the art Training Development Academy which will include a secondary control room and National Resilience Centre of Excellence.
- Combine the duty systems at Liverpool City and Kensington fire stations to create a Dual Station Hybrid – including a Specialist Command and Control function and improved Ariel (Combined Platform Ladder) capability
- Introduce a Stinger/Scorpion Fire Engine at St Helens which would be staffed on a Day Crewed / Retained basis – making it available immediately or on retained.
- Combining the duty systems at Liverpool City and Kensington to create a Dual Station Hybrid – incorporating A Specialist Command and Control function and improved Ariel (Combined Platform Ladder) capability.
- Creating specialist capabilities at stations – Liverpool City, Wallasey, St. Helens, Long Lane, Kirkdale, Belle Vale, Heswall and Formby
- Base aerial appliances at Liverpool City, Southport, Saughall Massey and St Helens
- Further develop our drone capability as proposed in our previous plan
- Continue to assist the ambulance service when facing a surge in demand, like that experienced through the Covid pandemic (whilst maintaining response to fires/other emergencies).
- Given the training demands anticipated when moving to introduce a specialist teams model we would create a non-established 32<sup>nd</sup> fire engine to offset the impacts of the changes.
- Explore different duty systems/approaches

## EQUALITY IMPACT

The proposed changes are considered to have a **positive impact** on the communities of Merseyside as there is an increase in fire and rescue coverage.

The redistribution of specialist appliances will help us to deal more efficiently and effectively to emergencies in areas where there is a likelihood of a particular risk occurring e.g. there are more high rise buildings in Liverpool, so it makes sense to locate a longer aerial appliance there. Training our staff in the use of specialist equipment will have a positive impact on their development as it will build skills and confidence in delivering a service which is effective in meeting the need of all the communities we serve.

The introduction of the Hybrid Model Duty System at Kirkdale increases the ability for MFRS to provide resilience and response in areas of high deprivation. This innovative duty system allows a flexible working approach for the staff that work within the system and allows the MFRS to have more resources to call upon when needed at busy times or when we are dealing with a major incident. A further EIA is to be completed around the equality impact on staff.

The introduction of the stinger/scorpion and the 32<sup>nd</sup> additional appliance will have the potential to provide a greater rescue and response service to the diverse communities and businesses of Merseyside.

The introduction of the 32<sup>nd</sup> appliance will have a positive impact on Firefighters as it opens up the opportunity to explore different flexible and family friendly duty systems.

The creation of a new superstation will have a positive impact for both staff and communities. The proposed new site is well located to highway networks with ease to major trunk roads. Our research shows that relocating the two stations will actually improve our response time to emergencies in the Croxteth and Aintree areas.

The proposal of a new Training and Development Academy and development of a centre of excellence will have a positive impact allowing MFRS to expand and increase training and provide modern facilities with accommodation and facilities appropriate for all. This will allow staff to be well trained, developed and empowered to deliver our services.

The new builds will be designed in accordance with building regulations. A further EIA will be completed to ensure the builds are fit for purpose, fully accessible to end users and visitors who may require disabled access, suitable for those who wish to practise their faith and facilitate nursing mothers etc.

Working with North West Ambulance Service to develop an Integrated Demand Management Programme will have a positive impact on all communities. This is a development on our previous IRMP action to enter into Emergency Medical Response alongside the Ambulance Service. Our collaborative work during the Covid 19 pandemic has recognised by the HMICFRS.

- **Prevention**

- Continue with our person-focused approach to Home Safety – targeting those over 65 and the most vulnerable due to socio-economic deprivation in Merseyside – knowing that smoke alarm ownership has diminished in these areas.
- Complete over 50,000 homes safety visits per year (150,000 in total over the life of this Plan)
  
- 10,000 Safe and Well Visits per year (30,000 in total over the life of this Plan)
- Reach 6,000 (10%) of homes in the highest deprived neighbourhoods using targeted campaigns based on analysis of accidental and fatal fires data in addition to the Index of Deprivation 2019 which identifies the areas of highest poverty and deprivation.
- We will renew our focus on working with the Registered and Private Rented Housing Sector to help us identify those most in need, as well as those aged over 65.
- Recruit Prevention staff who truly reflect the diverse communities we serve so we can fully understand and address the inequalities that exist.
- Our fire stations and Prevention teams will be joined by staff from all departments to take an organisation-wide approach to monthly themed monthly Community Safety campaigns that help us interact with large numbers of people, often working with partner organisations too.

## **EQUALITY IMPACT**

The proposals are considered to have a **positive impact** on the diverse communities of Merseyside as they are aimed at mitigating both current and future community risk identified and improving our prevention work in the community, by targeting our services at the most vulnerable residents.

The commitment to Home Safety Visits and Safe and Well visits will have a positive impact in supporting those who are most vulnerable within our communities. Especially as the Covid 19 pandemic has identified more vulnerable people e.g. those “clinically vulnerable or shielding” or whose circumstances (e.g. redundancy) have led to them becoming more disadvantaged.

The use of Positive Action to recruit Prevention staff will be an opportunity to increase the diversity of the workforce. The proposals are considered to have a positive impact on diverse business communities and the wider communities of Merseyside. The additional resources will assist with the delivery of Home Fire Safety and Fire Protection strategy.

Community Safety campaigns will have a positive impact on all communities and will allow staff to proactively and positively deliver fire safety education to diverse and vulnerable communities and embrace cultural differences.

### **Protection**

- We will increase the number of protection officers (temporary) from 642-646 to ensure delivery of our Risk Based Inspection Programme. In the longer term we would like to make these new Protection Officer roles permanent.
- Visit every high and high risk premises (7500 over the life of the plan)
- Our firefighters will complete 6336 Medium to low risk visits
- Introduce a new fully functioning Management Information System which links the areas of Protection, the Firefighter Safety with Prevention activity
- Introduce mobile / Agile working for staff
- Deliver a full response to Grenfell Tower Fire Inquiry recommendations
- Introduce a new Management Information System that links the areas of Protection, Firefighter Safety and Prevention activity and keeps all our risk information in one place
- Increase mobile/agile working for staff
- Fire Safety Inspectors will visit every registered Petroleum storage site in Merseyside.
- Monitor and assess all applications for new Explosive Storage Licences as well as responding to complaints received relating to any of these sites.

### **EQUALITY IMPACT**

The proposals set out in this section are considered to have a **positive impact** as they have the potential to provide a greater Protection service to the diverse communities and businesses of Merseyside, this will help the current work around” Engaging Diverse Businesses” which is a programme of work designed to ensure diverse businesses are supported with Fire safety.

The use of Positive Action to recruit additional Prevention Officers will be an opportunity to increase the diversity of the Prevention workforce.

The introduction of Agile/flexible working will have a positive impact on staff. It has the potential to offer an improved work-life balance which could be a benefit to parents and those with caring responsibilities

The innovative use of new technology will have the potential to provide a greater rescue and response service to the Diverse Communities of Merseyside through sharing of available intelligence about risks and hazards.

A full response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry will have a positive approach to improving public safety

### **Preparedness**

- Continue working with Blue Light partners to support them and improve services to the public whilst maintaining our response to fires and other emergencies
- Continue to review how up to date operational risk information is gathered and provided to operational staff at incidents and how this can be shared with other fire and rescue services across borders so we can work together effectively
- Provide the most up to date kit and equipment to firefighters to keep them safe whilst making sure that we have the right type of fire engines and other emergency appliances to deal with the risks we have identified.
- Make sure that staff know how to command incidents assertively, effectively and safely at incidents. This includes comprehensive training and exercising against all foreseeable risk, including high rise incidents, terrorist attacks, marine response, emergency medical response, flooding and wildfire incidents which will enable us to continue to adapt to an ever changing environment.
- Prepare our fleet of vehicles for a move to alternative fuels
- Introduce ways of staffing our Fire Control that reflects the demands on the service, increases the resilience of the team and enhances development opportunities for staff

### **EQUALITY IMPACT**

The proposed changes are considered to have a **positive impact** on the diverse communities of Merseyside

Our Blue Light partnership work will positively support and improve services to the public whilst maintaining our response to fires and other emergencies.

Ensuring appliances, vehicles, equipment and PPE introduced into the Service are fit for purpose will provide best value and meet the needs of the diverse communities of Merseyside.

A review of Fire Control will have a positive impact on staff development with the introduction of new flexible roles within fire control in addition to Crew Manager Development roles and long term aspiration to open up more career pathways towards senior management.

### **National Resilience**

We want to:

- Ensure National Resilience capabilities are available and fit for purpose through our assurance process. This includes visits to all fire and rescue services where National Resilience assets are based, large scale exercises and training
- Support the Government's plans to refresh the National Resilience Assets

### **EQUALITY IMPACT**

The proposed changes are considered to have a **positive impact** on the communities of Merseyside and beyond.

Comprehensive training and exercises against all risks will meet the needs of our local and national communities.

#### Finance

To be completed when budget details are approved

### 2: Who will be affected by the objectives proposed in the Functional plan and will this be Negative /Neutral or Positive?

MFRS services are intended to benefit all; the staff of MFRS, partners and members of the community. In relation to responding to emergencies, preventing emergencies and protecting the public, and supporting and developing our staff. Through the IRMP we plan and maintain our service to the public, and in particular continue to target the more vulnerable members of our communities through our prevention and protection work.

In addition:

- All Communities of 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 Functional Plan. 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?

10-year performance report

Performance Indicator Data, Incident Mapping.  
Reports cover range of topics including: Incidents, Mobilisations, Fatalities, Injuries, Temporal and Geographic analysis

Performance data

Performance Indicator Data, Incident Mapping, Home Office Benchmarking Data, Station Planning Performance, Exception Reports, Functional Plans

Fatality BI reports

Annual reports that analyse data in relation to fire deaths, both reports analyse the circumstances of the deaths and cross matches

Mapping	Ordnance Survey mapping layers. Pin pointing of locations of where incidents took place. Thematic mapping of topics from deprivation to age profiles
Knowing our communities	Analysis and mapping of Protected Characteristic data (ONS, Google, CLG) broken down into districts including: age, gender, race, Deprivation etc.) As well as internal HFSC and incident data.
Staff data	Public Sector Equality Duty reporting
MFRS Fatal Fires Report	Data published as part of our Public Sector Equality Duty
	Annual and 15 year reports exploring the analysis of fatalities in accidental dwelling fires.

#### 4: Research

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

What research have you considered?	What did it show?
<p>Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004 and National Fire and Rescue Framework 2012</p> <p>Appropriate legislation as it applies to the Fire and Rescue Service E.g. Equality Act 2010</p> <p>Previous MFRA EIAs carried out Key Policies</p> <p>Extensive work was completed around the National Security Risk Register – Community Risk Register – Local Resilience Forum in the Merseyside Community Risk Register: <a href="https://www.merseysideprepared.org.uk/">https://www.merseysideprepared.org.uk/</a></p>	<p>Establishes the powers and duties of the FRS and sets out the requirement to undertake an IRMP and what needs to be covered.</p> <p>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</p> <p>Helps 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.</p>

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## 5. Consultation

*Summarise any consultation you have had ,when developing the Functional plan , with any protected groups (listed in 6 below) both internally and externally to the organisation about how the Functional plan objectives might impact them either positively or negatively or natural*

Public engagement meetings commenced in Autumn 2020 to enable the public to shape the proposals for change as a result of the funding cuts from government.

The main findings of the public engagement meetings were:

- There was support for the MFRS factoring risk, demand and vulnerability into the way it uses its resources
- MFRS’s previous actions were considered reasonable
- MFRS’s Planning Principles were largely considered to be appropriate, but there was support for a couple of ‘tweaks’
- Prevention, Protection, Response and Firefighter Training were all thought to be important – but Response most so
- There was strong support for MFRS’s proposals

We will consult on this draft Plan for 12 weeks from 1st March to 24th May 2021. We are aware that the Covid 19 pandemic has curtailed our face to face consultations however we used Zoom for consultation in October 2020 and this was successful, so we are confident in using this method again.

This consultation will involve sending the Plan to fire and rescue services, representative bodies (Fire Officers Association, Fire Brigades Union, Unison, Unite Merseyside councils, Merseyside Police and North West Ambulance Service as well as libraries and one stop shops. An online survey will be available for all stakeholders.

## 6. Conclusions - Provide any conclusions ascertained from section 2 to 5 above about the equality Impacts for each protected group – Describe the impact in terms of Negative, Positive or neutral.

(a) Age



**POSITIVE IMPACT**

People in this group are likely to fall into our vulnerable category. The number of people aged over 65 is increasing significantly across Merseyside. People are living longer but live with poor health for longer. Young people are more likely to be involved in fires relating to anti-social behaviour.

Our targeted prevention activity, youth engagement and increase in response is aimed at protecting vulnerable residents including this group.

There is nothing to indicate that the actions within this plan would have a detrimental impact on people with this protected characteristic

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

Living with a disability may increase the chances of experiencing poor health and social isolation.

**POSITIVE IMPACT**

People in this group are likely to fall into our vulnerable category. Our targeted prevention activity and increase in response is aimed at protecting vulnerable residents including this group. The new build project will consider disability access requirements.

There is nothing to indicate that the actions within this plan would have a detrimental impact on people with this protected characteristic

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

**POSITIVE IMPACT**

Areas within Merseyside with higher levels of social deprivation and diversity in relation to Race identified by our Community Profile maps will benefit from increase in response and prevention activity.

The increase in resources around Prevention and Protection staff will be an opportunity to increase the diversity of the workforce through our positive action programmes. These target under representative groups which include Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority groups.

There is nothing to indicate that the actions within this plan would have a detrimental impact on people with this protected characteristic

**(d) Religion or Belief**

**POSITIVE IMPACT**

The new build project will consider facilities to practice religion or belief.

There is nothing to indicate that the actions within this plan would have a detrimental impact on people with this protected characteristic

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

**POSITIVE IMPACT**

The increase of Prevention and Protection staff will be an opportunity to improve the diversity of the workforce through our positive action programmes. These target under representative groups which include Female Firefighters.

The introduction of the 32nd appliance will have a positive impact on our firefighters as it opens up the opportunity to explore different flexible and family friendly duty systems.

The new build project will consider accommodation and facilities that are appropriate for all.

There is nothing to indicate that the actions within this plan would have a detrimental impact on people with this protected characteristic.

#### **(f) Sexual Orientation**

##### **POSITIVE IMPACT**

The new build project will consider accommodation and facilities that are appropriate for all irrespective of their sexual orientation

There is nothing to indicate that the actions within this plan would have a detrimental impact on people with this protected characteristic.

#### **(g) Socio-economic disadvantage**

##### **POSITIVE IMPACT**

An increase in response and protection resources will no doubt have a positive impact on the delivery of our Fire and Rescue Service which does have a focus on the risks of fire for this particular protected group. The additional resources will assist with the delivery of Home Fire Safety and Fire Protection strategy.

There is nothing to indicate that the actions within this plan would have a detrimental impact on people with this protected characteristic.

### **7. Taking into account the information contained in the sections above what are the final Outcomes and Decisions**

*If the Functional plan or any of its objectives will have the potential to have a negative impact on members of one or more of the protected groups, explain how this will be managed or mitigated or justified as being an appropriate and necessary means of achieving the legitimate aims set out in your plan*

The information provided in this EIA explain the ways in which different protected groups may be affected by the aims and objectives set out in the IRMP.

It is believed that the proposals that are contained within the IRMP offer the best service provision in the circumstances.

MFRS 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.

This is a draft EIA that will be added to during the consultation period for the IRMP.

## 8. Equality Improvement Plan

The following activities have been identified by the Equality and Diversity Advisor as part of the EIA reviewing and signing off process. They will assist with the improving the implantation of the IRMP, ensuring that Equality Impacts are assessed and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

1. For each of the proposals outlined in the IRMP the Proposal owners should carry out their own EIA (in consultation with the Diversity Team). EIAs should take into account the feedback received from consultation on the IRMP and assess whether further consultation with different protected groups would assist in establishing any equality impacts (positive/ negative /neutral) in relation to protected groups as a result of carrying out or not carrying out the Proposals. This should include consultation with Staff Networks (LGBTQI+, Gender and BAME) and the Representative Bodies. The EIA should be completed using the feedback and any relevant equality monitoring data and research to assess potential impacts **before** any proposals are fully implemented.

### **ACTION: ALL Proposal Owners**

Future Consultation on the IRMP should consider whether wider groups of Protected groups can be engaged with (specifically those at risk - over 65's by protected group, BME businesses and BME and minority groups). Knowing Your Communities and Partnership work streams will assist with this. It is important to ensure that the IRMP reaches those groups who are in the minority to establish if there are any equality issues both positive and negative to be considered when developing our services.

### **ACTION: Director of Strategy and Performance**

## 9. Equality & Diversity Sign Off

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

Signed off by: **Currently in draft**

Equality & Diversity Advisor

Date:

Comments:

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

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