

Equality Impact Assessment

Title of policy/report/project:	Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2021 -2024 EIA
Department:	Strategy and Performance
Date:	February 2021 - Draft for Authority June 2021 - Updated following consultation
Completed by:	Deb Appleton and Michelle Kirk

1: What are the main aims and objectives outlined in the IRMP 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 the impact of their introduction on our diverse communities across Merseyside and specifically how the proposals affect the 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 equality impacts.

Proposed 2021-2024 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 Search and Rescue Appliance) to 31 (plus the Search and 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 32nd 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.

There is an overall increase in the number of fire engines available across Merseyside and these additional assets are distributed based on risk, demand and vulnerability. The heightened levels of demand are experienced more in areas of high deprivation, as such the plan reflects socio – economic disadvantage alongside more recognised protected characteristics.

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 higher reach 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 MFRS's resilience and response capability 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 32nd 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 32nd 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 overall.

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, ensuring ready access to all. 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. This proposal tackles the health inequalities that exist across Merseyside, as well as those directly related to fire.

- **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.

Extending the focus to target the most deprived communities across Merseyside – ensures the Service are tackling socio economic disadvantage. It is also acknowledged that a higher proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Groups live in the areas of highest deprivation. See knowing our communities.

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.

The proposals also introduce self-management, giving members of staff with childcare or parental care responsibilities access to flexible working arrangements.

The changes also ensure more fire control staff can be alerted / secured should the Service be called to a large or protracted incident locally or nationally.

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

The Authority approved its budget in February 2021 and this and the Medium Term Financial Plan set out how the IRMP proposals are affordable.

2: Who will be affected by the objectives proposed in the IRMP 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 IRMP. 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
IMD Data

Data published as part of our Public Sector Equality Duty

Data published on levels of deprivation

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 IRMP. This could include quantitative data and qualitative information; anything you have obtained from other sources e.g. CFAO/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>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>Appropriate legislation as it applies to the Fire and Rescue Service E.g. Equality Act 2010</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>Previous MFRA EIAs carried out Key Policies</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>
<p>Extensive work was completed around the National Security Risk Register – Community Risk Register – Local Resilience Forum in the Merseyside Community Risk Register: https://www.merseysideprepared.org.uk/</p>	
<p>Census</p>	<p>Population data</p>

5. Consultation

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

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

A further 12 week consultation period took place from 1st March to 24th May 2021. We were 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 were confident to use this method again.

This consultation involved circulating 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 was also made available to all stakeholders.

A summary of responses is detailed below (the full responses are available on the agenda for the Authority meeting on 30th June 2021):

Members of the public:

- A number of suggestions were made with regards to recruitment and attracting underrepresented groups, further engagement with children and young people and raising awareness of mental health issues. (Acknowledged and details noted for further actions as appropriate)

Staff

- Alternative proposals regarding the high impact risk Marine in relation to station 25 and station 31. (Acknowledged by Chief Fire Officer who was pleased that staff had engaged in the consultation process. However, to implement their proposals would require an additional £1m which cannot be accommodated in this IRMP)

Cheshire & Merseyside CCG:

- Requested clarification in relation to the development of an Integrated Demand Management Programme and Emergency Medical Response with NWAS. (An invitation to meet to discuss further with the Chief Fire Officer was extended and accepted)

UNITE:

- Initial response no issues. Positive feedback in relation to accessible documents.

Fire Officer's Association (FOA)

- Generally supportive of all proposals.
- Would like to support working with NWAS to develop an Integrated Demand Management Programme.
- Would like to be involved in the introduction of the Drone, Stinger/Scorpion appliance and relocation of specialist equipment. (All acknowledged and noted for future development of these actions)

Fire Brigades Union (FBU)

- The FBU raised a number of points relating to the IRMP which have been considered and the IRMP amended as appropriate. Several other comments and recommendations will be picked up through the Service's normal representative bodies consultation and engagement processes where appropriate.

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 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 IRMP 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:

Equality & Diversity Advisor

Date: 16/6/21

Comments: Chief Fire Officer and Director of Strategy and Performance consulted

For any advice, support or guidance about completing this form please contact the 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