



MERSEYSIDE
FIRE & RESCUE
SERVICE



STATION MERGER CONSULTATION: AINTREE & CROXTETH

July 2021



INTRODUCTION

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority (MFRA) has begun a 12-week consultation on proposed changes to emergency response cover in Aintree and Croxteth. The consultation runs from 15th July to 7th October 2021.

The public consultation follows a previous public consultation on the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) for 2021-24 which first outlined the plans. Participants unanimously agreed the proposals to build a new centre of excellence were completely reasonable. The Fire & Rescue Authority approved this project following this strong public support.

The public consultation will consider:

- The proposed merger of Aintree and Croxteth Fire Stations including the Training & Development Academy (TDA), closing both stations, in order to create a new multi pump superstation and state of the art TDA and National Resilience Centre of Excellence on Long Lane, Aintree, Liverpool (subject to Fire & Rescue Authority and planning approval). Fire & Rescue Services visiting from around the country will bring social and economic benefits to the area.

The outcome of the consultation will be reported back to MFRA following the conclusion of the consultation period.

The consultation will involve three public meetings and three focus groups (either online or in person depending on COVID-19 restrictions). As well as seeking views from the public, consultation will also take place with staff based at Aintree and Croxteth, MFRS' staff networks and trade unions and staff associations.

The public meetings for this consultation will be held at Service Headquarters and online. Details of the dates will be available at www.merseyfire.gov.uk

This consultation document will be sent to local authorities, Merseyside Police, North West Ambulance Service and other stakeholders. It is available on our website www.merseyfire.gov.uk along with an [online questionnaire here](#)

You can email us at consultation2@merseyfire.gov.uk or write to Jackie Sutton, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle, L30 4YD.

BACKGROUND



Home Office

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service's (MFRS) 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.

In order to build upon our lead authority status for National Resilience, the Service has put forward its most challenging forward-thinking IRMP to date.

MFRS' 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."



The station merger consultation is an important element of a much broader project that MFRS has a huge amount of experience in, having successfully delivered station merger projects in Knowsley, Wirral and St Helens. This pioneering project will be a result in significant improvement in 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 the Home Office who have committed

£1.7million towards the cost of a National Resilience Centre of Excellence, enhancing our already positive relationship with this lead government department.

The station merger proposal 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 equidistant between the existing stations (1.9km from Aintree and 2.5km from Croxteth) and is the best available location to improve our response standards to life risk incidents.

The Service continues to improve its emergency response and resilience, through innovation and careful financial planning. To achieve this the Authority's IRMP supplement 2019-20 invested £1m back into the front line.

This investment has allowed a real improvement and the 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.

The IRMP 2021-24 proposals will help MFRS deal more efficiently and effectively with risk.

In essence, the move to a 12-acre site at Long Lane will allow 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 merge these 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 & Rescue Authority approval and planning consent, and the closure of the two existing fire stations and attached TDA.

We will work with the local authority to deliver the best outcomes for the existing sites.

"We're a modern day Fire & Rescue Service and it's important that we keep up with that, it's a forever changing world and we've got to adapt with that and give the best service possible to the people of Merseyside. The Long Lane project will give us the opportunity to serve the community in that way. I'm very proud to be a firefighter at Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service because it's the best Fire Service in the UK - it's the most modern, it's moving forward with the times and this project shows that we're moving in the right direction."

- Jack Norton, Firefighter, Aintree



THE EXISTING SITES



AINTREE FIRE STATION

The station opened on 9th November 1926. 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 need. The site is not fully accessible to all and doesn't provide the necessary facilities for a diverse workforce or community use.



TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY (TDA)

This site opened on 27th 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 has outgrown the site which is landlocked by development on all sides, and which significantly restricts MFRS' ability to develop training facilities in line with the risk our firefighters 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.

The Service has recently commissioned an Access and Inclusion Audit, 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 has, they will require a significant financial investment to bring them up to a basic minimum standard.



New facilities will provide a better working environment for MFRA staff, including improved training facilities for staff and external organisations. It will also provide improved community facilities compared to those available at the current TDA and fire station sites.

A full draft Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed and this will be updated following the outcome of the consultation to make sure we understand the impact of our plans.

CROXTETH FIRE STATION

The station opened on 14th 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 (HART). 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.



REVIEW OF OTHER POTENTIAL SITES

A 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.

Phase 2 involved the Service instructing an estate agent to consider sites within a five mile range of the ideal location for a merged station.

PHASE 1

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

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

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:

Site Name	Reason Rejected
Alchemy Way	Not of suitable size for the project.
Moorgate Road/Dairy Crest	Not available for purchase.
Ormskirk Road	Restrictions on the site made it unsuitable.
Scottish Power site	Not available for purchase.
Valley Road	Green belt land and the topography, including electricity pylons, made the site unsuitable.

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 the estate agent to identify potential sites within a five mile range of the ideal location for a station merger (see page 11 for more details).

PHASE 2

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

Site Name	Viability of Site
Stopgate Lane	Outside of Merseyside so not suitable.
Atlantic Park	The developer preferred a lease option with potential restrictions on the design that made it unsuitable.
Ormskirk Road	Restrictions on the site made it unsuitable.
Pighue Lane	Not of suitable size for the project.
Long Lane	Most viable option due to size and location, officers to explore in more detail.

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.

The 12-acre site at Long Lane, Aintree, Liverpool is large enough to build a Specialist Rescue Station and new Training and Development Academy to include a National Resilience Centre of Excellence, whilst allowing us to continue to collaborate with other blue light partners. This site is also predicted to improve our response times to emergencies.

Research^Δ shows us that the average response time from the new location would improve our performance when attending Life Risk* Incidents across Merseyside.

	IRMP Supplement 2019/21		Proposed Long Lane Site (IRMP 2021-24)	
Our attendance standard	Overall Performance	Average Response Time	Overall Performance	Average Response Time
Performance (%)	93.70%	00:05:52	93.90%	00:05:50

^Δ 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.

◦ Key Performance Indicator TR08: Attendance Standard - The first attendance of an appliance at all life risk incidents in 10 minutes on 90% of occasions. Based on Alert to In Attendance Times.

* Life Risk incidents include: Dwelling Fires, Non Domestic Fires, Road Traffic Collisions, Hazmat, Water Rescue and other incidents to involve rescue.



THE ANALYSIS BEHIND OUR PROPOSALS

STATION CHANGE METHODOLOGY

The Service has a robust station change methodology for managing the proposed station merger process. The methodology is based on MFRA’s experience in delivering successful station mergers in Knowsley, Wirral and St Helens.

In order to achieve the most efficient and effective emergency response the Service uses 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.

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 also identified
- Station boundaries
- Appliance/crewing shift patterns
- Travel time matrix
- Response Standard

In addition to the these datasets, FIRS also integrates with Maptitude mapping software and Simul8. Simul8 is the tool that runs the simulations and algorithms to predict future performance.

RESPONSE TIME ANALYSIS

The Service has used 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.

Site	Aintree station area	Croxteth station area	Overall
Current Stations	00:04:54	00:04:06	00:04:29
Long Lane	00:04:05	00:03:46	00:03:55

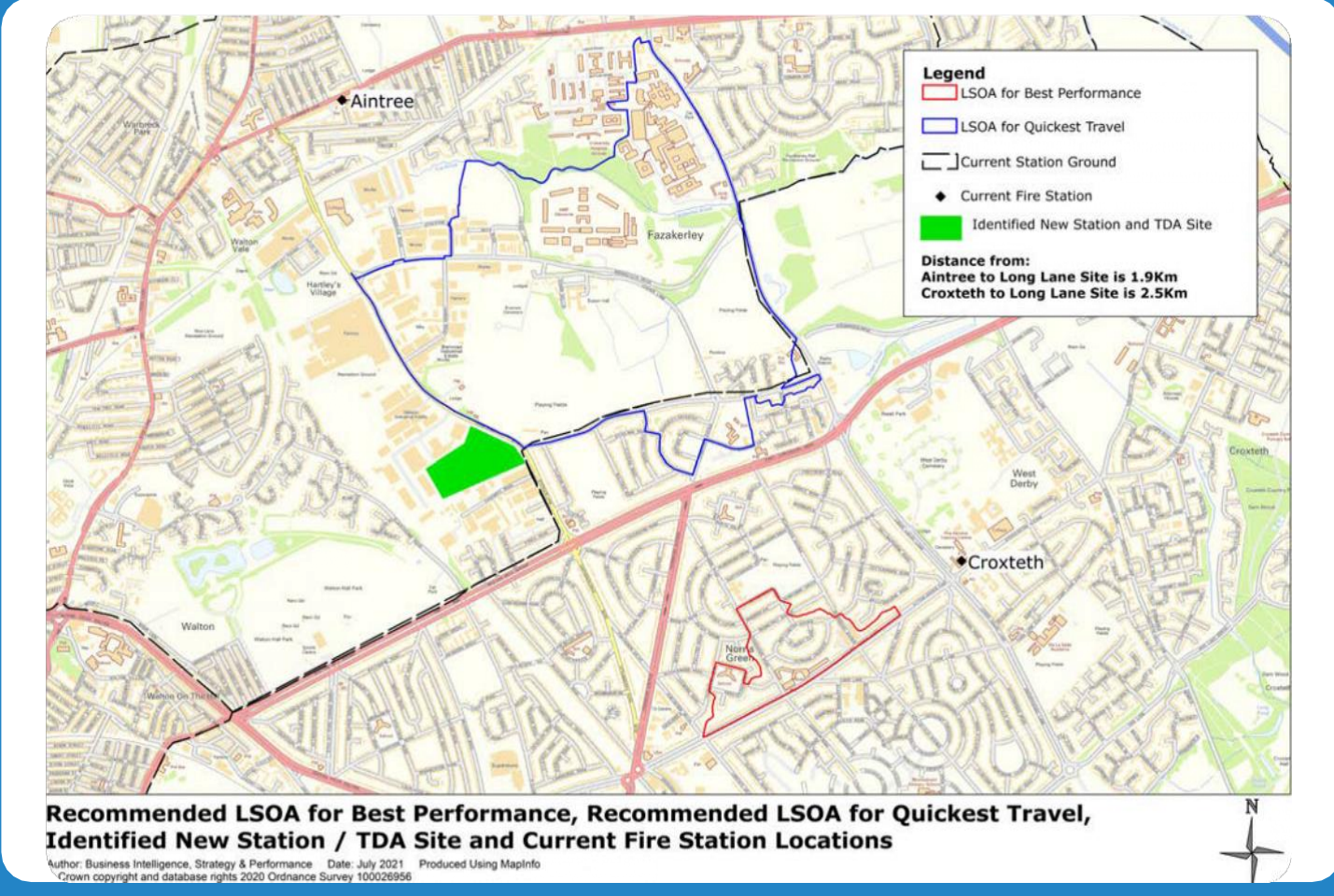
The table above shows the average response time of 3m 55 seconds is 34 seconds quicker than from the current stations. A significant proportion of this reduction comes from attending incidents in Aintree which is currently staffed during the day so it is reliant on surrounding stations attending incidents at night. The proposed new station would also have an appliance available at night.

FACILITY LOCATION PLANNER ANALYSIS

To identify the best possible location for a new merged station and Training & Development Academy, MFRS used software called Facility Location Planner (FLP) which was also 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



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).

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 within a predominantly industrial setting.. We therefore consider that the location is the best that we can practically achieve.

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 previous IRMPs and the proposed Long Lane site

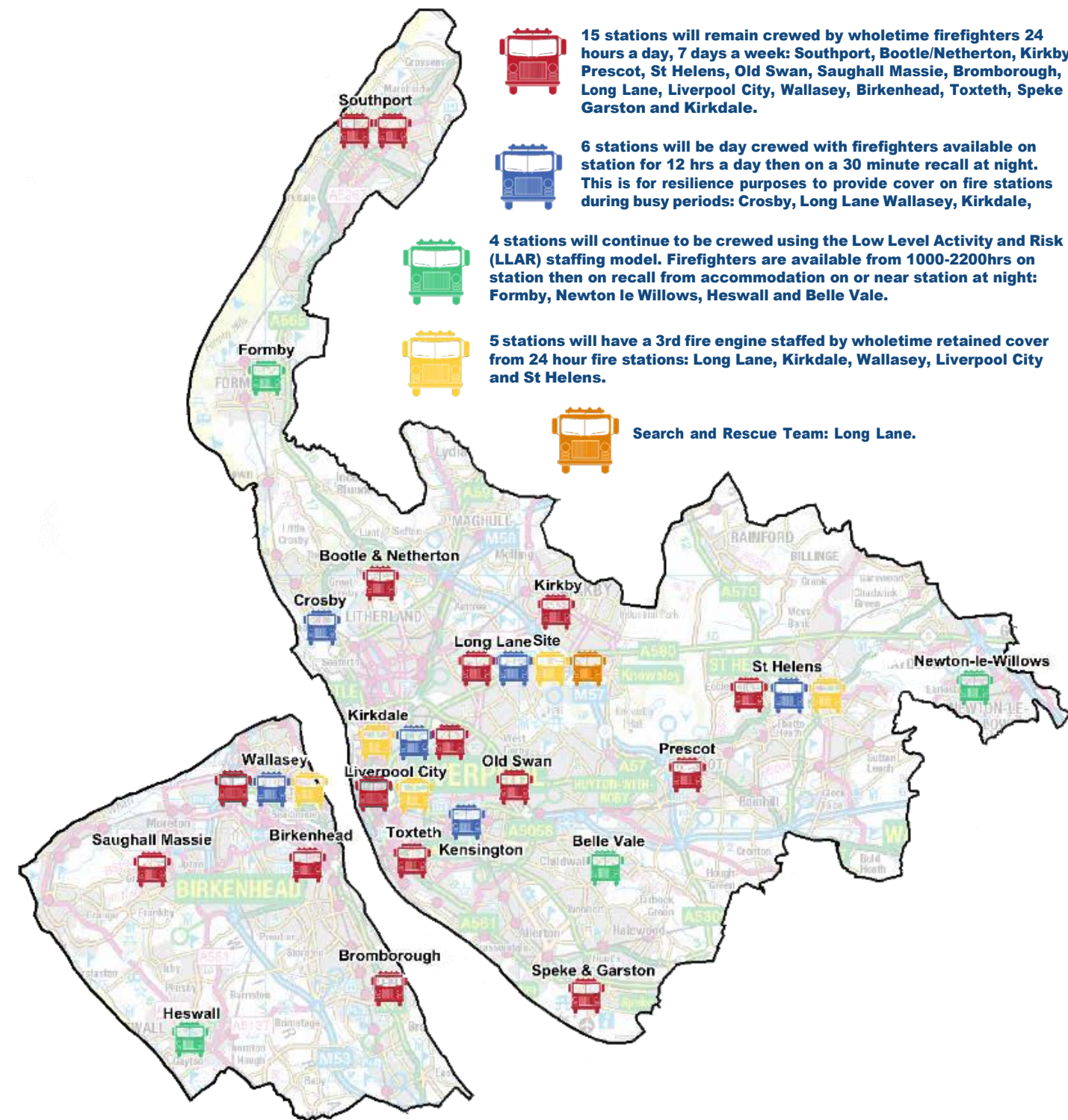
KPI	IRMP 2017/20		IRMP Supplement 2019/21		IRMP 2021-24 (with proposed Long Lane site)	
	Overall Performance	Average Response Time	Overall Performance	Average Response Time	Overall Performance	Average Response Time
Performance	91.70%	00:06:07	93.70%	00:05:52	93.90%	00:05:50

Based on existing arrangements it has been predicted that overall, our response to life risk incidents throughout Merseyside 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).

The proposed closure of Aintree and Croxteth Fire Stations and building a new merged station on Long Lane to replace them has a faster predicted response in terms of attending life risk incidents in 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).

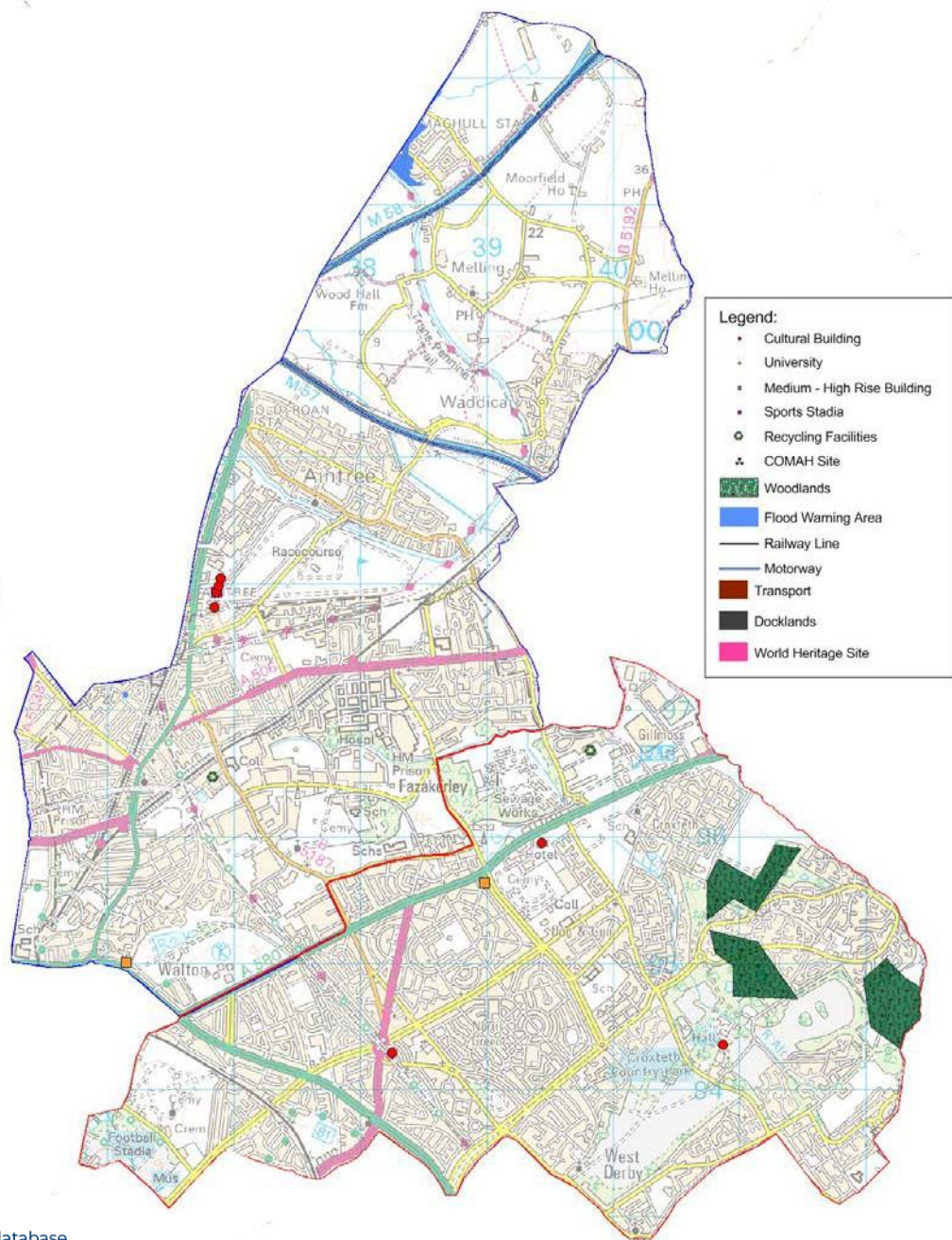
You can view our IRMP 2021-24 on our website [here](#).

RESPONSE PROPOSALS IRMP 2021-24



THE AREA UNDER CONSIDERATION

The following map describes what 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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Close to the proposed Long Lane site is HMP Altcourse, a location where over the years there have been several fires. Neighbouring this is Aintree University Hospital, which occupies a large complex site.

Also close by are two waste recycling centres, on Hartley Avenue and Bridgehouse Lane. Waste recycling centres and scrapyards have been responsible for some of the largest fires attended by MFRS in recent years.

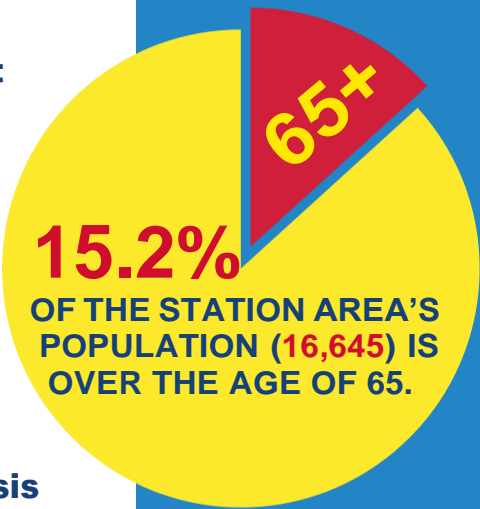
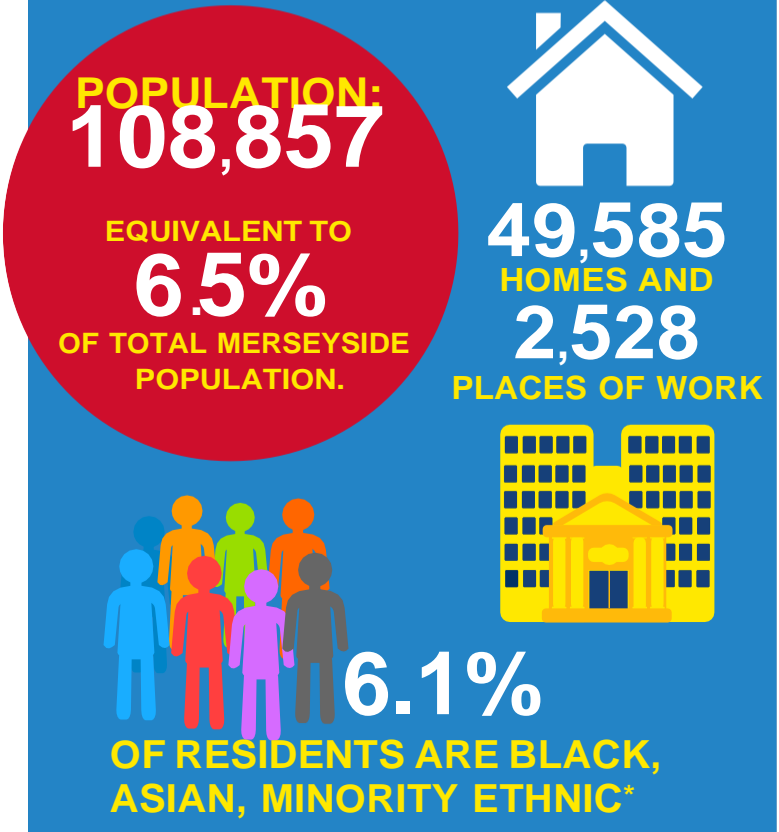
Moving slightly further away from the proposed site is Aintree Racecourse, Anfield Football Stadium, HMP Liverpool, as well as the Aintree Industrial Estate, Racecourse Retail Park and Aintree Shopping Park.

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.

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.

PROPOSED LONG LANE SITE STATION PROFILE

PRIMARILY MADE UP OF THE WARDS: WARBECK, FAZAKERLEY, MOLYNEUX, CLUBMOOR, WEST DERBY, NORRIS GREEN & CROXTETH.



* INCLUDING: NON ENGLISH, WELSH, SCOTTISH AND NORTHERN IRISH WHITE POPULATION

THE PROPOSED STATION AREA IS WITHIN THE...

10-20% MOST DEPRIVED AREAS IN ENGLAND.

30-40% MOST DEPRIVED AREAS IN ENGLAND FOR EDUCATION, SKILLS AND TRAINING.

0-10% MOST DEPRIVED AREAS IN ENGLAND FOR HEALTH, DEPRIVATION AND DISABILITY.



CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT

We will consult on these proposals for 12 weeks from 15th July to 7th October 2021. This consultation will involve sending this document to local authorities, Merseyside Police, North West Ambulance Service and other stakeholders, with leaflets also distributed in the local area.

We will hold public meetings in the areas concerned and will provide further details on our website.

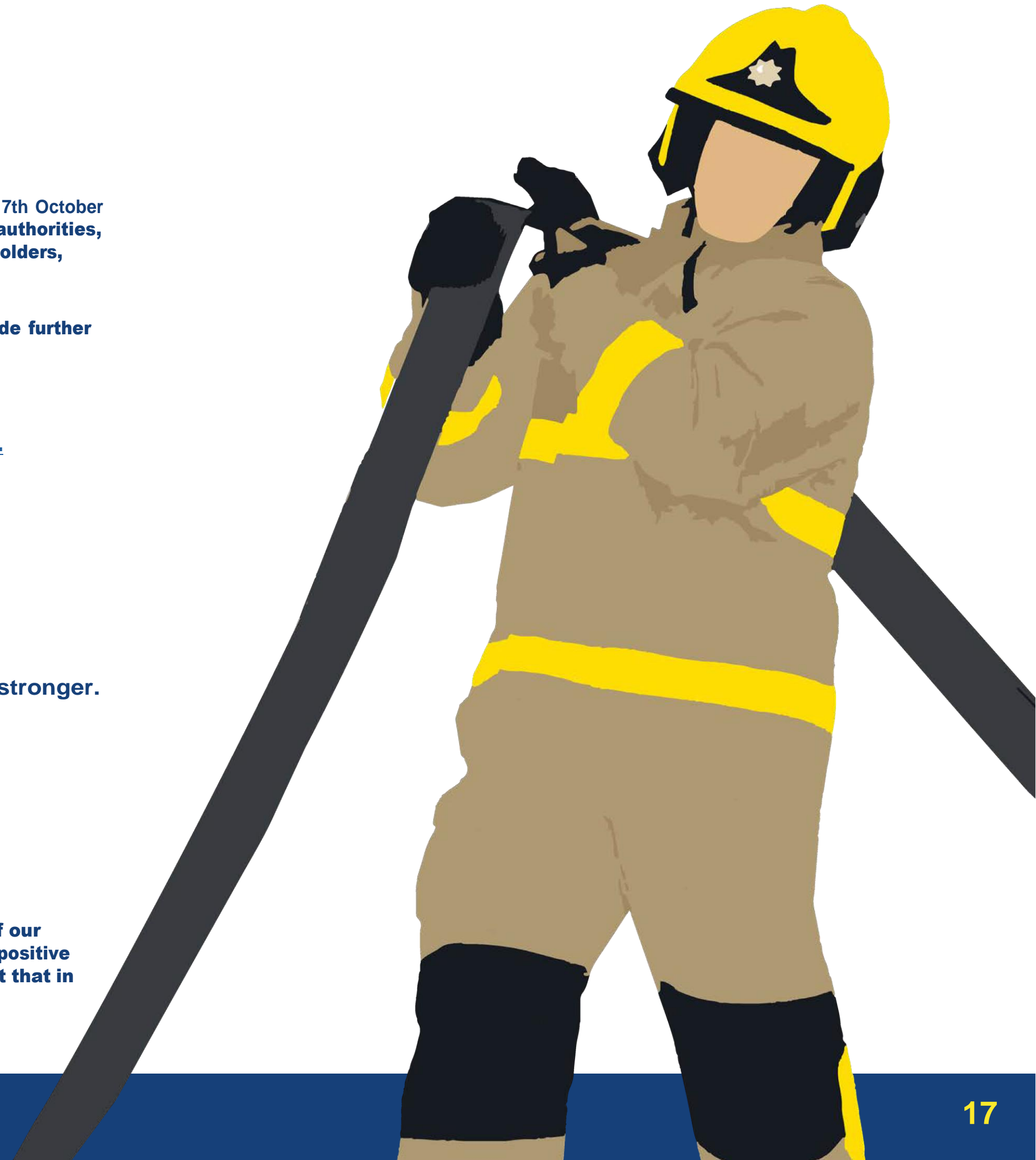
You can have your say on the proposals by:

- Completing an online questionnaire available on [our website here](#).
- Emailing us at: consultation2@merseyfire.gov.uk
- Writing to us at: Jackie Sutton
Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service
Headquarters
Bridle Road
Bootle
L30 4YD

Thank you for helping us to make Merseyside safer and stronger.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

You can find out more about the equality and diversity impacts of our proposals on our [website here](#). We believe the changes will have a positive impact on our staff and communities, but you can read more about that in our equality impact assessment.



ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

We are committed to ensuring that all our information is fully accessible for all communities across Merseyside. We have included this document on our website which can be accessed from our webpage <https://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/about/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/>

We also provide a free speech, reading and translation service using ReciteMe to help people who require online reading support access our documents this can be located on the front page, top right of our website by clicking the button called "Accessibility".

If you would like a copy in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French or Somali, please contact us:

BY POST: Diversity Team
Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service
Service Headquarters
Bridle Road
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BY PHONE: 0151 296 4422

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ARABIC

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Team, MF&RS Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle, Liverpool, 296 0151 الإلكتروني البريد أو 4422 diversityteam@merseyfire.gov.uk. 4422 296 0151
كبيرة طباعة بحروف أيضًا متوفر

BENGALI

আপন আরব, বাংলা প্রিকট িকপ চান, চীনা, ফরািস বা েসামািল কন েয়াগােয়াগ ডাইভারিসট দল আমােদর, MF & আরএস সদর, রশ্িম েরাড, Bootle, িলভারপুল L30 4YD. েেইলফান এবং িমিনকম 0151 296 4422 বা েইমইল diversityteam@merseyfire.gov.uk. বৃহৎ মুগ্গছাড়াও উপলব্ধ.

CHINESE

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FRENCH

Si vous souhaitez obtenir une copie en arabe, bengali, chinois, contactez s'il vous plaît français ou en Somalie nous à la diversité équipe, siège de MF & RS, Bridle Road, Bootle, Liverpool L30 4YD. Téléphone et minicom 0151 296 4422 ou par Courriel diversityteam@merseyfire.gov.uk. Egalement disponible en gros caractères.

SOMALI

Haddii aad rabtid nuqul Carabi, Bangaali, Shinees, Faransiis ama Soomaali fadlan la xiriir kooxda Diversity, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, Headquarters Service, Bridle Road, Bootle Liverpool L30 4YD. Telefoonka: 0151 296 4422 ama Email: diversityteam@merseyfire.gov.uk. Sidoo Kale waxaa heli kartaa iyadoo far waaweyn ah.





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