

## MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	30 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2021	REPORT NO:	CFO/040/21
PRESENTING OFFICER:	CFO GARRIGAN		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DCFO SEARLE	REPORT AUTHOR:	AM MURPHY/GM BEN RYDER
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STEWART WOODS, RIA GROVES, DEB APPLETON STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM		
TITLE OF REPORT:	STATION 18 & 19 MERGER LONG LANE SITE		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX 'A'	STATION CHANGE METHODOLOGY (RESPOL07)
	APPENDIX 'B'	IRMP 2021-24 RESPONSE PROPOSALS
	APPENDIX 'C'	EIA LONG LANE PROJECT
	APPENDIX 'D'	DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

### Purpose of Report

1. To request that MFRA Members, consider the content of this report and approve the commencement of public consultation on the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) proposal to merge Aintree and Croxteth Fire Stations (Stn 18 and 19), creating a new multi pump superstation as part of the development of a state of the art Training and Development Academy on Long Lane, Aintree, Liverpool.
2. These specific IRMP proposals are subject to a twelve-week period of public consultation to commence with effect from 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021. This is in addition to the twelve-week consultation period for the IRMP which ended on 24<sup>th</sup> May.
3. Members should note that this consultation relates to the operational response impact of the proposed merger in the context of the associated enhanced training opportunities offered by the overall development it does not replace any consultation relating to any future planning application.

### Recommendation

4. That Members;
  - a) Approve a twelve-week period of public consultation (to commence with effect from 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021) regarding the proposal to merge Aintree and Croxteth Fire Stations, in order to create a new multi pump superstation and state of the art Training and Development Academy on Long Lane, Aintree, Liverpool (which is subject to Authority approval).

- b) Support the proposal of the proposed merger of Aintree and Croxteth Fire Stations and the subsequent re-designation of appliances outlined in the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2021-24. This IRMP proposal will increase the number of fire appliances available across Merseyside. The IRMP is the subject of a separate report on this agenda.
- c) Note that following the conclusion of the public consultation process a further report will be submitted to the Authority which will detail the outcomes of the consultation process.

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## **Introduction and Background**

- 5. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service's leadership message has shifted turning austerity into aspiration and the burning platform of budget cuts and restraints into a burning ambition to be the best fire and rescue service in the UK.
- 6. In order to build upon our lead Authority status for National Resilience the Service has put forward it's most challenging forward thinking IRMP to date.
- 7. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service's IRMP 2021-24 states that: 'We propose to build a new state of the art Training and Development Academy which will allow us to expand and increase our training, with the potential to become a centre of excellence for national training. As part of that project, we also want to create a new station to replace two fire stations that are reaching the end of their useful life whilst securing an improvement in our response times.
- 8. The station merger consultation is an important element of a much broader project. One that MFRS have a huge amount of experience in, having successfully delivered a number of station merger projects in Knowsley, Wirral and St. Helens. This pioneering project will exponentially improve how we train our staff and colleagues from around the country. The project is both ambitious and forward thinking and this has been recognised by Home Office who have committed to being part of the project whilst enhancing our already positive relationship with a lead government department.
- 9. In this case the station merger involves closing Aintree and Croxteth Fire stations and opening a new state of the art Fire Station on Long Lane, Aintree, Liverpool. This site is almost equi-distant between the existing stations and is close to optimum in its location in order to improve our response standards to life risk incidents.
- 10. The Service continues to improve its emergency response and resilience, through innovation and prudent financial planning, to achieve this the Authority's IRMP supplement 2019-20 invested £1m back into the front line.
- 11. This investment has created a catalyst for change and the draft IRMP 2021-24 proposals are based on a robust risk methodology designed to further improve the Service based on the risk, demand and vulnerability in Merseyside.

12. The IRMP 2021-24 proposals will help MFRA deal more efficiently and effectively with risk. In essence, the move to a 12-acre site at Long Lane will enable MFRS to replace two very old fire stations along with an outdated training centre which is now unable to meet the demands of a modern fire and rescue service. MFRS proposes to replace these three locations with new facilities at one site designed to support and develop MFRS staff and the communities they serve. The proposals are based upon the purchase of a new site which would be subject to the Fire Authority approval and the closure of the two existing fire stations

### **The Existing Sites**

13. Station 18, Aintree Fire Station, opened on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1926 and although the Service's Estates Team have worked hard to modernise the site, the building is not capable of offering our staff or communities the facilities they require. The site is not fully accessible to all and doesn't provide the necessary facilities for a diverse workforce or community use.
14. Station 19, Croxteth Fire Station, opened on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1962. The site has been renovated to house the Search and Rescue Team (SRT) and North West Ambulance Service's Hazardous Area Response Team. Similar to Aintree the site is not fully accessible to all, does not offer a community room and is not suitable or of sufficient size to host SRT and HART. This is further evidenced through HART not being able to meet audit requirements as defined by National Ambulance Resilience Unit (NARU).
15. The Training and Development Academy opened on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1967 and has been redeveloped, most notably in 1999/2000, in order to keep up with the demands of a modern fire and rescue service. MFRS have outgrown the site which is landlocked and which significantly restricts MFRS's ability to develop training facilities in line with the risk our fire-fighters face locally, nationally or internationally. This information is included for context only as the public consultation is only relating to the closure of the two existing stations and building of a new station, not the proposed TDA redevelopment.
16. The Service has recently commissioned an Access and Inclusion Audit. The audit is being conducted by Wilkinson Cowan with an audit being completed at every site across MFRA's estate. The audit of Aintree, Croxteth and the TDA is not yet available but given that the sites are amongst the oldest MFRS have they will require a significant financial investment to bring them up to a basic minimum requirement.

### **Review of Other Potential Sites**

17. The review of potential sites was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 looked at creating a combined site at various locations in Knowsley with the majority located just off the East Lancashire Road.
18. Phase 2 involved the Service instructing Eddisons Estate Agents to consider sites within a 5 mile range of the ideal location for a merged station.

## Phase 1

19. Potential sites looked at included: Alchemy Way, Moorgate Road, Ormskirk Road, Scottish Power site and Valley Road. The location of these sites provided 3 possible options in regard to how MFRS could approach a station merger including:

- Option 1 – close Kirkby, Aintree and Croxteth
- Option 2 – close Kirkby and Aintree
- Option 3 – close Kirkby and Croxteth

20. The sites that had been identified as being potentially suitable for the proposed development were subsequently found unsuitable when further enquiries were made. As detailed in the table below:

### Map available in Appendix

Site Name	Reason Rejected
Alchemy Way	Not of suitable size for the project.
Moorgate Road / Dairy Crest	Not available for purchase.
Ormskirk Road	The developer was reluctant to sell and also wanted to design and build.
Scottish Power site	Not available for purchase.
Valley Road	Green belt land and the topography, including, electricity pylons made the site unsuitable.

21. The Kirkby area was initially considered as a location for the proposed merger, however given issues with procuring suitable and available land the decision was taken to instruct Eddisons Estate Agents to identify potential sites within a 5 mile range of the ideal location for a station merger.

## Phase 2

22. The second phase identified a number of potential sites and rated them in terms of suitability.

### Map available in Appendix

Site Name	Viability of Site
Stopgate Lane	Outside of Merseyside
Atlantic Park	The developer was reluctant to sell and preferred a lease option with potential restrictions on the design.
Ormskirk Road	The developer was reluctant to sell and also wanted to design and build.
Pighue Lane	Not of suitable size for the project.
<b>Long Lane</b>	<b>Most viable option, officers to explore in more detail.</b>

23. It was clear that the Long Lane site was the optimum option available and officers progressed with further analysis of the site and its viability to meet the needs of the Authority's IRMP.

24. The 12-acre site at Long Lane, Aintree, Liverpool is large enough to build a Specialist Rescue Station and new Training and Development Academy inclusive of a National Resilience Centre of Excellence, whilst continuing to collaborate with other blue light partners. This site is also predicted to improve our response times to emergencies.
25. Research<sup>i</sup> shows us that the average response time from the new station location would improve our performance when attending Life Risk Incidents across Merseyside.

KPI	IRMP Supplement 2019/21 <sup>ii</sup>		Proposed Long Lane Site	
	Overall Performance	Average Response Time	Overall Performance	Average Response Time
<b>Performance<sup>iii</sup> (%)</b>	93.70%	00:05:52	93.90%	00:05:50

Modelling was completed using resource modelling software called FIRS. The system models change: to station locations, mergers, shift patterns and utilises a minimum of 3 years of incident data to model results.

This is based on: 16 Whole-time (WT) appliances, 4 LLAR appliances, 6 Day Crewed appliances and 3 Whole-time Retained (WTR) appliances

<sup>1</sup> Key Performance Indicator TR08: Attendance Standard - The first attendance of an appliance at all life risk incidents in 10 minutes. Based on Alert to Attendance Times. Life Risk incidents include: Dwelling Fires, Non Domestic Fires, Road Traffic Collisions, Hazmat, Water Rescue and other incidents to involve rescue.

### **Station Change Methodology**

26. The Service has a robust station change methodology for managing the station merger process. The methodology is predicated on MFRA's experience in delivering successful station mergers in Knowsley, Wirral and St. Helens and is captured in Service Policy (Appendix 'A' - RESPOL07).
27. In order to achieve the most efficient and effective operational response the Service utilises a system called Fire Incident Response Simulator (FIRS). FIRS is an evidenced based toolset from Process Evolution. Process Evolution is a consulting-led company that helps Emergency Services manage their demand in a more efficient and effective way.
28. Their work is underpinned by an evidence-based toolset which helps MFRA to optimise where, when and how resources are deployed. To achieve this FIRS is loaded with:
  - 3 years incident data including appliance mobilisation times
  - 3 years appliance off-the-run data
  - Locations of stations and appliances
  - Key stations are identified
  - Station boundaries
  - Appliance/crewing shift patterns
  - Time travel matrix
  - Response Standard

29. In addition to the above datasets, FIRS also integrates with Maptitude mapping software and Simul8. Simul8 is the tool that runs the simulations and algorithms to predict future performance. IRMP 2021-24 response proposals are provided in a separate report on this agenda.

### **Response Time Analysis**

30. The Service has utilised RouteFinder software to simulate the response time to each Life Risk incident during 2019/20 from the proposed site on Long Lane to incidents within the existing Aintree and Croxteth station areas only.

**Average Response Times – Current and from RouteFinder**

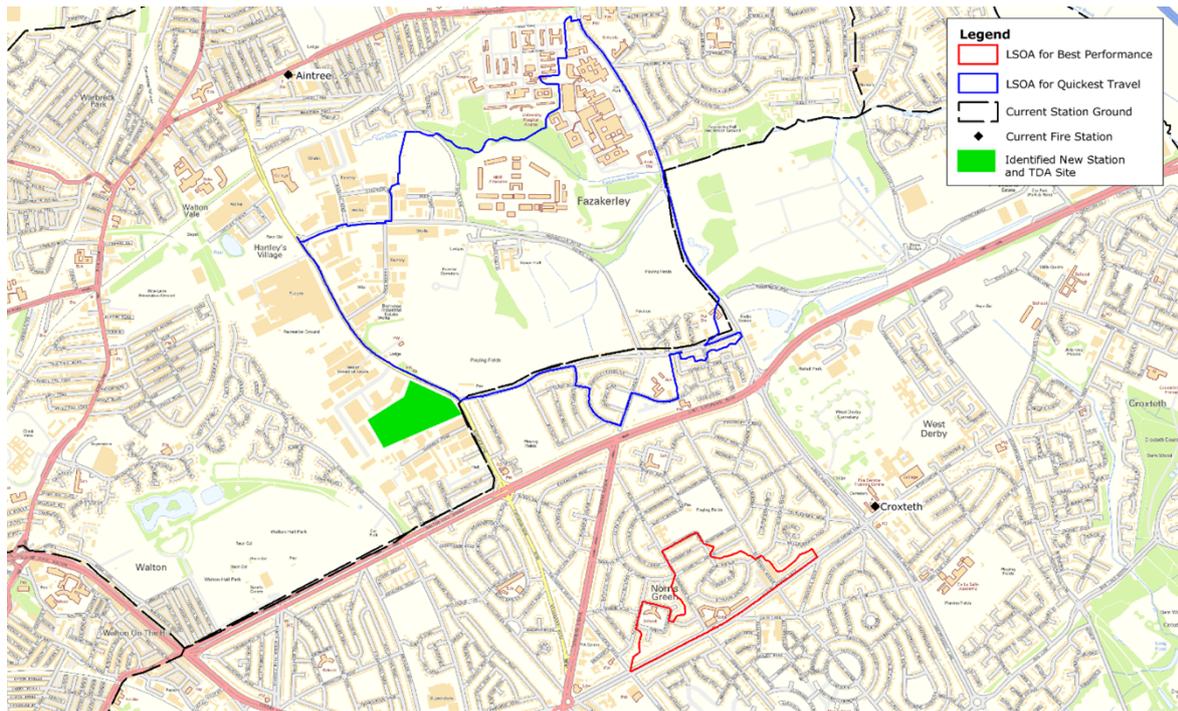
Site	18 – Aintree	19 - Croxteth	Overall
Current Stations	00:04:54	00:04:06	00:04:29
Long Lane	00:04:05	00:03:46	00:03:55

31. The table above shows the average response time of 3m 55 seconds is 34 seconds quicker than from the current stations. A significant proportion of this reduction comes from attending incidents in Aintree which is currently Day Crewed and therefore is reliant on surrounding stations attending incidents at night.

### **Facility Location Planner Analysis**

32. To identify the best possible location for a new merged station and Training Academy, MFRS utilised software called Facility Location Planner (FLP) which was developed by Process Evolution. The software uses Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) geography to identify the best location for a site within a given area. This process was simulated twice, initially for best performance and then for quickest response time.

**Facility Location Planner (FLP) Best Performance and Quickest Travel LSOAs**



**Recommended LSOA for Best Performance, Recommended LSOA for Quickest Travel, Identified New Station / TDA Site and Current Fire Station Locations**

Author: Business Intelligence, Strategy & Performance Date: December 2020 Produced Using MapInfo  
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33. The map above shows the current fire stations, locations for the Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) for the best performance (red border) and for the quickest travel time (blue border) and a parcel of land that has been identified as being large enough for a combined new fire station and Training and Development Academy (TDA).
  
34. The LSOA selected for the best performance (red border) is impractical as this a residential area with no available land and it is not far from the existing fire station in Croxteth. The identified parcel of land is adjacent to the LSOA for quickest response times (blue border), which is a more suitable area for development given main roads are close by and it is not a residential area. We therefore consider that the location is the best that we can practically achieve.

**IRMP Considerations**

35. The table below provides a comparison of proposals contained in the IRMP 2017/20 and IRMP Supplement 2019/21 along with the proposed development at the Long Lane site.

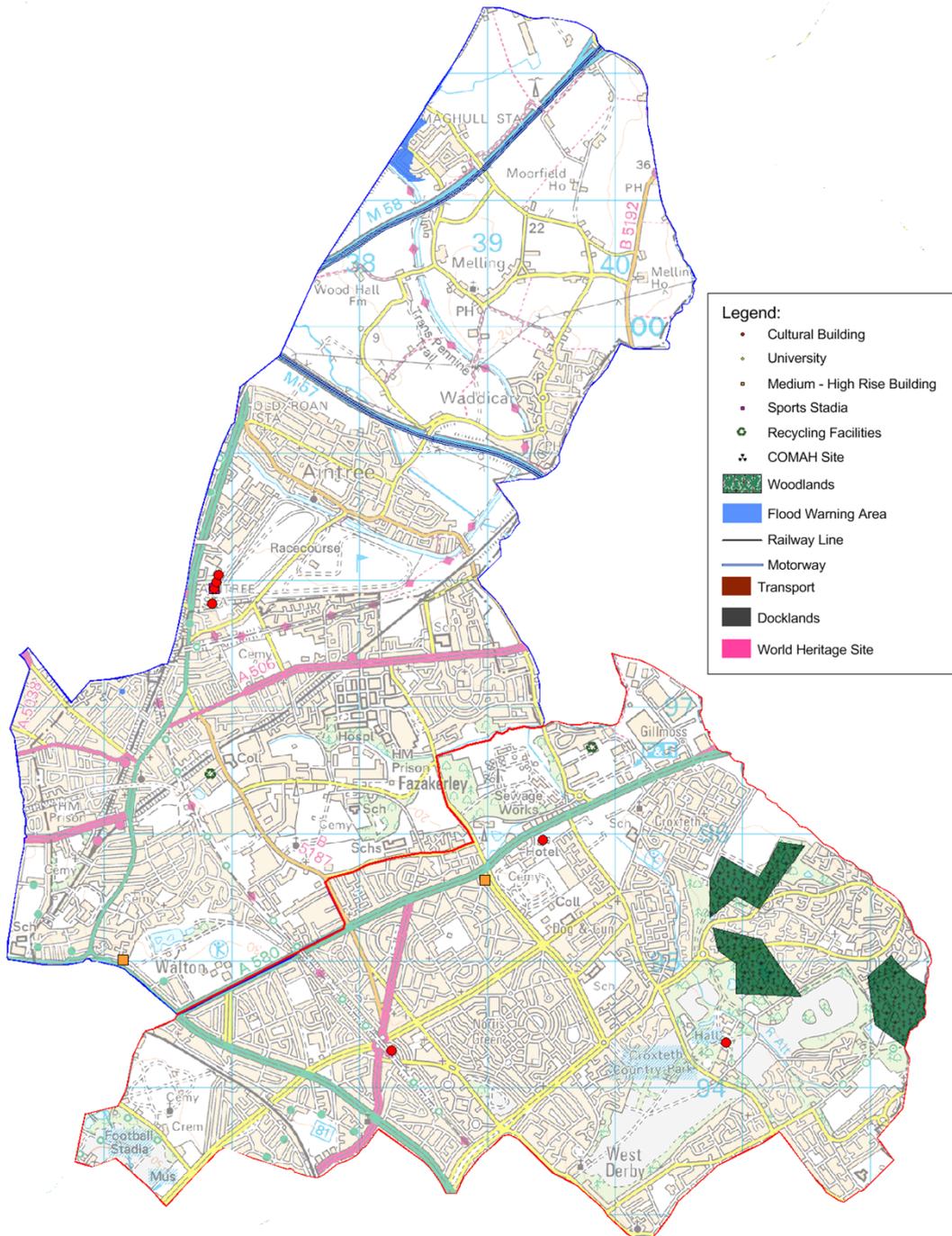
**Comparison of Life Risk Attendance Time Performance (Merseyside Wide), based on proposals in 2019/21 IRMP Supplement and the proposed Long Lane site**

	IRMP 2017/20		IRMP Supplement 2019/21		IRMP Supplement 2019/21 with proposed Long Lane site	
KPI	Overall Performance	Average Response Time	Overall Performance	Average Response Time	Overall Performance	Average Response Time
Performance	91.70%	00:06:07	93.70%	00:05:52	93.90%	00:05:50

36. Based on the current proposals, it has been predicted that overall Merseyside response to life risk incidents within 10 minutes would be achieved 93.7% of the time, with an average attendance time of 5m 52 seconds (from alert to in attendance).
37. Amending the above to close the Aintree and Croxteth Fire Stations and building a merged station on Long Lane, predicts a faster response in terms of attending life risk incidents pan Merseyside. This results in an improved prediction of 93.9% of life risk incidents being attended within 10 minutes and an average attendance time of 5m 50 seconds (from alert to in attendance).

### **The Area Under Consideration**

38. The following map describes what of the proposed station merger area looks like. Outlined in Blue is the Aintree Station area and in Red is the Croxteth Station area. Also identified on the map are significant landmarks, as well as potential risks to business and the community.



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39. Within the immediate vicinity to the proposed Long Lane site is the site of HMP Altcourse, a location where over the years there have been spates of fires. Neighbouring this is Aintree University Hospital, which occupies a large complex site.
40. Within close proximity are two waste recycling centres, on Hartley Avenue, L9 7DB and Bridgehouse Lane, L10 5HA. Waste recycling centres and scrapyards

have been responsible for some of the largest fires attended by MFRS in recent years.

41. Moving slightly further away from the proposed site is Aintree Racecourse, Anfield Football Stadium, HMP Liverpool, as well as the Aintree Industrial Estate, Racecourse Retail Park and Aintree Shopping Park.
42. Major transport infrastructure in the locality of the proposed site includes: A580 East Lancashire Road, A5058 Queens Drive, M57, M58 and Northern Line to Kirkby. As well as greenspace attractions including: Croxteth Country Park and Manor, Craven Wood, River Alt and Leeds Liverpool Canal.
43. All station areas have significant landmarks and potential risks. However, the modelled improvement in response to life risk incidents within the proposed merged station area is certainly a major positive for MFRS and our stakeholders including: partners, residents, visitors and businesses. Our comprehensive predictive analysis indicates this station merger will improve response times to life risk incidents in across Merseyside including both the Aintree and Croxteth station areas.

### **The Consultation Process**

44. If Members approve the recommendation outlined in this report and proceed with the twelve-week public consultation, the process will take place in the Aintree and Croxteth station areas. This consultation will seek the views of staff, representative bodies, station users and the local community. The consultation process is outlined below

### **Consultation Process July - October 2021**

#### **Key Points:**

- The public consultation process regarding the merger of Croxteth and Aintree Stations will run for twelve-weeks from 15<sup>th</sup> July to 07<sup>th</sup> October 2021, assuming the project is approved by MFRA on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.
- In a standard consultation of this type, as we have carried out with previous station closures/mergers, there has been a combination of online and in person consultation. However, given the current conditions there may still be some restrictions to public events etc. which will affect how this consultation is carried out. With the current lack of clarity owing to the pandemic restrictions, we are considering two approaches as outlined below:

<b>No Covid Restrictions</b>	<b>Covid Restrictions</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Preparation of consultation documents, survey, other media plus meetings and events	Preparation of consultation documents, survey, other media plus meetings and events	Mid-June – 15 <sup>th</sup> July
Consultation opens after approval by Authority	Consultation opens after approval by Authority	15 <sup>th</sup> July

Digital consultation launches with video on Social Media and link to MFRS website consultation (including survey)	Digital consultation launches with video on Social Media and link to MFRS website consultation (including survey)	15 <sup>th</sup> July
Copies of consultation document sent to Councils, Merseyside Police, NWAS and other stakeholders	Copies of consultation document sent to Councils, Merseyside Police, NWAS and other stakeholders	July
Consultation with Representative Bodies	Consultation with Representative Bodies	July - August
Consultation with Staff - Aintree and Croxteth	Consultation with Staff - Aintree and Croxteth	July - August
Consultation with MFRS staff networks	Consultation with MFRS staff networks	July-August
*3 focus groups carried out (in person)	3 focus groups carried out (online)	Early September
3 public meetings carried out (in person)	3 public meetings carried out (online only)	Early September
Leafleting local areas	Leafleting local areas	July -Sep
End of consultation	End of consultation	7 <sup>th</sup> October
Report to Authority on consultation responses in October/November (date TBC)		

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

45. A full Equality Impact Assessment and all associated Equality and Diversity considerations will be completed throughout the corporate management of the project. The MFRA Diversity, Engagement and Consultation Manager is integral to the project management structure, ensuring close liaison is maintained throughout the project.
46. A full draft EIA has been completed by the ED&I officer (Appendix C), this will be updated following the outcome of the consultation.

### **Staff Implications**

47. The provision of sector leading facilities at the new TDA site with an infrastructure fit to meet the ambitions of the Service will exponentially improve the working conditions and training provision for MFRA personnel.
48. There will be a detailed consultation and communication process supported by and delivered through a designated project team in line with Service Instruction 0881 (Consultation and Engagement Framework).
49. MFRS Corporate Communications Team and the station management team for Aintree and Croxteth have been engaged in the process. They will contribute to the planning and delivery of the consultation process. They will be instrumental in engaging with the public, distributing information, attending public meetings and answering questions.

50. If the station merger is approved by Authority following the twelve-week consultation process. The implications to our staff will be carefully considered and managed by the Aintree and Croxteth station management teams and POD. This will include engagement with representative bodies and take account of employee's personal circumstances. The merger will be subject to the approval of any purchase of land by the Authority.

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### **Legal Implications**

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51. It is considered that in carrying out the extensive twelve-week consultation that is proposed, the Authority will be fully complying with legal requirements and best practice guidelines. The outcomes of this twelve-week public consultation process will be fully reported to Authority prior to a decision being made.
52. Dialogue continues with the owner's representative of the Long Lane site, however any agreement for the purchase of the land would be subject to full Authority approval. The legal searches and terms for any exchange for a conditional sale continue to be undertaken by the legal team.
53. Subject to Fire Authority approval to complete the purchase of the identified site and feedback from the public consultation, the legal parameters for the sale of the two existing fire stations that are proposed to merge would also be sought and executed as appropriate.

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

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54. The new TDA / station merger project budget is estimated at £25,251m based on a high level cost plan that reflects the project requirements. The estimated project costs will be reviewed and confirmed as the project proposals are developed and will be reported back to Members' for approval as we progress through to the next stage of the development.
55. The project team will challenge the high level cost plan throughout the design process in line with the fiscal resources identified for the build.
56. The public consultation costs are estimated at approximately £18,000.

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

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57. A risk register has been developed to manage and mitigate associated risks. The register is reviewed regularly at the Project Board. The Chair/Vice Chair of the Project Board or Project Manager escalate risks by exception to the project's Executive Group.
58. MFRA will reduce any associated corporate risk by completing extensive consultation on the proposed station merger.

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

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59. The twelve-week consultation process will enable the public and other stakeholders to carefully consider the implications of the proposed station merger and contribute valuable opinions that will be considered by the Authority.
60. New facilities will provide an improved working environment for MFRA staff, including enhanced training facilities for internal and external personnel. It will also provide improved community facilities compared to those available at the current TDA and station sites.

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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### **PREVIOUS MERGER REPORTS (TBC)**

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## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

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**MFRA**  
**CDM**  
**LCC**  
**RIBA**  
**TDA**

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<sup>i</sup> Modelling was completed using resource modelling software called FIRS. The system models change: to station locations, mergers, shift patterns and utilises a minimum of 3 years of incident data to model results.

<sup>ii</sup> This is based on: 16 Whole-time (WT) appliances, 4 LLAR appliances, 6 Day Crewed appliances and 3 Whole-time Retained (WTR) appliances

<sup>iii</sup> Key Performance Indicator TR08: Attendance Standard - The first attendance of an appliance at all life risk incidents in 10 minutes. Based on Alert to Attendance Times. Life Risk incidents include: Dwelling Fires, Non Domestic Fires, Road Traffic Collisions, Hazmat, Water Rescue and other incidents to involve rescue.