

Please find the FOA response below:

The FOA have been consulted on the draft IRMP 2021 – 2024 and have now had the opportunity to review the proposals contained within. The FOA would offer the following comments and observations.

We note the consideration of the National Security Risk assessment and the community risk register as well as the use of a wide range of historic business intelligence in the preparation of this plan. We support the approach of viewing this data in the context of risk, demand and vulnerability to identify potential harm to the communities MFRS serves. This approach also allows the service to train staff against the anticipated risks and demands to ensure they are well prepared for the hazards they face.

We fully support the wide range of duty systems and working patterns the service employs. We recognise that this allows the service to staff its resources in an efficient way but we also know that the variety of standard patterns and the ability to transfer between them, alongside the arrangements to make specific flexible working requests is appreciated by our members as it provides them with the ability to choose a duty pattern that suits their individual work life balance.

We support the outstanding work the service is doing in targeting its prevention work at those most at risk and the other community prevention activities that seek to reduce the number of incidents the service is required to attend.

We note the service continues to be the lead authority for National Resilience. Maintaining this position can only provide benefits to our members and other staff within MFRS, creating jobs and development opportunities.

We recognise that the protection function faces new challenges as a result of the Grenfell tower enquiry and welcome the investment in this department in relation to increasing the numbers of staff. We support the employment of a diverse mix of people, both grey and green book, and the opportunities this provides for people to consider a career in the fire service who may not wish to be operational firefighters.

We note the intention to introduce a stinger/scorpion type appliance and a 45M CPL. We would request that the outcomes of any report, considerations of cost/benefit and any alternatives are shared with the FOA for discussion before a definite decision is made to purchase.

We believe the decision to disperse the special appliances from Kirkdale is a positive step and will allow crews who are designated to support them better access to familiarise themselves with those assets. We would suggest that the equipment carried on these appliances is reviewed to ensure it is up to date and fit for purpose.

The decision to move to a new site for the TDA and combine this with a station merger of Croxteth and Aintree will provide MFRS with the opportunity to build a modern training

centre, fit for the needs of its staff and providing the facilities needed to train effectively and safely. This can only be a good thing for all staff and the community.

The FOA is interested in the proposal to develop and Integrated Demand management Program with NWAS. The service will be aware that FOA members were amongst the first to step forward and volunteer to assist the NHS during the COVID pandemic, with our H&S rep able to agree procedures and risk assessments locally, allowing this work to start and continue despite protracted national negotiations. We are open to discussing how activities such as EMR and ambulance driving could continue, especially during periods when the ambulance service is experiencing extreme pressure.

The proposals for prevention and protection activity are challenging but will focus activity in the areas where it will have the most effect. We welcome the introduction of a replacement for the current, very outdated, management information system used by protection.

We note the proposal to purchase a drone capability. This would represent a significant spending in terms of capital, ongoing maintenance, replacement and training for staff. FOA are aware of the usefulness of drones and the availability of them in the north west region with other FRS. We would seek to engage with the service to fully understand the rationale to introduce our own capability and whether collaboration opportunities have been fully explored.

We recognise the financial challenge faced by the authority and agree with the financial principles outlined in the plan to ensure effective use of the authorities budget.

The service has taken great steps in improving equality, diversity and inclusion over the last 10 years. It should be very proud of the fact that MFRS has some of the highest proportions of female and BAME firefighters in the country. There is always more we can do and the FOA is committed to working with the service to ensure all areas of the organisation fully reflect the communities we serve.

Kind Regards

Merseyside FOA Secretary.